



# **GENEROUS** **LIVING**

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All of Me in Response to All of Him

4th Quarter 2023  
Offering Appeals

We recommend that a copy be stored in the pulpit.

## October 7, 2023 - Local Church Budget

Some parents hand their young child something to put in the offering. When does that stop?

Let's try it today, but let's involve everyone! Do you have something to put in the offering plate today? If not, get something right now, even if it's an empty tithe envelope.

In a moment, I'm going to invite you to give your offering to someone else to put into the plate today, but first, I want you to think about what you are giving and the reason you're giving it. Some of you may have already given your tithes and offerings this month, or maybe you give online, so you aren't giving anything today during the church service. That's fine. You can explain that.

Let me repeat the two questions:

1. What are you giving today?
2. Why are you giving it?

*Let's have everyone stand now (wait for everyone to stand). Please move into groups of two. If you see someone left out, you can form a group of three to make sure everyone's included. Once you're together, sit down together for a moment and share your answers to our two questions. (Pause and help people get together with others for this sharing experience.)*

Okay, let's take about 60 seconds for you to give the other person what you were going to put into the offering today and share your reason why you're giving as well. (Notify at 30 seconds and end around 60 seconds).

Now we'll collect the offering, and please give what has been given to you this Sabbath.

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

## **October 14, 2023 – Carolina Evangelism**

Revolutionary generosity means being interactive Christians. We must move beyond social programs, of which we are so proud, and move toward a hands-on, socially engaged lifestyle.<sup>4</sup> What would Jesus do? What did He do? If Jesus wanted simply to do something for us, He could have done it from Heaven. Instead, He chose to engage with us. He became flesh and dwelt among us. He stepped into first-century Palestine's culture. He invited people into His life and allowed Himself to be invited into theirs.<sup>5</sup>

They were not the right people with which to be generous;<sup>6</sup> they were what people of society considered the “unlikeables” and were treated as untouchable. These were people that many would “unlike” or “unfriend” from their Facebook or social media platforms. These people had nothing with which to repay Jesus. They were sick, blind, and lame, physically and spiritually, but these are the ones whom Jesus kept putting at the head of the banquet tables. Are you ready for that?<sup>7</sup> This is the true heart of generosity. Visualize how it looks, acts, and feels.

4-7 (Thomas Nees. *The Outlook* (bi-monthly newsletter), September–October 2007).

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## October 21, 2023 - Local Church Budget

Happy Thanksgiving!

You might think I'm a bit confused. In Canada, Thanksgiving was the second Monday of October—the 9th. In the United States, it won't be until next month—the fourth Thursday in November, which will be the 23rd. Why say, "Happy Thanksgiving" today?

Of course, any day can be Thanksgiving. And Scripture gives us many reasons to give thanks, such as these:

"I will extol the Lord with all my heart in the council of the upright and in the assembly...The works of his hands are faithful and just; all his precepts are trustworthy" (Ps. 111:1, 7).

"It is good to give thanks to the LORD. . . . O LORD, what great works you do! And how deep are your thoughts. Only a simpleton would not know, and only a fool would not understand this" (Ps. 92:1, 5–6 NLT).

"Praise be to the Lord, for he has heard my cry for mercy. The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and he helps me. My heart leaps for joy, and with my song I praise him" (Ps. 28:6–7).

National holidays for Thanksgiving come from expected harvest blessings. Most of us aren't farmers, but we have experienced God's abundant blessings in so many ways. So today, join me in Thanksgiving—we aren't limited to one day a year. Let's give to God from an abundant heart of praise and thanksgiving today!

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## October 28, 2023 - Carolina Youth 8001

“Don’t you have a saying, ‘It’s still four months until harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest” (John 4:35).

There is more to farming than just picking the crop when it is ready. Orchards need to be pruned. Trees need to be netted so the birds don’t eat the harvest. Fumigation and fertilizers need to be applied or the bugs will decimate your crop. You water it by creating irrigation channels or by connecting pipes, making sure all your fields are watered. The farmer makes sure the plants don’t freeze by placing heaters or covering them with plastic. But the crop still needs to reach its destination; the market, the juice factory, or the place where they will package the vegetables. There is a lot of work in order for the harvest to be ready.

Just like in the harvest from the fields, timing is everything. Otherwise, the spiritual harvest goes to waste. Satan is always trying to spoil the harvest. The devil doesn’t want the harvest to reach heaven.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has a very good system to preserve the harvest until it is ready for heaven. Our offering today goes to Carolina Youth. This is one of the levels of the church whose sole purpose is to support the local Conference to get the harvest ready for the second coming of Jesus.

**Prayer:** Father, we pray that you will open our eyes to see that the harvest is ripe and please bless our offering today so we can be ready to bring the harvest home. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

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## November 4, 2023 - Local Church Budget

Some people receive a regular income for their work, such as pastors and teachers, bank tellers and other hourly or salaried employees. They can plan accordingly. Their tithe remains constant, and their offerings might also be constant, even though some expenses might fluctuate while others remain steady. Other people might get paid in bursts with irregular amounts each time—like farmers who harvest their crops, salespeople on commissions, restaurant waiters, and Uber/Lyft drivers. Their tithes and offerings fluctuate, just like their income.

