

January 7, 2023

## **Local Church Budget**

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

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 through the giving of tithes and offerings that "all you are" comes from Jesus and I am encouraging you to give all you are back to Jesus.

Today, the loose offering is for our local church budget. Let's commit and re-commit ourselves to Jesus as we plan our giving for 2023.

Optional: *Prayer for the offering.*

January 14, 2023

## Religious Liberty

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.

Optional: *Prayer for the offering.*

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

January 21, 2023

## **Local Church Budget**

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

Let's take a moment corporately to consider what God has given to us as a church. The question for us is, "What are we doing with the talent(s) God has given to us as a church?" Our corporate talent comes from God and He gives it to us to develop and use for His glory and for the benefit of others.

Today as we give to our local church budget consider prayerfully the talent(s) God wants us to use as a church to be a light in a dark world.

Optional: *Prayer for the offering.*

January 28, 2023

## **Wisconsin Conference Advance**

When you hear the word “Stewardship” don’t cringe and hide your wallets or purses. At times the focus of stewardship has been, not intentionally, transactional (about money only), instead of transformational (spiritually balanced).

Our focus in the Wisconsin Conference is for Stewardship to be an act of worship. I invite you today to look at your giving of tithe and offerings, not as a financial transaction, but as a vehicle for spiritual transformation.

*Prayer: Dear Father, receive these tithes and offerings as an act of worship and bless our local Conference as we make plans to reach Wisconsin with the everlasting gospel of Jesus Christ. In Your precious name we pray, AMEN!*

February 4, 2023

## **Local Church Budget**

This week our tithe and offerings will support our local church budget. Like every family, the local church family has financial obligations to meet. Some are easy to see like power and heat, Pathfinders and Church School. However, many are not so obvious: children's magazines, Sabbath school Bible study guides, teaching supplies, staff salaries, cleaning services, property insurance, worthy student fund, community outreach, family emergency fund and the list goes on.

These are but a few of the costs that must be met month after month as the local church seeks to be a light in the community and take care of each other's needs. Because these expenses are constant, My Personal Giving Plan recommends that 3-5 percent of one's income be set aside for the local church budget. This systematic giving ensures that all members share both in the blessings and the responsibilities of the local congregation.

Thank you for your faithfulness supporting your local church, your local family.

Optional: *Prayer for the offering.*

February 11, 2023

## **Adventist Television Ministries Evangelism**

For those whose hearts are open, Adventist Television Ministries still reaches 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.

Your offering today 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.

Thank you for giving liberally so we can advance our message through Adventist Television Ministries and hasten the return of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Optional: *Prayer for the offering.*

February 18, 2023

## **Local Church Budget**

Tithe. What is it?

“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 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.

May God keep us faithful to give our tithe and offerings so that none of these vital ministries are neglected.

Optional: *Prayer for the offering.*

February 25, 2023

## **Wisconsin Conference Advance**

Stewardship worship is first about relationship! Stewardship is giving our all, lovingly, to the One who lovingly gave His all for us, and continues to give His all to us daily.

God's generosity is revolutionary and relational. Because of our relationship with Him, we delight to partner with Him in funding the mission—the everlasting gospel to the world.

“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” Matthew 6:33.

**Prayer:** Dear God, bless these tithes and offerings that we give to You today. Help these funds to be used to teach people to observe all the things You have commanded us to do. And bless our Conference administration as they seek ways to follow the great commission to baptize people and get them ready for your soon return. In the name of Jesus we pray, AMEN!



March 4, 2023

## **Local Church Budget**

Have you heard of the Mission Investment Offering? It's about a partnership between you and God. You pick a project and dedicate the income to the Mission Investment Offering.

Here's an example involving a Christmas Cactus. \*Christy, a member here in the Wisconsin Conference, thought very carefully about what she could do for a mission investment offering. After much prayer she decided to dedicate her Christmas cactus to God and told God she would set aside \$1 for every blossom on the plant for the entire year. The plant had not been blooming and she had done everything she could think of to make it bloom again.

