

Tithe and Offering
Appeals for
2019
(English)



May God richly bless your church family for their faithfulness in returning tithes and offerings. All to the glory of God.

North American Division 2019 Offertory Readings

Our mission is to reach the North American Division territory with the distinctive, Christ-centered Seventh-day Adventist message of Hope and Wholeness. Stewardship Ministries is dedicated to helping members catch this vision to fund the mission to finish God's work. Funds received through offerings make an impact on preaching the gospel to save the lost.

Systematic giving is part of being a faithful steward. When we return tithes, we are recognizing that God owns everything. Giving offerings expresses our gratitude for what God has done for us. God has chosen this method to support those who preach the gospel as they reach the world with His message.

You will find an extensive selection of videos emphasizing various offerings by visiting our website at www.nadstewardship.org. You can use them either in conjunction with the offering appeals or in place of. They average between a-minute-and-a-half to two minutes in length.

Faithful stewardship is a matter of the heart. We don't give to receive love and blessings from God. We give because *we have already* received God's love and blessings. We give because our hearts and lives are full of the joy of the Lord, and giving is a natural response. We give because we want to live out God's character of abundant generosity as exhibited through the giving of the Ultimate gift: His Son.

In 2019, the North American Division is celebrating the 100th anniversary of Family Ministries. Within these appeals, you will find several appeals focused on family. To discover more resources to assist you in emphasizing family ministries in your local church, go to www.adventistfamilyministries.com.

God's blessings to you as you help others experience the joy of faithful stewardship.



John Mathews
Director



Bonita J. Shields
Associate Director



Seventh-day Adventist Church
NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION

STEWARDSHIP

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

James Hoffer is a retired Seventh-day Adventist minister. He served for 46 years as a pastor in the Ohio, Michigan, and Chesapeake conferences, including six years as a departmental secretary in Uruguay and Brazil. He is an author, public speaker, poet, editor, proofreader, musician, and linguist fluent in Spanish and Portuguese, with a working knowledge of German and Italian. After retiring, he was a copy editor and proofreader for the Review and Herald Publishing Association in Hagerstown, Maryland. He is the author of the book, *Secrets and Mysteries of the Lost Ark: A Bible Adventure* (www.lostarkseminar.com). Since 1985, Jim has served as world president of the Adventist Amateur Radio Association International (www.aarai.org). He and his wife, Ruth, reside in Berkeley Springs, West Virginia.



ABOUT THE READINGS

This material can be translated, printed, or photocopied by Seventh-day Adventist entities without securing further permission. Republished documents should include the credit line: North American Division Stewardship Ministries.

Scripture quotations identified CEV are from the Contemporary English Version. Copyright © American Bible Society 1991, 1995. Used by permission. Texts credited to NKJV are from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1979, 1980, 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved. Scripture quotations marked NLT are taken from the *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2007 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

ABOUT THE PERSONAL GIVING PLAN

The North American Division encourages the use of the Personal Giving Plan. The plan was developed to assist members in systematic giving, and suggests that in addition to returning 10 percent of a member's personal income as tithe, certain percentages be dedicated as offering to three main categories:

- Local Church Budget 3-5 percent
- Conference Advance 1-2 percent
(*Education, evangelism, VBS, summer camps, and union magazines*)
- World Budget 1-3 percent
(*To support global mission needs and other items*)

Dear Presenter,

Thank you for your willingness to share the offering appeals with your local congregation. It is a wonderful privilege and a gratifying responsibility! Below are some suggestions to help you be as effective as possible as you share these reading with your congregation:

PRAY: Pray for the power of the Holy Spirit, and that God will use your words to speak to the hearts of the congregation.

PRACTICE: Read through the appeal at least three times to familiarize yourself with it. Find key words (underline or highlight them) to emphasize throughout the reading. Strive to share these readings with excellence.

PREPARE: There may be times when other materials are sent to your local church to distribute or present along with the appeal. Please use them accordingly and determine how they can be used most effectively.

PRESENT WITH PASSION: As you present, read slowly and clearly, yet enthusiastically. It is an amazing privilege and responsibility to lead out in giving during the worship service. Fill your heart and mind with the thoughts presented, and God will do the rest.

PRAY: In your personal devotions, present to God what is on your heart as it relates to the appeal. He will give you thoughts for your offertory prayer. Then, as you pray with the congregation, please keep the prayer concise and to the point.

May God richly bless you and speak through you as we take this journey together in 2019!

January 5, 2019

Local Church Budget

Negative inventory. At this time of year, many stores are involved in taking inventory as they prepare to file their business tax returns. One of the terms that has come out of this process is “negative inventory.”

As they attempt to reconcile their computer records between the goods they believe they have on hand and the actual amount, sometimes there is an unaccountable difference. Sadly, “negative inventory” reflects goods that are no longer there due to shoplifting or employee dishonesty.

This is a good time for us as Christians to take stock of our giving and lay good, solid plans to be faithful in this new year.

What does “faithful” actually mean? God’s Word in Malachi tells us: “Bring ye *all* the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it” (Mal. 3:10, KJV, emphasis supplied).

As we begin this new year, let’s ask God to help us be faithful in our return of tithe and giving of offerings. We don’t want any negative inventory in God’s house!

January 12, 2019

Religious Liberty

Religious Liberty. Nothing is more important than liberty of conscience and religious freedom. We were created to serve by choice, and Christ came to free us from the result of bad choices. The good news of the Gospel is a message of freedom.

It is no accident that the Adventist church has championed religious liberty from its very beginnings. Early Adventists suffered steep fines and even chain gang imprisonment under abusive Sunday blue laws. Our prophetic imperative told us that even in a land of blessed freedoms, powerful forces will again try to compel all to worship falsely.

Our church early on opposed a national Sunday law before Congress. Our church for well over 100 years has sent *Liberty* magazine to legislators and community leaders to clarify the great issues of conscience. Our church has defended Adventists in the workplace. And by radio, television, and a myriad of member events and outreach events, it keeps the freedom bells ringing.

In this offering today, you are making all this a continuing reality. Give as if your very liberties are at stake. They are. If the watchmen cry not, who will give the warning? — Lincoln Steed, editor *Liberty* magazine and associate director of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty, North American Division.

January 19, 2019

Local Church Budget

Martin Luther King. My wife and I happened to be in Memphis, Tennessee, in early April of 1968, visiting friends. They took us on a ride to the motel where Martin Luther King, Jr., had just been assassinated on April 4. It was not yet a memorial; just a second-story room roped off with police tape. We stood there mute, thinking about the tragedy that had recently occurred. It was a solemn moment, and in our thoughts, we paid tribute to one whom we now consider to be a great hero of our nation, a victim of prevailing racial hatred.

Martin Luther King Jr. was an American Baptist minister and activist who became the most visible spokesperson and leader in the civil rights movement. He is best known for his role in the advancement of civil rights using the tactics of nonviolence and civil disobedience based on his Christian beliefs and inspired by the nonviolent activism of Mahatma Gandhi. – Wikipedia.

So here we are more than 50 years since his death. We reflect on other heroes from many lands, such as Mother Teresa, Martin Luther, and Nelson Mandela. Our church has had heroes and special people as well, and continues to have them.

Undoubtedly, the great majority of heroes remain unsung and unknown. Today, we have the opportunity to be heroes for Christ and His church, by being faithful to our calling. Please give generously today.