The Jews gathered for three major religious festivals each year in Old Testament times. According to Deut. 16:16-17, “no one should appear before the LORD empty-handed: Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way the LORD your God has blessed you.” Notice this last sentence, “Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way the LORD your God has blessed you.”

How much has God blessed you? Bring God a gift in proportion to His blessing. Tithing makes that pretty simple—one-tenth of your paycheck. The same can be said of your offerings—give in proportion to the way God has blessed you.

Maybe we need to pause and count our blessings! Don't give what you “can't” or merely give what you “can.” Instead, give according to God's blessings to you.

**Prayer:** Thank you, God, and please accept our gifts to You today, just as You have blessed us. In Christ's name, Amen.

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## November 11, 2023 - Annual Sacrifice Offering for Global Mission

If you could make a difference in someone's life by giving up something for one week, would you do it? What would you give up? The latest issue of your favorite magazine? A pizza? A new pair of shoes? Think what you can give up this week so someone you don't know can be introduced to Jesus, and then put that amount in an offering envelope marked *Annual Sacrifice Offering*.

Your gift might sponsor a seminar about healthful living or help support a Global Mission pioneer in a city where most people have never heard about Jesus. Just think! One day you could meet the person you sacrificed for in heaven.

If you have courage, ask God how much He wants you to give Him by giving beyond your regular tithe and promise offering. If you agree to give God what He is asking, He will provide what He has asked you to give.

This is your opportunity to sacrifice and share God's love with someone who doesn't know Jesus. Your gift will help reach every unreached person. What would you sacrifice for that individual?

**Prayer:** Lord, we humbly accept the advice that the Apostle Paul gives us in Heb. 13:16 where he said, "Sacrifices are pleasing to God" (ESV). So, Lord, we ask you to bless our offerings of sacrifice so that they might multiply and help Global Mission pioneers reach the unreached. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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

At grocery store check-out lines, you'll find an array of items for impulse buying. They hope you will add additional items to your cart while you wait in line.

The same thing happens with online purchasing. When you select something, SHAZAM! everyone else who made that same purchase ALSO bought this item or these two items. Just "click here" to add them to your virtual shopping cart. How many times have you purchased more than you intended simply because of impulse shopping?! Me too!

While impulse shopping might be fun (or hazardous), the Bible suggests a different way of giving. Don't base it on how well I do the offering call. Paul instructed the believers in Corinth to make plans and take action each week, at the start of the week. We call this "planning" or "systematic benevolence"—giving regularly as a lifestyle.

Paul wrote, "On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up, so that when I come, no collections will have to be made" (1 Cor. 16:2). Because Paul didn't come by the Corinthians' church each Sabbath, the people started each week by putting God first with their personal giving. You might have a container where you put your offering as you start each week, and then bring it to church on Sabbath and give it to God, just as you planned.

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## November 25, 2023 – Carolina Youth

We worship God with our best resources because God has provided what we need the most, salvation: “apart from me there is no savior.” And His salvation embraces all aspects of life; in Him, there is full redemption.

This was the experience of a man named Roger. His dad was a fisherman, and his mother died during his early childhood. Roger coped well because of the love and support of his dad until something terrible happened. While at sea, his dad had to climb to the top of the mast. He fell into the water and was nowhere to be found. At the age of 14, Roger was an orphan with no one to pay for his school fees. He became partially homeless, spending some nights at some relatives’ homes, some nights sleeping in fishing boats by the sea, and other nights sleeping in trees! He would steal raw vegetables from people’s gardens to fill his empty stomach. He was so poor that he had to wear all three pairs of his pants, one on top of the other, to cover himself. To escape this harsh reality, he started drinking alcohol, and rapidly, he became a heavy drinker. But one day, Roger heard about the Gospel and accepted Jesus as Savior. His life was transformed. He was healed of his painful emotions, quit alcohol, settled in a job, ran his own business, grew a happy family, owned a house, sent his kids to school, and lived with a life’s purpose of introducing others to His savior.

In response to the exceptional redemption he experienced, among other things, Roger decided to worship God by faithfully returning his tithe and offerings until he died. What has the Savior accomplished in your existence? This week, as we worship with our tithe and regular offerings, let us show an appropriate response to His salvation.

**Prayer:** Lord, we are thankful for the complete salvation provided to us and to Roger. Help us to worship you with our transformed life and generosity with our resources.

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## **December 2, 2023 – Local Church Budget**

December starts off the Christmas season in earnest for many people, even if merchants have been pushing the need to buy gifts for weeks already.

What makes the Christmas season special for you? Is it the music, the decorations, special foods, family gatherings, or the gifts—what you might receive, as well as what you might give?

