

Tithe & Offering Appeals

2021

Our mission is “to reach the North American Division and the world with the distinctive, Christ-centered Seventh-day Adventist message of hope and wholeness.” Stewardship Ministries is dedicated to helping members catch this vision.

Systematic giving is part of being a faithful steward. When we return tithe, we are recognizing that God owns everything. Giving offerings expresses our gratitude for what God has done for us. God loves a cheerful giver, and He 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/videos. You can use them in conjunction with the offering appeals or in place of them. They average between a-minute-and-a-half and 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. We give because we want to live out God's character of abundant generosity—especially as exhibited through the giving of the ultimate gift: the life of His Son. Giving is a natural response for recipients of God's goodness.

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

Michael Anthony Harpe



Director
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About the Author



Angel J. Rodriguez is a Seventh-day Adventist minister. He began his ministry in the Greater New York Conference in 1985. He has since served in the New York and Texas Conferences and now in the Upper Colombia Conference. He has also served as an administrator and department worker for various conferences. He and his wife, Valerie, have four boys and one princess.

His parents were from Puerto Rico. While his mother was pregnant with Angel and his twin brother, the couple migrated to New York City, where she later worked for the Board of Education. His father worked as an engineer for various hospital systems.

He is an avid sportsman who loves fly-fishing, canoeing, kayaking, hiking, cycling, and horseback riding. He earned his doctorate in Church Growth and Evangelism from Andrews University in 2003. He now pastors the Sandpoint, Idaho, Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Upper Colombia Conference.

Angel has been involved with many church-planting projects, church revitalizations, prison ministries, club ministries, and overseas evangelistic efforts. His passion is soul winning. He loves watching the transformational power of Jesus Christ in the lives of precious souls as they open their hearts and commit their lives to Jesus.

About the Readings

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Scripture quotations are taken from the King James Version.

About My Personal Giving Plan

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. The plan suggests that, in addition to returning 10 percent of a member’s personal income as tithe, certain percentages may be dedicated as offerings 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

Visit <https://www.personalgivingplan.com> to see a more extensive breakdown for each category.

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.

Everything in God’s creation is orderly and purposeful. The same can be said of My Personal Giving Plan. Like all plans, it requires thought and consideration. No great work can be built upon emotional or sporadic giving.

Where Do My Offerings Go?

13th-Sabbath Offering

You’ve heard how everyone in an Amish community comes together for a barn raising. Well, Seventh-day Adventists also have projects where we all pitch in to accomplish a goal. That is the purpose of the 13th-Sabbath offering. Every 13th Sabbath, the church focuses on one of its world divisions to accomplish a mission goal. Often, the offering goes toward constructing a building that will be used for education, evangelism, or media outreach. The 13th-Sabbath offerings have been used to establish schools such as Central Philippine Adventist College. A recent offering made a youth camp possible in Belize. All the church members around the world join hands on these projects through sacrificial giving. In 1913, the 13th-Sabbath overflow

amounted to 474 dollars. Now, it exceeds a quarter-million dollars. We call it an overflow offering because it encourages extra giving beyond the usual mission offering. In practice, 25 percent of the 13th-Sabbath offering is considered overflow. The rest is more broadly distributed to continue mission work around the globe. Also, you can give a 13th-Sabbath offering anytime by marking it on your tithe envelope. Do you want to be part of something big? You'll be part of a worldwide community expanding Adventist mission work when you give to the 13th-Sabbath offering. Remember: Our giving funds the mission to finish the work.

Thirteenth-Sabbath Offerings for 2021

First Quarter:	Euro-Asia Division (ESD)
Second Quarter:	Inter-American Division (IAD)
Third Quarter:	North American Division (NAD)
Fourth Quarter:	Northern Asia-Pacific Division (NSD)

Birthday Thank Offering

Usually on your birthday, you get a present. But in church many people give a gift on their special day. It is called a Birthday Thank Offering. Have you ever given someone a thank-you gift? Maybe they watched your cat for a weekend or sang a song at your wedding, and you just wanted to show how grateful you felt. Well, church members sometimes offer a gift of pure gratitude to God. It might be on the occasion of a birthday, thanking God for the blessings of the past year. Or maybe thanking Him for one blessing in particular, such as a promotion at work. Or a new grandbaby. They mark it on their tithe envelope as a Birthday Thank Offering.

So, what happens to the Birthday Thank Offering? This gift is directed to church divisions outside North America to do mission work. Much of it is used in evangelistic activities. But some also goes to clinics, hospitals, and educational institutions. A portion of your gift goes to administer the General Conference mission program, helping to move missionaries into new fields and advance the Adventist message. So, your gift of gratitude goes to missionaries and church institutions around the world

who in turn will accept it with gratitude. It shows that being thankful can be contagious, doesn't it?

Conference Advance

Your local conference is a sisterhood of local churches that helps each congregation within its boundaries to accomplish important objectives that are beyond the reach of any one church alone. A Conference Advance offering addresses these specific needs as well as a variety of special projects. One of the largest portions goes to fund Christian education. Another substantial part of the Conference Advance offering is set aside for evangelism in the local community. It is also used to finance programs and advertising that most local churches cannot shoulder alone. Child evangelism, inner-city evangelism, Vacation Bible School, summer camps, and youth evangelism are also areas supported by the Conference Advance offering. Another benefit of the Conference Advance offering is the popular union papers and magazines that are shipped free of charge to church members. These informative publications help to unite believers over a large area and create a sense of community. All of these educational and life-changing programs are possible because individual members choose to contribute a suggested amount of 1–2 percent of their income to the Conference Advance.

Local Church Budget

Perhaps the most obvious need addressed in My Personal Giving Plan is the local church. Like every family, the local church family has financial obligations to meet. Some are easy to see like power and heat, but many are not so obvious: children's magazines, Sabbath School Bible study guides, teaching supplies, staff salaries, cleaning services, church school operating expenses, property insurance, worthy student fund, and community outreach. 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. 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 share both in the blessings and the responsibilities of the local congregation.

Mission Investment Offering

The Mission Investment Offering is a partnership between you and God. You pick a project and dedicate the income to the Mission Investment Offering.

Here's an example involving chickens! When Kelly Rose Bishop was a teenager, she decided to commit 10 percent of her egg business to investment. She sold eggs to regular customers and to people who just stopped by her house. After two months she noticed that her sales had gone up by 50 percent. That's how the partnership worked. She promised to give 10 percent of her income—that was her part—but she believes that God blessed her little business because the 10 percent grew due to a new larger income—that was God's part.