January 26, 2019

Michigan Advance Partners

The furthest north in the Michigan Conference, the Houghton Seventh-day Adventist Church is in an area of the Upper Peninsula that can average hundreds of inches of snowfall annually. Our building had been in need of roof repair or replacement for some time. In 2017, our church was seeking to undergo this major project and have things completed in time for the upcoming winter. Having a new roof was a clear priority for the church family, but we were not certain how we were going to be able to pay for such a large project. Prayers went up to God, and members began to seek to raise funds and contribute toward the need.

One of our members, Karen Sotala, reflected on how our church could apply to receive assistance through Michigan Advance Partners (MAP). As Pastor Sean Brizendine and the board decided to make the request, we were so thankful that as the project coalesced with our church's new roof, \$7,400 from MAP was approved and sent to help us pay for the project.

The principle behind MAP reflects the invitation to "let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others" (Philippians 2:4, NKJV). We thank God for how each church in Michigan, including our own local church in Houghton, gets to be a part of making MAP possible to bring blessing to our sister churches. Each person's cheerful willingness to give faithfully reflects the overflow of our Heavenly Father's love who gave His beloved Son to save us and provide for our every need. May God bless you as you remember MAP.

February 2, 2019

Local Church Budget

Groundhog Day. Even Punxsutawney Phil has his day in the sun! As we consider this whimsical, legendary creature that supposedly makes his appearance each February and predicts the soon advent of Spring, we know that in some minds the groundhog or woodchuck is a nuisance, raiding gardens and leaving big holes in the ground. On the plus side, however, their abandoned dens provide homes for foxes and skunks that in turn eat mice and destructive field insects. And groundhogs are even used in biomedical research. Their susceptibility to a virus similar to human hepatitis B has made them valuable to researchers in finding a cure for the human affliction.

Who would have thought! But then, who would have thought that a church organization that began with a handful of believers in the mid-1800s would now number well over 20 million! This is all because of our wonderful Adventist message and our deep devotion to evangelism, both public and personal. And it is no doubt also due to our faithfulness in tithes and offerings, which fund the mission.

When you think about it, however, the early Christians in Acts 2 had no organizational infrastructure, but what they did have was lots of love for one another. They provided strongly for the needy among them, and they went forth preaching the Word in great faith.

Let us today demonstrate great faith and love as we return a faithful tithe and give liberally to the needs of our congregation.

February 9, 2019

Adventist Television Ministries

Back to “normal.” On February 14, 1991, a pastor received a phone call from another pastor inviting him to go as a translator on a mission trip to build a church in the Dominican Republic. Their other translator had had a change of plans, so he was asked to go with only two days’ notice.

After a week away from home living in rather primitive conditions, how good it felt to take a nice hot shower and crawl into one’s own clean bed! How nice to get back to “normal”!

However, “normal” for millions of the people of the world means living constantly on the edge of starvation; barely surviving, scraping by on only a few dollars per year; living in a tiny wooden cabin, eight or more people to a family; walls covered with newspaper; carrying water from the community faucet; washing “clothes” (maybe more like rags) by hand at the same faucet or in the nearby river.

And yet . . . one member of the mission group commented, “How can they be so happy?””

I encourage you today to support the World Budget, which includes Adventist Television Ministries such as Hope TV, *Faith for Today*, *Breath of Life*, *It is Written*, and others. These ministries help spread the Gospel to around the world. And let’s help these joyful people come to know the source of their joy!

February 16, 2019

Local Church Budget

Christian Parenting Day. While we have been called to go out into the world and make disciples for Jesus, we can't forget that we have a mission field inside the walls of our own home. Ellen G. White wrote in the book, *The Adventist Home*, "Our work for Christ is to begin with the family, in the home...There is no missionary field more important than this" (p. 35).

As parents, we play the most important role in the life of our children as we disciple them to be followers of Jesus and accept His free gift of forgiveness and eternal life. While we may teach them, it is much more important that we *show* them what it means to be a disciple.

When you set aside the tithe and offerings, write a check and put it inside the envelope, or when you go online to do the same, invite your child to sit by you and explain to them what you're doing and why. Your example of gratitude for God's goodness, of joyfully giving, and financial support of the ministry of the church is critically important as they develop these same traits.

Today is Christian Parenting Day. Give your child the tithes and offerings you have brought and let them place them in the offering plate. Since today's offerings are for the local church budget, take the time to explain to your child what that means and what the funds will be used for. You will be planting in their minds the importance of supporting the ministry of your local church.—Claudio Consuegra, NAD Family Ministries

February 23, 2019

Michigan Advance Partners

Where can you ice skate, swim, and take a mud bath? Yep, that would be the Detroit Northwest church parking lot. Or at least that's what the people used to say. In fact, it's really bad when your guest speakers have to include in their sermon an appeal to encourage the congregation to do something about this ever-shifting pit of gravel.

In reality, the property on which the church sits never had a parking lot. Grass which had been driven on and sprinkled with gravel over the years became a pit of despair. It had gotten so bad that members and friends would have to negotiate when they would come to church depending on how the weather would affect their ability to move about when they got out of their vehicles. In winter we were assured to have an ice-skating rink, which scared many of our seniors, in April it was a swimming pool, which all our children loved, but the parents not so much, and it was muddy in May. Then there was the occasional flat tire due to the unrecognizable objects that would puncture them and leave folks stranded.

As you can see, we truly needed something to be done, yet did not have the funds to make a parking lot a reality, until we were blessed to received assistance from the MAP program. Thanks to these funds, the Detroit Northwest Church was able to install a concrete parking lot. Now, we have more than enough parking for programs and events, as well as not having to worry about some of our most vulnerable members, such as seniors, being able to make it safely into the building without a fall. Thanks to these funds our members, visitors, and friends no longer have to wade through the red sea to enter into church. First impressions are important and with God's help and yours, those who visit God's church in Northwest Detroit will no longer be frightened away by an obstacle course before entering God's sanctuary.

March 2, 2019

Local Church Budget

The water's edge. Pastor and Mrs. James Hoffer once lived in St. Joseph, Michigan, just a mile or so from Glenlord Beach on Lake Michigan. When they moved there in 1989, there was a nice swimming area and sandy beach. Now, due to shoreline erosion, there is nothing. Over the years, erosion has claimed whole houses and radically altered the landscape. Barriers prevent people from venturing too close.

What causes erosion? The gentle and incessant lapping of water, the prevailing westerly winds, the action of rain and snow beating down—all have their effect. When roots or foundations aren't deeply secure, the elements slowly but surely wreak disintegration, and sand, rocks, and even structures topple into the lake.

This process is exactly what happens when little indiscretions and the world's influences begin eating away at our Christian foundation. We don't notice the erosion until it's too late. That is why we are encouraged with these words: "Just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in Him, rooted and built up in Him" (Col. 2:6, 7). It is the daily commitment and attention to your root system that will keep your life standing tall and strong.

Today's offering is for Local Church Budget. Help us help others come to Jesus and stay close to Him. And prevent spiritual erosion!

March 9, 2019

Adventist World Radio

Adventist World Radio. “Change was in the wind in 1989 when the Cold War ended, the Berlin Wall came down, and Romania was liberated. As Romania’s Communist leader, Nicolae Ceaușescu, and his wife fled for their lives, they were captured, tried, and executed.

“Ilie Radu and his wife, Lidia, felt free for the first time in their lives. Ilie began to search for answers to the questions that had been burning in his heart about God and about what happens when you die....

