



2020 Annual Donor Report

THE UPPER ROOM



The Upper Room invites people to create daily life with God.





From the Executive Director

“For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

— Ephesians 2:10

One of the most fascinating features of God’s creation is its rhythm – this reassuring pattern of seasons, where we can always expect the snow to melt and spring life to emerge. The pandemic has felt like a long winter to me, where folks stay in, hunker down, and wait for it to pass. Like you, I’m ready for this season of sickness and social isolation to end so I can gather with family and friends, travel, go back to church, and move around freely. With vaccines being distributed more widely, I can see a brighter tomorrow.

Much has happened during this last trip around the sun, especially at The Upper Room. Since the onset of COVID, we have helped thousands of pastors provide access to the devotional guide when churches were unable to gather. We’ve ramped up our online resources, including Morning Prayer on Facebook and free eCourses, to keep people connected. Our prayer center volunteers offered comfort, responding to every concern posted on The Upper Room Prayer Wall. Our flagship programs, Emmaus Ministries and The Academy for Spiritual Formation, provided opportunities for their communities and groups to connect online while researching and testing new ways to offer variations of their programs. And we named a new publisher, Rev. Kimberly Orr, a pastor from Houston with a heart for God’s people. Kimberly will serve as our spiritual and executive leader. She will be leading in the most challenging of situations, embracing change while discerning the Spirit’s invitation to explore new possibilities. It’s a crucial position during this pivotal time.

In my first conversation with Kimberly (via Zoom), I was pleased to tell her about the generosity of our donors and their faithfulness to our ministry. And that despite the challenges, we can report yet another record-breaking giving year, where 9,700 donors contributed nearly \$1 million dollars to help people experience the love and grace of God. Your confidence in us gives our staff great encouragement and hope. We can indeed bear fruit in these trying days—and beyond in a post-pandemic world. New life awaits. New possibilities are ours. We have a fresh start to break new ground. Join us in yet another season of good ministry and outreach.

