



GENEREROUS LIVING

All of Me in Response to All of Him

Offering Appeals

2nd Quarter 2023

Treasurer's Copy

Please store a copy in the pulpit.

April 1, 2023 – Local Church Budget

Happy April Fools' Day—a day of frequent pranks followed by someone gleefully spouting, “April Fools!” Has it happened to you already today? Did you do it to someone else?

The Bible mentions the term “fool” several times, but never in a glib or “happy trickster” sort of way. Twice in the Psalms we read, “The fool says in his heart, ‘There is no God’” (Ps. 14:1 and Ps. 53:1). If you're in church today, you probably aren't the fool found in Psalms.

We're more susceptible to being the “fool” found in Luke 12. Christ's parable warns against the natural trigger called “greed.” In this story, a farmer realized some bumper crops, so he decided to enlarge his storage capacity, then take an early retirement so he could just “eat, drink and be merry” (Luke 12:19).

Sound inviting?

Jesus came down harshly, not because of what the farmer had, but because of what he didn't have. According to v. 21 (NLT), “A person is a fool to store up earthly wealth but not have a rich relationship with God.” One way to have a rich relationship with God is to give offerings with a thankful heart.

Does this mean we're fools if we don't put everything we have into the offering? Not necessarily. It does mean that when we make our relationship with God our highest priority, the result is wisdom (Prov. 9:10) rather than being a fool—on April Fools' Day or on any other day.

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

April 8, 2023 – Hope Channel International, Inc.

God is using Hope Channel International, Inc. to transform lives for a better life today and for eternity. With 70 global networks and growing, broadcasting in over 80 languages, Hope Channel is fulfilling the mission to preach the gospel “in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come” (Matt. 24:14).

Hope Channel is also an evangelistic resource center. *Wake Up with Hope* is a daily morning program that nurtures viewers’ souls and their spiritual needs. *3AM: Morning is Coming* is a program that encourages young people to understand the Three Angels’ Messages. *Hope.Study*, an online Bible study course platform, continues to grow—within the first year of its inception, 144,850 people have started a course. People are searching for understanding and truth in this broken world. Heroes II, Hope Channel’s brand-new video game app, is inspiring a new generation to study the Bible. Imagine if we could reach every gamer with the gospel!

All these opportunities are made possible through your generous support of Hope Channel. Watch Christ-centered programming on DirecTV 368, HopeTV.org/Watch, Roku, and the Hope Channel app. We want the message of hope to reach people until there are no more people to reach. Only then can the end come! Your faithful financial giving will be blessed to do just that. “Whoever refreshes others will be refreshed” (Prov. 11:25).

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

April 15, 2023 - Local Church Budget

“Tax Day” is April 15 for U.S. citizens, while it’s April 30 in Canada, but when do you actually pay your taxes? Some do it ASAP, while others wait until the last minute, and still others file for extensions. Did you know that some people make quarterly payments throughout the year rather than a lump sum in April? Bermuda has no Tax Day, but it collects a payroll tax throughout the year.

Do you view giving your tithe to God as a tax—something the government requires of its citizens to fund its services? Does God tax believers so His church has money to operate? Some might view it in this manner.

Today I invite you to view it differently—your voluntary gift to God. We include “offerings” during our worship service because giving to God is an act of worship. Sure, everything comes from God, and He doesn’t *need* our money since He already owns “the cattle on a thousand hills” (Ps. 50:10). But giving enables us to participate in worship—like joining the congregation in singing or praying along silently during the main prayer of the church service.

When you give a birthday gift because you feel obligated, it’s rarely as pleasurable for you or the recipient as when you give a gift because you want to give.

Take that same approach as you give your offering to God. It’s your gift, and you’re giving it to God! Let’s worship!

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

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.

Written by: Pastor Daniel Bran

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

April 29, 2023 – Local Church Budget

“Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly, will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously... God loves the cheerful giver” (2 Cor. 9:6–7).

The law of sowing and reaping is very simple. One stalk of corn yields around four ears of corn. If I only sow three seeds of corn, I will enjoy about 12 ears of corn on the cob. But if I sow 100 seeds then I will harvest 400 juicy, sweet ears of corn that I can share with friends and neighbors or sell at the farmer’s market. The more you sow, the more you will reap. The word is multiplication. What you sow, God multiplies. The Bible says that God is the One who makes the food grow. He is the One who multiplies the harvest, and God tells us that the more we sow, the more we will reap.

The law of sowing and reaping is true not only in agriculture but also in finances. Our passage today tells us that the more financial seeds you plant, the more He will prosper you. God’s multiplication ensures that when you give generously, you will also reap generously; the Bible promises it.

I invite you to be a cheerful giver and sow abundantly by providing for our local church budget.

