

Women Alive

Winter
2021/2022

President

2022: A New Year, A New Beginning

I find it interesting that television, Facebook, and Emails bombard us with suggestions of what we should do in this New Year. "Lose weight," Scrooge on Peloton and the first three words you see will be your guiding words for this year. This is what I believe.

In the Beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (John 1:1)

A baby in a manger, a cross upon a hill. The message of the Savior brings joy to hearts still! (Words from a Christmas card.)

In the Beginning--A baby in a manger.

One baby born in a manger in the middle of nowhere, a mother and father attempting to find shelter and warmth, poor shepherds welcoming the "babe." So quiet, little fanfare.

These past few years have been a major disruption in our lives. Yet, babies were still born, people still married, and life and death still happened. How blessed I was to welcome our first grandchild. My son and his wife stayed at the hospital for the duration, brief updates while they waited. Yes, they had a warm hospital room and medical staff. Yet how different from the past when everybody and anybody would come and go. How difficult for my son to not be able to attend doctor appointments beforehand in anticipation of his child's birth, how sad not to have in-person baby showers and "tummy rubs." Yet, we still welcomed that new little boy into our lives, he was still taken to the church and dedicated to God and is loved by all. Maybe, just maybe God's gift to us is in the painful moments, the quiet of the darkness, the joy of new birth and the hearts stilled by sadness.

What would I bring to baby Jesus? How will I start the New Year in prayer? Reading his word in the quiet of the morning or in happy and sad times. Gifts I would give you: 1. Perfect Love, 2. The Gift of Joy, and 3. Peace of Christ.

One baby born in a manger, where will he lead you? God gives us all that we need in his Holy Word. And a gift of a New Life.



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Treasurer

Congratulations are in order for the results of our 2019-2021 State Project—support for the Christian Women of Angola with their project of creating fabric with scripture verses, then making the clothing to wear as a means of spreading God’s word. What a unique idea! And our Massachusetts women came through enthusiastically with a total gift of \$4,036.30. Karen Smith at the “Africa Desk” of International Ministries (IM) will see that it reaches its destination. Thank you to Rev. Ruth Harvey, first IM Special Assistant to Angola in almost 100 years, for offering her gifts to bring a personal message and thereby encourage support for the project by so many individuals and groups.

With our AB Women’s Ministries of MA Fall Meeting on September 25, 2021, we embark on a new state project for 2021/2022: Rizpah’s Children. National Ministries is a partner organization which identifies the needs of impoverished children in our country, making connections with other partner organizations to provide services and ministries that would help the children and their families. You will find the Biblical reference to Rizpah in 2 Samuel 21:1-10.

Support of the State Project is one of the Eight Steps of Giving that we American Baptist women of Massachusetts have taken on to provide financial assistance to 8 different ministry foci. The results of the 2020-21 Eight Steps of Giving are as follows:

8 Steps of Giving 2020-21 Results

Scholarship Fund	\$147.37
Camp Mission	\$137.38
State Project (Women of Angola)	\$347.41
State Support for ABWM	\$163.38
AB GIRLS	\$157.38
Friendship Fund	\$137.38
Women & Girls Mission Fund	\$157.38
plus contributions to a Partnering Ministry (MBMM primarily)	

While all these ministries are important, I want to particularly encourage the State Support for AB Women’s Ministries of MA. As you know, there are no dues to belong to AB Women’s Ministries of MA, and this State Support is critical for providing the necessary funds for speakers, musicians, and materials for our events, as well as the expenses incurred for publishing and distributing (via mail when necessary) the newsletter, WOMEN ALIVE. Not having enough funds means the event cost to the individual is increased.

One does not have to give to all the Eight Steps of Giving, although that would earn a certificate of merit for the individual or group; nor does one have to give beyond your means to each ministry. When you see the form for the Eight Steps of Giving 2022, please prayerfully consider where you might offer your support...in any amount.