There are all kinds of ways to enter into partnership with God. For example, you might dedicate the money you save using coupons at the grocery store, or you can dedicate the money you save by skipping dessert when eating out. One person picked up aluminum cans that she found on her morning run and gave the proceeds to investment. Every dollar you raise goes to advance Adventist missions overseas. Come up with your own mission investment idea today.

Sabbath School Mission Offering

When the Sabbath School Mission Offering envelope comes around, it is easy to slip in a dollar or two. But when you find out where it goes, you might want to give more!

The mission offering travels to church divisions outside North America where the needs are great. Much of it is used in evangelistic activities, but some also goes to aid clinics, hospitals, and educational institutions. Adventist World Radio gets help from this offering. And a portion of your gift goes to administer the General Conference's mission program, which helps to train and move missionaries into new fields to advance the Adventist message. The offering that you give in your Sabbath School room literally goes a long way as it aids mission work around the globe.

World Budget Offering

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is a worldwide church. And the world budget is our contribution to this global mission.

From the earliest days of the Adventist Church, men and women have responded to Christ's Great Commission by looking beyond their own shores. Today, Seventh-day Adventists make up one of the fastest growing Christian churches in the world—with more than 3,000 people being baptized every day! In more than 200 countries and in more than 600 languages, the message of Jesus's soon return can be heard.

Historically, it has been the privilege and duty of the materially blessed members in developed nations to plant seeds of growth in poorer regions of the world. New evangelistic strategies that address ever-changing global realities are constantly being developed, and our offerings give life to these new programs.

My Personal Giving Plan recommends that 1 to 3 percent of our income be set aside for this global outreach. Working together, we can make sure the Adventist message continues to grow worldwide.

Special Projects Offerings

These offerings include ministries such as Women's Ministries and Christian Record Services. My Personal Giving Plan doesn't recommend a specific percentage for these since the need and scope will vary from project to project. For example, these offerings support undertaking local church building initiatives or a mission trip. The special projects also include requests for help from denominational entities such as ADRA and Adventist World Radio, as well as other Adventist supporting ministries that you may wish to assist.

2021 North American Division Sabbath School Mission Investment Projects

ATLANTIC UNION

The Good Shepherd House, located in the Greater New York Conference, hopes to contribute to the fight of health equity among the surrounding communities in the county of Brooklyn. Having a Seventh-day Adventist-run free Medical and Dental

Clinic would help bridge the gap in access to healthcare quality. Along with a food pantry program, a thrift store, and social services that we plan to implement, it will enable us to address some of the social determinants of health.

The Southern New England Conference is focusing the mission investment funds on aspects of community services involving collection, distribution and training. Currently, there is a need for space for the temporary storage of equipment needed to meet emergency needs. There is very little space for deployment mobilization of service assets (workers and equipment) to provide needed services during times of extremity.

PACIFIC UNION

The Nevada-Utah Conference is focusing on the Church building on the Kayenta Navajo Mission site in the Nevada-Utah Conference.

The Arizona Conference plans free clinics and multisite evangelism under the name: Diné Impact '22. The majority of the land area, population and Adventist membership of the Navajo Nation is within the territory of the Arizona Conference. Therefore, the Arizona Conference accepts the challenge of taking the lead in a united evangelistic thrust to reach the entire Navajo Nation. The purpose of this specific project is to reap a substantial harvest of souls in the late summer of 2022, by capitalizing on interest generated through radio and internet outreach to the entire Navajo Nation (across State and Conference lines) in partnership with Adventist World Radio and others, beginning in August 2020. A weekly Navajo-focused, locally produced radio broadcast will air across the Navajo territory on KTNN-AM, the 50,000-watt "voice of the Navajo Nation." A website, currently under construction, will complement the weekly broadcast, and a Bible school will be established to follow up on interest generated.

Dear Presenter,

Thank you for your willingness to share the offering appeals with your local congregation. It is a wonderful and gratifying responsibility. How you present these readings will determine how effective they are. Here are some suggestions to consider before you share:

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

Practice: Read over the appeal at least three times to familiarize yourself with it. Read slowly and clearly. Underline or highlight key words to be emphasized during the reading. Strive to share these readings with excellence.

Prepare: Sometimes materials for special days are sent to your local church to distribute or present along with the appeal. Determine how they can be used most effectively.

Personalize: If you have a personal experience that you think will add strength to the appeal, please share it. People connect with others through stories.

Present with Passion: A presentation can have all the above elements, but without passion it may not stir the hearts of the hearers. Ask God to fill your heart with His Spirit so that you can present the appeal with spirit and truth.

May God richly bless you and speak through you as we take this journey together in 2021.

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2021 Offering Appeal Schedule

Jan 2 Church Budget	July 3 Church Budget
Jan 9 Religious Liberty	July 10 World Budget
Jan 16 Church Budget	July 17 Church Budget
Jan 23 MAP	July 24 MAP
Jan 30 Church Budget	July 31 Church Budget
Feb 6 Church Budget	Aug 7 Church Budget
Feb 13 NAD Evangelism	Aug 14 Christian Record Services
Feb 20 Church Budget	Aug 21 Church Budget
Feb 27 MAP	Aug 28 MAP
March 6 Church Budget	Sept 4 Church Budget
March 13 Adventist World Radio	Sept 11 World Budget
March 20 Church Budget	Sept 18 Church Budget
March 27 MAP	Sept 25 MAP
April 3 Church Budget	Oct 2 Church Budget
April 10 Hope Channel International	Oct 9 Radio Expansion
April 17 Church Budget	Oct 16 Church Budget
April 24 MAP	Oct 23 MAP
May 1 Church Budget	Oct 30 Church Budget
May 8 Disaster & Famine Relief	Nov 6 Church Budget
May 15 Church Budget	Nov 13 World Budget
May 22 MAP	Nov 20 Church Budget
May 29 Camp Sagola	Nov 27 MAP
June 5 Church Budget	Dec 4 Church Budget
June 12 Women's Ministries	Dec 11 Adventist Community Services
June 19 Church Budget	Dec 18 Church Budget
June 26 MAP	Dec 25 MAP

NOTE/s: *the second week of the monthly offering schedule is designated for World Budget ministries. Previously the offerings would go to World Budget as a whole and be divided by percentages to various ministries under the WB umbrella. Going forward, the ministry listed in the schedule should be the ministry specified in the offering call and will directly receive the designated offering. The offering appeals titled specifically for World Budget will go to the overall budget itself.*

January 2, 2021

Local Church Budget

One cold, winter, Sabbath morning a visitor arrived at church. He noticed it was cold inside the sanctuary, and everyone wore winter coats and scarves. The visitor found the head elder and asked, "Is your furnace broken?"