With appreciation,



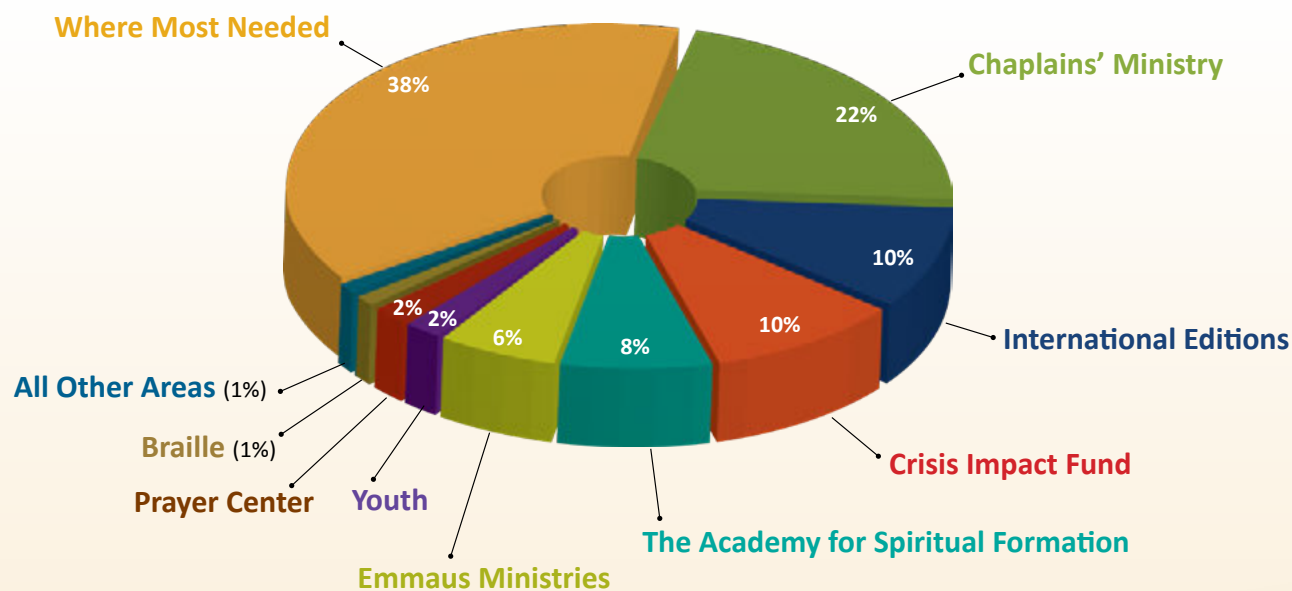
Sherry Elliott

Executive Director
of Administration,
Interpretation,
and Development



Donor Revenue for 2020

Total raised in 2020: **\$972,220**



100% of every donated dollar goes directly to supporting our ministries. The cost of fundraising efforts are covered by our administration budget.



Donor Revenue for 2020



Chaplains' Ministry: \$210,176

The Chaplains' Ministry Fund provides copies of *The Upper Room* daily devotional for military and prison chaplains to use in their ministry with the people they serve. Because of the generosity of donors, the ministry recently expanded to include 135 VA hospital chaplains.

Rich in history and connection, the Chaplains' Ministry started in the wake of World War II when staff began to work with military chaplains to provide copies of *The Upper Room* to our armed forces. Today, The Upper Room distributes more than 270,000 copies of the daily devotional to military, VA hospital, and prison chaplains.



The Upper Room is helping our veterans answer difficult questions such as, *What is the meaning and purpose of my life? Why does evil exist? Has God abandoned me?*

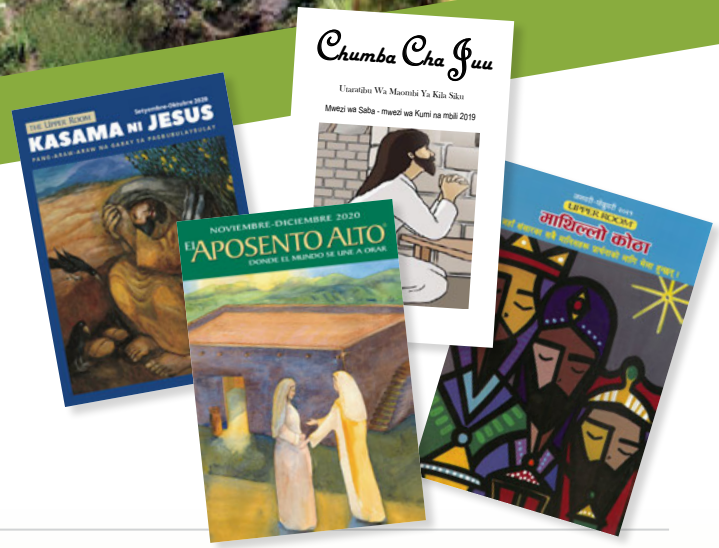
—VA Hospital Chaplain





Donor Revenue for 2020

International Editions of *The Upper Room*: \$96,648



The Upper Room daily devotional is available today in 37 languages and can be found in more than **100 countries**. This fund supports our international publishing coordinators in the printing, production, and distribution of many of the language editions. For our global readers, devotional material in their native tongue is hard to come by and the daily devotional guide is considered a treasured resource.

The Upper Room daily devotional is available in these languages.

Armenian	Bulgarian	Estonian	Hungarian	Japanese	Nepali	Russian	Tamil
Batak/	Burmese	French	Iban/English	Kannada	Norwegian	Sinhala	Telugu
Indonesian	Catalan	Greek	Ilokano	Kiswahili	Odia	Spanish	Thai
British sign language	Chinese	Gujarati	Indonesian	Korean	Polish	Swedish	Urdu
	English	Hindi	Italian	Malayalam	Portuguese	Tagalog	



Having the Kiswahili edition of *“The Upper Room* in the eastern Congo . . . is a great ministry opportunity for our episcopal area.”

