

Karen Dainty, President

The ABW Ministries 2024 – 2025 Mission Focus is Welcoming the Stranger

"Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers and sisters, even though they are strangers to you". 3 John 1:5 (NIV)

As I was meditating on the theme of *"Welcoming the Stranger"*, I was reminded of the many opportunities that we as Great Rivers Region American Baptist Women have to *"Welcome a Stranger"*, and affect others' lives:

Special Project: Mini Libraries for Talita Cumi Girls Clubs

One of my fondest childhood memories is Mom reading a bedtime story. She read the same books over and over; my favorite was "Make Way for Ducklings". Even though her memory was failing her, she could still recite all the ducklings' names from the book. Another favorite of mine, "The Monster at the End of this Book". As a camp counselor, I read it every Saturday evening to begin our devotions; making sure that the campers felt safe and that there was nothing to be afraid of at camp. We have an opportunity to bless the girls of the more than 50 Talita Cumi Girls Clubs in Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico and Nicaragua to enjoy reading, have books readily available to read, and have someone read to them. As you plan your winter and spring events, remember to Welcome a Stranger by giving to the Special Project.

Virtual Missionaries Live on Zoom - March 1, 2025

Have you ever wondered about how our mission dollars and prayers are used? Is my small gift and quick prayer really helping? The answer is a big "YES". Join us on Zoom to hear how God is working with and in the areas that our Global Servants work and serve. I look forward to hearing how in our own small way, we are Welcoming Strangers through our Global Servants.

American Baptist Women's Ministries, ABYW & AB G.I.R.L.S. Conference - July 25-27, 2025

Conference is a time to rest, reflect, catch up with friends (old and new), and enjoy God's beautiful creation. This year we are returning to Lake Williamson. Some of my fondest conference memories are of sitting in the gazebo on the dock and sharing with the AB Girls (who are now in their 20's and 30's) share their joys and struggles. As we shared, we also could feel God's presence and His answers to some of those struggles. Save the Dates of July 25-27, 2025, invite a friend, invite someone new, invite someone you would like to get to know better, invite Young Women and Girls from your church, invite someone you think would enjoy a weekend away... Most important, attend conference with friends or strangers to enjoy God's creation and God's Word.

As we look forward to 2025 with hope, strength, and courage, may we be lights to our darkened world and Welcome a Stranger to a saving knowledge and personal relationship with our Savior Jesus Christ.

Happy New Year and my God bless each one of you!
Blessings,
Karen Dainty, President GRR ABW Ministries

MISSIONS & SERVICE COORDINATOR PAT REED

An update from our global servant in Ukraine, Kristy Engel.



"Kristy shares her heart about what she has seen and experienced while continuing to serve in Ukraine. She wrote it on the 1,000th day since the war began. "24,000 consecutive

hours," she writes, "of missiles, drones...loss of life. The journal is a mix of the stark reality many have forgotten as time has passed and **the hope that only God can bring in the middle of crisis and devastation.**

"Imagine what life would be like if you were born in Kyiv and not Kansas City. Or Odessa and not Orlando," she writes. There is something powerful about remembering our shared humanity and taking a moment to think about the reality facing tens of thousands of people today.

Although donations, volunteers, and government funding have decreased (or stopped completely in some cases), the need has not; it has remained unchanged, making resources scarce. **And yet..."Where there is hope, there is love, and where there is love, there is God."**

Kristy shares how God is seen through the laughter and voices of children and the boxes of food brought to the shelter. She encourages us to pray, learn, and share if we cannot give or go. The work is far from over in Ukraine and it is not easy, but she (and we) can "choose hope over despair, action over silence, and love over hate.

As you read this heartfelt journal, pray for Kristy, our ministry partners in Ukraine and the people they serve, that God would provide for their needs and encourage their souls."

AREA PRESIDENTS Upcoming Dates

Area I

Saturday, April 26, 2025 - Area 1 Spring Spiritual Feast at Blackhawk Camp in Oregon, IL.