“After a few years, while studying the Bible, they discovered that Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River and not sprinkled. Ilie immediately requested that his new church family baptize him. He was informed that he had been sprinkled as a baby and that was good enough. Feeling devastated, Ilie began again to search for truth....

“Then four years ago, Ilie was working as a switcher for the railroad.... One day he noticed that a fellow worker had a radio app on his cell phone, and when they had some downtime waiting on the trains, he would listen to the radio on his phone. That gave Ilie the idea to do the same, so he began listening to a Christian station while at work. The station he liked most was the very popular Radio Vocea Sperantei, an affiliate of Adventist World Radio!”

Would you like to know the rest of the story? Go to the Adventist World Radio website, www.awr.org. And please give liberally to AWR today!

March 16, 2019

Local Church Budget

God's care for His own. Swallows can fly 7,000 miles without a chart, compass, or radio beam and land at the place they left six months before.

Spiders can make a silken rope, creating materials in their own chemical laboratory, very fine but strong enough for their own transport through the air.

Beavers are engineers, constructing without the aid of tools, cement, or precision instruments, bridges, tunnels, roadways, canals, and dams that last for years.

Bees, wasps, and ants solve their housing problem by building well-ventilated, weatherproof, well-designed, and practical apartment houses.

A young squid travels by jet propulsion. He swims by pumping water through a tube along his thin, streamlined body. When pursued, he can gather great speed, and he always jets backwards. When he gets going fast enough, he can set his fins at an angle and take off into the air. He has been seen to fly as far as sixty yards with one takeoff, leaving his foes far behind.

Can a Creator God like that take care of you and me? Of course! And shouldn't we respond to His loving care, most of which we take for granted, by living just as close to Him as we can? Yes!

Let us praise God for His blessings and respond in loving gifts for Him today.

March 23, 2019

Michigan Advance Partners

The Estey Seventh-day Adventist Church was in desperate need of repairs. The block walls of the building were being held together by steel cables. The roof was leaking in several spots and many of the windows had been shot out by vandalizers. Estey is a country church and there would be no way that members could afford to pay for all the renovation costs.

However, thanks to Michigan Advance Partners (MAP) and its generous donors they got a new roof, siding, windows, and even a new sound system. Thanks to MAP the light in Estey will continue to shine and the doors will remain open.

We are one family. Whether you attend a large city church, or a small country church, MAP funds are there to help those who get in a pinch, or just can't afford to make the repairs or renovations. Please consider giving generously to MAP as you may be saving a light in the community.

March 30, 2019

Evangelism

The previous two *Unlock Revelation* series have brought astounding results. The excitement and synergy of uniting together our public efforts and advertising brought attention all across the state of Michigan. More than 150 lay preachers shared the Gospel at nearly 200 sites.

More than 5,000 non-Adventists and 10,000 Adventists attended both series. Some question the effectiveness of mailing handbills, but nearly 50% of attendees came from a flier in the mail or from seeing a billboard. Most of the other half came from personal invitations from a friend, neighbor, or co-worker. Certainly, the effectiveness of personal ministries united with public evangelism is vitally important in the success of soul-winning. Thousands of members also experienced a revival in their life as they worked in and attended the meetings, hearing our most precious message preached with power from the Holy Spirit. As we surge ahead in 2019, *Prophecy Unfolds* will be our next united, Conference-wide effort, beginning in September. We want to reach more people than ever with the everlasting Gospel. A plan is being developed for a coordinated outreach to dark areas in Michigan. We hope to send workers into areas where there is no Adventist presence to build up a work and even plant churches in due time. As we look into the world, Jesus is coming soon, and He longs to use His people to proclaim His message of love. He wants to specifically use you. Will you give yourself fully to Jesus to be used by Him to spread His Word with those who need to know Him? Jesus desires for His people to surrender their hearts, time, talents, and resources completely to His cause and make Him the priority of their lives. Today's offering for MI Evangelism will be a first step opportunity to be a part of this special effort.

April 6, 2019

Local Church Budget

Tax time! Through the years, the government has discussed whether to continue the deduction for charitable gifts. The day may come when this is no longer allowed. Questions in the minds of churches and other non-profits are, “How much would this affect their revenue?” and, “How much is this tax break an incentive in people’s giving?”

We are used to the idea of the charitable deduction because of the countries in which we live, but many other countries don’t have this benefit. Yet our people in these places are nevertheless faithful in their tithes and offerings.

A question to ask ourselves might be, “How does this affect *my* giving?”

Jesus tells us: “Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly” (Matt. 6:2-4, NKJV).

So, let us enjoy the deduction while we have it, but continue to be faithful regardless of what governments do or don’t do. Today’s offerings is for Local Church Budget.

April 13, 2019

NAD Christian Record

Let's take a trip in our imaginations. Think ahead to what heaven and the New Earth might be like. Who from the Bible would you like to talk to first? Everyone will, of course, want to talk with Jesus, face-to-face. What's the first question you'd like to ask Jesus when you sit at His feet? Who is the first family member you hope to see?

All of us, I'm certain, will have questions to ask when we get to heaven. However, there's one question that many of us don't think too much about: "What will I see *when* I can see?"

Until that day comes, you and I have an opportunity to introduce our friends who are blind to Jesus through the programs and materials provided through Christian Record Services, Inc. You and I, through our World Budget offering gifts today, can put the Sabbath School lesson, Bible studies, magazines, and Christian library books into the hands of people who are blind. You can provide time in nature through National Camps for Blind Children, a Christian Record program for youth and adults. Your gift can start or nurture the spiritual journey of an individual who is blind.

Imagine it: Heaven, the New Earth, and time with our Savior, seeing and experiencing a new life with perfect eyesight and bodies that are healed and restored. What a day that will be! Thank you for your gifts today that plant seeds for the kingdom in the hearts of people who are blind.—Jeri Lyn Rogge, Communication Director, Christian Record Services, Inc.

April 20, 2019

Local Church Budget

Easter.

Jesus and Alexander died at thirty-three;
One lived and died for self; one died for you and me.
The Greek died on a throne; the Jew died on a cross.
One's life a triumph seemed; the other but a loss.
One led vast armies forth; the other walked alone;
One shed a whole world's blood; the other gave His own.
One won the world in life and lost it all in death;
The other lost His life to win the whole world's faith.

Jesus and Alexander died at thirty-three;
One died in Babylon; and one on Calvary.
One gained all for self; and one Himself He gave;
One conquered every throne; the other every grave.
The one made himself god; the God made Himself less;
The one lived but to blast; the other but to bless.
When died the Greek, forever fell his throne of swords;
But Jesus died to live forever Lord of lords.

Jesus and Alexander died at thirty-three;
The Greek made all men slaves; the Jew made all men free.
One built a throne on blood; the other built on love;
The one was born of earth; the other from above.
One won all this earth, to lose all earth and heaven;
The other gave up all, that all to Him be given.
The Greek forever died; the Jew forever lives;
He loses all who gets, and wins all things who gives.

—Charles Ross Weede

April 27, 2019

Michigan Advance Partners

Well used door. The Port Huron Blue Water Church moved out of Port Huron and into the city of Marysville after building a new church facility in 1977. Over the last 40 years, the exterior doors have certainly felt the impact of Michigan's ever-changing weather. Those doors have endured heavy snowfall, icy conditions, salt, sub-zero temperatures, heavy rains, humid summer heat, and the list could go on. With the continual changing of seasons and varying degrees of weather, those wooden, exterior doors have done what any wood door would do in those situations—fall apart.