After Christy dedicated the Christmas Cactus to God the plant began to bloom again! Imagine her surprise when over the course of one year the plant had over 100 blossoms! Christy was faithful to set aside that mission money and at the end of one year she happily gave it all to God for a special mission offering.

How about you? Would you like to partner with God and start a mission investment project? Every dollar you raise will be used to advance Adventist Missions.

*\*Not her real name.*

Optional: *Prayer for the offering.*

March 11, 2023

## **World Budget - Adventist World Radio**

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).

Optional: *Prayer for the offering.*

March 18, 2023

## **Local Church Budget**

We worship God with our resources because whatever He receives, He multiplies. In John 6:9, Andrew came to Jesus and said, “Here is a boy with five small barley leaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?” The miracle of the multiplication of bread teaches that nothing is too small for Jesus to make into a sumptuous feast!

It also teaches that Jesus can only multiply what is given to Him. The food that had remained at home, He did not multiply; the food that was eaten before the disciples came, could not be multiplied; the food that was hidden away was not multiplied. Only the food freely offered by the little lad did He multiply.

God still works miracles of multiplication. Has there been a time in your life when God multiplied for you?

Optional: *Prayer for the offering.*

March 25, 2023

## **Wisconsin Conference Advance**

The Mission of the Wisconsin Conference is to grow passionate disciples of Jesus, prepared for Christ's soon coming. Our vision is to transform communities by reflecting Christ. Our core values are God's Word, His people and His charge to share the gospel.

The Wisconsin Conference has four main events to help grow us as Christ's disciples: Campmeeting, Camp Wakonda youth camps and activities, Education and Evangelism.

Campmeeting is our 10 day convocation for worship, fellowship and training held at the Camp Wakonda campground every June.

Camp Wakonda has summer camps for youth as well as numerous activities throughout the year, including retreats and Pathfinders.

Our schools in Wisconsin are scattered throughout the entire state and have been a blessing to thousands of young people, training them to become disciples of Jesus.

Evangelism is a commitment in Wisconsin, both corporately and individually.

Perhaps your journey as a believer has been enriched through one or more of these events. If so, this is a wonderful opportunity to give God a thank offering for all His blessings.

*Optional Prayer: Lord, we praise You for being an unlimited God who provides for us according to Your great riches. Thank You for providing abundantly for our campground, our schools and our work of evangelism. Amen.*

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” a number of 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 talked about in the book of Psalms.

We’re more susceptible to being the “fool” found in Luke 12. In this story, a farmer had some bumper crops, so he decided to enlarge his storage capacity and 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 did NOT have. According to v. 21 (NLT), “A person is a fool to store up earthly wealth but not have a rich relationship with God.”

The first step towards true wealth is to have a rich relationship with God and to give offerings with a thankful heart. When we make our relationship with God our highest priority, the result is wisdom (Prov. 9:10) rather than being a fool.

Optional: *Prayer for the offering.*

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).

Optional: *Prayer for the offering.*

April 15, 2023

## **Local Church Budget**

“Tax Day” is April 15 for U.S. citizens. However, 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? Perhaps you’ve been tempted to view it in this manner.

Today I invite you to view it differently. Offerings are your voluntary gift to God. We include “offerings” during our worship service because giving to God is an act of worship. It shows our trust in Him as our provider and sustainer. Giving offerings joins us together in fellowship with God and with one another as we work alongside Him where He leads us to give.

Optional: *Prayer for the offering.*

April 22, 2023

## **Wisconsin Conference Advance**

Do you have a mission plan? Does your church have a mission plan? We are saved because God had a mission plan. He emptied heaven and sent His Son Jesus to our world. And at some point, the church mobilized resources to send a missionary to our home country or region. With Jesus as our model, would you like to be an instrument of love to every nation, tribe, language, and people?

“The best medicine you can give the church is not preaching or sermonizing, but planning work for them. If set to work, the despondent would soon forget their despondency, the weak would become strong, the ignorant intelligent, and all would be prepared to present the truth as it is in Jesus.” (Review & Herald, June 25, 1895).

God may be calling you to give more than just tithe and offerings. He may be calling you to give time and talents. Are you willing? Today’s offering is for the Wisconsin Conference Advance. Please pray about how you can help advance the mission of our conference.

