

Fellowship Focus

Abound in Hope

Sherry Elliott, Executive Director of Administration, Interpretation, and Development

Hope is a strange thing. It comes and goes mysteriously. Some days I have a hard time holding on to it. It drifts away easily if the morning news makes me anxious or the sky turns gray.



When this happens, I lean into my family and friends and pray. It also helps to go to my "happy place" where the world is bright and at peace, and all my loved ones are healthy and happy.

Advent reminds us that we are a people of hope, waiting for the Child of Hope. We remember God's promise that a child will

be born, a son will be given, and his name will be Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6-7). Hope is more than wishful thinking. It means having a strong and confident belief that a situation will change; something good will happen. We will see a promise fulfilled and God's abiding presence in the world.

On the first week of Advent, we light the candle of Hope. It's also called the Prophecy candle to represent Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the other hope-filled prophets who foresaw the coming of a Savior and better days ahead for God's people. The light from this first candle offers me more than a glimmer of hope. Its flame renews my soul and quells my fears. Yes, Advent is about

preparing and waiting; but for me, it is also about remembering God's long history of faithfulness and deep love for us. God gives us the precious gift of hope. And, with hope comes comfort and peace even when the morning news is scary and the sky is gray.

In this newsletter, may you find hope in our reports on the recent Resilience Conference, the Emmaus Ministries Virtual Walk and Challenge, and the Academy for Spiritual Formation events. We celebrate the life and legacy of three of our international partners, and honor our staff working creatively and diligently to lead our publishing and spiritual formation program initiatives.

My prayer for you, our donors who give us such hope and encouragement, is this one from the current issue of *The Upper Room* daily devotional and written by my colleague Evan Young:

All-Present One, may we find a sense of hope and anticipation in the midst of our current realities. May we not lose faith. In this season of Advent encourage and strengthen our faith, and give us eyes to see you! Amen.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. —Romans 15:13, NRSV



Donors Make a Difference

The Upper Room accepts the following gifts with gratitude and thanksgiving and will use them to fulfill our mission.

Edith Deane Estate

The Upper Room received a legacy gift from Edith Deane of Washington, DC. Mrs. Deane's bequest arrived with this scripture:

"God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that . . . you may share abundantly in every good work."

—2 Corinthians 9:7-8, NRSV

Paul Graves Darnall Estate

The Upper Room received its largest gift to date from the estate of Mr. Paul Graves Darnall of Benton, Kentucky. Mr. Darnall was a regular donor until his death in November 2017. He spent his life and career traveling the world and working as an international banker. He was a member of First UMC Benton, Kentucky, and a regular reader of the daily devotional guide.

HIGHLIGHTS OF MINISTRY IMPACT

Emmaus Ministries

Two new virtual offerings were designed and tested this year. They will launch early next year.

- 1 Day Four Restore**, a one-day retreat model designed to refresh the spirit of anyone who has attended a Fourth Day movement event like The Walk to Emmaus, will hold its first retreat on January 29, 2022. Sign-up at <https://na.eventscloud.com/dayfourrestore>.
- 2 Virtual event** (yet to be named), designed in the Emmaus tradition, will start on February 10, 2022. This new model will take place over three consecutive weekends and is for adults, especially those whose location or health concerns might not allow them to attend an in-person offering.

Emmaus Ministries Virtual Walk and Challenge

Emmaus Ministries held various international and regional Gatherings this year and hosted its first-ever **Virtual Walk and Challenge**, Oct. 1–Nov. 12. More than 200 people participated in this challenge that encouraged people to get fit physically and spiritually. Based on walking the distance between Jerusalem and Emmaus (7 miles/14,000 steps), participants earned footprint points for steps and spiritual activities. People walked 10,434 miles and raised \$10,670 with all proceeds going towards Emmaus Ministries' operations fund.

The top-three communities based on footprint points were Southern Maryland, Western New York, and Lagniappe Country.



We are grateful for all who participated.