"No, the furnace is fine. We just don't have enough money to pay the heating bill."

Startled, the visitor asked, "Doesn't the local church budget handle these issues?"

The elder shook his head.

The visitor requested permission to address the church. He asked the members, "How many of you had heat in your homes today?" Everyone raised their hands.

He continued by saying, "Today, we are in God's church. I believe that God deserves better than what we enjoy in our homes. I will visit again next Sabbath and will donate to the local church budget. How many will join me?"

Most of the congregation raised their hands. He finished his remarks with this scripture passage: "Every man according as he purposes in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loves a cheerful giver." 2 Corinthians 9:7

The following Sabbath, the visitor returned and led the members in giving to the local budget. The congregation continued to pay for heat throughout the entire winter as they brought their offerings for the expenses of the church. When we compare the comforts in our own home to the needs of the church, we can see the importance of supporting the local budget.

January 9, 2021

Religious Liberty

We live in unprecedented times and attempts to undermine religious freedom is an ever-present reality. During these times of crises, it is imperative for us to uphold the banner of freedom as never before and to invest the time to pray for the countless men, women, and children who continue to suffer harassment, discrimination, and even imprisonment, because they choose faithfulness to God.

In the words of Ellen White, “We are not doing the will of God if we sit in quietude, doing nothing to preserve liberty of conscience. Fervent, effectual prayer should be ascending to heaven that. . . calamity may be deferred until we can accomplish the work which has so long been neglected. Let there be most earnest prayer and then let us work in harmony with our prayers” (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 714).

Every year we have the opportunity to highlight the sacred gift of liberty of conscience and appeal to church members to support the ministry of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty (PARL), *Liberty Magazine*, and other religious liberty initiatives. As citizens and ambassadors for Christ, it is also important to highlight the meaning of religious freedom and its practical impact upon religious accommodation and the freedom of expression.

Through your prayers and financial support, we can support our brothers and sisters, and we can express our support for freedom for all people, no matter their faith.

Today, let us give God our best offerings so that together we can expand the indispensable work of defending religious liberty across the North American Division.

January 16, 2021

Local Church Budget

A church member lost his job when his company downsized. He knew that for weeks he would be without food and without the ability to pay his bills. He told the pastor about his situation.

The pastor said, "You are not alone. About a third of our congregation's members have gone through tough times. Our church can assist you and give you time to get back on your feet."

The church board requested his rent and utility bills. It shocked this man that the church would give him, not loan just loan him, the money to help pay the bills.

The pastor shared this text. "Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Matthew 25:40

Weeks later, the man found another job. He wanted to repay what the church had done for him.

The pastor pointed out a line item in the church budget called Emergency Fund. This explained how the church had assisted him and his family.

When you give to the church budget, a part of the offering goes to help church members in time of need. By contributing to the church budget, you are helping to provide resources to those in crisis—one day this may even be you! Today, when we give to the local church budget, we are supporting all the ministries of the church.

January 23, 2021

Michigan Advance Partners

Back in the early 1960's, before computers, cell phones, and internet, two brothers played "seek and find" with a map of Michigan. The game went like this. One brother would find a city or town and tell his brother the name of it. Then the other brother would search the map to find where that city or town was located.

Today, paper maps are, for the most part, obsolete.

But there is a MAP in the Michigan Conference that is far from obsolete. MAP, or Michigan Advance Partners, is still very active. Just like the seek and find map game the brothers played, money from Michigan Advance Partners reaches every city and town in our state. When a church or school has a need to help fund a special project, monies from MAP are available to assist.

You can help to provide funds for future MAP projects by giving generously to the offering today.

January 30, 2021

Local Church Budget

And [Jesus] said to them, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses."

16 Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully.

"And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?' So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. 'And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.'" "But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?' "So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." Luke 12:15-21

In this parable Jesus does not condemn those who are rich in this earth's goods. The lesson He wants us to understand is how we use the riches He provides for us. There are some families who are living at, or below, the poverty level. Others have much more than they need to sustain a comfortable life.

Perhaps God has blessed you with more than you need. According to the words of Jesus, it is better to share the abundance with others than to hoard it for ourselves.

Our offering today is for the Local Church Budget.

February 6, 2021

Local Church Budget

A new pastor arrived early in the week for a tour of the church and school. When the deacon showed the new pastor the sanctuary, he gasped. There were large streaks of watermarks running down the walls on two sides of the sanctuary.

“What happened here?” he asked.

“Long story short, it’s a budget issue,” the deacon replied.

After the tour, the pastor thanked the deacon and went home. As he prayed about the situation, the Lord pressed his heart that he must find some way to restore God’s house of worship. A couple of verses came to mind. “Ye shall not do after all the things that we do here this day, every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes.... Then there shall be a place which the LORD your God shall choose to cause his name to dwell there.” Deuteronomy 12:8, 11

On his first Sabbath, after the conference president introduced him, the pastor stood still and looked at the walls of the church. The eyes of the members followed the eyes of the pastor as he scanned the walls. “Beginning next week, we shall work together as a church. We shall restore God’s Holy Temple,” he said to the congregation. The church erupted with praise!

The next Sabbath the pastor placed an envelope in the offering plate. He asked the congregation to join him and give to the church budget. Six weeks later, they completed the repairs. The members renewed God’s house of worship.

Today’s offering is for our “house” here, won’t you give from the heart for the upkeep of our beautiful church home?

February 13, 2021

NAD Evangelism

In 2020, the Rest and Renew Retreat transformed the lives of several hundred people. It ended as a divinely innovative breakthrough in personal and public evangelism. The registration fee was simple: invite and bring a non-member friend. God brought more than 300 people, many who were community guests, some even atheists and agnostics.

The weekend focused on:

- 1) **Physical Rest** - Restful and renewing activities including free massages, guided nature hikes, wagon rides, bonfires, and more.
- 2) **Emotional/Mental Rest** - Balanced Living presentations that gave simple principles for healthy and positive living.
- 3) **Spiritual Rest** - Eight morning/evening Bible study sessions

As Christ's method was followed and members ate, lived, fellowshiped and studied the Bible together throughout the weekend, the trust and confidence that often takes weeks or months to gain was accomplished in a few short hours.

