



# GENEREROUS LIVING

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All of Me in Response to All of Him

## Offering Appeals

1st Quarter 2023

Treasurer's Copy

Please store a copy in the pulpit.

## January 7, 2023 - Local Church Budget

Happy New Year! Did you make any New Year's resolutions? Some people don't make New Year's resolutions because they have tried making resolutions before and don't want the discouragement that comes from repeated failures.

And yet we make commitments and re-commitments all the time. Vibrant relationships involve commitments and re-commitments, including forgiveness when we mess up. Weddings call for commitments, and anniversaries spark natural moments of re-commitment. The start of a school year launches commitments for students, staff, and families.

Beginning a new year provides a natural time to make a commitment, or a re-commitment, to Jesus. Today, I'm inviting you to acknowledge explicitly that "all you are" comes from Jesus and give all you are back to Jesus. Let's actively symbolize this.

Please stand at this time. I know you're not accustomed to doing this during the offering—unless you're a deacon. But I'm asking everyone here to stand to their feet today for the offering. Yes, you.

### Activity

*When the offering container comes to you, pass your tithe envelope or your cash around yourself from the front to the back and back to the front (demonstrate it in the front and have the deacons demonstrate it as well).  
(Alternate: place it over your heart and then raise it to heaven.)*

Yes, you can put your offering in the offering plate, but first symbolize your full commitment to Jesus by encircling your entire self with your offering (or placing it over your heart and then raising it to heaven). And then feel free to sit down after that time. Let's commit and re-commit ourselves to Jesus as we start this New Year!

**IT IS ALL OF US IN RESPONSE TO ALL OF HIM!**

Did you know that just 150 years ago, being a Seventh-day Adventist in the United States could be a risky business? Take the case of Pastor James Scoles from Springdale, Arkansas. He volunteered to help finish painting his congregation's newly built church and decided to complete the work one quiet Sunday morning. "I went over to the church," he said later, "and finished up a small strip of painting on the south side... and here I quietly worked away for perhaps two hours." \* For this act, Pastor Scoles was arrested and jailed—and it was just one of many cases where Adventists and other religious minorities were prosecuted under state Sunday laws.

Today, we may not be arrested for working on Sunday, but religious freedom must still be defended. As Ellen White reminded us, we must remain vigilant and hold high the "banner of truth and religious liberty" in these last days. Today, we have the opportunity to support the vital mission of Liberty magazine and the work of our Public Affairs and Religious Liberty leaders. With each issue of Liberty magazine that rolls off the presses, and with each visit to a legislator's office, or legal case argued, our religious liberty leaders are working to defend the precious, God-given gift of freedom for all people. With our offering today, we have a chance to raise high the banner of religious liberty.

\* A. T. Jones, *Civil Government and Religion* (Oakland, CA: American Sentinel, 1889), p. 114.

**IT IS ALL OF US IN RESPONSE TO ALL OF HIM!**

## January 21, 2023 - Local Church Budget

In Christ's parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14–30), it seems God gives people what they have. We then develop and use these, and then we give an account to Christ when He returns. Not everyone receives the same talents or the same number of talents.

What talent(s) has God given you? Some might be obvious, while others could seem minor or even uncertain. Let's take a moment corporately to consider what God has given to each of us. You can do this on your own, as well. You might already have a clear answer or two from God, or maybe you need more time. Perhaps each of us should do this at least once a week.

However, the next question for us to consider would be, "What are you doing with what God has given you?" Yes, it comes from God, but He gives it to you to develop and to use for His glory and for the benefit of others.

Every member here present, please hold out your hands in front of you, cupped together, demonstrating that you are receiving talents from God (demonstrate this posture as you speak and encourage listeners to participate actively).

### Activity

*Holding your hands cupped together in front of you, pray a short prayer, asking God what talents He has given you. And ask Him how He wants you to use them. I will finish with a blessing on our tithes and offerings and the way God is going to use your talents to advance His kingdom. Now consider, "What are you doing with what God has given you?"*

Let's pray together, thanking God for our talents, and asking His guidance for their use.

