



GENEREROUS LIVING

All of Me in Response to All of Him

Offering Appeals

1st Quarter 2024

Treasurer's Copy

Please store a copy in the pulpit.

January 6, 2024

Local Church Budget

Each new year brings with it a new promise of change. As a college professor, when I look into the eyes of new students each semester, I see hope and excitement for a better future. Similarly, many have entered the doors of our local churches in search of hope for a better future. Like a student who is given a clean slate on the first day of class, the gospel of the hope in Jesus that we have as Christians provides us all with a clean slate through salvation!

Students sit in my classroom, hopeful to have their thirst for knowledge filled by what they will learn day after day together. And the thing I like to impress on all of my classes is that they will get exactly what they put into the class. If they show up, engage in discussion, and choose to intentionally connect, they will get a lot out of it.

Much of the blessing of being part of a local church comes from choosing to intentionally connect. One profound way to do that is through giving to our local church offering. “You, God, are my God, earnestly I seek you; I thirst for you, my whole being longs for you, in a dry and parched land where there is no water” (Psalm 63:1, NLT). Our local church community exists to serve those in the immediate surrounding community as well as believers worldwide.

By Heather Thompson Day

January 13, 2024

Religious Liberty

Today, more than two-thirds of the world's population live in countries where there are restrictions on religious liberty. As we worship together this morning, religious freedom is denied in places such as North Korea and Saudi Arabia. In Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, and many other countries religious minorities face hostility and danger. In China, people of faith endure government surveillance and restrictions.

This morning, in North America, we are blessed. We have the constitutional right to worship—openly and without fear. We can share our faith freely with others. Yet even here, we can't take this blessing for granted. As we read the headlines and look at the culture around us, we can see that the God-given gift of religious freedom is not always valued as it should be. And even today, in this land of liberty, Sabbath-keepers still face challenges in the workplace.

More than 150 years ago, Ellen White urged us to “hold high the banner of truth and religious liberty” in these last days. The offering we will collect now allows our church in North America to do exactly that—to defend religious freedom in the courts, to support church members who face discrimination in the workplace, and to send almost a million copies of *Liberty* magazine each year to lawmakers and thought leaders across our nation. Please give generously as together we work to safeguard the precious gift of religious liberty.

January 20, 2024

Local Church Budget

Did you know that a Chinese bamboo plant takes, on average, about five years of caring for it before you see any part of the plant burst through the soil?¹ That means for five long years you have to water it, care for it, and ensure it gets all of the nutrients required, without seeing any immediate results. However, once it is ready to come out of the ground and grow tall, it can grow as much as ninety feet in just five weeks! All of the years of caring for the plant led to seemingly “quick” growth.

Similarly, we can sometimes miss the long-term impact of our local church ministries. We may not witness with our own eyes anything extraordinary occurring in a single children’s Sabbath School class, during a Women’s Ministry Bible study, or at a Wednesday night prayer meeting. Yet, at each and every one of these gatherings, souls are being watered and nurtured, little by little.

Today’s offering is for our local church budget. “And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart” (Galatians 6:9, NKJV). The seeds we sow through our offering help to support the mission and ministry of our local church. Today, I invite you to reflect on the blessings that have been sown in your own life through our church as we collect our offering.

¹ <https://mycollaborativeteam.com/the-growth-of-a-bamboo-tree/>

January 27, 2024

Conference Advance

Birthdays are a big thing in our family. We never pass up a chance to celebrate God's blessing of another year of life for someone in our home. When we come together around food and laughter to celebrate one of our family members, it feels as though it binds me even closer to my spouse and children. Birthdays are just one type of celebration that bonds me closer to the ones I love. We celebrate holidays, when we get promotions at work, and when people get married, just to name a few.

Celebrations come in all sizes, and for a variety of reasons. God's word says, "Clap your hands, all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy" (Psalm 47:1, NIV). When was the last time you celebrated what God is doing in your life, or the life of your church family members? When was the last time that you celebrated another person giving their life to God? Our Conference Advance goes to support a variety of different projects of the gospel mission. One of those is evangelism. We are told that all of Heaven throws a party when just one sinner repents and turns toward God! Today, as we prepare to return our tithes and offering, consider praying for God to plant in your heart the desire to see how you can partner with the mission of our church to win souls for Christ.

By Heather Thompson Day

February 3, 2024

Local Church Budget

“And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all” (Acts 3:16, NKJV). In the book of Acts, Jesus’ followers were given incredible power through Jesus to heal people! How amazing is that?