—Judith Osanga Yanga, Director of Communications for the East Congo UMC Publishing Team



Donor Revenue for 2020

The Academy for Spiritual Formation: **\$72,778**

Due to the pandemic, most of the 2020 Academy retreats were cancelled or postponed, leading to a significant reduction in revenue to support the ministry. As a result, fundraising initiatives focused on raising support for The Academy's daily operations budget. In 2020, this fund allowed The Academy staff to explore, test, and create new online and hybrid models and to offer day apart retreats in The Academy rhythm. Having a healthy operational fund will also ensure that in-person Academies will be able to resume quickly once it is safe to gather in person again. The **Academy general fund** raised **\$49,588**.



The Academy
for spiritual formation*

The Academy Scholarship Fund raised **\$17,855** and supports participants who attend a Two-Year Academy or the new one-year online Academy model. Half of all Two-Year Academy participants require scholarship assistance.

The John Mogabgab Leadership Endowment Fund raised **\$5,335**. It supports the recruitment and retainment of the best faculty possible and serves as a permanent fund to generate annual returns to sustain the ministry.



“ I enjoyed being back in a setting that followed the ASF ‘formula’ of worship, teaching, reflection, discussion. I felt like I was home, and I would encourage you to do many more of these programs. They really work, they translate well to Zoom, and they are a balm in these fraught days.”

—Rebecca Copeland, Day Apart Retreat participant



Donor Revenue for 2020

Emmaus Ministries: \$61,060

More than 500 Emmaus weekend events were cancelled due to COVID-19, thus drastically reducing income revenue to Emmaus Ministries, which depends on community fees, the sales of program materials, and donations for its operational income. As a result, Emmaus Ministries depended more than ever on donations. **Emmaus Ministries: Making a World of Difference**, a fundraising initiative, aimed to raise \$100,000 in 100 days for the **Fourth Day Fund**, the operations budget. In 2020, this fund supported the work of Emmaus Ministries to host a first-ever global Gathering and to explore, design, and test online models of weekend retreats in The Walk to Emmaus tradition. The **Fourth Day Fund** raised **\$45,884**.

The GIFT Fund for Emmaus Ministries raised **\$12,638**. This fund supports emerging Emmaus Ministries communities and their regional representatives.

The Walk to Emmaus Fund raised **\$1,770**, and the **Chrysalis** fund raised **\$768**. Both funds are designated for their respective program ministry.



“Through this event, I realized that despite the COVID-19 pandemic, God is still with us and he is still working.”

— Rev. Kim Hyo Seung, International Virtual Gathering participant



Donor Revenue for 2020

The Crisis Impact Fund: **\$94,903**

The Crisis Impact Fund is designed to help The Upper Room respond quickly and with relevance to urgent social needs and other crises. In 2020 The Upper Room helped people connect during social isolation and to find spiritual wellness during our two crises: COVID-19 (globally) and systematic racism (nationally). Money raised funded the following initiatives: **Morning Prayer on Facebook**, free eCourses and **resources on spiritual wellness during the pandemic**, monthly sabbath time for spiritual renewal for pastors and church leaders, **resources on the spiritual work of overcoming racism**, and a call-in phone meditation for visually-impaired readers when the Braille edition printer temporarily shut down. Going forward, this fund will help The Upper Room to be ready to respond to future needs and crises.



“The role of the prophet is twofold: one, to speak with power and two, to speak to power. This work on anti-racism does both of those things. The videos, writings, and resources are powerful representations of what grace and justice sound like. . . . This work is needed.”

—Rev. Ron Bell, lead pastor at Camphor Memorial UMC



Donor Revenue for 2020

Braille: \$14,135

For the first time since its inception in 1940, the Braille edition of *The Upper Room* daily devotional guide was fully funded. A truly donor-sponsored ministry, copies are sent free-of-charge to those who request the Braille edition. In 2020, there were 450 recipients. At \$5 per copy per issue, the Braille edition is The Upper Room's most expensive edition to produce. When the Braille printer closed temporarily before completing the May/June 2020 issue, Upper Room staff member, Wendi Bolton, called our Braille readers to offer options about how to receive each day's meditation, including a call-in phone recording, which too was sponsored by donors.