**IT IS ALL OF US IN RESPONSE TO ALL OF HIM!**

With such an army of workers as our **youth**, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Savior might be carried to the whole world! How soon might the end come—the end of suffering and sorrow and sin! How soon, in place of a possession here, with its blight of sin and pain, our children might receive their inheritance where “the righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein forever;” where “the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick,” and “the voice of weeping shall be no more heard.” Psalm 37:29; Isaiah 33:24; 65:19. – {Ed 271.2}

The Seventh-day Adventist Church puts a huge priority on rightly training our youth. This priority is reflected through our Children’s Ministries, Adventurers, Pathfinders, Summer Camps, and schools worldwide that serves nearly millions of youth and young adults every day. All of these are important ministries in our church as studies have shown that “most children have their spiritual morning’s in place by age nine.” (George Barna 2003)

Your offering today for Carolina Youth, will help rightly train our youth so that they might furnish the army to carry the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Savior to the whole world! How soon might the end come, the end of suffering and sorrow and sin! As you give generously and fearlessly today, remember that God has placed you in this particular place, at this particular time to help furnish His work.

**IT IS ALL OF US IN RESPONSE TO ALL OF HIM!**

## February 4, 2023 - Local Church Budget

We Seventh-day Adventists have a reputation of being faithful in returning our tithes to God, at least compared to most other Christian denominations. However, our tithing might contradict what's in our hymnal, and I'm talking about a well-known hymn. Either we need to change our giving or we need to change the lyrics in the *Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*, specifically song #309.

Here's how the revised version of this song should go: "10% to Jesus I surrender, 10% to Him I freely give." Join me on the chorus, "I surrender 10%, I surrender 10%, 10% to thee my blessed Savior, I surrender 10%."

Something about that just doesn't sound right, does it? Jesus never asked us for 10%; He's always asked for everything. That's why the hymn goes, "All to Jesus I surrender, all to Him I freely give."

Yes, the Bible talks about a tithe being 10% as a practice of worship and reminds us that everything comes from God, but let's remember that everything belongs to God, including the local church offering. With what's left, I buy food to take care of my body or to pay my bills; even this belongs to Jesus. When we bring our offerings to God, we acknowledge that EVERYTHING comes from Him and we can trust Him to supply everything we need.

Today I invite you to give everything to Jesus and allocate a portion of that to the offerings at this church as you actively worship God.

**IT IS ALL OF US IN RESPONSE TO ALL OF HIM!**

The world we've come to know may never return to what we once referred to as normal if for no other reason than the precious influence of Jesus' time on earth, though it has lingered like a sweet perfume for 2,000 years, has lessened the impact on the lives of everyday people now because hearts are hardened. Nevertheless, you can make a difference in the lives of others whose hearts are still open to knowing Him by supporting Adventist Television Ministries in reaching the masses for Jesus.

One pastor recalls the day a woman came to church with her family in tow all because of a TV media ministry. Though he studied with her, she had apparently viewed our programming for so long that there was hardly anything left to tell her. What a wonderful day when she and her family were baptized.

Adventist Media Ministries undergird your local ministry and make it more impactful. Breath of Life, Faith for Today, Jesus 101, and It Is Written are each designed to reach a specific audience through a unique worldview.

Whether people know their Bible well or not at all, they must still be presented with the *Adventist* story. And yes, your offering can help reach around the corner or around the world through streaming, touching hearts and changing lives with a Christ-centered message of hope and wholeness. Please give liberally to advance our message through Adventist Television Ministries and broaden your outreach so Jesus can come and we can go home.

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## February 18, 2023 - Local Church Budget

“Tithes and offerings.” What are they?

“Tithe” literally means one-tenth, or 10%. If you have \$10, one-tenth would be \$1. If you have \$1,000, one-tenth would be \$100. People who “tithe” take their income, like their paycheck or their profit when they sell something, and give 10% of it to God as their tithe. Malachi 3:10 says, “Bring ye” or “you bring.” For those in a relationship with God, this statement means, “If you love me, bring the tithe into the storehouse.”