Guests were especially thankful as each spiritual topic was completely Bible based and Christ centered. Many experienced miracles and freedom from past challenges as they yielded their lives to Jesus. The weekend was truly filled with the Holy Spirit and God's grace. More than 75 people made decisions to accept Christ, receive baptism or do Bible studies.

This is a model that can be duplicated in your local church. Use your talents for Him! As we continue to press forward in new innovative evangelistic methods, Christ's method will always prove effective. Your offering today will continue to strengthen God's work across the North American Division, in Michigan, and in your local community.

February 20, 2021

Local Church Budget

One of our churches in New York City was looking for an innovative way to help pay off their mortgage. The monthly payments were close to 60% of the local church budget.

“Does anyone have an idea for ways to raise extra money?” the pastor asked. He knew at their current rate of giving, it would be decades before the building could be free of debt.

One member came up with a novel idea. In addition to his normal offering, he volunteered every week to donate the money that it would cost him to have one meal at his workplace. The cost was between five and six dollars per meal. He invited others to join him in this pledge.

Around 300 members dedicated the cost of one meal per week for the local church budget. As a result, \$1,500.00 in extra funds came into the treasury per week. That meant donations of \$6,000 per month, close to \$78,000 per year, besides the regular offerings.

As the membership grew, the giving amounts also grew. Within ten years, this church burned their mortgage and dedicated the building debt-free.

When a church works together and supports the local church budget, wonderful things happen in the name of the Lord.

The Bible is clear. “Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.” 2 Corinthians 9:7

February 27, 2021

Michigan Advance Partners-What is MAP?

MAP stands for Michigan Advance Partners. This offering funds a variety of needs within the conference. Members are encouraged to give 1% of their income. The following is a breakdown of how those offerings are spent:

33.33% - Evangelism

This includes funding for public evangelism, CAMPUS Ministries, Bible Study Offer.Com, lay training, VBS, etc.

33.67% - Education

- Project Assist – 17%

These funds are matched on a 3-way basis with the local church and senior academy to assist students who have financial needs, to attend one of the four senior academies in the state.

- BCA Equipment – 1%

These funds are appropriated to Battle Creek Academy for assistance in supplying up-to-date classroom instructional equipment.

- GLAA Operations – 15%

Special subsidy to Great Lakes Adventist Academy for the purpose of keeping boarding academy costs as low as possible for students.

- School Equipment - .67%

These funds are used to assist local church schools for updating classroom equipment.

4% - Camp Au Sable-These funds are used to improve facilities and provide necessary equipment for Camp Au Sable.

4% - Campmeeting/Campground-These funds are used to improve facilities and provide necessary equipment for camp meeting.

25% - Pooled Resources-Requested funding for building purchases, new build and remodeling, and special evangelism projects are reviewed by the Lay Advisory Committee for consideration.

May the Lord richly bless you as you give to support MAP.

March 6, 2021

Local Church Budget

One morning, the deacon-in-charge arrived at church only to discover standing water in the church basement.

He began making phone calls. "There are several inches of water in the basement! Can you come to help clean up the mess?"

Most of the deacons hurried to the church in their flannel shirts and jeans to help. They gathered sump pumps, hoses, extension cords, and began to drain the water. They closed all the waterlines to make sure it wasn't a frozen line that ruptured.

When the members first heard the news, some worried about the coming repair bills. "How will we be able to pay for this?" they asked one another.

However, the head deacon smiled and reassured them, "Our church emergency repair fund will take care of the expense. We have money set aside for unexpected events like this."

The members were thankful that through their faithful giving to the church budget in the past, there did not need to be any delay in getting repairs. The head deacon made a call to the local construction firm that Monday. Within two weeks, the workers had repaired the damage.

The congregation could once again meet in their fellowship hall and Sabbath School classrooms.

The Bible says, "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work." 2 Corinthians 9:8

March 13, 2021

Adventist World Radio

The field trip had ended. At the bus stop, many parents were already waiting to pick up their children. Others arrived a few seconds later. One by one, the parents hugged their children and left.

However, one child still waited for his parents. The bus driver sat next to the boy on a bench and waited with him. Tears were rolling down the boy's face as he looked up at the driver. He needed no words to explain. He felt abandoned.

Then he heard the voice of his auntie. He ran to her and grabbed her by her legs. His tears turned to joy. The pain of abandonment changed to celebration.

We as Christians may sometimes feel alone and abandoned by God. But this is never the case. The Bible reminds us: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me." Psalms 23:4

Imagine if we as Christians can feel alone and abandoned at times, how must others feel who don't know Christ?

The offering that we give today to Adventist World Radio, brings joy and hope to those who feel lost and abandoned. They are like that young boy. The message of hope is like the aunt, ready to bring peace and hope to those who have believed they were all alone.

Today, by our offerings, let us bring a message of joy to others by opening our hearts and giving to advance the spread of the Gospel around the world.

March 20, 2021

Local Church Budget

One day Jesus saw a widow bring her offering to the temple. She gave two of the smallest coins in the temple monetary system. Embarrassed that her gift was so small, she waited until she thought no one was watching. Yet, Jesus commended her. "Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all." Luke 21:3 How can this be?

The rich gave large coins. But the widow gave her heart as part of her offering.

A Christian writer commented on this passage. "A heart of love and genuine faith in a worthy object is more acceptable to God than the most costly gift. The poor widow gave her living to do the little that she did.... It was this unselfish spirit and unwavering faith that won the commendation of Jesus." {3SP p. 72}

We may think the size of our offering makes it valuable to God. But no, the size of the heart gives value to the gift. God will take the offering we give with our hearts and magnify our offering into something special for His service.

Does this mean we should not sacrifice as we give? Here are the words of Jesus. "For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had." Luke 21:4 The widow sacrificed with her heart. As a result, God blessed her gift.

March 27, 2021

Michigan Advance Partners-Brighton Church

The Brighton Church did a much-needed remodel of the parsonage in 2020. MAP funds were requested to accomplish this capital improvement effort and the rest was sacrificially donated by the church members.

The project included a new roof, new roof boards, new kitchen, new flooring upstairs and downstairs, water sealing the basement and installing new shelving units. Two bathrooms were remodeled, and all new doors and trim were added throughout the house. The project also included a new furnace, water heater, water softener and a water filtration system.