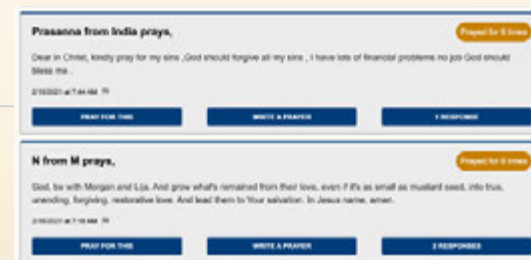


“Ms. Smith was very thankful that I called and told me how much she enjoyed our devotional. She had a lot of health issues and said her church and *The Upper Room* were her only connection to the outside world.”

—Wendi Bolton, The Upper Room's Senior Coordinator of Hospitality and Service

Prayer Center: \$17,457

Thousands of people each month post prayers on the donor-sponsored prayer wall, and hundreds of volunteers pray for these people each day. An estimated 94,399 prayer requests were posted on the prayer wall in 2020. We are especially grateful for The United Methodist Men who have sponsored The Upper Room Prayer Center since its beginning in 1978.





Donor Revenue for 2020

The Stephen Bryant Prayer and Spiritual Formation Fund: **\$5,160**

Upon the retirement of The Upper Room’s beloved publisher, Rev. Stephen D. Bryant, The Upper Room staff and board of directors established a new fund in his honor. Tapping into Steve’s deep passion for the spiritual health of clergy and spiritual leaders, **The Stephen Bryant Prayer and Spiritual Formation Fund** will provide financial support in creating virtual events (and in-person events, when safe) designed for pastors and church leaders to support their life with God as leaders in faith communities. This fund will eventually help us to create a library of digital content to support the lifelong journey of spiritual formation for church leaders.



Rev. Steve Bryant



“I was happy to give to the newly created Stephen Bryant Prayer and Spiritual Formation Fund as a way, not only to honor Steve Bryant’s leadership at The Upper Room for many years, but also to ‘pay it forward.’ I have been blessed with life-giving experiences and insights through Upper Room publications, books, and programs. I want many other people to benefit from the rich spiritual resources that The Upper Room offers — for many years to come.”

—Robin Pippin, donor and retired employee of The Upper Room



Donor Revenue for 2020

All Other Areas: **\$29,768**

Includes funding for **Youth, Web Ministries, The Chapel,** and **Africa Upper Room.**

Where Most Needed: **\$370,135**

Donations, including bequests, not given to a particular ministry are placed in the “Where Most Needed” fund. In addition, donors can give to this designation, which serves as a “general fund” for The Upper Room’s ministries. Donations designated as “Where Most Needed” are made available for ministries that need additional funding to accomplish their ministry goals. Oftentimes, this allows a ministry area to become fully funded when it falls short of budget needs. Ministries that benefited from this fund because of 2020 giving include: **Africa Upper Room, The Upper Room Prayer Center,** and the operating budgets of **Emmaus Ministries** and **The Academy for Spiritual Formation.**



“The Upper Room daily devotional has touched my life and the lives of others with whom I have shared it. Giving to this fund provides me joy in knowing that others will have the same opportunity to experience God’s transforming love.”

—Debbie Boe, donor and The Upper Room’s Customer Relationship Manager



Your Impact in 2020

The **Tagalog edition** of *The Upper Room* daily devotional was revised after being out of print for more than 13 years. The daily devotional is now available in **37 languages**, in more than **100 countries**, reaching **4 million readers** globally.

34% increase in subscriptions to the digital version of the daily devotional.

2 million people reached each month through The Upper Room website and social media.

497 military, VA hospital, and prison chaplains supported by The Upper Room Chaplains' Ministry. More than **270,000 copies** per year are sent to these chaplains.

More than **58,734** people made **225,130** visits to The Upper Room Prayer Wall.

Nearly **2,000** people from **35 countries** registered to attend Emmaus Ministries' International Virtual Gathering. Leadership and musicians came from various countries. Simultaneous translation occurred in Korean, Mandarin, and Spanish.

More than **200 people** attended the two-session Emmaus Ministries online event in Asia. People came from Hong Kong, Malaysia, South Korea, Singapore, the Philippines, and Taiwan.

630 people attended *Freedom from Worry*, the first eCourse offered by The Upper Room to help people adjust to the pandemic. This eCourse was offered free-of-charge, thanks to donor gifts.