In the Seventh-day Adventist Church, tithes and offerings are received at the local church, and then the tithe begins its journey. There is an immediate benefit to the local church from the tithe in the form of a full-time or part-time pastor, teacher/principal, disaster response, and access to the Conference, Union, Division, and General Conference leadership and services. The journey continues and tithe is sent to the Conference (storehouse) where 75%-85% remains to fund ministries and workers in the territory. We follow the New Testament teaching that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel (1 Cor. 9:14). The rest is sent to fulfill the mission of the gospel to reach the world everywhere.

“Offerings” are any donations you make beyond the return of tithe—10%. The majority of offerings remain at the church for various ministries and church budget operations which include church upkeep and special offerings important to your congregation, your community, or you personally.

Let’s be faithful with tithe and offerings so that none of these vital ministries are neglected.

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Nosoca Pines Ranch serves the Carolina Conference with two very distinct ministries-- Summer Camp Ministries and year round Retreat Center Ministries. Summer Camp has one goal: to “Show Christ to Kids”. This is done by about 60 staff members who are “unashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ” and spend a week building a relationship with campers as they are experiencing exciting activities and uplifting programs in God’s first book, the great outdoors. Each summer camp week ends with an invitation to be a Christ follower. Every summer hundreds of children dedicate or rededicate their lives to Christ.

The rest of the year Nosoca is dedicated to providing a place where the departments and entities of God’s work in the Carolinas can come apart and know God in a much more personal way. Most every weekend Nosoca is hosting a ministry retreat-- providing food, housing, meeting rooms and activities as well as technical support.

Nosoca Pines Ranch is committed to partnering with the churches of the Carolina Conference in finishing Gods work!

Our offering today is for Carolina Youth, part of which supports the ministries of Nosoca Pines Ranch. As you prepare to give fearlessly and generously, trust in God; He will provide all your needs. He is faithful and continues to answer the prayers of His people.

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## March 4, 2023 - Local Church Budget

This is the time during the worship service when the person in front says something like, “Now is the time when everyone can participate in the worship service.” This implies all people present should take out a wallet to put something in the offering. It also suggests that the other parts of the worship service aren’t for everyone.

Let’s really do something today in which everyone can participate. Let’s all stand up and move to the aisle nearest you. That’s right; we do want everyone to participate in the worship service at this time! So please stand and make your way toward the nearest aisle (pause and encourage participation).

### Activity

*Before passing the offering plate and expecting everyone to put in money, let’s go bigger. Instead of money, let’s give God what He really wants—ourselves. If you are willing to give yourself to God today as your act of worship to God, please come forward. When you get toward the front, you can kneel before God or stand or bow or raise your hands in praise to the Almighty Creator—the awesome One who made you.*

Money makes a great offering, but the best offering is to give yourself to God. Today I ask everyone to participate by giving not just money, but yourself, to God. This is true worship.

After we dedicate ourselves through silent prayer, return to your seats, and the deacons will receive the tithe and offerings

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Just over a year ago, hardened assassins from the New People's Army in Mindoro, Philippines, laid down their guns and chose a new life—and baptism—after listening to Adventist World Radio and studying with local Adventist pastors. No longer “Former Rebels” but “Fully Reconciled,” these men and women wanted to get right to work in sharing what they had found with their family, neighbors, and friends.

Just after their big baptism, they declared that they would “each one reach one.” They decided amongst themselves that each of them would lead someone to Jesus so they would soon have 700 people ready for baptism! Only a couple months later, 700 more Former Rebels had given their lives to Jesus as a result of these converted friends witnessing to them. They had used the projectors and Bible study materials AWR had given them, and by February 2022, they had already reached their goal for the year!

AWR is currently working with these new believers so that each of their villages will have a church building. In addition, they are helping AWR reach into places like Mindanao to reach *current* rebels and assassins whose lives would also be changed with the love of Jesus! Please pray for AWR as its radio waves travel to some of the most difficult places on earth—including the Middle East and North Korea—to help reach every “nation, tribe, language and people” (Rev. 14:6).

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## **March 18, 2023 - Local Church Budget**

When does Spring begin? That probably depends on where you live in North America. Most schools will take a “Spring vacation,” with students and families vacationing to warm climates.