Optional: *Prayer for the offering.*



April 29, 2023

## **Local Church Budget**

“Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly, will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously... for God loves a 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.

Thank you for giving cheerfully and generously to support our local church budget.

Optional: *Prayer for the offering.*

May 6, 2023

## **Local Church Budget**

When our finances are a mess, we can hardly enjoy a happy life, and that makes it difficult to honor God with a faithful tithe and adequate offerings. Would you like to enjoy a quality of life that your heavenly Father has meticulously purposed for you? Find resources that will train you to be accountable financially. Enroll in an online class or attend a local seminar. Take the time to sit down as a family and work through a budget. Little by little you can begin to exercise more discipline and order in the management of our God-given resources. You will be blessed and you will become a blessing to others.

This week may we reflect the image of the orderly God that we serve through our tithe and regular offerings.

*Optional: Prayer – Lord, this week give us the wisdom and discipline to reflect Your orderliness in the management of our personal affairs.*

May 13, 2023

## **Disaster and Famine Relief**

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 (Adventist Community Services) 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 respond to disasters within the NAD, and Adventist Development and Relief Agency’s international disaster response work. Both groups respond to crisis in their communities by offering services, goods, rebuilding communities and offering spiritual and emotional support. Thank you for joining the teams that extend a hand of mercy to people in crisis.

Optional: *Prayer for the offering.*

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. 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.

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.

Optional: *Prayer for the offering.*

May 27, 2023

## **Wisconsin Conference Advance**

Today as we worship with our tithe and regular offerings we will be supporting the work in the Wisconsin Conference and the many resources God uses through our conference to bless others.

Consider all the resources God has used in your life to bless you and take care of you. Some of those resources may be ministries and people here in the Wisconsin Conference. Think of Campmeeting, Camp Wakonda, Church Planting, Lay-Pastor Training, VBS, Pathfinders & Adventurers, the Worthy Student Fund, the Family Crisis Fund, Adventist Community Services, Education, Evangelism, Retreats – the list goes on and on. God has blessed us abundantly and we have much to be thankful for.

But remember, the advancement of the work in the Wisconsin Conference requires more than finances - it also needs volunteers. Prayerfully consider where God is asking you to give.

Optional: *Prayer for the offering.*

June 3, 2023

## **Local Church Budget**

It's that time of year - graduations! And graduations matter! They mark a significant accomplishment—the culmination of years of study and hard work. 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. As you look back, one question that often surfaces is, “Was it worth it?” Did all the time, 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 a good question 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. Any investment we make for the kingdom of heaven will pay off when we take it to graduation and beyond.

Optional: *Prayer for the offering.*

June 10, 2023

## **Women's Ministries**

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.

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.

Learn more about how you can be involved in women's ministry at [nadwm.org](http://nadwm.org).

Optional: *Prayer for the offering.*

June 17, 2023

## **Local Church Budget**

The North American Division encourages the use of the “My Personal Giving Plan.” This plan was developed as a guideline to assist members in systematic giving.

To gain a more extensive understanding visit the website [www.personalgivingplan.com](http://www.personalgivingplan.com).

The “My Personal Giving Plan” encourages each of us to renew our commitment to the principles of Christian stewardship. While it blesses the church as a whole, its real impact is on us as individuals in our faith-based covenant with God. Like all plans, it requires thought and consideration. Everything in God’s creation is orderly and purposeful. No great work can be built upon emotional or sporadic giving.

This week, prayerfully ask God to show you how you can be systematic and orderly in your giving. Where does God need you to advance?

Optional: *Prayer for the offering.*



June 24, 2023

## **Wisconsin Conference Advance**

The Mission of the Wisconsin Conference is to grow passionate disciples of Jesus, prepared for Christ's soon coming. Our vision is to transform communities by reflecting Christ. Our core values are God's Word, His people and His charge to share the gospel.

The Wisconsin Conference has four main events to help grow us as Christ's disciples: Campmeeting, Camp Wakonda youth camps and activities, Education and Evangelism.