Area II

March 11, 2025—Area II Spring Board meeting will be via Zoom

April 10, 2025—Spring Rally

Area III

Saturday, April 26 Spring Rally, Fairbury, IL - Put a "SPRING" in your "STEP"! And take a "STEP" into a new "LIFE"!

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS



Each year a number of resolutions are made in an attempt to improve our lives, to do and be better. Have you ever thought what resolutions a Christian might or should make? If you are in the resolution mood, here's a few to consider:

1. Spend more time with God
"After dismissing the crowds, he went up to the mountain by himself to pray. When it was evening, he was there alone" (Matthew 14:23).
2. Connect to a church
"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching" (Hebrews 10:24-25).
3. Serve regularly
"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms" (1 Peter 4:10).
4. Read the Bible
"For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope" (Romans 15:4).
5. Share the Gospel
"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19).
6. Focus on spiritual growth
"Therefore, let us move beyond the elementary teachings about Christ and be taken forward to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God" (Hebrews 6:1).
7. Give generously
"You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God" (1 Corinthians 9:11).
8. Commit to Daily Prayer
"Pray without ceasing." (1 Thessalonians 5:17)
9. Cultivate a Grateful Heart
"Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." (1 Thessalonians 5:18)
10. Strengthen Relationships
"Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins." (1 Peter 4:8)

Taken from www.biblestudytools.com & www.tipsofwisdom.com

PRAYER

At the end of each day I try to say a prayer of thanks for the day that I had, I find it gives me peace. I recently came across these two little prayers that I thought worth sharing.

Dear God, thank you for this day and all the moments you gave me to learn, grow and share your love. Thank you for my family, my friends, all the people who care for me. Thank you for the food I ate, the fun I had, and the kindness I received. I'm so grateful Lord for Jesus who loves me so much and shows me how to love others. Thank you Jesus for being my friend, my savior, and my guide. Thank you for forgiving me when I make mistakes. Help to do better each day. Help me remember the good things about today and to say sorry for the things I didn't do quite right.

Teach me to be kind, patient, and full of love, just like you. As I close my eyes tonight I ask for your protection over me and my loved ones. Please give me sweet dreams and fill my heart with peace and joy. Help me to trust you more and wake up tomorrow to shine your light in all I do. I love you lord and I thank you for loving me first in Jesus name, I pray.
Amen

Never go to sleep without saying these 4 things

- * A prayer of thankfulness, heavenly father thank you for today, thank you for every blessing big and small that remind me of your love.
- * A prayer for safety, Lord, as I prepare to rest, I ask for your protection over me and my loved ones, guard our home and keep us safe through the night.
- * A prayer for shepherding, God lead me on your path, guide my thoughts, my decisions, and my heart toward what is right and pleasing to you. Be my shepherd, leading me beside still waters and restoring my soul.
- * A prayer for blessings and renewal, Father bless me with your presence, renew my faith and fill me with hope for tomorrow. I trust you and surrender all my fears and worries to you. Amen.

As we look at 2025, may we always remember that we can always take everything to God in prayer. May you be blessed with good health, success, love, peace, and happiness in 2025.

Marcia Wimmer
Area I President

COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

Lori Hill

The Ripples newsletter is published quarterly with 2 additional special editions throughout the year. If you would like to receive the newsletter electronically or prefer to receive by mail, please contact me at 816-455-0364 or lori.hill234@gmail.com.

Ripple publish dates are:

Winter Edition (Jan.-March) - January 1, 2025

Women's History Month Special Edition—March 1, 2025

Spring Edition (April-June) - April 1, 2025

Summer Edition (July-Sept.) - July 1, 2025

COURAGE FOR THE DAYS AHEAD WHAT WILL 2025 BRING?

We will be ending our “Be Strong and Courageous” theme later this year. What have we learned from this theme? Please ponder and think about your answer??