Thank you. I hope we may see one another in person before too long. Meanwhile, stay safe and well!



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Coordinator of Mission and Service

Rizpah's Children is a growing national strategic network of organizations whose mission and vision demonstrate a passion around childhood poverty. Connected as partners by American Baptist Home Mission Societies (ABHMS), network members seek to radically improve the wellness of children physically, emotionally, spiritually, and educationally through long-term, measurable justice-related ministries.



Named for the Bible's Rizpah—a woman who kept the slain bodies of seven children safe from birds and beasts for months on a mountaintop (2 Samuel 21:1-10)—Rizpah's Children seeks to exponentially increase the impact of its members' ministries, based on the foundational belief that more can be accomplished collectively than each organization could achieve alone.

Rizpah's Children partners identify the needs of impoverished children in their communities, and then connect various organizations to provide wraparound services and ministries that bring God's healing love to not only the children but also their families.

While these agencies and organizations operate independently of each other, they collaborate through the network in communications, promotion, strategizing, practice, and funding. ABHMS walks alongside Rizpah's Children partners by:

- **connecting** faith-based, educational, governmental, grassroots and business organizations as an amplified voice to bring awareness to the problem of childhood poverty; to allow those embarking on similar goals to share ideas, work processes and successes; and to shine a light on efforts that can be emulated as models elsewhere in the nation; and
- **cultivating** the partner relationship through a national platform that provides forums for sharing knowledge; leading webinars; participating in continuing education programs; writing for national publications, such as The Christian Citizen; offering workshops at national gatherings; and pursuing funding opportunities.

By connecting and cultivating, Rizpah's Children seeks to radically **change** the condition of children in poverty nationally through justice-related efforts. (*Information obtained from <https://abhms.org>.*)

Rizpah's Children is our 2021-2022 State Project. Donations may be sent to Marilyn Glover at 40 East Boarder Road, Malden, MA 02148.

Jennifer Sten-Cromack
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Coordinator of AB GIRLS

Hi! My name is Becca, and I am very glad to join the AB Women's Ministries! I will be helping to lead the AB GIRLS. I am very excited to be a part of this ministry.

I spent some years when I was young doing mission work with a Christian camp in Romania and saw how impactful being involved in service work and being surrounded by a community of givers at a young age can be. I am a member of First Calvary Baptist Church in North Andover, and I grew up attending, and then working at Grotonwood and Oceanwood. There again, I felt the impact of having a community

to lift you up, and a retreat where I could get to know God better. I am so glad to be a part of this group and hopeful that I can give some of the wonderful things that I have received in my life back to the AB girls.

I am so glad to have a chance to be a part of such a giving and thoughtful group of women. I am excited to have a lot of fun with the AB girls and am hopeful that we can continue to grow the community and help the girls grow in their faith!



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Other News

AB Women's Ministries Judson Association

Several churches were represented at the Judson Women Toy Harvest held on Saturday, November 13, 2021, at the First Baptist Church in Medford. The women enjoyed meeting in person this year, and it was a wonderful morning of reconnecting and sharing updates and ideas from the different churches. Everyone enjoyed a delicious breakfast prepared by the First Baptist Church ladies and then learned about the Medford Family Life Center, an organization that the Medford First Baptist Church has been involved with for many years. The women then watched a video message from Chaplain Pierce VanDunk from the Middlesex House of Correction in Billerica. They learned about the many opportunities of special programs for the people who are incarcerated at the prison and how the gifts that we and others donate, are distributed to the inmates' families throughout the month of December.



The congregations of the Judson churches were very generous and donated a large amount of toys and gift cards for the children of families that participate in the Medford Family Life Center and the children of inmates at the Middlesex House of Correction.

Everyone enjoyed being together and learning about the two groups that received the donations. Pastor VanDunk invited our group to participate in the wrapping of the gifts going to the Middlesex House of Correction and several members were able to help with this project.

The Judson Women hope to be able to meet in person for their annual meeting in May.