Campmeeting is our 10 day convocation for worship, fellowship and training held at the Camp Wakonda campground every June.

Camp Wakonda has summer camps for youth as well as numerous activities throughout the year, including retreats and Pathfinders.

Our schools in Wisconsin are scattered throughout the entire state and have been a blessing to thousands of young people, training them to become disciples of Jesus.

Evangelism is a commitment in Wisconsin, both corporately and individually.

Perhaps your journey as a believer has been enriched through one or more of these events. If so, this is a wonderful opportunity to give God a thank offering for all His blessings.

Optional: *Prayer for the offering.*

July 1, 2023

## **Local Church Budget**

God set the amount or value of some offerings, and for other offerings He left it to the personal choice of the worshipper. The general principle was always to give in proportion to what one has received and to give our very best offerings to God.

“Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord your God which He has given you.” Deuteronomy 16:17.

Today’s offering is for the local church budget. Let’s contemplate God’s goodness and His fairness. He loves us and He gives His all for us. What can you give for Him?

Optional: *Prayer for the offering.*

July 8, 2023

## **World Budget**

Have you ever wondered what happens to the mission offerings you give each week or as part of your promise offerings? Think of your mission offerings as a vital river flowing through the entire world, providing life-giving support to build God's work in every mission field. But exactly where do our offerings go? What do they achieve? And what do they support?

Seventy percent of your weekly mission and promise offerings help support the work of about 400 missionary families working with the 13 world Divisions, plus the Middle East and North Africa Union Mission and the Israel Field, to help these regions build and sustain mission activities. The remaining 30 percent of your mission offerings help several church institutions such as the medical mission work of Loma Linda University, the outreach of Adventist World Radio, and the humanitarian ministry of ADRA, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency.

Thanks to your faithful offerings, millions of people from the most challenging areas of the world have found salvation in Jesus and have joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Thousands of new congregations have been established in unreached areas, and new believers are being trained in how to share their new faith with others in their neighborhoods. Your river of mission offerings helps grow and sustain mission work throughout the world.

Optional: *Prayer for the offering.*

July 15, 2023

## **Local Church Budget**

Can you out-give God?

This idea is that when you give something to God, He gives you more than you gave to Him.

But does it work? If you give God a dollar or \$1,000 will you get back more than you gave to God?

For some of us, just paying our bills is a great accomplishment. Others have extra or prioritize investing in a retirement account, real estate, or the stock market, hoping they will get back more than they put into their investment. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't.

Remember, whatever we give actually came to us from God, the original Giver. James 1:17 says: "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father...". God started this by giving us something to give—like an older person giving a child something to put in the offering plate.

Today I invite you to take what God has given you and give it to Him; then let Him give you more—whether that's money, opportunities, talent, love, or life.

You can't out-give God, but it's great to try!

Optional: *Prayer for the offering.*

July 22, 2023

## **Wisconsin Conference Advance**

The Bible says, “Moreover, it is required in stewards that one be found faithful” (I Cor. 4:2). What does it mean to be a faithful steward?

A faithful steward will manage material possessions for God’s glory – money, property, investments, estate planning, caring for the environment – we manage these things in a way that honors God.

A good steward will also learn and practice debt-free living. Getting out of debt is essential to be free from financial enslavement.

Good Stewards will return tithe, the whole tenth of your income, for the world work, and give a liberal offering to support the local church’s mission to the community.

All these things work together to help us develop a relationship with God and become good stewards for all that He entrusts us with.

Today’s offering is for the advancement of the work in the Wisconsin Conference. Thank you for being good stewards of what God has given us here and advancing the cause in our conference.

Optional: *Prayer for the offering.*

July 29

## **Local Church Budget**

“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” (2 Cor. 9:7).

We find three biblical principles of giving in this passage.

First, we need to decide in advance how much we are going to give.

Second, we are not to give reluctantly or under compulsion. God doesn’t want you to give because you are being pressured to give. He desires it to be a voluntary choice.

Third, God loves a cheerful giver. God wants you to give from the heart, willingly and cheerfully. Are you happy that you can contribute to God’s remnant church?