Seeing that the doors were in desperate need of replacement, the church went to work finding a contractor who could replace those old wooden doors with new fiberglass or steel doors that would last much longer. However, the church quickly found out that replacing exterior doors on a commercial building can get rather expensive. After getting quotes ranging from \$8,000 to \$20,000, the church decided to ask Michigan Advanced Partners (MAP) for financial assistance. And praise the Lord; MAP was willing to help out the Port Huron Blue Water Church with \$4,000.

This is a huge blessing for a small church such as Blue Water, and the members are thrilled to have the old doors finally replaced. Without MAP, it would have been financially difficult to accomplish this project. Praise God there are faithful people willing to donate to ministries such as MAP, so that churches keep their facilities properly maintained for the honor and glory of God.

May 4, 2019

Local Church Budget

Lest we also forget. When London was being blitzed during World War II, this article appeared in one of the British newspapers:

“We have been a pleasure-loving people, dishonoring God’s day, picnicking and bathing. Now the seashore is barred—no picnics, no bathing.

“We have preferred motor travel to church going. Now there is a shortage of motor fuel.

“We have ignored the ringing of church bells calling us to worship. Now the bells cannot ring, except to warn us of an invasion.

“We have left our churches half empty when they should have been well filled with worshippers. Now they are in ruins.

“We would not listen to the way of peace. Now we are forced to listen to the way of war.

“The money we would not give to the Lord’s work, now is taken from us in higher taxes and the high cost of living.

“The food for which we refused to give God thanks, now is unobtainable.

“The service we refused to give to God, is now conscripted for our country.

“Lives we refused to live under God’s control are now under the nation’s control.

“Nights we would not spend watching unto prayer are now spent anxiously in air raid precautions.”

“Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord.”- Ps. 33:12

May 11, 2019

Disaster and Famine Relief

Adventist Community Services Disaster Response has been serving the community for years. In the small town of Beaumont, Texas, more than 50 percent of homes in some of the communities were destroyed as raging waters flooded the area. ACS DR visited one senior who pleaded that we come and look at the damage. We went into her home and the smell of mold and mildew permeated our nostrils. We stepped through the mud that still covered portions of the floor as she pointed to where the water had come in her home. As we looked at the damage, she pulled out her cell phone to show us the river-like stream that ran through the house directly where we stood. We couldn't help but notice the black mold moving its way up the walls of her home. Showing concern, we explained that it was not safe to live in a building under these types of conditions. She looked at us with earnest eyes and simply asked, "Where would you have me go?" We had no answer.

Experiencing these types of events convinced ACS DR that we needed to find additional ways to help in recoveries such as this one. Through many discussions with Union leadership, we created a Rebuild Program that is presently taking shape in both the Southern and Southwestern Unions. While this work is somewhat different from our norm, ACS DR is working to address needs in our Communities. –Derrick Lea, NAD Adventist Community Services

May 18, 2019

Local Church Budget

Adventist Single Adult Ministries Sabbath. Look around your church and you will notice church members and guests who have never been married, who are divorced, or who have lost their loved one. They are as important to the church as anyone else, and yet, often they feel forgotten or neglected by the church.

The apostle Paul wrote to the unmarried in the church at Corinth that not being married provides some opportunities that those who are married do not have. “I want all of you to be free from worry. An unmarried man worries about how to please the Lord. But a married man has more worries. He must worry about the things of this world, because he wants to please his wife. So, he is pulled in two directions. Unmarried women and women who have never been married worry only about pleasing the Lord, and they keep their bodies and minds pure. But a married woman worries about the things of this world, because she wants to please her husband. What I am saying is for your own good—it isn't to limit your freedom. I want to help you to live right and to love the Lord above all else,” (1 Cor. 7:32-35, CEV).

Whether married or unmarried, we all can participate in the ministry of the church. Through our prayers, personal efforts, and financial support, we contribute and assume responsibility and ownership for the mission with which God has entrusted us. The offering today, which is designated for the local church budget, demonstrates our response to God's generosity to us.—Claudio Consuegra, NAD Family Ministries

May 25, 2019

Michigan Advance Partners

Have you noticed that there are special times when it seems that heaven has come very near? It was that way when the multitudes gathered together around Jesus on the day He fed the five thousand. The multitude was so caught up in the scene that the book *The Desire of Ages* records that “The day seemed to them like heaven upon earth.” (DA, 365) It goes on to describe that they were even unconscious of how long it had been since they had eaten any food. Occasions like these are very precious to those who want to press closer to Jesus. This is how many of us feel about Camp Meeting.

Michigan Conference Camp Meeting has been one of those yearly gatherings where heaven seems to come very near. It is a place where both the young and those with length of days are eager to press closer to Jesus.

It is hard to imagine Michigan Conference without Camp Meeting but without the faithful giving of God’s people Camp Meeting could not be what we know it as. One way to systematically give to Camp Meeting and so many other things that we hold dear here in Michigan is to commit to giving 1% of your monthly income to Michigan Advance Partners or MAP for short.

Today the loose offering is for MAP which helps to support Camp Meeting. You can also give through the Tithes & Offering Envelope in the pews or through online giving. May God continue to bless our Camp Meetings and each one for giving to this special cause. Amen.

June 1, 2019

Local Church Budget

Summertime dangers. Mosquitoes, flies, poison ivy, ticks—these are some of the nuisances that we may have to cope with during the warmer months. More serious are the dangers associated with sunburn (or even skin cancer), drowning, and increased risk of automobile injury due to the crowded highways.

But we should be even more concerned with the spiritual dangers that abound in summertime. Summer is when many spend more time in leisure activities, and sometimes because of travel and vacations our normal schedules are interrupted. It is much easier to neglect our personal devotions and attendance at our home church.

This can have a lasting negative impact on some people. Any time the patterns of our lives are interrupted, for whatever reason, there is potential for profound spiritual change.

On the positive side, summer presents wonderful opportunities for sharing our faith. We can stock our cars with literature and leave tracts in strategic places (inside of motel Bibles, in restrooms, for example). We can make new friends for Jesus in parks and camping areas and tourist sites.

Faithful members mail in their tithes and offerings even when they are away, because they understand that their church's needs continue in their absence. Thank you for remembering the needs of your local church family even when you're away.

June 8, 2019

Local Church Budget

Jason and Shannon, who only recently started to seek the Lord and attend church, were almost out of money. They had \$75 dollars left in their pockets, which was well short of what they needed to make it to their next paycheck, and only half of what they needed to get their license plates renewed. However, that Sabbath Jason was impressed to put all of it into the offering plate. "How can I do that," he questioned. I don't even have enough as it is. But the impression continued to press him, and when the offering plate was passed, he put in the full \$75.

After the service as they were leaving church a woman approached them. "I felt impressed to give this to you," she said, handing them some cash. Jason and Sarah thanked her and left to go home. "When they counted the money, they were astonished to find they had been given \$140, almost double the amount they gave to God, and just what they needed to pay for the renewal of their license plate. They were amazed by God's faithfulness and joyful because now they were able to continue to come to prayer meeting, church services, and Bible studies."

God does not always take care of us in such dramatic ways, but He never fails us when we are faithful to Him. David wrote in Psalm 37:25; *"I have been young and am now old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his descendants begging bread."*

As you give for local budget today, don't be afraid to give to God. Claim His promises and trust His word.