Some places are already experiencing warmer temperatures and signs of new life on trees and shrubs—plants that may have looked lifeless during the winter months. Of course, many places in North America won’t have signs of Spring for another week or two, or maybe a month or two, but Spring will come, and the miracle of rebirth reminds us of the new birth Christ offers each of us.

What does this have to do with our call for the offering this Sabbath? At least two things.

1. Seasons change. Systematic giving to God remains a good practice for prioritizing God and living for Him on a regular basis. However, seasons can affect your giving pattern, sometimes resulting in smaller gifts and sometimes resulting in larger gifts. What season are you in right now? And when have your giving seasons changed?

2. God gives new life. We might think primarily about money when it comes to tithes and offerings—our gifts to God, but God continues to be the One who first gives to us. Even when it seems like we have little or nothing, God gives new life!

Whether Spring has arrived, or you hold to its promise to arrive soon, respond now to God’s gift of new life for you.

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It is God's design that the "everlasting gospel" should be passed down throughout history by each generation reaching and teaching the next. This was clear to ancient Israel in such places as Deuteronomy Chapters 6 and 32, as well as in Joshua 24. Yet, one of the saddest verses in Scripture is the indictment stated in Judges 2:10: "*After that whole generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation grew up, who knew neither the LORD nor what he had done for Israel*" (NIV). The indictment is not against the wayward youth, but actually against the older generation who failed to correctly nurture them.

The hard reality is that we can't pass on what we don't have. The yawning and well-documented gap between profession and practice among Christians bespeaks a faith that is more flabby than foundational. Adults—and especially, parents—whose Christianity is religious gloss rather than spiritual substance cannot lead children to a deep, abiding faith. And without that, no amount of youth worship services, music, Christian education, or programs will hold them in the church orbit. The only thing capable of exerting a lasting pull is the gospel authenticated in the lives of those who profess it.

While it is not the sum-total of an authentic Christian life, how we choose to use our money speaks volumes about our priorities and, consequently, about what we truly believe. Do you trust God for your daily needs and desires? Or do you feel the need to store up enough money to account for everything that could go wrong or to provide for your happiness? Do we truly value the lives of our youth and their involvement in the life of the church? Or do we feel the need to say "the right things" and then withhold our money for use in projects that our generation is more comfortable with or more highly value?

*"The heart of God yearns over His earthly children with a love stronger than death. In giving up His Son, He has poured out to us all heaven in one gift. The Saviour's life and death and intercession, the ministry of angels, the pleading of the Spirit, the Father working above and through all, the unceasing interest of heavenly beings,—all are enlisted in behalf of man's redemption"* (Steps to Christ, pg. 21, EGW).

Will you partner with me in demonstrating to our youth that we do indeed know the LORD, and that He has done—and will continue to do—mighty things for us? Will you allow God to reach our hearts, so that He can reach the next through our changed lives of generous living?

***Today's offering appeal for Carolina Youth was written by Henry Johnson.***

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## ***Tips for a Successful Offering Appeal***

### **1. Pray**

Your attitude is of utmost importance. An offering appeal presented with a pre-season of prayer is always more effective. People in the pews will know the difference and respond accordingly. With an attitude of gratitude, calling for the offering is always a privilege for which to be thankful.

### **2. Practice**

Read the script out loud several times and stay with the script until the reading comes naturally. If possible, stand in the church location and read the script with the microphone on. Take courage, you will gain experience over time and eventually come to wonder why it seemed so hard at first.

### **3. Appreciate your audience**

Realize that they want you to succeed. Relax as best you can! We are all in this together.

### **4. Visualize yourself giving the offering appeal**

Smile! Imagine yourself speaking, your voice loud, clear and confident. Visualize the congregation smiling and pleased with your presentation. This will boost your confidence as they approvingly smile.

### **5. Know and share your material**

Make sure you fully understand and share how the designated offering will be used. Give everyone a reason to help support the designated offering.

### **6. Do not apologize for any nervousness or problem.**

Being nervous is natural. No one but you have to know. Do not allow yourself to focus on your anxiety, but rather focus on your message and audience. They will never suspect you are not a public-speaking pro!