Gift-giving can be problematic. What if someone gives you a gift, but you don't have one to give in return or vice versa?! Which matters more: the amount of money you spend on the gift or giving a "perfect gift" to a particular person? Let's reverse that; what if someone gives you a gift and it's not something you've ever wanted or will ever use? Should you put on a happy face and say something like, "How can I ever thank you enough for this gift?"

Each Sabbath we collect an offering as you give your gifts to God. We don't limit this to the Christmas season because Christmas happens every time we come to church. We come to worship the greatest gift of all time—the gift of God coming to this earth in the form of Jesus Christ.

Our gifts, whether they are wrapped in beautiful Christmas paper or given as cash or checks or through online giving with a credit card, show our thankfulness to God.

So, "Merry Christmas!" And let's take this opportunity to give our gifts to God.

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## **December 9, 2023 - Adventist Community Services**

People come in all shapes and sizes, and so do their needs. Adventist Community Services offers diverse services tailored to fit the needs of the vulnerable in their community.

David walked into Joseph's Storehouse Food Pantry, an ACS center in Oklahoma. The staff soon learned that he had recently been released from prison and was saving money to rent an apartment. At the time, he was living in a tent near a creek just outside of town and had no way to cook. David chose food that was ready to eat out of the package.

Realizing that more was needed, a volunteer invited him back the next day to pick up cooking items. The volunteer went shopping for items they didn't already have at the center and soon, David received a small cook stove, fuel, can opener, and cookware when he returned. ACS continues to assist David with food when he runs low, and prays for his safety and for God's continued presence.

Whether giving food and cooking gear, dental care, clothing, after school tutoring, or English language skills, your ACS offering paves a pathway forward for somebody in need.

Ellen White shared, "The Savior mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, 'Follow Me'" (*Ministry of Healing*, p. 143).

Adventist Community Service's ministries mingle in our communities, bringing Jesus' goodwill to the people. Join us and become the practical hands and feet of God in our world.

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## **December 16, 2023 – Local Church Budget**

The Christmas story of Christ's birth in a stable includes visits by local shepherds and Wise Men from far away.

The shepherds, although the low-class people of Bethlehem, played a vital role for God's people. Jerusalem, located only five miles (eight kilometers) from Bethlehem, needed "spotless lambs" for daily sacrifices and many more during festivals like the Passover. These shepherds took care of the little lambs to ensure they would be pristine enough for sacrifice. Maybe that's why the angelic host appeared to the shepherds in Bethlehem, giving them a personalized invitation to visit the spotless Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world. However, the shepherds had no gift for Baby Jesus. Instead, they joyfully proclaimed His arrival to the world (Luke 2:16–18).

The Wise Men represented the other end of the social and economic spectrum. Even though they were part of the wealthy intelligentsia, they still found themselves drawn to something far greater than themselves. Following the star, they came to Jerusalem (Matt. 2:1) and directly to the temple (*Desire of Ages*, p. 60), asking, "Where is the newborn King of the Jews?" Prejudiced and defensive religious leaders could point the Magi to nearby Bethlehem, but they refused to go there themselves. However, the Wise Men went. In fact, "wise men still seek Him." And they worshiped and gave gifts.

This Sabbath you're invited to worship and to give gifts, just like the Wise Men thousands of years ago.

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## **December 23, 2023 – Carolina Youth 8001**

Times are changing and the world is becoming a more intimidating and complex place to live. Youth are faced with issues that far surpass the issues faced by past generations. There is a great need for places that our youth feel understood, a place where they can ask hard questions, not only about God; but, about life issues as well, and a place that gives them a sense of belonging.

There are so many programs within the Carolina Conference that provide this safe place for our youth, such as Pathfinders, Adventurers, Nosoca Pines Ranch, camp meetings, etc. These programs give our youth a community to belong to and a place to not only learn Scripture but learn to understand it and apply it to their relationship with God.

The offering today is for Carolina Youth. This money will support the different programs that provide our youth with a safe and fun place to not only learn about God, but how to apply these teachings to their daily lives, helping them to stand firm in this ever-changing world. Thank you for partnering with me to help our youth learn to live courageous lives for Christ.

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## December 30, 2023 - Touch A Life At Pisgah Academy

“Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away...” (1 John 2:15–17).

One of the items most of us have in our medicine cabinet is a thermometer. It shows the condition of our health, whether we are fighting an infection or not. Is there a thermometer to measure “the love of the world?” Is there a sure way to know whether “the pride of life” has infected me?

If you find yourself shopping for things you don’t need, if you have luxuries that are beyond your means or are getting in debt to live a lifestyle that impresses others, then you may be “loving the world.” If you find yourself giving excuses for not returning a faithful tithe and you are not giving any offerings to support God’s work, that is a sign that you have the fever of materialism.

Adventists believe that “the world is passing away” and that “the pride of life” begins to loosen its grip on us when we place God first by returning our tithes and offerings.

Our offering today is for our local Union Conference. Let us support the Lord’s vineyard in our local field.

**Prayer:** Dear Jesus, keep us away from “loving the world” and materialism. Help us keep spiritually and financially healthy by returning our tithes and offerings into the storehouse. In your name, Amen.

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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!