June 15, 2019

Local Church Budget

Father's Day. A pastor recounts: "Several years ago, I received a phone call from Mary, one of our church members. She sounded quite excited and wanted my wife and me to come by her house to hear a marvelous story. Her elderly mother and disabled brother had been living with Mary and her husband for several years, but the mother had recently died. Now, Mary was visiting the Social Security office to report her mother's passing. Little did Mary know the surprise awaiting her:

"She handed over the death certificate and was going to make arrangements to halt her mother's monthly payments and change her brother's payments to herself. Then the lady said to Mary, 'What about the benefits from your father?' To which Mary replied, 'My father has been dead for many years.' Then the lady got a strange look on her face and said, 'No, dear, your father is very much alive.' Mary was totally shocked. Then the lady said, 'Listen, I am not allowed to reveal his whereabouts, but if you will write a letter, we will forward it to him.'

"As it turned out, Mary's parents had gone through a very bitter divorce when Mary and her brother were little, and her mother never told her about her father. Needless to say, a few days later her dad called from Chicago, and it brought an exceedingly happy reunion! And she was able to connect with half-sisters she never even knew about. God is so good."

On Father's Day weekend, let us remember our local church family needs, and look forward to one day seeing our heavenly Father face to face!

June 22, 2019

Michigan Advance Partners

The St Charles Church recently requested Michigan Advance Partners (MAP) funds to help put in an asphalt parking lot. For over a century the church had a dirt and gravel parking lot that would get pretty muddy in the rainy seasons.

With the assistance of the MAP funds they were able to install the parking lot giving it a much nicer curb appeal.

Without the MAP funds, it would have been a hardship on the church members who are advanced in age. Please be sure to keep on giving so that our churches can have the support they need for larger projects they otherwise couldn't afford. Thank you for your generous contribution! Praise the Lord!

June 29, 2019

Camp Sagola Lodge

Camp Sagola is a Ministry Training Center/Summer Camp in the Upper Peninsula owned by the Michigan Conference but operated primarily by the sisterhood of churches in the Upper Peninsula (U.P.). At the facility the Michigan Conference sponsors a three-week Summer Camp program for young people ages 8 – 17, a five-day Camp Meeting over Labor Day, North Woods Romance (A Marriage Retreat), Women's Retreat, Men's Retreat, and other church ministry training events. The sisterhood of churches in the U. P. also hold a Spring and Fall Retreat where all the churches come together for a weekend of training and spiritual revival, a teen snow outing and other church training events.

Six years ago, the main lodge which contained the kitchen/dining area, three meeting areas for seminars and young people, store, medical room, five sleeping rooms, showers, restrooms, and storage areas burned down.

A new lodge has been built replacing a part of what existed before. The upstairs which contains the kitchen/dinning area, restrooms, store and office is complete and is being used.

As soon as finances are available the downstairs, which will have up to six sleeping rooms, four meeting rooms for seminars and young people, a medical room, shower areas, and storage will be completed. Three family cabins and nine RV sites which were close to the old lodge also need to be replaced.

Partner with your fellow brothers and sisters in Christ in sharing a portion of the blessings God has given you and experience His provision for the work of His church.

Today's offering goes to the Camp Sagola lodge.

July 6, 2019

Local Church Budget

Independence Day. In the year 2000, the General Conference session was held in Toronto, Canada. On July 4, the people of the city went to work and the General Conference did its normal business. You see, July 4 is not a holiday in Canada. It was a good reminder for us that “this world is not my home.”

It may surprise you to learn that the United States is one of the few countries where the national flag is displayed in the church sanctuary. Adventists in other countries feel that that would be mixing politics with religion. Americans, of course, consider that they have a spiritual heritage received from the founding fathers of the nation. Their patriotism has almost a spiritual feeling to it.

I personally have no problem displaying the flag or honoring our country, but the faithful Adventist always has in the back of his or her mind that someday even here the situation will change. Right now, we are prospering beyond measure and way too comfortable. Hopefully, we are taking full advantage of these conditions to be faithful in our stewardship and in sharing the gospel with others around us.

Jesus told Pilate that His kingdom was not of this world. As we celebrate the birth of our nation this month, let us also bear in mind our greater loyalty to Christ, and continue to strive for the coming of His kingdom. And let us support His kingdom work by giving to our local church this morning.

July 13, 2019

NAD Women's Ministries

Women's ministries. Today's offering is for the North American Division (NAD) Women's Ministries, which was first established in 1898 at the urging of Ellen G. White. In the book *Evangelism*, we find her marching orders to the women of the church: "The Lord has a work for women as well as for men. They may take their places in His work at this crisis, and He will work through them. If they are imbued with a sense of their duty and labor under the influence of the Holy Spirit, they will have just the self-possession required for this time. The Saviour will reflect upon these self-sacrificing women the light of His countenance, and will give them a power that exceeds that of men. They can do in families a work that men cannot do, a work that reaches the inner life. They can come close to the hearts of those whom men cannot reach. Their labor is needed" (*Evangelism*, p. 464).

All 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 classes in English as a second language, 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. I invite you to make a generous gift today to affirm their work and ministry.

July 20, 2019

Local Church Budget

The Clear Word. Several years ago, a pastor was preparing to officiate at his son's wedding in Minnesota. It was Saturday evening after sunset, and all were at the church going through the rehearsal.

The groom, the best man, and the dad were up on the platform awaiting the entrance of the bridal party. The flower girl proceeded, pretending to scatter flower petals as she went. Next came the Bible boy, empty-handed, pretending to carry a Bible. So, the pastor remarked, "Hmm, an invisible Bible." Without missing a beat, the best man quipped, "Yes, it's the *Clear Word!*" And of course, everyone had a good laugh.

Many thousands have been blessed by Dr. Jack Blanco's Bible paraphrase, *The Clear Word*, as well as by his life story as a little boy in Germany. How clear is God's Word to you and me?

God has made it clear in His Word about returning tithe and giving offerings. His desire is for us to remember that He is our Great Provider for all of our needs.

Today's offering goes to our local church budget. At this midpoint of the year, please make it a matter of earnest prayer regarding your giving. God has tremendous blessings in store for you if you are faithful!

July 27, 2019

Michigan Advance Partners

Boyne City SDA has had a pressing need to update their church entrance for some time and requested funds from Michigan Advance Partners (MAP) to undergo this project.

Upon receiving a generous amount of MAP funds, the Boyne City Church realized that just updating the entrance wasn't enough!

Using the funds they received from MAP as a starting point, the Boyne City Church is currently raising additional money to update their entrance, repair the sanctuary, and pave the parking lot to their community service center.

In this case, MAP has given proper incentive to accomplish these necessary repairs. The goal is almost met, repairs will get underway in 2019.

Thank you for being faithful stewards and contributing to Michigan Advance Partners.

August 3, 2019

Local Church Budget

Too early. A pastor in Ohio had a speaking appointment in Indiana one Sabbath morning. He calculated the travel time, and left his home promptly to make sure of an on time arrival.

As he drove into the church parking lot, he found himself to be the first one to arrive. So, he patiently waited, figuring that very soon he would begin to see other cars pulling in. As he waited and waited, he began to get upset. Where were the people? After a few more minutes, he became alarmed and then angry. Again, *where were the people?*

As his patience grew thinner, he considered returning home, when suddenly a few cars began to appear, and then more and more. He hadn't realized that he had crossed the line from Eastern time to Central time. He was an hour early.