Prayer: Dear God, help us to sow generously and be cheerful givers this morning. Bless the ministry of our local church as we work together to seek and save the lost. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

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

May 6, 2023 – Local Church Budget

Perhaps the best-known text in the Old Testament book of Malachi is, “Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse.” Malachi added God’s challenge: “Test me... and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it” (Mal. 3:10).

Today, some Christians promote the “Prosperity Gospel,” which draws on verses like this. Give to God (or my church or ministry), and God will give you more money than you gave. Forget investing in the stock market or real estate; give your money to God and watch your bank account surge.

While God wanted to illustrate His blessing through material prosperity to the Israelites in Old Testament times, Christ certainly didn’t exhibit lots of money. In the New Testament, Paul predicted that those who sowed sparingly would reap sparingly, while those who sowed generously would also reap generously (2 Cor. 9:6). However, Paul further explained that abundance would be in good deeds and righteousness (vv. 8–10).

Have you put God to the test when it comes to blessings? What did you “sow” in the past? What will you “sow” this year? Are you prepared to receive God’s blessings, whether they are financial or whether they come in another form—like faith, godliness, joy, fellowship, and love for God and others?

Let’s give to God and rely on him to provide the blessings in the forms He chooses and at the time He chooses.

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

May 13, 2023 – Disaster and Famine Relief
(World Budget) 500

You've read the news and watched the footage—witnessed the aftermath from hurricanes, fires, floods, and other disasters tearing apart communities. Families are displaced, having lost their home, livelihood, and even loved ones. What happens next?

For many, the answer is Adventist Community Services (ACS) Disaster Response. The ACS network of trained volunteers respond across the North American Division (NAD), offering services, goods, and a caring heart.

Adventist expertise has traditionally focused on leading and operating the warehouses where donated goods are sent to be sorted, inventoried, and distributed to the affected community. Recent years have seen the Adventist role expand to meet a variety of needs such as sheltering, delivery of goods, rebuilding communities, and providing emotional and spiritual care.

Almost four months after Hurricane Ida swept through Louisiana, the Houma Nation was still in desperate need of help as many homes were damaged and winter was approaching fast. ACS Disaster Response leaders came to the area to learn how they could help those who had been overlooked. One resident asked in desperation, "What are we supposed to do?"

After assessing the situation, ACS was quickly able to bring blankets and other household items to share. In addition, the North American Division ACS Disaster Response sent funds to local teams who purchased space heaters to keep people warm while they rebuilt their homes. This money was from gifts like yours.

Today's offering is shared between Adventist Community Services Disaster Response, who responds to disasters within the NAD, and Adventist Development and Relief Agency's international disaster response work. Thank you for joining the teams that extend a hand of mercy to people in crisis.

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

May 20, 2023 – Local Church Budget

Sometimes when people go to visit another person or family, they take a gift for the host. Were you invited for a special dinner? Then take a pie or a bouquet of flowers. Were you invited on Saturday night for some table games? Maybe you'll take some snacks—sweet, salty, or healthy! This simply demonstrates good manners. The gift isn't more than the meal you receive, but it acknowledges a relationship that isn't merely one-way. Good relationships involve both give and take.

When David successfully took the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem, he gave everyone in Israel gifts of food, with a much larger gift to God. David also gave his music leader a song, found in both Ps. 96 and 1 Chron. 16, which includes this modern way of singing it:

Bravo, God, Bravo!

Everyone join in the great shout: Encore!

In awe before the beauty, in awe before the might.

Bring gifts and celebrate,

Bow before the beauty of God,

Then to your knees—everyone worship! (Ps. 96:7-8 MSG)

We have come to worship God at His house on this Sabbath. This includes bringing our gifts and celebrating in worship. No, we don't give as much as God gives us, but we give because that's part of the relationship we have with our great God and part of the worship we practice each week.

Prayer: God, please accept our gifts at this time. Bless our humble offering we give to you today in Jesus' name, Amen.

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

When I was a young boy I remember the first time I saw my older brother Albert in his Marine uniform. I was moved by how different he looked. He looked assured, accomplished, mature and well, just different! I stood back as his kid brother and just saw him respectfully, “different”.

The Adventurer and Pathfinder participants also wear a uniform. We do not have to go to Camp Lejeune or pass rigorous training to earn the right to wear our uniforms, but once we have it, we continue to wear it with pride and respect. Hopefully, we feel “different”. In this mindset, the wearers realize that they are part of something big and important. They realize they are representing a youth organization that is much bigger than just their local club.

The uniform represents unity to a cause and mission that is **different** than anything else they do. The mission of the wearer is “real and visible”. The uniform represents loyalty toward to the mission of serving Christ and loyalty to all the others wearing the same uniform. Together as a group the wearers grow in fellowship and purpose towards showing the world that Jesus is KING.

Through your offering today, you may continue your support so our Busy Bees, Helping Hands, Companions, Master Guides, etc. continue to praise God’s name by being “different” for others everywhere to see and be moved.