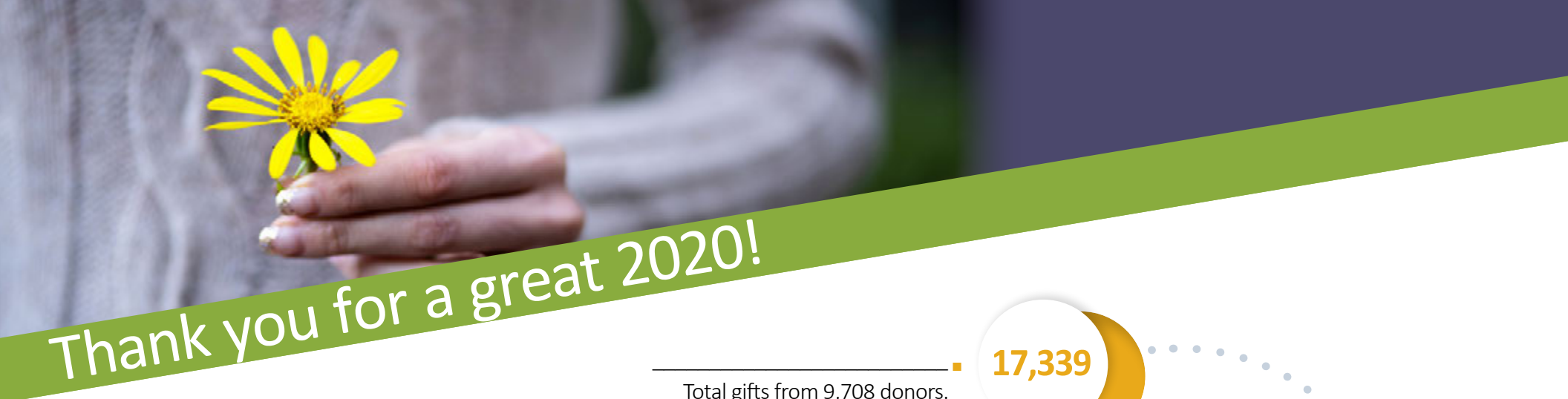
1,030 people attended one of the two Academy Recommends eCourses. Thanks to donor gifts, one was offered free-of-charge and the other was discounted.

186 people attended one of The Academy for Spiritual Formation's three Day Apart Retreats. **90** of them were new to The Academy.