Marilyn Glover, Pat Fish, and Beverly Mattatall
Judson Association Officers

Beloved Community Ministry

In the previous newsletter you learned that American Baptist Women's Ministries of MA was awarded a New Baptist Covenant Grant initiating new community building opportunities as part of their Building Beloved Community Ministry. The requirement of the grant has been fulfilled, but we chose to continue to gather as a group to learn, pray, and determine what our next steps will be in building the Beloved Community in Massachusetts.

Jesus said, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (John 13:34-35)

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "Our goal is to create a beloved community, and this will require a qualitative **change** in our souls as well as a quantitative change in our lives." Well then how do we "create a beloved community" in today's world?"

To be in the world and not of the world we need to be **changed/transformed** (Romans 12:2). So, we decided we should Study the Word first. Some suggestions were

Acts 11:1-18
the book of Ruth

John 13:31-35
the book of Esther

Romans 12:1-17

In addition to studying the Word, we decided to do a fun project. Shortly, we will have a Blog with recipes from a variety of cultures. Stay tuned!

We invite and encourage you to study the Word along with us. Share your thoughts on the AB Women's Ministries of MA Facebook page or email us at abwmass@gmail.com.

Bonnie Sestito, Co-leader
Beloved Community Ministry in MA

Save the Date for Spiritual Retreat Day

Lord Be Glorified



"If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen." (1 Peter 4:11)

March 12, 2022
9 AM – 3 PM

First Baptist Church in Needham
858 Great Plain Ave.
Needham, MA 02492

For more information which is forthcoming, visit www.abwomensministriesma.org.

National News

Empowering Seniors Webinar

Thursday, February 17, 2022 at 8:00 PM EDT

Are you taking care of a senior citizen? Are you looking into selecting senior care? If so, attend our Empowering Seniors Webinar to hear a panel of experts share how to care for seniors, senior self-care tips, and information on selecting senior care.

Identifying and Managing Bullying Behavior

Thursday, March 3, 2022 at 8:00 PM EDT

This interactive webinar will help parents identify if their child is being bullied or if their child exhibits bullying behavior towards others. Identification is the first step; now, what to do? We will discuss ways to manage the behavior and where to go for help. We will spend time understanding how bullying behavior is developed and the fact that it is a BEHAVIOR, not a person. How do we help children develop empathy and coping skills to avoid bullying behavior? How do we teach children who are being bullied to stand up to the person bullying them? Participants will be provided with resources to increase their understanding further and support any necessary follow-up.

Sustaining Sisterhood

Thursday, March 17, 2022 at 8:00 PM EDT

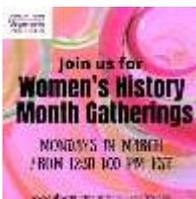
Join us as we explore a few of the many biblical texts from Hebrew scripture and the New Testament that point to the power of sisterhood in resistance, lament, support, shared theologizing, and worship, centering on those typically marginalized. How might your own sacred stories from lived experience offer a starting place for doing theology, as they emerge from and lead to committed action and struggle with and for children and others on the margin? Listening to our stories as women child advocates reveals the need for sustaining sisterhood and spiritual renewal to resist, reimagine, and respond to changes to create new visions, relationships, strategies, and resources for a more just future. Consider how retreats and other gatherings of women could advance the children's movement by forging supportive, authentic, and trustworthy sisterhood across difference, affirming a collective vision for the work we do, and sustaining and strengthening each other to persist in that calling.

Let the Walls Fall Down Virtual Tea

Saturday, March 26, 2022 at 2:00 PM EDT

Join us for the best tea party hat contest, trivia, special music, and more. Prizes include program registration for ABWM's 2022 Women and Girls Conference.

For more information or to register visit www.abwomensministries.org/events



During Women's History month, AB Women's Ministries curates a gathering every Monday during March. We hope you will join us in celebrating Women's History Month!

More information will be available soon!

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