Today, I encourage you to provide for the expenses of your local church, not reluctantly but cheerfully give what you have purposed in your heart.

Optional: *Prayer for the offering.*

August 5, 2023

## **Local Church Budget**

The story is told of a young man who was anxious about his upcoming wedding. He knew that the bride was the one he had dreamed of, but he had some real concerns for their finances as a new couple. He would be the only one earning a salary and previously, as a bachelor, he could hardly reach the next payday without borrowing some money.

Surprisingly, after the first month, the first quarter and the first year of marriage, the couple found that the one income was sufficient for the couple's expenses. They could even reach the next payday with some bit of savings. The result was great peace of mind. How was that possible?

During their wedding preparations, the pastor counseling them advised them to follow the instruction Jesus gave in Luke 14:28, "Sit down and estimate the cost." They learned about the importance of a family budget. Neither of the spouses was an accountant, but with practice, discipline, and God's help, they established a budget, a roadmap for their expenses.

This week as we worship with our tithe and regular offerings let us place God and His instructions on the forefront of our lives.

Optional: *Prayer for the offering.*

August 12, 2023

## Christian Record Services

Imagine the scene recorded in Mark 10. A huge crowd was following Jesus. Voices buzzed around Him, clamoring for His attention. And then, a desperate shout reached Jesus' ears (or, perhaps, struck His heart).

“Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

Jesus stopped in His tracks and called out to Bartimaeus. Immediately, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus. Jesus asked him, “What do you want me to do for you?”

Without hesitation, Bartimaeus declared, “Rabbi, I want to see!” Jesus answered, “Go, your faith has healed you!”

I love that we can share the mercy and grace of Jesus Christ with people who are blind or experiencing vision loss! Christian Record Services, a ministry of compassion of the Seventh-day Adventist Church since 1899, is serving nearly 18,000 members throughout the United States and in countries around the world.

Christian Record Services offers an array of services and programs, including Bible study lessons, books, magazines and Bibles in audio, braille, and large print from a library of more than 2,000 titles. Members can also deepen social, educational, and spiritual connections through PhoneFaith, scholarships for higher education, and National Camps for Blind Children.

These services and programs are free of charge to people who are legally blind. Your offerings will help further the mission to *empower* people who are blind to *engage* with their communities and *embrace* the Blessed Hope.

Optional: *Prayer for the offering.*



August 19, 2023

## **Local Church Budget**

In Matt. 6:21 Jesus says, “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

The Amplified Bible explains it like this, “Where your treasure is, there your heart [your wishes, your desires, that on which your life centers] will be also.”

Let me explain it this way. God has set things up so that your heart will follow wherever you make your investment. If you neglect your friends or family, your love for them will diminish. If you invest more time and money with them, your love for them will grow!

The same is true with your love for God and His church. Your love for God and His church increases as you place your treasure—your money, time, skills, and service—with God and His church. Your heart follows where you place your treasure.

Today I’m inviting you to make God and His church your treasure. And you can do that simply by giving at this time.

Optional: *Prayer for the offering.*

August 26, 2023

## **Wisconsin Conference Advance**

II Kings 4 tells the story of a widow whose family had contracted a huge debt resulting in painful consequences. In verse 7, “She went and told the man of God, and he said, ‘Go, sell the oil and pay your debts. You and your sons can live on what is left.’”

The Bible story then shares that a miracle happened, a room full of jars of oil to sell and pay off all their debts! The widow returned to Elisha to express her gratitude and the prophet speaks these final words to her, “Live on what is left.”

These words stand as a promise from God. She does not have to fear for the future.

They are also an instruction not to live on borrowed resources. Elisha’s parting advice was for her to manage wisely. The Lord not only performs miracles, but He also teaches us how to use our blessings.

Today’s offering is for the Wisconsin Conference Advance. As we claim God’s daily promises for our provision let us also be diligent in the management of our resources. Let us learn to “live on what is left” and see what God does for us so we can be a blessing for others and for our church!