Braille

The Braille edition



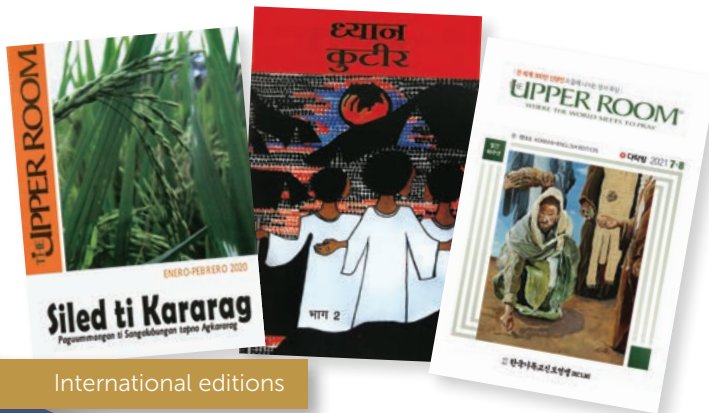
We have received about \$7,000 of the \$15,000 needed to fully fund the braille edition of *The Upper Room*. There are nearly 500 recipients of the braille edition (print and digital).

"I really do enjoy The Upper Room magazine in braille. The devotions are so comforting to me."

—Janice Lynn from Florida, braille reader

If someone you know would like to receive the devotional in braille, please call Customer Service at 1-800-972-0433 to order.

The braille edition is free of charge thanks to the generosity of donors.



International editions

left to right: Ilokono, Hindi, Korean-English

International Editions Update

The 35+ editions of *The Upper Room* continue to reach people in their native language, an invaluable gift especially during this time of pandemic.

We are sad to share that three of our publishing partners died this year from COVID-19 or other illness. Join us in giving thanks for the life and ministry of

Bishop Daniel Arichea, editor of Ilokono edition, Manila, Philippines

Bishop Phillip Masih, editor of Hindi edition, Lucknow, India

Mr. Un-Ok Yu, former editor of the bilingual Korean-English edition and the trilingual Korean-English-Japanese edition

YOUR GENEROSITY

Enables The Upper Room to Help People
Heal from Trauma

The Academy for Spiritual Formation

The Academy has created transformative space online by creating three new virtual programs.

Spiritual Formation in Today's World: A One-Year Online Offering from The Academy for Spiritual Formation wrapped up in November. Fifty-one people participated in this first-ever event in which they met per quarter for three days. Registration is now open for the 2022 year-long event.

Day Apart Retreats : Four were held and more are being planned for 2022.

Spirituality of Resilience within the Hispanic & Latinx Community, the first-ever online six-month Spanish language Academy specifically for the Latinx community, successfully launched on September 18. There are 49 participants, including persons from Venezuela, Argentina, Mexico, and Puerto Rico.



"It was a transformative learning experience. . . . Thank you so much for providing experiences for spiritual development like this one."

—Alma Perez, Tennessee



"As a long-time liturgist, I have always thought of symbols or sacred spaces in chapels or temples. But it was during the Academy . . . that I understood nature as a sacred space."

—Juan Gattinoni, Argentina

See upcoming Academy events at Academy.UpperRoom.org/events.

Reset Retreat Pilot

Working with Rev. Dr. Ron Bell (Saint Paul, MN), The Upper Room is piloting an event called "Reset Retreat" for church leaders. The purpose of "Reset Retreat" is to invite church leaders into a sacred time and space where they can address the unprocessed grief and trauma that ministry can bring. A pilot of this program took place on August 5–7, 2021, in Saint Paul. This event was made possible because of donor gifts to the Crisis Impact Fund.

"Many times, I have come to discover the importance of developing a greater sense of self as a disciple of Jesus Christ; but the work of ministry never gave me that opportunity. This retreat, this time away . . . has helped me to learn more about myself and that journey of discovery."

—Rev. Mark Norman

Resilience Conference

The Upper Room continues to adapt to meet current needs by creating new digital resources. Many new virtual programs and events launched this year, including the groundbreaking event, **Resilience: Healing Practices for Body, Mind, and Spirit**. The three-day Resilience conference was able to take place because of the generosity of donors who gave to the Crisis Impact Fund and the Stephen Bryant Prayer and Spiritual Formation Fund.

The conference offered space for people to find rest and renewal and to explore healthy spiritual practices as they begin to make their way in this new world and to heal.