A licensed electrician inspected the breaker box and brought all the wiring up to code. A plaster specialist repaired the ceiling in the upstairs hallway and bedroom. The master bedroom was redesigned, and 4 new closets were added throughout the house.

The electrical service in the garage was updated, the garage door was repaired, and the trusses were replaced to bring the ridge of the garage back in line with the gables. Fascia boards were replaced along with new doors, windows and siding.

Pastor Schefka was the chairman of the parsonage committee and many church members assisted in church work bees to help make critical milestones in the project. The Lord has greatly blessed, and the parsonage is now a beautiful home, due in part to the assistance of Michigan Advance Partners.

Today's offering is for MAP, thank you for your faithfulness in supporting all of our sister churches and their needs.

April 3, 2021

Local Church Budget

The greatest gift a person ever receives is the gift of life. Each child differs from every other child.

When the time came for one father's only daughter to be born, there were complications. She had the umbilical cord tied around her neck three times.

When the doctor delivered her, she looked different. She was purple. The nurses grabbed her and supplied oxygen to her lungs. She seemed lifeless. Then she twitched, and then she cried. Tears ran down the father's face as he saw her turn from purple, to soft red, and to a healthy peach in color. He thanked the Lord for bringing life into his princess.

Just then he saw a glimpse of the cross. He experienced a portion of how our Father must have felt seeing His Son on the cross.

God's heart must have broken while watching His Son go through so much pain and agony to save us. The greatest gift our Heavenly Father gave us was His Son. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."
John 3:16

Today, as we give to local budget, let us remember why we give. Because of our personal giving, we can share the good news of the Cross with others. We can bring a message of hope to a world in need of a Savior.

April 10, 2021

Hope Channel International, Inc.

Sarah loved Jesus from a young age, and always believed in Him. Yet, she felt she was never good enough for Him and didn't see how she would be able to do all of the right things in order to be saved. Sarah found herself engaging in unhealthy habits, searching for worth in relationships and substances.

Sarah knew this was not the right path, and she shared her feelings with a friend. Her friend suggested she download some resources on her phone that would allow her to lift up her thoughts and feel that God was close to her. That's when Sarah found Hope Channel—right in the app store on her phone.

"I liked the name," Sarah said. "I thought okay, Hope Channel' – I am really looking for hope right now!" She immediately began to watch the program Table Talk. Through this program, Sarah was able to see and understand God's grace. Her life began to transform.

This led to finding Let's Pray LIVE. "They say 'the place where you don't have to pray alone,'" said Sarah. "My husband is not a believer so a lot of times I do pray alone, and since I found them, I'm not!"

Sarah says, "I'm just so grateful that I found [Hope Channel] and since I found it, I have never once thought about throwing away this precious life that I've been given. I am joyful."

Thousands across North America and around the world like Sarah are searching for hope. Today, your offering will further the ministry of Hope Channel. Let us join together to share hope around the world!

—Elizabeth Camps is Director of Marketing for Hope Channel International, Inc.

April 17, 2021

Local Church Budget

“How can you maintain a church school? Your congregation is so small!” This question came from parents whose membership was at a nearby church that had no school of its own. “We are so thankful to send our children here. But we don’t see how you manage. Our church can’t afford a church school!”

The church school often struggled with finances. But by the end of each fiscal year, it had stayed within budget. The pastor and church determined that educating the youth of the church was the top church priority. “It’s our investment in the future of the church,” the pastor explained.

They recognized that one day the children in the school would grow up to be leaders in the church. Not only that, there would be eternal, heavenly rewards for this church that had invested in the Christian education of their young people.

So, despite the challenges, this church channeled 66 percent of their church budget to keep the church school in the black. They rejoiced to sacrifice for their school. Their church school still operates today.

The results are clear. Many of the youth from the school are still active members of the worldwide church. These youth give thanks for the spiritual care the teachers and faculty provided and to those members who contributed to the church budget year after year.

The Bible is clear. “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” Proverbs 22:6

April 24, 2021

Michigan Advance Partners-Midland

Our Midland Seventh-day Adventist Church was blessed with support from Michigan Advance Partners in September 2020. Through a bequest and member contributions, we had been raising funds for a professional multi-camera video recording and livestreaming system for our church. We wanted to livestream our services, seminars, and other events to members and potential guests, but we also wanted to record sermon videos for our church's website ministry. We have a complete online audio sermon library of all of our sermons for the past ten years on our church's website. Over those ten years more than 100,000 audio sermons have been downloaded to 139 countries. We hoped to expand our website sermon ministry to include both video and audio recordings.

Although we had raised significant funds for this project, MAP funds enabled a significant enhancement in the professional capability of the equipment we purchased. MAP funds also enabled us to move this project to completion much earlier, which was especially beneficial during Covid-19 church attendance concerns.

We praise the Lord for the MAP program, and for all of the faithful and generous donors who contribute to it. Michigan Advance Partners has been a huge blessing to our Midland church family and its ministry.

May 1, 2021

Local Church Budget

A new church plant, with only 25–30 attending each Sabbath, wanted to invite a speaker for an evangelism effort.

“How much will it cost?” they asked. When the pastor told them the amount, they knew they could not afford the price. How could they raise that much money?

The church met for a business meeting to discuss the idea. The pastor listed the costs of the meetings: airfare, car rental, motel, meals, and so on.

One family said, “We don’t have any extra money, but we do have a nice guest room. We can invite the evangelist to our home. That will save the cost of a motel. He can also eat breakfast with us each day.”

Another family said, “We can provide evening meals.”

A third family offered, “He can use our pickup.”

In the back of the room, three families whispered among themselves. “We can pay for the airline ticket,” they announced.

Within a short time, plans were complete. The evangelist came, and the church plant rejoiced to see the fruits of their giving.

When a church comes together, what seems impossible can become possible. Each family gave what they had. As a result, the Lord’s work went forward. “Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD thy God which he hath given thee.” Deuteronomy 16:17

Today, let us come together and give as our wonderful God has blessed us.

May 8, 2021

Disaster and Famine Relief

“Fatal,” “Devastating,” “Horrendous,” “Unforgettable,” “Death Toll Rises!” These are just some of the words to describe the natural disasters and traumatic events that continue to ravage our world.

Your gift to the Disaster and Famine Relief offering allows the church to give a sense of HOPE to thousands of victims of natural disasters.

Simple things like kitchen kits to use in temporary housing, to sheds to secure any belongings victims are able to salvage to Instant pots, along with cooking classes on how to use them, are given to thousands to bring some normalcy to a chaotic situation.