Written by Hector Gonzalez,
Youth and Young Adult Director

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

June 3, 2023 – Local Church Budget

It's that time of year when school graduations take place. You, or someone close to you, may have already celebrated this milestone, or perhaps it's just around the corner.

Graduations matter! They mark a significant accomplishment—the culmination of years of study, hard work, and hopefully, worthwhile education along the way. The regalia might look funny, but it represents something. For some, graduation is a miracle they once thought might be impossible. For others, it's the expected result from their investment.

And then what?

The day after graduation might mean starting a job or maybe continuing with more schooling. Time marches on. Even with photos and video clips of graduation, you must still face another day. As you look back, one question that often surfaces is, "Was it worth it?" Did all the time and money and study pay off, or was it merely a passing chapter of life with little to show for all the investment made?

That's true for all of us, whether or not we're formally graduating.

What do you have to show for the investments you've made? God repeatedly reminds us to invest in Him and in others for eternity. Is it worth it? It actually turns out to be more than a passing chapter of life. It *is* life—and eternal life at that. The investment of our time, temple, talent, and treasure (the pillars of stewardship) pays off when we take it to graduation and beyond.

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

Women are specifically designed by God to meet the needs of other women. Women's Ministries is the best way to connect the church with unchurched women in your community and introduce them to Jesus Christ.

Across the North American Division, from the United States to Canada and from Bermuda to Guam-Micronesia, the women of the church are engaged in serving others. They give Bible studies, hold evangelistic series, and minister to those in shelters for battered and homeless women. They provide for the needs of families seeking refuge on our shores from oppressive regimes, teach English as a second language classes, tutor school children, and make bags of love for children who are displaced from their homes or their parents. The women of the church are making a significant difference in their communities and their congregations.

COVID didn't slow down ministry, it just moved it online. Local, Conference, Union, and Division women's ministries offered online and live webinars, retreats, and seminars. Zoom became the place to get together to talk, study, discuss books, and pray together.

Established in 1898 at the urging of Ellen White, the Women's Ministries Offering funds evangelistic outreach events and leadership training for women across the North American Division. These women partner with God in service through ministries that seek to encourage, equip, and challenge girls, teens, young adults, and women to grow deeply in God and serve Him uniquely with their gifts and talents.

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

June 17, 2023 – Local Church Budget

According to 2 Cor. 9:7, “God loves a cheerful giver.”

That raises two questions: 1. Does God love you? (wait for response); and 2. Are you a cheerful giver? (wait for response).

Hopefully the message you receive here each Sabbath is that God loves you. Are you also a cheerful giver each Sabbath? We’re about to give you the opportunity to be cheerful!

Some here may have grown up listening to Christian singer Steve Green’s children’s songs, including “God Loves a Cheerful Giver,” with the opening line being, “God loves a cheerful giver, Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha!”

(Play song. <https://youtu.be/-UZ9td0LBpM>) (2-minute song)

The lead-in to the song challenges the idea of “giving ‘til it hurts” by referencing 2 Cor. 9:7, “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.”

Instead of “giving ‘til it hurts,” try “giving ‘til it tickles!”

Maybe we should try it this week. Instead of solemnly passing the offering plate, smile as you give. Or try laughing! Now that could be fun!

Yes, God loves you! And God invites you to be a cheerful giver. Let’s give until it tickles—Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha!

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

I love reading and preaching from 2 Timothy. The relationship between an adult and a youth is very powerful when reading this book of the Bible. The emotion of an adult who prays (1:3) for his young protégé. The emotion of the youth who sheds tears (1:4) when his adult mentor leaves. There is something powerful about the dynamic of youth having adults to lead, guide, mentor and encourage them along their journey. It is a blessed opportunity to teach and help them to be strong (2:3-6) when times are overwhelming, to live to please God (2:15-19) every day, and to stay away (2:22-24) from temptations and bad influences.

We also know that besides Paul Timothy also received mentoring and teaching from (1:5) his mother and grandmother, adults that lovingly taught and guided him. How precious and powerful are these opportunities.

I am reminded of a story that happened just a few years ago and it represents the results of adult investment in a youth:

Willie was 9 years old when he was kidnapped from his own driveway in Atlanta, GA. He was held for over 3 hours. In his fear he remembered a song that his mother sang at home and proceeded to sing this song repeatedly for those 3 hours. "Every praise is to our God. Every word of worship with one accord..." His kidnapper cursed at him, told him to be quiet and threatened him, but the entire time Willie continued to sing this song that he was taught. Finally, after over three hours the kidnapper released young Willie, UNHARMED."

May we adults give of our offering to support the ministries for our youth and also give our time and mentorship to prepare our young people to be strong until Jesus returns.

Written by Hector Gonzalez,
Youth and Young Adult Director

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

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!