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go. -- Joshua 1:9

Each year at this time, thousands of people stand in the cold in Times Square, New York. No big event beckons them. No ballgame is being played. No rock concert is getting underway. It's simply a huge, lighted ball that drops from a tall building. And within a few seconds, hardly worth fighting traffic and crowd pushing for, it descends marking a new year. Why has this non-event turned into a huge, money-making holiday? Most other holidays celebrate a reputable person, famous birthdays, document signings, or a noted event. But New Year's Eve only celebrates the passage of time—something that most of us would rather not recognize. We make a huge deal out of it because it signals the end of an old era and the start of a new one.

The old year's problems, heartaches, and struggles seem to vanish and become a faded memory when we think of getting the chance of a new year and a new start. It must have been the same way for the Israelites when they stood with Joshua looking forward to a new era ahead of them. They had wandered for 40 years in the desert, and finally they could see land flowing with milk & honey ahead. Better yet, they had God's promise that He would never leave or forsake them.

As you stand with your back to the old year and look forward to the new one, you can have hope in the promises of God. You will certainly face both trying and joyful times ahead, but you can rest assured that He “*will never leave you nor forsake*” (Joshua 1:5). That promise is enough to celebrate the new year ahead!

Ask God to give you courage, strength, and faith in Him to face the days ahead. Thank Him for being faithful and for never leaving your side.

Please join us to Connect or Reconnect at the American Baptist Women, Young Women & G.I.R.L.S. Conference. To Be held on Fri, Sat, Sun, July 25,26,27 Lake Williamson Christian Center, 17280 Lakeside Drive, Carlinville, IL 62626

Watch for more info that will be coming very soon. Start your New Year planning a ladies weekend in July! Hope to see you this summer!

Nancy, Marilyn, Ashley



SAVE THE DATE

American Baptist Women's Ministries,
ABYW & G.I.R.L.S.
Conference

Fri, Sat, Sun, July 25-27, 2025
Lake Williamson Christian Center
17280 Lakeside Drive
Carlinville, IL 62626

Start planning now for us all to
“RECONNECT”

DATES TO REMEMBER

National Dates— Zoom

Thursday, January 9, 2025, 7 PM ET / 4 PM PT, Live on Zoom

The Road Isn't Straight: Matthew 2:1-12 (Magi come from the East) Isaiah 43:16-21 ("I am doing a new thing, now it springs forth") from the East)

Register at www.abwomensministries.org

Region Dates

Saturday, March 1, 2025

Tuesday, March 11, 2025

Thursday, April 10, 2025

Friday/Saturday, March 28-2025

Saturday, April 26, 2025

Saturday, April 26, 2025

Thurs./Saturday, July 3-6, 2025

Friday, July 4, 2025

Friday/Sunday, July 25-27, 2025

Friday/Saturday, August 22-23, 2025

Virtual Missionaries—Zoom (10am)

Area II Spring Board meeting will be via Zoom

Area II Spring Rally

ABWM GRR Spring Board Meeting

Area 1 Spring Spiritual Feast at Blackhawk Camp in Oregon, IL.

Area III Spring Rally—Fairbury, IL

ABCUSA 2025 Biennial Mission Summit Fri

Women & Girls Day, Omaha, NE (9am-2pm)

ABWM GRR Annual Conference, Carlinville, IL

ABWM GRR Fall Board Meeting

Mission

AB Women's Ministries is a Christ-centered ministry with a commitment to encourage and empower women and girls to serve God.

Vision

Every American Baptist church shall have a vital women's ministry program that empowers women and girls to become and develop as God's person, build God's faith community and serve God's world.

Purpose

As servant leaders, we serve American Baptist churches by encouraging existing vital ministries with women and girls and empowering churches to build such ministries.

Next Publication: March 1, 2025

If you have any questions regarding this publication or would like to be on our mailing list, please contact Lori Hill at 816-455-0364 or lori.hill234@gmail.com.