Cleaning buckets have also been distributed in North Carolina, Georgia, and Florida during storms over the last two years and families were able to remain under their roof without fear of mold infecting their household.

Residents on the Island of Saipan were able to return to their homes after ACS Disaster Response team members traveled to rebuild homes that had been uninhabitable after Typhoon Yutu devastated the Island.

Adventist Community Services Disaster Response works all over the North American Division serving communities in times of crisis. Today, your generosity may be used by God to meet the needs and bring relief and comfort to those who have lost so much.

—Wynelle Stevens is the Assistant Director at Adventist Community Services.

May 15, 2021

Local Church Budget

“The Church is on fire!”

We can talk about being “on fire” as a good thing. But when flames and fire trucks appear, a church on fire is never good news! This is exactly what one of our North American churches experienced.

Once the fire was out and the immediate crisis over, the church members met to make plans for how to meet the emergency. They gave offering appeals for repairs. The work of restoration began at once.

But there was another special need. The Pathfinder club, with about 50 children, wanted to attend the Camporee that year. At first, they asked for permission to raise funds from resources outside the church. The board granted permission. The young people began asking for donations from family and friends. They wrote letters to aunts, uncles, cousins, and neighbors. Little by little, the Pathfinder funds arrived.

The last Sabbath before the deadline for Camporee, the Pathfinder club still fell somewhat short of their goal. In spite of the focus on the fire restoration, the pastor gave a special appeal for the Pathfinder club. The congregation responded, and the Pathfinders had the funds needed for the Camporee.

The Pathfinders refused to believe that it was impossible for them to raise the funds within months. They had faith God would bless. Their motto was Matthew 19:26. “But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, with men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.”

Today, let us remember that what seems impossible becomes possible when a church family works together to support the local church budget.

May 22, 2021

Michigan Conference Advance-Camp Meeting

The Campmeeting experience is such an incredible blessing as it affords us so many things; time with family and friends, opportunities to meet new people, and inspiring meetings and seminars, just to name a few. The blessings are numerous and rich. It truly is a time when it seems Heaven draws especially close.

While preparing for the Camp Meeting in 1868 very specific goals were established in order to accomplish as much as possible for the cause of Christ.

“We desire to call out as many of our brethren, both preachers and people, as we can, and also as many of our unconverted fellowmen as we may be able to interest in this meeting, that we may do them good. We want all who shall come to this meeting to come for the purpose of seeking God. We want our brethren to come for the purpose of seeking a new conversion. We want our preachers to set them in this an example worthy of imitation. We desire also to see many of our fellowmen who have no interest in Christ, or at least no knowledge of the present truth, converted to the Lord, and rejoicing in the light of His truth.”—The Review and Herald, August 18, 1868.

As we prepare for this year’s Campmeeting, may we be planning and praying for the Holy Spirit’s presence to impact each one in a mighty and powerful way so that many will be recommitted and others brought into the fold as Christ is soon to come.

Today’s loose offering is for Michigan Advance Partners which helps to support Campmeeting. You can also give through the Tithes & Offering Envelope or through online giving. May God bless Campmeeting as well as each one as we give to this special cause.

May 29, 2021

Camp Sagola

Jennifer accepted an invitation from her friend to a special autumn church gathering at Camp Sagola where there would be other kids from other churches in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. She was excited to meet new people and decided to join in.

Sabbath School groups including the Primary, Junior and Teens were meeting outdoors at different locations around the camp as there were not places indoors for them to meet. Although the weather was a little cold, it was a wonderful time...until it started to rain. All the groups ran for the lodge where the Beginners and Kindergarten groups were already meeting.

Having five different age groups of young people all meeting in one room with their leaders trying to teach them was a real challenge for everyone!

Last year special MAP funds were given toward a new Camp Sagola project to increase the meeting space for situations like these. In the walkout basement of the lodge, construction has already begun on four meeting rooms, six rooms for sleeping, and a bathroom for those staying in RVs.

God is continuing to bless with funds from other sources and it looks like this project may be completed in 2021!

Next time Jennifer comes to camp I pray she will have a place indoors where she can attend Sabbath School if it is raining or too cold.

Won't you join your conference family in giving to finish this project?

June 5, 2021

Local Church Budget

A New York church school fell behind on their payments to the conference. The conference was forced to make a decision. "We can only give you three more months. If you are not current by March first, we cannot reopen the school in September."

The church and school board had an emergency meeting. "What can we do?" they asked each other. "It's almost the first of December, and we owe \$20,000!"

"We could have a bake sale," suggested one lady.

"We could have a garage sale," offered another.

"Maybe the students could sell Christmas candles," a student offered. But none of these ideas, nor even all the ideas together, would raise enough.

Finally, one member suggested, "What if we agree to pledge all unexpected money for the next three months? Perhaps God will send the money."

Every Sabbath, the head elder took a couple of minutes to ask, "Has anyone received any unexpected money to donate to the church school debt?" The offerings began to come in and the school fund grew. Unexpected Christmas gift? \$250. Year-end bonus larger than usual? \$100. A forgotten refund? \$14.50. A tax rebate? \$1,200. Large and small, the gifts continued.

The treasurer kept careful records but did not announce the exact amount until March first. The total of the unexpected money donated to the school debt equaled \$20,000!

Today, as we give to the church budget, let us remember how God blesses those who will trust God in their giving. "We walk by faith, not by sight." 2 Corinthians 5:7

June 12, 2021

Women's Ministries

Today's offering is for the North American Division Women's Ministries, which was first established in 1898 at the urging of Ellen G. White. When we look closely at the women in our own lives, those in our workplaces, and especially those in our churches, we see that women bring kindness, love, tenderness and emotion into all the work that they do. This is especially needed at this time in earth's history. Is it any wonder then that in the book *Evangelism* we find a powerful statement on the relevance and scope of the work women are asked to do in the church, side by side with men and young people as the time for Jesus return draws nearer?

"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. 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 (Ellen G. White, *Evangelism*, p. 464).

All across the North American Division, the women of the church are engaged in serving others. Women are teachers, witnesses and evangelists. They minister to those in shelters and to battered and homeless women and children. They provide for the needs of families, teach Sabbath school, and do visitation. The women of the church are making a significant difference in their communities and their congregations in various ways by watching and responding to any and all needs of the people they meet.

I invite you to make a generous gift today to affirm their self-sacrificing and loving work and ministry.