How many times have you or I had to say "Oh!" when we have made a hasty judgment based on poor information? Sometimes it is better to be more patient and wait until we know the whole story.

Smooth human relations can sometimes be a challenge, but it is an important and necessary part of getting along as part of God's family. As decisions are made about important issues in the church, let us go with cooler heads and committed hearts, that God's work may go forward. Please give liberally to His work today.

August 10, 2019

Oakwood/Andrews/Loma Linda Universities

Our marvelous educational system. A Seventh-day Adventist man who went through our educational system wrote: “My parents became Seventh-day Adventists when I was 8 years old. My mother had been a Jehovah’s Witness and my father a former Adventist. They were not attending any church at the time, but they allowed my brother and me to attend Sunday school with the neighborhood children. The day we came home from Sunday school with notions of going to heaven when you die was the day our parents got to thinking about their spiritual responsibilities. You see, Jehovah’s Witnesses and Seventh-day Adventists have similar views on the state of the dead.

“A couple of years later we were enrolled in the local church school, and never again did we attend a non-Adventist school.

“I think back to that wonderful church school library, full of inspiring pioneer missionary stories; to our godly teachers and the Bible lessons through all levels of education; and to the lifelong friends we made along the way. Sadly, some of those friends have passed on, and some have left the faith of their childhood. But many of us have remained, and up into our later years still cherish our Adventist educational experience.”

Our universities and other schools are not perfect, because people are not perfect. But they certainly deserve our support today as we render God’s tithes and our offerings.

August 17, 2017

Local Church Budget

Anything for a buck. Commerce is an interesting phenomenon. There is a fine line between making money for our daily needs and making money because of greed. The human individual from day one is driven by thoughts of self-interest and self-benefit. It is in our very nature, and to some degree necessary for life but exploited by Satan to the extreme. From the baby crying because it is hungry to the business person pushing the envelope seeking to move upward, it is often about self.

Altruism and self-denial do not come naturally. Happy is the parent and blessed the child when by precept and example self-interest is suppressed and thinking of others is encouraged. A truly other-centered person is a miracle of God.

“The directions given by the Holy Spirit through the apostle Paul in regard to gifts, present a principle that applies also to tithing: ‘Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him.’ Parents *and children* are here included. Not only the rich, but the poor, are addressed. ‘Every man according as he purposeth in his heart [through the candid consideration of God’s prescribed plan], so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.’ The gifts are to be made in consideration of the great goodness of God to us”—*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 80, emphasis ours.

Today we have another opportunity to demonstrate our faithfulness and the joy of altruistic living.

August 24, 2019

Michigan Advance Partners

Have you ever experienced that moment when something you thought was impossible, suddenly becomes possible? At the beginning of every school year at Great Lakes Adventist Academy, doors that were previously closed, begin to open for families who never thought they could afford to send their children to a Christian boarding academy. We see the parents walking out of the Business Manager's office, their faces full of relief, eyes rimmed with tears. They have just been told that Project Assist can help with almost 30% of their child's school bill. The impossible has just become a reality for them.

Project Assist is a three-way matching program that partners the Michigan Conference, Great Lakes Adventist Academy, and the home churches of the participating students. MAP funds, given by members of the Michigan Conference, make it possible for programs like Project Assist to exist. By systematically giving 1% of your income to MAP, you are helping students with financial needs receive a high quality Seventh-day Adventist education.

There are almost 100 students at Great Lakes Adventist Academy this year who will benefit from this program. These are students who work hard to help pay their tuition. They strive to succeed academically. But most importantly, they want to develop and strengthen their personal relationship with Jesus in a spiritually nurturing environment. They want to have friends who understand their beliefs and don't bully or judge them. They want teachers and staff who pray with them and for them. By supporting MAP, we are giving these students a world of possibilities in a world that once seemed impossible.

August 31, 2019

Local Church Budget

Pastor Chris had always been faithful in returning God's tithe to Him. However, a young pastor's salary and three young children to raise left his checkbook empty at the end of each month. He could only afford to give 1% for offerings, or so he thought. During his daily prayer life, God impressed him to increase his offerings. Pastor Chris knew and trusted the Word of God, so he stepped out in faith. He would increase his offerings by one additional percent each month until he reached a full 10% offering.

At the end of each month the checkbook had been empty. However, as he increased his offerings month by month his account stayed in the black. By the time he reached 10% offerings there was more money in the checkbook than ever before, and he had not received a pay raise during that time.

How did it happen? Perhaps only God knew. His promises are sure. Ecclesiastes 11:1 says; "Cast your bread upon the waters, for you will find it after many days."

As you consider your offering to church budget today, will you give to God, trusting Him to return to you all that is needed to care for your family?

September 7, 2019

Local Church Budget

Men's Ministry Day of Prayer. When Claudio Consuegra, the current Family Ministries Director of the North American Division, was a young man, he began attending the Seventh-day Adventist Church and was receiving Bible instruction by the local church pastor. When they studied what the Bible said about tithes and offerings, Claudio became concerned. He had not been careful about money management and had fallen into a bad habit. He would get paid on Thursday, but by Monday all his money would be gone. He would then borrow money from friends to hold him over until the next paycheck.

When he was taught that God expects that the first 10 percent of our income be returned, he figured that would not be possible. His paycheck now didn't even last a week so, surely, finances would be even tighter with 10 percent less to spend. When he told his pastor of his concern, the pastor challenged him to test God and claim His promises. Claudio prayed and put God to the test. The amazing thing is that the very first week he returned God's tithe, his paycheck lasted until the next paycheck, even after paying back his debts. Since that day, more than 40 years ago, he has been returning God's tithe and giving offerings faithfully, and God has shown His faithfulness and love to him and his family in many different ways.

His daughters witnessed their parents' faithfulness and now as married women they follow the same practice. His prayers and his obedience have shown them what it means to be a spiritual head of household, as men of God are called to be.

September 14, 2019

Local Church Budget

Elizabeth began her nursing career in the early 1950's. At the end of each month she had little, if any, money left over from her \$200 salary after returning tithe, paying for room and board, and a \$100 car payment.

At that time, her home church was entering a building project. When Elizabeth received her pledge card, she questioned if she could contribute anything at all. Her co-workers had been talking about the nominal \$5 per month raise that they received each year. "I could give the \$5 raise money," she thought, and wrote in \$5 on her pledge card. Somehow, she just didn't feel right about that amount. She was convicted that she could give more. Quickly she erased the \$5, wrote \$20 on the card, and turned it in.

A few days later, her co-workers were buzzing about the "same old \$5 raise" they had received. Earlier that day the nursing supervisor had taken Elizabeth aside and given her her paycheck, asking her not to look inside until she went home. She explained that they wanted to reward Elizabeth's faithfulness, and if she opened her check, it might be awkward to discuss her raise with the others.

That evening when Elizabeth opened her pay envelope, she saw her raise: it was \$20, exactly what she needed to fulfill her pledge. God promises, "And if shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear." (Isaiah 65:24)

September 21, 2019

Local Church Budget

Grandparent's Day. Grandparents and grandchildren have a unique opportunity to learn lessons together across the generations. Grandparents have experienced the ups and downs of life, and can teach their grandchildren lessons of patience, planning, and perseverance so they can reach their goals in life.

Grandparents can teach their grandchildren about saving, investing, spending, and giving. Perhaps they have experienced the ups and downs of the economy, so they can tell them stories of what it's like to have more some days and less at other times.

