

OUR **LOVE** OFFERING TO THE WORLD: A Letter from Your World Relief Officer

Dear American Baptist Leaders,

Each year, as your donations join with those of other American Baptist congregations across the United States and Puerto Rico, One Great Hour of Sharing becomes **OUR LOVE OFFERING TO THE WORLD!**

Is the practice of receiving “love offerings” familiar to your church? You might be familiar with love offerings, like when your congregation receives an offering to show appreciation for a beloved pastor, a guest preacher, or special speaker; to support a specific occasion, like an anniversary or commemoration; or, to support a particular church or community program, or project. And each year you receive OGHS, you are indeed taking up a **LOVE OFFERING**—one that is shared around the world!

OGHS has been an offering of love to the world for over 77 years. Each year you are invited to give for the sake of sisters and brothers around the globe. Our collective giving to OGHS shows up around the world in tangible acts of love, compassion, and care:

- comfort and hands to help rebuild after natural disasters;
- shelter, nourishment, and safety in places where war rages and poverty prevails;
- tools and expertise to establish sustainable agriculture, clean water, and livelihoods; and
- advocacy for the dignity of those who are marginalized and most vulnerable.

Simply put, OGHS shows up when immediate and long-term help is needed. We may never personally witness the results of our help—but that’s what a love offering is: giving from the heart, believing that our gifts make a difference, trusting that our gifts bear hope and light and love in the lives of those to whom we are connected.

We give generously for the sake of others. We give cheerfully because we care. We give enthusiastically because we love. We give to OGHS—**OUR LOVE OFFERING TO THE WORLD!**



In grateful partnership,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lisa Rothenberger-Winter".

Lisa Rothenberger-Winter
World Relief Officer

**“Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”
(2 Corinthians 9:7, NIV)**

Guide to Your Promotional Materials

Your box of resources includes the following items.

If you need additional quantities, call Lara McQue at 610-768-2011 or email Lmcque@internationalministries.org



2026 Planning and Resource Guide

Inside you will find great content to help you promote the offering. Each page is perforated to be removed and distributed to those who can help build enthusiasm for the offering—the pastor, worship team, teachers, etc.

Video

The 2026 video is “Our Love Offering to the World.” Runtime is 1:33. The video can be found at www.abc-oghs.org.

One Great Hour of Sharing Poster (available in English and Spanish)

Create a prominent display with the poster. Call attention to the poster each week through announcements in worship and Sunday school hours and in newsletters.

Printed Bulletin Insert

Use this fold-over bulletin insert as an educational resource in worship, in your newsletter, and at meals and meetings.

Offering Envelopes (available in English & Spanish)

Distribute envelopes generously. Include them in a letter from your pastor to all members and friends, in pews and Sunday bulletins. Put envelopes in several places to make it easy for people to give when it is most convenient.

Promotion Checklist

Thanks for saying “Yes!” to coordinating the One Great Hour of Sharing offering for your congregation.

Here are some tips that we hope are helpful to you.

PREPARE! (During April/May)

Review all promotion resources; order additional quantities if needed by calling Lara McQue at 610-768-2011 or emailing Lmcque@internationalministries.org.

- Involve others! Share the individual resources found in the 2026 Planning and Resource Guide with the pastor, the worship team, teachers, etc. as appropriate.
- Choose a leadership team if you need one.
- With your leadership team, set a realistic, but challenging, offering goal. Challenge your congregation to reflect on 2 Corinthians 9:7
- Set a date(s) when you will receive the offering. Put this date on your church calendar.
- Be creative! Plan promotional activities to involve people of all ages. Ask teachers to use the materials in the weeks leading up to the offering.
- Familiarize yourself with each of the promotional pieces:
 - 2026 Planning and Resource Guide
 - One new video “Our Love Offering to the World” (Runtime of 1:33) can be found at www.abc-oghs.org
 - Poster
 - Printed bulletin inserts
 - Offering envelopes

EDUCATE AND PROCLAIM! (During April/May)

- Know what the offering is and what it provides. Yes, OGHS is a tangible way American Baptists provide for the human needs of our world. The offering provides:
 - **Emergency relief** available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for urgent or acute needs brought about by disasters of natural or human origin;
 - **Development projects** focused on meeting chronic human need by enabling individuals or groups to establish or maintain a more adequate quality of life; and
 - **Ministries to displaced persons** focused on holistic ministry to immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants—those within the U.S. and around the world who find themselves someplace other than what they have known to be home.
- Include announcements and mission stories in your newsletter.
- Make sure offering envelopes are in the pew racks each week.
- Display the offering poster in a prominent place. Set up a visual display to track the offering. Update your display each week.
- Enclose bulletin inserts in weekly bulletins. Create additional bulletin inserts by photocopying the Mission Stories found in this guide.