June 19, 2021

Local Church Budget

Naaman was the commander of the Syrian army, a great and honorable man in his nation. But he was leper. During one of the conquests against Israel, Naaman captured a young girl and gave her to his wife as a maid. The Bible never gives the name of this precious child, but her influence in the house of Naaman was great. She spoke of the God of Israel who could heal the husband of her mistress.

The wife told her husband about the hope of a cure. Naaman asked the king of Syria to write a letter to the king of Israel requesting healing.

After several delays, Naaman arrived at the home of the prophet Elisha. Rather than meeting Naaman himself, Elisha sent his servant with a simple message: "Go and wash in Jordan seven times." 2 Kings 5:10

Angry that the prophet did not come out and make a grand display of healing him, and instead, commanded him to wash in a dirty river, Naaman headed home. But his servants urged him to follow the command of the prophet and wash 7 times in the Jordan. When he did, God healed him of the leprosy.

A little girl shared with her mistress. The woman shared with her husband. Her husband shared with the king of Syria. Today, we can do the same. When we give to the local budget, the funds are used to help share the gospel with others. Your name may never be known, but by sharing—like the little maid—lives will be changed just as Naaman was.

June 26, 2021

Michigan Advance Partners-Pioneer Memorial Church

What a blessing the MAP offering has been to our Pioneer Memorial Church! The principle behind this collective fund Michigan Conference churches faithfully support is simple--as Paul put it, "**At the present time your plenty will supply what [the other churches] need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need" (2 Corinthians 8:14).** After years of supporting our sister congregations through this MAP fund, it was our honor last year at Pioneer to receive from them the money we needed to finish our own sanctuary renovation project. It was a gift from Heaven (and our sister congregations) at a time we truly needed it. Praise God and thank you!

But why should we be surprised? It is the familiar "Body of Christ" principle. Spread across this great state north and south are many very diverse congregations. Like the appendages, organs and cells of a body, each of us belongs to a unique congregation. But because we are bound together by the love of our Savior, He transforms us into one collective Body of His. That means the only way for the Body to stay healthy is if every congregation (and every member) looks out for the others. No body, including the Body of Christ, could possibly grow if every part or any part of the body cared only for itself! Such selfishness would spell the end of all of us.

Instead Jesus invites us, "**Freely you have received, freely give" (Matthew 10:10).** Calvary emptied the Treasury of Heaven for us. Why then wouldn't we want to share those treasures with our sister churches?

July 3, 2021

Local Church Budget

Camporee at Oshkosh is the largest Pathfinder event in the North American Division. One Pathfinder club in Texas was excited to go, and the church had elected a new director and staff for their Pathfinder club just nine months before Oshkosh Camporee.

The new leader said, "We have very little money in our Pathfinder fund, and Camporee is expensive. How can we raise enough money to pay for transportation, food, entrance fee, and all the incidentals that are needed for the trip?"

They consulted with the former Pathfinder director to get ideas. The church board gave permission for placards, donation boxes, and other promotions. They had some response, but the club was always short of their goal each month.

On Pathfinder Day, they made a special appeal. "We have done all we know how to do, but we're running out of time. Can you please help us?"

People made more donations than usual. Everyone kept praying. The children watched the goals. Parents wondered if they could somehow give a little more. Church members found extra funds to help meet the deadline.

When the time came, the Pathfinders went to Oshkosh. The entire church received a blessing!

How did it happen? When there were no funds for ministry, they brought the matter before the Lord. Leadership counseled together. The church worked together. The wise man wrote: "Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety." Proverbs 11:14

July 10, 2021

World Budget

Every year, several friends came together to go salmon fishing. One man didn't bring his polarized glasses. He noticed that his buddies could see the fish in the river and cast their fly presentations before them. While they caught one fish after another, he caught nothing.

Then his friend realized what was happening. He said, "Come over here next to me."

His friend passed an extra pair of glasses to him and pointed to the river. "Can you see now?"

The man replied, "Now I can see! There are salmon everywhere!"

One moment, the man could not see the fish. However, as soon as he put on the right glasses, his worldview changed.

In the time of Israel, Moses sent spies to go into the Promised Land to see the potential. Ten spies saw the obstacles that faced them. "We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it. Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land."
Numbers 13:27, 28

Ten men saw danger and defeat. However, two of the spies could see the promise.

"And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it." Numbers 13:30 When we see the promise of the second coming of Christ, we can understand why giving is important. We will see how God can use our gifts to help others see the promise before them.

Today's offering goes to World Budget which funds many different ministries under their umbrella, diversely spreading the gospel in the hopes of reaching people before Jesus soon return.

July 17, 2021

Local Church Budget

There is an allegorical story of a man who enjoyed fishing from a bridge in the park. One day, he felt a tap on his boot. He ignored it at first, but then he felt many small taps. He looked down and saw a squirrel. The small animal looked up with longing eyes.

He realized he was eating from a small bag of mixed nuts he had in his pocket. So, he pulled out some nuts and handed them to the squirrel.

The man named the squirrel Tapper. Each time the man would go to the bridge, Tapper would race down the tree and tap the man's feet. Each time, Tapper would get a feast of nuts and dried fruits. People who chanced to walk by smiled in surprise to see the relationship between the two. Of course, you understand, this story is just an illustration.

Have you ever gotten a tap in church? Have you had a tap on your heart to respond to an offering appeal? Is God tapping on your heart right now to support the church budget ministries that touch the lives of the people in your community? If you feel that tap and choose to give, you are touching the lives of others, even though you can't see or touch them in person.

This morning, listen to the taps of the Holy Spirit. "And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, 'This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.'" Isaiah 30:21

July 24, 2021

Michigan Advance Partners-Adventist Education

Most people have some idea about how the stock market is doing because the health of their investments is tied to it. It is safe to say that everyone who invests in the stock market wants to find investments that will provide a positive dividend and increase to their portfolio. Essentially, they want to get more money out of their investment than what they originally put in.

The Bible talks about an investment that is completely different than the investments of the world. From a purely worldly perspective it doesn't seem to make any "cents." And, in fact, this is beautifully true. Matthew 6:13 says, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Adventist Education perfectly fits the concept of heavenly investment because investing in the life of a child has an incredible impact. In fact, investing in Adventist Education provides a double impact because of the positive force students can have as citizens of this life and in the life to come.

As we near the coming of Jesus, the need for Adventist Education has never been greater. Additionally, the need of financial support for families to send their children to our schools has never been greater.