Because many grew up and lived without much of the technology that surrounds us today, grandparents can teach their grandchildren how to communicate face-to-face and the importance of placing healthy boundaries around all of the technological gadgets that consume our time. Grandparents and grandchildren can do service projects together to help others make this world a better place. One way to accomplish this is by volunteering on projects or activities in your church and community. As you spend time together, you can share principles and life lessons that will help your grandchildren grow to be healthy adults and committed Christians.

The offering today is for the local church budget. The church can serve as the vehicle where people of different ages come together for the common goal of sharing the message of love from God to His children who don't know Him yet. Our generosity is a lesson to God's younger children and a tangible way to help others.—Claudio Consuegra

September 28, 2019

Michigan Advance Partners

Last year, the Williamston Church had three to four attending members each Sabbath. The struggle was real. They knew if something didn't happen, it would be difficult to keep the doors open in the future. As they knelt and prayed, they claimed promises that God would use them to reach out to others. They continued to pray. Not long after this, a young lady who had been listening to Strong Tower Radio visited the church one Sabbath. She began Bible Studies, and several months later, she was baptized. The little group next decided to pray for missing members, and several began to attend on varying Sabbaths. They were next convicted it was time to host an evangelistic series. One of the attending members invited several friends, and four of them came every night. On the opening weekend, 20 visitors attended, and the church was full. Members came from other area churches to help with the series. The everlasting Gospel through the Three Angels' Messages was preached. Christ was uplifted, and His truth was proclaimed. Hearts were touched, and lives were changed by the power of the Holy Spirit. At the end of the series, eight precious souls prepared for baptism and to be a part of God's remnant church. The members, new and old, are revived and excited at how God has answered their prayers. Strong Tower Radio, prayer, personal evangelism, missing member reclaiming, and public evangelism all worked together to more than double this little church. Why not surrender yourself and all that you have today to the cause of Christ and the building up of His kingdom? You will see modern day miracles right before your very eyes in your life and in the lives of those He reaches through you! Today's offering will be for Michigan Conference Evangelism.

October 5, 2019

Local Church Budget

Tornado! Some of us have seen major disasters and lived to tell about it. On June 8, 1953, the west side of Cleveland, Ohio, was hit by a major tornado. Pastor James Hoffer was a teenager at the time. The Hoffers' house was not seriously affected, other than a two-by-four sticking through the roof, a garage leaning almost off its foundation, and a yard full of glass shards. But houses down the street were completely destroyed, and neighborhood after neighborhood looked like a war zone. A baby near us was picked right out of her crib and smashed against a wall. All in all, many either died or were hurt.

The signs had been there—an eerie greenish hue to the sky, followed by golf-ball-sized hail and a massive storm. Fortunately, the Hoffer family was safe and sound as they fled to the basement.

Then, three years later a fire caused serious damage, and the same family had to move out into rented quarters for several months.

Our possessions are precious to us, but in perilous times our lives are of much more value. What value do you place on your possessions, your home, your vehicles, your income?

Jesus is coming soon. Let us send our wealth on ahead to His kingdom. Today, we're investing in His kingdom by giving to the Local Church Budget.

October 12, 2019

Voice of Prophecy / La Voz de la Esperanza

Radio Ministries. The Voice of Prophecy exists to proclaim the everlasting gospel of Christ—leading people to accept Jesus as their personal Savior and nurturing them in preparation for His soon return.

A leader in religious broadcasting for more than 88 years, the Voice of Prophecy focuses on God's love and heralds the soon return of Christ—providing hope to broken people and guidance for daily living. Founded in 1929 by H.M.S. Richards, the ministry continues today under the leadership of Speaker/Director Shawn Boonstra and Associate Speaker Jean Boonstra.

The Voice of Prophecy can be heard in nearly three dozen languages, and Bible lessons are available in more than 70 languages. Local Discover Bible Schools have been established in 2,400 churches across North America, with hundreds more around the world. And humanitarian projects in countries such as India and Myanmar are meeting physical as well as spiritual needs. As the Voice of Prophecy looks to the future, it will continue to focus on sharing the love of Christ with a hurting world.—from the Voice of Prophecy website, <https://www.voiceofprophecy.com/about>

October 19, 2019

Local Church Budget

Working for Jesus. There is nothing in this world more wonderful than working for Jesus! This can be done vicariously, sustaining other workers with your prayers, offerings, and words of encouragement. But even more wonderful is to become a soul-winner yourself.

Perhaps you are picturing someone knocking on doors or preaching, and you can't see yourself in that picture. However, there are many more ways to win souls, and at least one of them is suited to you and your individual personality and gifts.

It can begin right in church, within the four walls of the building. How about this for a starter: "Everyone a greeter." Yes, we have our officially appointed greeters, and they do a wonderful job. But it was never meant for the rest of us to just fade into the woodwork. Each one of us should make a point of giving a friendly greeting to both visitors and fellow members. We should be proactive and intentional. And, where possible, even invite them to our homes for a fellowship meal, or sit with them in church.

Instead of viewing church passively, we should think of it as an evangelistic tool; it exists to draw the lost into our fellowship, rather than being an exclusive club for our members. Let us faithfully give our tithes and offerings but let us also give of ourselves!

October 26, 2019

Michigan Advance Partners

Pressing Forward. As the world continues to deepen in chaos, we see on every hand signs that Jesus is coming soon. We should not just know God for ourselves, but also make Him known to others. We must personally know His word and proclaim it to the world. We must give the trumpet a distinct sound for we are living in earth's final moments. We must not merely preach the righteousness of Christ, but possess it in our own souls.

The latter rain will empower God's people to finish the work. However, there is a personal work of soul-winning God desires from each of us right now to prepare us for that time. We must give ourselves fully to the cause of Christ. We must be totally devoted to Him, fully surrendered to Him, and fully engaged for Him. The Michigan Conference is dedicated to serving the churches in their local mission to carry the message of Christ deeper and wider than ever.

As we partner together and lay our plans before the feet of Jesus, we believe He will guide and direct our footsteps. Let's press together more closely in unity with both each other and Heaven as we move forward in faith onward and upward to the Heavenly calling Christ has on each one of us. Will you become a light for Christ and His truth to those He brings to your path and share with them the words of life that can bring salvation and hope to those who are spiritually dead? Ezekiel 37:3-5 says "And He said to me, 'Son of man, can these bones live?' So I answered, 'O Lord God, You know.' Thus says the Lord God to these bones: 'Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live.'" Today's offering is for Michigan Conference Evangelism

November 2, 2019

Local Church Budget

Divine counsel. “God is the source of life and light and joy to the universe. Like rays of light from the sun, like the streams of water bursting from a living spring, blessings flow out from Him to all His creatures. And wherever the life of God is in the hearts of men, it will flow out to others in love and blessing....

“So those who are the partakers of the grace of Christ will be ready to make any sacrifice, that others for whom He died may share the heavenly gift. They will do all they can to make the world better for their stay in it. This spirit is the sure outgrowth of a soul truly converted. No sooner does one come to Christ than there is born in his heart a desire to make known to others what a precious friend he has found in Jesus; the saving and sanctifying truth cannot be shut up in his heart. If we are clothed with the righteousness of Christ and are filled with the joy of His indwelling Spirit, we shall not be able to hold our peace. If we have tasted and seen that the Lord is good we shall have something to tell. Like Philip when he found the Saviour, we shall invite others into His presence. We shall seek to present to them the attractions of Christ and the unseen realities of the world to come. There will be an intensity of desire to follow in the path that Jesus trod.”—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 77, 78.