WORSHIP! (During June)

- Personalize the offering with a testimony from a church member or guest about why giving to this offering is important to them. Many people have been personally impacted by natural disasters—hurricanes, fires, mudslides, etc. Others have personal testimonies about helping to resettle refugees in their community—invite them to share.
- Read Mission Stories during worship services as “Mission Moments.”
- Have a One Great Hour of Sharing sermon and Children’s Moment prior to the week you receive the offering.
- Use the worship resources during worship services and in small groups.

CELEBRATE! (During June)

- Announce to the congregation the result of their gifts and celebrate their generosity. Offer thanks and announce the offering total in your newsletter and worship bulletin. (If you did not meet your goal, celebrate what you have received and announce that you have set aside one or two more Sundays for people to give.)

FOLLOW-UP

- Keep a record of promotional activities and what worked well for your church. Archive resources for future years.
- Forward offering receipts to either your Regional Office or the ABCUSA, P.O. Box 851, Valley Forge, PA 19482.**

Meet Your World Relief Committee

Have you ever wondered how the gifts that you give to the One Great Hour of Sharing offering get to the places where they are put to work? This is the responsibility of the World Relief Committee (“Committee”). The Committee’s purpose is to support, enable, and encourage emergency relief and disaster rehabilitation, development assistance, and ministry to displaced persons. The source of funds for this work is the gifts you give to the One Great Hour of Sharing annual offering.

The Committee is made up of people from different parts of our American Baptist life:

- 7 voting members elected as follows:
 - 2 from the Board of Directors of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society (International Ministries);
 - 2 from the Board of Directors of the American Baptist Home Mission Societies;
 - 2 from the Board of General Ministries; and
 - 1 from the Executive Committee of the American Baptist Women’s Ministries.
- 4 staff members: a representative from the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society (International Ministries), the American Baptist Home Mission Societies, the American Baptist Churches USA, and the American Baptist Women’s Ministries.
- The World Relief Officer serves as staff to the committee.

The Committee meets two times a year. Each individual project proposal is submitted via a completed application that is presented by the appropriate staff representative and then considered by the Committee. A formal vote is taken on each application. Although only the voting members vote on final decisions, all members can give input on each of the grant applications prior to the decision being made. The approval process is followed by a time of prayer for the partners who will receive the funding and for the people whose lives will be made better in some way by the project.

Your committee members are as follows:

Rev. Dr. Tamara Scott (Chair), Kalamazoo, MI

Rev. Yamina Apolaris, Caguas, PR

Mr. Roger Chamberlain, Fairfield, OH

Rev. Corey Fields, Wilmington, DE

Mrs. Miriam Noyes, Keizer, OR

Mrs. Lovena Van Haften, Pella, IA

Rev. Dwayne T. Williams, Huron, SD



Did You Know?



Photo: Public Domain, trumanlibrary.gov

Harry S. Truman, 33rd U.S. President

The One Great Hour of Sharing offering began seventy-seven years ago in response to the devastation of World War II. On Saturday evening, March 26, 1949, a national broadcast titled "One Great Hour" featured a remarkable assembly of national leaders and celebrities. The 33rd U.S. President, Harry S. Truman's, radio address during the broadcast included the following:

"There are thousands of children in foreign lands today who have no memory of their parents, no knowledge of the meaning of the words "home" and "family," and who have forgotten what it feels like to have enough to eat. There are hopeless thousands who wander among the shattered towns seeking a place to rest, seeking security and a chance to begin their lives anew. There are many who pray to God only in secret, fearing persecution if they profess their beliefs openly.

It is hard for us to comprehend grief and distress such as this because we in America are so much more fortunate. Our country has been blessed with material riches. Our homes are secure. We can go to our churches and worship God as we desire.