Optional: *Prayer for the offering.*

September 2, 2023

## **Local Church Budget**

Labor Day Weekend is here! Ironically, instead of working on Labor Day, most people have a holiday with no work! In other words, many “play” on “Labor Day.”

Does that seem wrong, or is it actually right—in a counter-intuitive way?

Labor Day is the holiday given for the work you’ve already done.

When we put it in spiritual terms, it means we give to God and others because we’ve already received so much from both God and others.

Our offering today provides the opportunity for us to give back what He has given to us.

Optional: *Prayer for the offering.*

September 9, 2023

## **World Budget: Radio Ministries**

The Voice of Prophecy radio ministry began with an offer that founder H.M.S. Richards Sr. simply could not refuse. The *Los Angeles Express* newspaper promised Pastor Richards several *free* 15-minute slots of radio time each week if he would place weekly advertising for his tent meetings in their paper.

Always wanting to embrace new methods to reach souls, the 35-year-old Richards jumped at the chance. On October 19, 1929, only days before the Great Depression hit, Richards was on the air, sharing the hope of Jesus with the people of Southern California.

By World War II, the Voice of Prophecy had become the first religious coast-to-coast broadcast in North America on the Mutual Broadcasting Network. That same year, 1942, it launched a Spanish-language broadcast that would later be called *La Voz de la Esperanza*.

More North Americans access radio regularly than any other major media format. Eighty-eight percent of Canadians report having listened to radio in any given month, while 93% of Americans say they listen to radio every week. Online audio also remains a fast-growing market, as millions turn to digital platforms for more engaging content. As listeners tune in week by week, they are invited to go deeper with the Lord through the radio ministries' Bible schools and evangelistic events.

Day by day and week by week, the power of radio evangelism continues to change lives. Please join today in giving generously to support the ministry of the Voice of Prophecy and *La Voz de la Esperanza*.

Optional: *Prayer for the offering.*

September 16, 2023

## **Local Church Budget**

“Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, will be poured into your lap” (Luke 6:38).

Gloria and Enoch embarked on their long-awaited vacation. The plan was to spend a couple of days visiting their son’s family and their three granddaughters and then go to their favorite beach on the coast to enjoy the sun and water. That Sabbath, as they attended church with their granddaughters, the pastor made a special offering appeal to those in attendance to cover the expense of replacing the roof on the church. Gloria and Enoch felt impressed to give all the money they had saved for their beach vacation to the church for the new roof and to spend the rest of their vacation with their son’s family instead. To their surprise, when they returned home, Gloria found a letter in the mail from her work at the hospital stating that they had miscalculated her wages and needed to pay her back wages. Enclosed was a check for exactly double what she and Enoch gave to the Adventist church to help with the roof.

The Bible promises that when you give, it will be given to you. We invite you to give for your local church budget so the work of the Adventist church will continue here.

Optional: *Prayer for the offering.*

September 23, 2023

## **Wisconsin Conference Advance**

The Mission of the Wisconsin Conference is to grow passionate disciples of Jesus, prepared for Christ's soon coming. Our vision is to transform communities by reflecting Christ. Our core values are God's Word, His people and His charge to share the gospel.

The Wisconsin Conference has four main events to help grow us as Christ's disciples: Campmeeting, Camp Wakonda youth camps and activities, Education and Evangelism.

Campmeeting is our 10 day convocation for worship, fellowship and training held at the Camp Wakonda campground every June.

Camp Wakonda has summer camps for youth as well as numerous activities throughout the year, including retreats and Pathfinders.

Our schools in Wisconsin are scattered throughout the entire state and have been a blessing to thousands of young people, training them to become disciples of Jesus.

Evangelism is a commitment in Wisconsin, both corporately and individually.

Perhaps your journey as a believer has been enriched through one or more of these events. If so, this is a wonderful opportunity to give God a thank offering for all His blessings. Consider also how you can be a volunteer, giving of your time and talents, to help advance God's work in our conference.

Optional: *Prayer for the offering.*

September 30, 2023

## **Local Church Budget**

Today's loose offerings will be for the local church budget. I would also like to share with you that today is a 13<sup>th</sup> Sabbath and thus a 13<sup>th</sup> Sabbath offering is encouraged. What is a 13<sup>th</sup> Sabbath offering?