Your giving today will help our church family remain a godly presence to those in our community.

November 9, 2019

Annual Sacrifice Global Mission

Veteran's Day. Today we give special honor to our military veterans those who have put their lives on the line to ensure our freedom. Whether in times of war or times of peace, our military are there for us, protecting our shores and skies.

As we ponder that, let's also remember that each one here is engaged in a fierce battle, a battle called "the great controversy," or, the struggle between good and evil. We already know from the Bible who will win this battle, but until such a time we are living in an embattled world.

We have many "soldiers" among us as well. They are our Global Mission pioneers, pushing back the frontiers of the spiritual world.

Global Mission is the frontline arm of Adventist Mission, an office of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's world headquarters. The organization sends volunteer missionaries, typically for one or two years, to reach people in areas of the world where there are no Seventh-day Adventist members. Together, Global Mission pioneers and cross-cultural Seventh-day Adventist missionaries are working to "Tell the World" about the love of Christ in some of the world's hardest-to-reach places.

Let's give them our support today. And above all, let us uphold them in prayer.

November 16, 2019

Local Church Budget

Rescued! The Hagerstown Seventh-day Adventist church in Maryland has had an annual tradition: a fund-raising yard sale for the public. Members and others donate items, some provide baked goods for sale, and the proceeds go for a special church project.

The venue for the sale has always been a prominent location along the main road through town, known as Dual Highway or Route 40. The lot slopes gently down to the road. The church chose that vacant lot so that the many passers-by would notice it.

At one of these sales a few years ago, a folding table was with the children's items, including a large inflated rubber ball. Of course, that caught the eye of a three-year old boy. He grabbed it and began kicking it around the area. Unfortunately, as it rolled toward the highway the little boy was scampering after it. Most everyone was preoccupied at the time and did not notice the potential tragedy. Just then, the pastor saw this out of the corner of his eye and yelled "Stop!" in his loudest voice. Fortunately, the child stopped just in time, and the ball rolled out right in front of a rapidly passing car and was demolished.

That little boy is now a handsome young man in his twenties. You may not rescue one of our youth in such a dramatic fashion, but you can rescue some today, young and old, by your faithful giving.

November 23, 2019

Michigan Advance Partners

When my family and I moved back to Michigan after 6 ½ years of pastoring in The Last Frontier – *Alaska*, after taking the call to become the new Pastor of the Waterford and Livingston church's, it was very evident the first time we drove onto the parking lot at Waterford, that the church will need to have it re-paved. Re-paving a parking lot, as most of you know, can be expensive!

As a Michigander by blood, I remember back in my Lay Ministry days here in Michigan, that the church's in this great state and conference help support MAP funding. Funding that assist's Church's with many of their needs. One of those needs is re-paving parking lots!

Therefore, we began a 'capital campaign' to raise the fund's for this project. The Church rallied around this project, and with the mighty help of MAP funding that our Conference supports, Waterford received \$1,451, which allowed the Church to meet it's financial goal.

We are very grateful for the support that MAP funding gave to the Waterford Church so that the Church could have the parking lot re-paved. This is an extremely important Fund for our Conference to assist Church's to meet there needs. Therefore, as part of the Michigan Conference, MAP is indeed **very worthwhile** to generously support as Waterford learned and is grateful for!

November 30, 2019

Evangelism

Evangelism Still Works! Some people today, despite evidence that reveals the contrary, believe that evangelism does not work anymore. Calls are made for new methods and ways that are believed to be more effective. While we must always search for new ways to reach hearts that lie within the tested principles of Scripture, public preaching will never be outdated.

Revelation 14:6 says, "Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to *preach* to those who dwell on the earth - to every nation, tribe, tongue and people." Since the Three Angels messages are *preached* to the earth, then public preaching will certainly be an effective method until Jesus comes.

As the Holy Spirit fills the earth with His power in the last days, the Gospel will go forward in a loud cry, and the world will be astonished as God works in the simplest ways to finish His work. The loud cry will be preceded and followed by a personal work done by every member. That work, God is looking for each of us to participate in now.

We can receive the power of God's Spirit now to change first our hearts and then the hearts of those around us when we allow ourselves to be filled with Christ fully. Will you open yourself to God using you in whatever capacity He chooses? Today's offering will be for Michigan Conference Evangelism.

December 7, 2019

Local Church Budget

Spiritual Frostbite. Frostbite is dangerous. As the mercury dips below the freezing mark, we must take extra precautions to keep our extremities warm. *Spiritual* frostbite is even more dangerous, as it can cause eternal damage. We have all been exposed to spiritual coldness at times, so we need to protect ourselves. The symptoms of spiritual frostbite in the church are the same as physical frostbite:

1. You begin to feel extreme coldness. We usually think it's everyone else who is cold. So, we think the church is not as friendly as it once was. The choir is not as good, and the message was cold and empty. Brother Tom didn't shake my hand today, etc.

2. The sensation of tingling takes place. You still have some spiritual memories of warmer days. Oh yes, once in a while you get a warm feeling, but you notice you don't respond as quickly as you used to; you begin to slow down.

3. Numbness begins to set in. There's no longer a concern for lost souls to be saved or much time for Bible study. You say the church needs a revival. The people just don't care anymore. Someone needs to do something—someone else, that is!

4. Then comes the loss of all feeling. Spiritual frostbite has taken its toll. Now you need to visit the Great Physician and let Him examine your heart.

December 14, 2019

NAD Adventist Community Services

What will you find? Jim Smith went to church one Sabbath morning. He heard the organist miss a note during the prelude and he winced. He saw a teenager talking when everybody was supposed to be bowed in silent prayer. He thought the deacon was watching to see what he put in the offering plate and it made him boil. He caught five grammatical errors in the sermon. As he slipped out through the side door during the closing hymn, he muttered to himself, “Never again! What a bunch of clods and hypocrites!”

Ron Jones went to church one Sabbath morning. He heard the organist play an arrangement of “A Mighty Fortress,” and he thrilled to the majesty of it. He heard a young girl take a moment in the service to speak of the difference her faith makes in her life. He was glad to see that his church was sharing in a special offering for the hungry children of Nigeria. He especially appreciated the sermon that Sabbath—it answered a question that had bothered him for a long time. He thought, as he walked out the doors of the church, “How can a man enter this place and not feel the presence of God?”

Both men went to the same church on the same Sabbath morning. Each found what he was looking for. What are you finding this Sabbath?

Let us give faithfully today, and especially uphold the work of our community service organization.

December 21, 2019

Local Church Budget

Read Isaiah 53

Let us always remember that He was born to die, died to rise, rose to intercede and intercedes to have a people to return for.

May God help us all to be ready for that great day.

December 28, 2019

Michigan Advance Partners

The audio/visual equipment at the Tecumseh was long overdue for an update. Somethings were not working properly. When a guest speaker would come in and had Power Point to use we just had to do without.

We are grateful for the Michigan Advance Partners (MAP) funds we received to help us with this special project.

Previously during Camp Meeting, it was hard to find someone to speak at church for those who didn't attend. Now we can livestream Camp Meeting on Sabbath so that everyone can enjoy the blessings of the speakers.

With the help from MAP funds and local church donors, we were able to update our equipment. It has been a blessing 10 times over for everyone.

Thank you for being a faithful MAP supporter.