We know that we enjoy these great blessings not because of any special merit on our part, but because of the bounty of God. It is to His Providence that we owe the richness of our country and our heritage of freedom. Since these good things come to us from Him, we know that we must use them for the good of others in accordance with His will."

The broadcast concluded by asking Americans to give generously the next morning in their churches. More than 75,000 churches responded.

Today, One Great Hour of Sharing serves people in over 80 countries around the world. Sponsored by five Christian U.S. denominations and Church World Service, One Great Hour of Sharing makes sure that we can respond to needs as soon as they happen and that tens of thousands of people receive support for ongoing relief, rehabilitation, and development.

The World Relief Committee of the American Baptist Board of General Ministries reviews each development project request funded by the One Great Hour of Sharing offering received from American Baptists. Gifts reach the ministries and people in need through a network of regional and international partnerships with the following:

American Baptist Foreign Mission Society (International Ministries)

American Baptist Home Mission Societies

Baptist World Aid - the compassionate arm of the Baptist World Alliance, supporting three areas of ministry: relief, development, and support of national partners.

Church World Service - Founded in 1946, Church World Service is a relief, development, and refugee assistance ministry. Church World Service transforms communities around the globe through just and sustainable responses to hunger, poverty, displacement, and disaster.

Theme Development and Scriptural Exegesis: OUR LOVE OFFERING TO THE WORLD

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 9:7 [NIV]

“Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”

In 2 Corinthians 8-9, the Apostle Paul lays out his stewardship campaign to gather an offering to be sent to the Christian church in Jerusalem. Commonly known as “the collection for the saints,” the offering occupies a significant place in Paul’s missionary work.

Paul’s calling was to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ. He preached generosity and hospitality. He brought Jewish and Gentile believers into one community, despite their differences of nationality, tribal affiliation, and economic standing. He encouraged unity, love, compassion, and service.

Paul’s stewardship campaign called for members to set aside money each week, above and beyond their regular tithes and offerings, to help Christians in Jerusalem. The offering was a gift, with no strings attached, no expectation of repayment or reward, and no ulterior motives. This collection was a love offering, embodying the word of Jesus:

“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, NIV)

Members of the early church took seriously the command to love God and neighbor. The Apostle’s focus on the collection highlights the hallmarks of community life that God and Jesus emphasized: care of the poor and vulnerable; use of resources to benefit those who need help; loving one’s neighbor; caring for the environment; and advocating for social justice so all can live and thrive. Communities grounded in Jesus’ sacrificial life and death embody radical generosity, often pooling their resources for their common good (see Acts 2:44-47).

Paul reminds us that **how** we give is as important as **what** we give. We give cheerfully, gladly, unselfishly, and generously as God has given to us. We live our lives, transformed by God’s grace, with open hearts and hands.

Today we live in a world where people are hurting, resources are concentrated in the hands of fewer people, and compassion is diminishing. This world needs love in ways that matter and make a difference for the better. We are asked to give, even as needs grow.

We are invited to give, not because our pockets are overflowing, or to keep up with the Joneses, or because we are shamed into giving. Rather, we remember God’s sacrificial love for us that keeps blessing us with resources we can share.

We give because our hearts are touched as we witness God at work in ourselves, in one another and throughout the world. Our response to God’s love for us is to love others, near and far. We are agents of grace when we choose to give, trusting that God’s Kingdom is being built through us and among us.

We cannot be in all of the places where our love offering will eventually go, but our gifts will bless the world far beyond what we can imagine.

OGHS is your – our –  LOVE OFFERING to and for the world.

Let us share generously and cheerfully.

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The term “**LOVE OFFERING**” may not be a familiar one in your tradition. A **LOVE OFFERING** is a voluntary monetary gift: to show appreciation for a beloved pastor, a guest preacher, or special speaker; to support a specific occasion, like an anniversary or commemoration; or, to support a particular church or community program, or project. The **LOVE OFFERING** is separate from one’s regular tithe and giving and is often collected on special days or occasions.¹



photo: @disciplephoto

¹ <http://www.theafricanamericanlectionary.org/PopupCulturalAid.asp?LRID=29>, January 10, 2025.