"The announcements for this event started arriving at the time I was getting into counseling for the trauma I am carrying not only from the pandemic but also going back to childhood. So, I intentionally chose this event as an opportunity to learn more techniques that might help with my healing. And, man, did you folks deliver."

—B. from Texas



One of the key speakers was Rev. Sidwell Mokgothu, Limpopo Synod Bishop of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa and board chair of Africa Upper Room Ministries (AURM). Rev. Mokgothu's invaluable work with AURM has been made possible because of donors' generous support of AURM over the years.

THANK YOU

for shining the light of Christ brightly in 2021!

DONORS GAVE From November 1, 2020 through October 31, 2021

\$1,426,666 to support the ministries of The Upper Room this year.

26% of donations were from first-time donors!

94% of all donations were \$100 or less.

305 Fellowship Circle members collectively gave **\$10,219** each month.

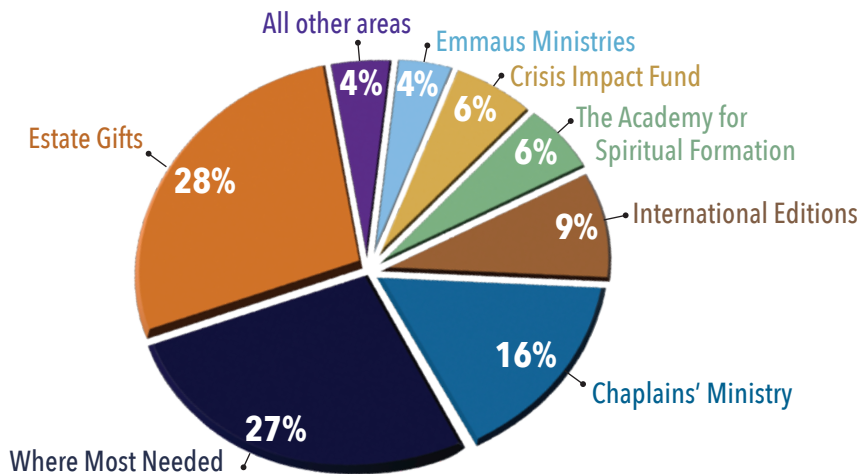


To join this monthly giving circle of friends, visit UpperRoom.org/fellowship or call 1-877-899-2781, ext. 7212.

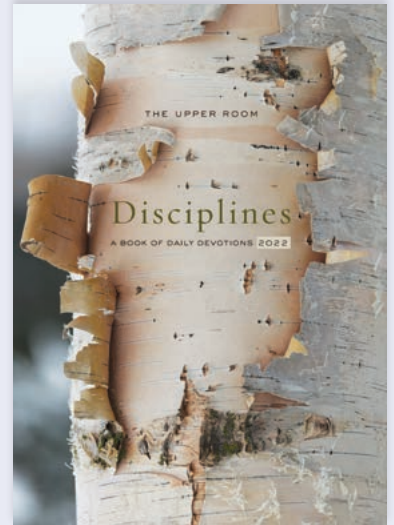
DONORS ARE FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Australia	Hong Kong	Malaysia	Sri Lanka
Barbados	Indonesia	Norway	Switzerland
Bermuda	Ireland	Puerto Rico	Thailand
Canada	Italy	Singapore	United Kingdom
Dominican Republic	Jamaica	South Africa	United States
France	Japan	South Korea	Virgin Islands (U.S.)

HOW DONORS GAVE



The Upper Room Disciplines 2022



For nearly 65 years, *The Upper Room Disciplines* has gathered a diverse group of contributors who share contemporary reflections on traditional readings from the Revised Common Lectionary. Each week, a different Christian thought leader offers seven daily devotions, prayers, and thought-provoking questions that invite deep discussion and study. *Disciplines* has become a trusted companion for personal prayer and study and an essential resource for pastors and Christian educators.

Visit UpperRoomBooks.com/Disciplines for more information and use promo code **FRIENDS22** to receive a 20% discount when ordering *The Upper Room Disciplines 2022*.

The Upper Room covers all its ministry expenses from product sales, participants' fees, interest income, and the generous support of donors. We do not receive any apportionment funds from The United Methodist Church or any other denomination. Donations are needed to help sustain and expand the reach of our ministries so others may experience God more fully.

Merry Christmas