The scriptures teach us about our all-powerful God who desires to work through us. I have found that God places people in my path to remind me of His power. One time, a young woman came to see me during my office hours. She did not come to discuss class assignments – she came looking for this God of miracles that I share in my communications classes. Meeting after meeting, I was delighted to listen to her wrestle with her faith, and I was grateful to pray with her. Most of the time when we met, I just listened. And yet, in our busy world, listening to someone can be one of the greatest gifts you can give to them.

That woman has since graduated and left our university, but I know without a doubt that our meetings, shared laughter, and prayer allowed her to see the love of Christ more fully, through having someone to lean on spiritually. Friends, today we have the opportunity to give so that our local church continues to be a blessing to those around us.

By Heather Thompson Day

February 10, 2024

Adventist Television Ministries Evangelism

“Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth...” (Revelation 14:6).

Today, this verse is being fulfilled with television ministries. The Adventist gospel message is flying in the midst of heaven in the airwaves of television. There are seven media ministries under the umbrella of the North American Division: Faith for Today, It Is Written, Breath of Life, Jesus 101, Voice of Prophecy, La Voz de la Esperanza, and Lifetalk Radio. All of these ministries have television content that is not only reaching the United States and Canada, but the whole earth. The speakers for these ministries are holding evangelistic meetings in North America and around the world with many baptisms and many more lives touched by the wonderful messages of hope for these last days.

Today’s offering is for these media ministries to continue the gospel commission to preach the gospel to every inhabitant of this planet. In many cities, it is hard to knock on doors and share a piece of literature because people live in apartment buildings, condominiums and gated communities. But people are coming to Christ because of TV.

We invite you to be generous in your offering and support these ministries who are using television and the internet to go inside homes to preach the Advent message.

February 17, 2024

Local Church Budget

Did you know that research has shown that people who write down what they are grateful for, even once a week, were likely to be “more optimistic and felt better about their lives.”² A while ago, I added the practice of writing down what I am grateful for in my daily prayer journal. My family, my work, and my faith often make the list. Some days, I am most grateful for an encouraging lunch with my colleague. Weekly, the realization that it is Sabbath and I get to rest in Jesus really overfills my heart’s “gratitude cup.” In the words of the Psalmist, “I will praise You, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will tell of all Your marvelous works” (Psalm 9:1, NKJV).

What are you grateful for today? When you look back over your past week, is there a moment or interaction that you can thank God for? I encourage you to take a moment to thank God for whatever is filling your heart with gratitude at this moment.

At this moment, I am very grateful for the word of God; specifically, Hebrews chapter 11, sometimes referred to as “The Faith Chapter.” As we all face different challenges in different seasons of our lives, it is incredibly refreshing to be reminded of God’s faithfulness. Today, as we return our offering, let us return to God our tithes and offerings from a heart overflowing with gratitude.

By Heather Thompson Day

² <https://www.health.harvard.edu/healthbeat/giving-thanks-can-make-you-happier>

February 24, 2024

Conference Advance

The other day, I sat down on a plane and listened carefully as the flight attendant gave the safety instructions for the flight. Though I have flown before, that day, the words in the safety demonstration struck me as I listened. The flight attendant said the typical line about what to do in case of an emergency in which there is a loss in air pressure in the plane, which is to “put your mask on first” before stopping to help those around you. Clearly, even in our daily lives, we are best able to give back when we first take time to steward our own health, finances, and relationships, among other things. The Word of God says, “Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides...” (1 Peter 4:10-11, NIV).

What gifts has God given you? Think back on this week, and consider what ways the Lord has blessed you, your family, or maybe your work. Now, think about how you can be a blessing to those around you. Our Conference Advance goes to support the network of churches in our region, so we can be God’s hands and feet through ministries like evangelism and summer camps. Today, let’s give with open hearts.

By Heather Thompson Day

March 2, 2024

Local Church Budget

When Joshua began leading the Israelites, there was likely a lot of uncertainty around how things would go. Moses had spent years leading the children of God through the wilderness and through many miraculous events! In Joshua 1, we can see that God calls Joshua to be both “strong and courageous” (Joshua 1:6, NIV) in a transition of leadership that surely may have felt overwhelming to Joshua at times.

And yet, God walked with Joshua through the ups and the downs of his journey as a leader. Joshua proved to be a faithful steward of what God gave him. God gave him the task of leadership, and Joshua leaned on God to see that through. The beautiful thing about Joshua’s story is that God did not just give Joshua an enormous task – God took it upon Himself to provide Joshua with the wisdom to be the leader that Israel needed at that moment.

