

May 3

Local Church Budget

Author Melvin Santos Speaking:

One day, while shopping at Lowe's hardware store, I saw a bird trapped inside the store. The bird probably had entered through the outdoor garden section. Its wing seemed broken and it was too weak to fly. If left alone this bird would die. I found a discarded box and went over to get the bird. I took that bird home and placed it in a makeshift birdcage and gave it water and food. The next day the bird was more alert and flapping its wings. I took it outside and opened the cage door. The bird slowly walked out and flew to the nearest tree. I felt great that I was able to help one of God's little creatures live another day!

Jesus' words, "Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which have neither storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds?" (Luke 12:24, NKJV). Jesus wants us to trust Him because God the Father cares so much for us.

God has placed the church to care for the broken hearted, to help the downtrodden, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and to share the love of Jesus.

Our offering today is for the local church budget. Let's continue to be that point person God can use to support His people and His ministries. Let us pray...

May 10

Disaster and Famine Relief

This Sabbath, our church joins many others in collecting a special offering to support ongoing disaster relief efforts. Funds collected today support both Adventist humanitarian organizations, Adventist Community Services and ADRA. Each serves in different geographical areas.

Adventist Community Services, also known as ACS, responds to disasters of all kinds across the North American Division which includes the United States, Canada, Bermuda, Guam, and Micronesia.

As we approach Christ's return, the Bible tells us that crisis events will increase. Emergency Management records have tracked disasters for over 50 years and confirm tornadoes are touching down with greater impact, hurricanes are moving at greater speeds, and violent killings in the form of mass shootings increase with alarming frequency.

Adventist Community Services stands ready to serve those affected by these and other tragedies. ACS Volunteers:

- open collection centers to receive and sort donations, sending them to areas of greatest need,
- provide emotional and spiritual care to the distraught,
- and deliver essential supplies to areas hardest hit by a disaster.

I John 3:18 tells us to love with action and in truth. Today, we ask that you give liberally, and we thank you for joining the team who extends the hand of mercy to people in crisis. Together we are serving communities in Christ's name.

May 17

Local Church Budget

Author Melvin Santos Speaking:

When our kids were of age to work, it warmed our hearts when we saw them buying gifts for each other for special occasions such as birthdays and Christmas, or no occasion at all. They received great joy in seeing their siblings' reactions when opening the gifts.

God too, loves a cheerful giver. However, giving results from two motives -- either from unselfish love, or for personal reward.

The gifts exchanged between family and friends may serve as an example of unselfish devotion. On the other hand, many gifts are not gifts at all, but a means to an end. They may be given to promote, to influence, or to bribe. Some give out of pressure or obligation.

God measures the gift by the motive of the giver. "The offering from the heart that loves, God delights to honor." (*Desire of Ages*, p.65)

Today, let's give from a heart that loves our God. Our offering for today is for the local church budget. Let's pray...

May 24

Wisconsin Conference Budget

The COVID-19 pandemic caused thousands of deaths around the world and made people rethink their purpose in life. We've all been affected by this. Recent wars displaced millions from their homes creating major cultural, political, and population shifts. These crises created openness in spiritual things. People are searching for meaning and peace. They're hungry to make sense out of all the chaos in the world.

Churches in our conference can be that haven and point of contact for people to hear about Jesus. Offerings collected monthly for the Wisconsin Conference Budget give opportunities for ministries in all churches to be funded so they can plant seeds of hope and love.

Now is the time to invest in God's work. Why not ask God for bigger requests so He can bless us abundantly? We don't need to wait until we have more to give more. We can flex our faith in God now. He's ready!

Our offering for today is for the Wisconsin Conference Budget. Let's lay all on the altar and give our all to God. Let's pray...

May 31

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, as good stewards of Your blessings, give us the wisdom and discipline to reflect Your orderliness in the management of our personal affairs.