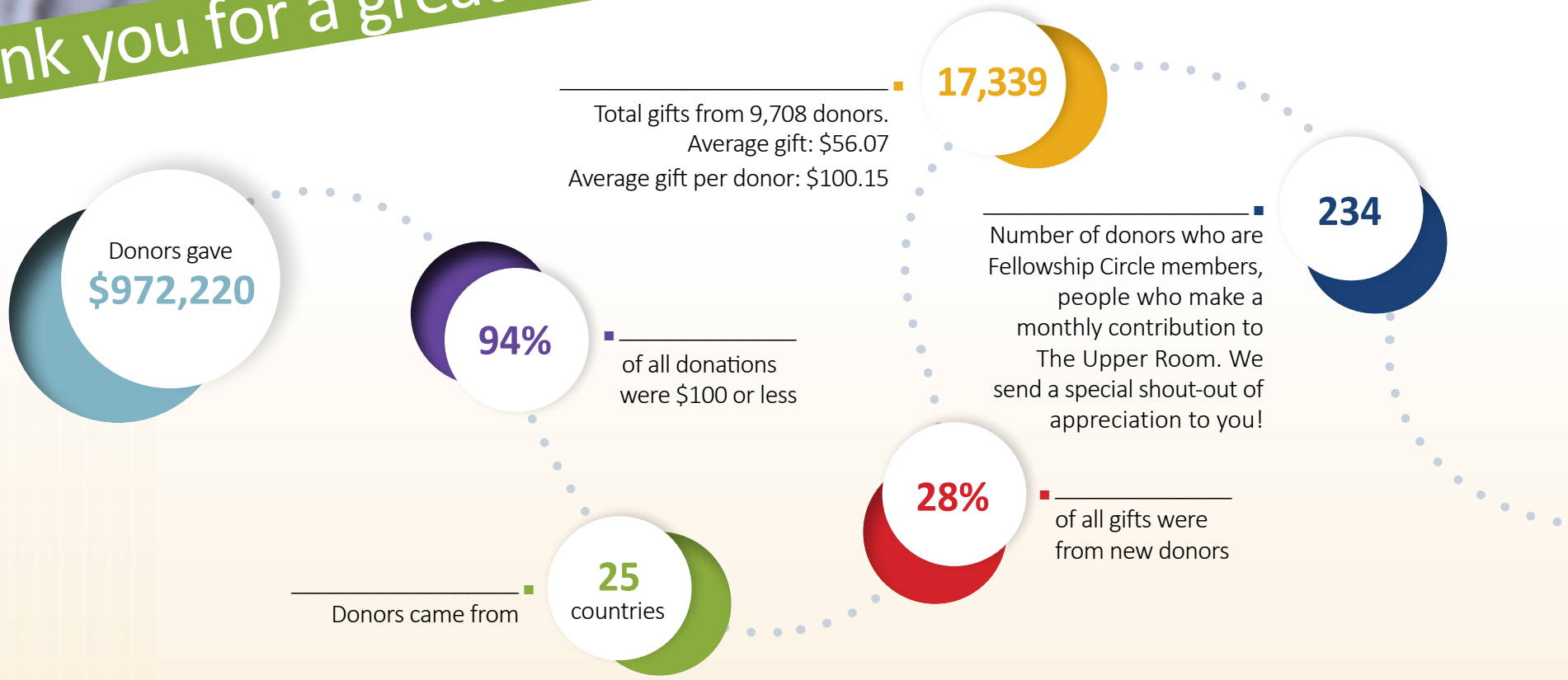
To foster spiritual wellness during a turbulent year, The Academy for Spiritual Formation ramped up its podcasts. It continues to be ranked as a **Top 15 Spiritual Podcast**.

6,266 people per video was the average reach for Chapel Live and A Moment of Prayer, two weekly services offered via Facebook Live.

14 videos were created for the series "The Spiritual Work of Overcoming Racism."



Thank you for a great 2020!



Legacy Gifts: We would like to extend a special word of gratitude for the two legacy gifts we received. Lucy Ellen Haywood from Ohio and William and Jean Fishwick from New Jersey both gave estate gifts to the general fund.



Join us!

Ways to Become More Involved

Join the Fellowship Circle

The Fellowship Circle is a giving circle of friends, who make monthly contributions to The Upper Room. By selecting “recurring gift” on the donation form, you can set up an ongoing monthly gift of any amount and to any fund by using your bank account or credit or debit card. Contact Amy Skerratt, Donor Relations Manager, for more details. **877-899-2781 ext. 7212**



Be a Legacy Giver

Planned giving, bequests, or endowments can make an impact for generations to come. For more information, please contact Amy Skerratt, Donor Relations Manager. **877-899-2781 ext. 7212**

Give a Tribute Gift

Any gift may be made in honor of or in memory of a loved one. If you provide us with the contact information, a tribute card can be mailed on your behalf.

Can Your Donation Be Matched?

Many companies match donations to The Upper Room when given by their employee. Please check with the Human Resources department at your employment to see if your company matches charitable contributions.

Make an In-kind Gift

If you are interested in donating an in-kind gift that is mission-aligned with our ministry, please contact Sherry Elliott, Executive Director of Administration, Interpretation, and Development. **877-899-2781 ext. 7520**

The Upper Room’s EIN# is 62-0475840.



Who We Are

Mission Statement

The Upper Room invites people to create daily life with God.

Vision

To foster an international community of people and congregations who are seeking God, building a vision of new life in Christ, nurturing one another by sharing experiences of God's love and guidance, and encouraging one another in Christian action to transform the world.

Core Scriptural Values

- » The Great Commandment – *Matthew 22:37*
- » The Great Commitment – *Matthew 16:24*
- » The Great Requirement – *Micah 6:8*
- » The Great Commission – *Matthew 28:19-20*
- » The Great Redemption – *John 3:16*

Contact Us

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