We too have been given the privilege of supporting the work of God at a local level. Our offering today will go to support our local church budget. The ministries of the local church are the heartbeat of the gospel spreading in our community. As we collect our offering today, consider how you can best steward all of the resources that God has blessed you with!

March 9, 2024

Adventist World Radio

(Note to the offering reader: Download the AWR 2024 video and the latest offering resources at awr.org/offering.)

Adventist World Radio (AWR) uses many forms of technology to reach people where they are, in their local dialect. From AWR's shortwave towers in Guam to 1,800 radio stations around the world, these messages are broadcasting in more than 130 languages every day. And for those who aren't in range of a radio station, AWR's YouTube videos and ministry app are ministering to millions.

In addition, solar-powered Godpods are reaching everyone from prisoners to shepherds! And the ministry's semi-truck in Ukraine is both meeting needs in the community and broadcasting Bible-based messages of hope wherever it goes.

Recently, the ministry tried something unique in Ghana. After renting airtime on 10 radio stations near the Sahara Desert, AWR started sharing the good news of the gospel over marketplace loudspeakers in 12 cities. AWR also paired this with a "Question of the Day," where callers were invited to receive a prize (such as a copy of the book *The Great Controversy*) by answering a question about the prior day's broadcast.

The results have already been astounding. In the last six months, more than 10,000 people have been baptized, with approximately 5,000 from the market loudspeakers alone. God predicted that one day we would be "utterly amazed" (Habakkuk 1:5, NIV) at what He would do—and we are!

Thank you for your support of Adventist World Radio.

March 16, 2024

Local Church Budget

The beach is one of my favorite places. My family lives close to the beach, and it is a wonderful place to come to, especially when the weather is warm. My husband and I have taken many walks along the water and prayed for God to guide the next steps of our lives.

Looking at the water, we can all be reminded of God's sovereignty. That's a big, theological word that simply means that God reigns above everything. God is in control. When the disciples, in the book of Mark, were caught in a storm, they cried out to Jesus for His help. Jesus was fast asleep, but they woke Him up and He calmed the storm that threatened their lives. Their response was, "...[they] said to one another, 'Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!'"(Mark 4:41 NKJV).

Today, we can rest in knowing that our God is able to calm all of the storms in our lives. Even deeper than that, God is able to give us a sense of peace, even when the world around us feels like it is in chaos. We are blessed to be able to gather as believers and encourage each other with our testimonies of how God has carried us through the storms of our lives. As we return our tithe and offering today, let our hearts give from a place of gratitude for our "storm-calming" God.

By Heather Thompson Day

March 23, 2024

Conference Advance

One of my favorite things to do to clear my mind and connect with God is to go on a run outside. Whether it is sunny or even on a cold day, running has been a great way to reset my thinking. Running consistently has been shown to improve memory, increase overall health, and provide people with better moods and more energy.³ When I used to run on a track team, our coach always emphasized focusing on the race ahead of us, not what is happening to the right or to the left.

There are many things happening in our world today, and if we focus on all of the turmoil, it can become very discouraging. Yet God encourages us with these words, “You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you” (Isaiah 26:3, NIV). Together, we can “run” this race together, and one way to support one another is by giving to the local Conference Advance. Did you know that your Conference Advance goes to support ministries that serve our region and touch peoples’ lives? One example of this is our summer camp, which is a place where many young people serve God and work together to bring other young people to Christ through music, games, and activities. As we give today, let’s give with an open heart.

By Heather Thompson Day

³ <https://www.webmd.com/fitness-exercise/health-benefits-running>

March 30, 2024

Local Church Budget

I remember it like it was yesterday. I got a call from a close friend saying that they had gotten an incredible job in an incredible city that would be their dream come true. I celebrated with my friend, while also feeling the sting of pain from my own disappointment from recently being rejected from yet another job for which I was qualified, yet was not found worthy to possess.

Disappointment and rejection can be hard things to deal with. One thing that God taught me and my family during that season of our lives was that though it may not be “my turn” for the blessing of my dream job, it is always “my turn” to serve God and those around me by doing my best, no matter what position I’m in.

One thing that has blessed me and many others during tough times is the support local churches offer to those who are struggling just to make it. I’ve been in small group Bible study where other members prayed for me and supported me in many ways, both with physical needs and spiritual. Today’s offering will go to support our local church budget, which supports ministries that are the heartbeat of our church all week long, not just on Sabbath. “The Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’” (Acts 20:35, NIV).

By Heather Thompson Day