Have you read stories of pioneer families who came together for a barn raising? Some Amish communities still enjoy these events. Seventh-day Adventists also have projects where we all pitch in to accomplish a goal. That is the purpose of the 13<sup>th</sup> Sabbath offering.

At the end of each quarter, on a 13<sup>th</sup> Sabbath, the church focuses on one of its world divisions to accomplish a mission goal. The back of the adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide will give information for the project for that quarter.

Sometimes the offering goes toward constructing a building that will be used for education, evangelism, or media outreach. All the church members around the world join hands on these projects through sacrificial giving. Think of it as a world-wide "barn raising."

Do you want to be a part of something big? Then plan now to be a part of a worldwide community expanding Adventist mission work and give to the 13<sup>th</sup> Sabbath offering. Just mark your tithe envelope with "13<sup>th</sup> Sabbath offering."

Optional: *Prayer for the offering.*

October 7, 2023

## **Local Church Budget**

On one occasion, a pastor accompanied by an elder visited a low-income family of the church. They were gladly welcomed and had a great time fellowshiping together. At some point in the conversation, the pastor opened the Bible and read Malachi 3:10, “Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this,” says the Lord of hosts, “If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it.”

The pastor encouraged the family about faithfulness in giving. Upon completing their visit, the elder shared with the pastor that he was much uncomfortable about the text he read because this family was struggling financially. Gently, but firmly the pastor responded: “I wanted to make sure that they are not missing God’s blessings.”

Have you missed God’s blessings? God is ready for you to try Him and see what He can do. Make a vow to Him now that you will be faithful to give where He leads you to give and see what blessings He has for you.

Optional: *Prayer for the offering.*



October 14, 2023

## **Wisconsin Conference Advance**

Revolutionary generosity means being interactive Christians. We must move beyond social programs 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>

Most of the people Jesus associated with had nothing with which to repay Him. 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.

Our offerings today are for the advancement of the work in the Wisconsin Conference. Thank you for being involved and engaged with the work here in Wisconsin.

Optional: *Prayer for the offering.*

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

October 21, 2023

## **Local Church Budget**

What is the formula for a happy life? Go to school, study hard, pass exams, embrace a lucrative career, get married and live a long and peaceful life.

Unfortunately, real life often fails to match this ideal. Unexpected troubles become lifelong companions. The longed-for career does not materialize. The house is repossessed by the bank. A lingering illness causes one to long for rest. We find that life is unfair and unpredictable.

While experiencing trials, grief and humiliation the prophet Jeremiah spoke about God's compassion and mercies. As David fled from his enemies he wrote Psalms of praise and thanksgiving for God's faithfulness. As Job sat in the ashes with his boils he said, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."

Are you experiencing trials? Probably...everyone has issues to deal with and sorrows to bear. Nevertheless, in the power and strength of the Holy Spirit we can praise God and continue to serve Him where He needs us.

This week as we worship God with the giving of tithes and offerings, let us recall that God's care for us is constant and regular. We can count on Him to be what we need in all of our circumstances.

Optional: *Prayer for the offering.*

October 28, 2023

## **Outdoor Education**

Outdoor Education in Wisconsin takes place in the beautiful outdoor setting of Camp Wakonda. Students in grades 5 and 6 come together to form friendships and learn about their Creator through hands-on experiences in nature.

The goals for Outdoor Education in the Wisconsin Conference are: that students have a greater appreciation of God through nature, the science program is brought to life, students are able to see God's great power and love in creation, and that students will love and enjoy the outdoors.

While at Camp Wakonda, students enjoy worship, interactive activities in nature, science, team building with a focus on exploration of God's Word and His second book - nature.

“Let the children learn to see in nature an expression of the love and wisdom of God; let the thought of Him be linked with bird and flower and tree.” (Education p. 102, 103).

Thank you for supporting the Outdoor Education offering today. Remember to take time this week to be outside and thank God for all His marvelous creations.

Optional: *Prayer for the offering.*

November 4, 2023

## **Local Church Budget**

In Old Testament times, the Hebrews gathered for three major religious festivals each year. 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.

Optional: *Prayer for the offering.*

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 healthful living seminar 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?

Optional: *Prayer for the offering.*

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.

Optional: *Prayer for the offering.*

November 25, 2023

## **Wisconsin Conference Advance**

“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” in us? 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.”

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 the Wisconsin Conference Advance. Thank you for supporting God’s work in our local field.

Optional: *Prayer for the offering.*

December 2, 2023

## **Local Church Budget**

We worship with our resources because we follow the example of our God, who is a Blind Giver. When God gives, He gives out of love to all. Faithful to this attribute, “He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous” (Matt. 5:45). In contrast, we are inclined to give exclusively to what we see and whose outcome we can control.

Jesus came to this earth as a “blind giver.” His salvation is for all. Will you choose Him to be your Saviour? Will you choose to be a “Blind Giver” for those whom the Saviour lived and died for?

Thank you for supporting your local church budget today with your tithe and offerings.

Optional: *Prayer for the offering.*



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 did not 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).

The mission of Adventist Community Services is to mingle in our communities, bringing Jesus' goodwill to the people. Join us and become the practical hands and feet of God in our world.

Optional: *Prayer for the offering.*

December 16, 2023

## **Local Church Budget**

Before we can have financial peace, we must first have personal peace. “Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.” Matthew 6:33.

Out of one’s daily devotional life comes the strength to make it through the day. How is this done? Designate a quiet time for the Creator—early morning is favorable; choose a Bible passage to read; meditate on it; then, in your prayer of needs, acknowledge and thank God for who He is. Pause and allow Him response time; then acquiesce when He chooses to respond, via voice, another human, or circumstance. Keeping a prayer journal is an inspiring, powerful look back at how God answers and is a testimony to inspire others.

As we put God first and seek His righteousness He will guide us in all of our affairs in this life, preparing us for the next. May the peace of God fill each of us today as we give Him our tithes and offerings and commit ourselves to making Him first.

Optional: *Prayer for the offering.*

December 23, 2023

## **Wisconsin Conference Advance**

This is the season of giving. We are reminded that God Himself gave His only begotten Son. We hear the story of the wise men giving gifts to the baby Jesus. We look for ways that we can give to others. The question for us is, “How much will we give?”

Zacchaeus gave 50% of his wealth. The poor widow gave all she had – two copper coins. Barnabas sold a field he owned and provided for the preaching of the gospel.

Throughout history the people of God have been giving for the Lord’s work. God’s children do not spend all their income on themselves but think of sharing their wealth for the preaching of the gospel and the care of the poor.

The Wisconsin Conference is a sisterhood of churches that helps each congregation within its boundaries to accomplish important objectives that are beyond the reach of any one church alone. The conference advance offering addresses these specific needs as well as a variety of special projects.

Through the spirit of generosity and sacrifice we partner with God in funding the mission. Thank you for your faithful commitment to bless your fellow brothers and sisters in the Lord.

Optional: *Prayer for the offering.*

December 30, 2023

## **Public Campus Ministries**

Some young people today are dedicating their lives to bring the Gospel to some hard-to-reach peoples and groups in the Middle East. In the tradition of the Waldensians of the Middle Ages, they pursue secular activities as a vehicle for preaching the gospel. Some are enrolled in Universities. Though they are students their first aim and focus is to find opportunities to bring the love and message of Jesus to their peers.

One modern-day Waldensian wrote these words: “Being in a foreign land is challenging. You miss your family, your home country, and your friends. You also have to adapt to a new culture, the people, the climate, and so forth.” But her commitment remains unshakable because “Universities are amazing mission fields. You meet people your age, you easily make friends, and you have many opportunities to share about God with open-minded, inquisitive people.”

One of the goals of our Conference is to support public campus ministries here in Wisconsin. To build a network team of young adults supporting each other as they seek to be a light in a dark world. Please pray daily for the young people here in Wisconsin and abroad who have made a commitment to be missionaries in public schools and universities. Your support is much appreciated.

Optional: *Prayer for the offering.*