As you consider your investment portfolio, won't you consider choosing one of the most important investments possible, that is, a child of God? Investments deposited in the heavenly treasury will never result in loss or ruin. Furthermore, throughout eternity you will be able to reap the dividends and be grateful that God empowered you to be a channel of blessing to a child of God.

July 31, 2021

Local Church Budget

A blessing is on the man who puts his faith in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he will be like a tree planted by the waters, pushing out its roots by the stream; he will have no fear when the heat comes, but his leaf will be green; in a dry year he will have no care, and will go on giving fruit. (Jeremiah 17:7, 8 - Bible in Basic English)

One of the fun activities available at Camp AuSable is High Adventure. You can climb a rock wall, glide down the zip line, ride the swing, or take a leap of faith. If you choose the leap of faith you will climb a pole 26 feet high, stand on the top, and then jump off into the air.

Of course, you are strapped into a harness, and that is where the faith comes in. Someone is on the ground controlling your fall with ropes which are attached to the harness. You are trusting them to bring you smoothly and safely to the ground.

Sometimes it may seem like a great leap of faith to return to God His tithe and our offerings. But God has proven that He is Someone we can have faith in. When we are faithful with tithe and offering we can be confident that God will keep His word, and our needs will be provided for.

Today, take a leap of faith. Give a faithful offering to the Local Church Budget and trust God to provide for your needs.

August 7, 2021

Local Church Budget

After the fall of Israel because of their apostasy, God gave the nation time to consider what they had done. Seventy years later, when their probation ended, the time arrived for Israel to return to rebuild the walls and the temple at Jerusalem.

However, they didn't have the resources to go back and rebuild.

Yet God had ways of opening the treasures of heaven to bless His people. Never underestimate our God!

The Bible says, "In the first year of King Cyrus, King Cyrus issued a decree concerning the house of God at Jerusalem: "Let the house be rebuilt, the place where they offered sacrifices; and let the foundations of it be firmly laid, its height sixty cubits and its width sixty cubits Let the expenses be paid from the king's treasury." Ezra 6:3,4

God touched the heart of the pagan king to allow Israel to return to Jerusalem. Not only that, but the king offered to finance the entire project for the restoring of the temple.

Years later, God touched the heart of Darius, the king who followed Cyrus. He provided the lambs, bullocks, and rams needed for the sacrifices. He also provided wheat, salt, wine, and oil for the ceremonies connected to the worship services.

It was God Himself who touched the heart of the king to support the cause of spreading the Gospel. Today, may our hearts also be open to support the gospel ministry our church has for this community.

August 14, 2021

Christian Record Services

The number of people with visual impairment or blindness is expected to double by 2050. This could include you, someone you love, or someone in your community.

Since 1899, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has cared for people who are blind. With support from members like you, you show you care by providing funds for Bibles, camps for the blind, college scholarships, accessible reading resources, and a Bible school with Braille and large-print lessons through Christian Record Services for the Blind. Christian Record Services empowers people who are blind to engage their communities and embrace the Blessed Hope.

There is more we could do. If every church member gave generously and faithfully to support ministry for people who are blind, together we could also decrease loneliness and despair in the blind community and reduce the accompanying health-related complications such as; a weakened immune system, anxiety, depression, and cognitive decline.

Revelation 1:7 offers a future with eyesight for people who are blind: "Behold, he cometh with clouds;" and "every eye shall see him." Until that wonderful day, your gift will provide hope and love and help to nurture someone's spiritual journey with Jesus.

Consider how much you value your eyesight and prayerfully donate today for someone who cannot see, so they can receive the caring love of Jesus through Christian Record Services. Give liberally so people who are blind can understand how much you care.

August 21, 2021

Local Church Budget

The church roof had a problem. It leaked! One time, the pastor counted six buckets in place to catch the drips. Raindrops fell on the rugs, pews and tile floors. It seemed like a new leak was discovered every time it rained.

The church board discussed the problem. "We don't have extra money in the budget," they agreed. "But let's at least get a few estimates so we know how much we will need."

After getting several estimates to repair the roof, the board saw that the church didn't have enough resources to cover the entire expense. They had to make a choice.

"Could we cover the roof with a tarp while we wait for funds?" they wondered. "Or should we take out a loan?"

The pastor suggested a third option. "Let's take this matter to the congregation. Perhaps, when they understand the need, they will give extra offerings to repair the roof."

Within weeks, the church had raised over 90 percent of the funds. The pastor and head elder agreed to move by faith and scheduled the repairs. As the work went forward, the extra funds kept coming into the local church budget.

Upon completion, the church had enough funds to pay the final installment of the bill. Where the body of Christ works together in unison, great things can happen. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" Psalm 133:1

August 28, 2021

Michigan Conference Advance-Village SDA School

“All the Israelite men and women who were willing brought to the Lord freewill offerings for all the work the Lord through Moses and commanded them to do.” Exodus 35:29

In ancient Israel, God’s people generously and sacrificially gave for the building of the sanctuary, so much so that Moses asked them to stop giving. “And they spoke to Moses, saying, “the people bring much more than enough for the service of the work which the Lord commanded us to do.” Exodus 36:5.

At the Village Adventist Elementary School, we have been blessed by the MAP funds that helped fund the installation of new plumbing and the construction of a new driveway in front of the school. These were part of a larger remodeling project which included; new carpet, floors, lockers, office cabinets and furniture, painting, and the addition of 40 new Chrome Books. The renovations greatly improved the aesthetics, functionality, and safety of our school.

The money we received from MAP was a particularly timely blessing. Although our church and school donated large amounts of time, money, and talents to complete these important improvements, the MAP funds provided significant funding to finish the project.

Let’s not stop giving, but be encouraged to give sacrificially and generously today, which will allow MAP to do much more in our sister churches than we would otherwise be able to do.

We hope you will prayerfully consider becoming a regular, systematic contributor to MAP so that God’s work can continue to move steadily forward and hasten the return of our blessed Lord Jesus.

September 4, 2021

Local Church Budget

Now when they drew near Jerusalem, and came to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Loose them and bring them to Me. And if anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord has need of them,' and immediately he will send them." Matthew 21:2, 3

This is one of the perplexing stories in the Bible. A modern equivalent might be if you were told to find two limousines with the keys left in them. When you find them, and start the engine, there is a knock at the window. The owner asks, "What are you doing?" to which you reply, "The Lord has need of these."

The disciples followed the instructions of Jesus. The owner of the two animals accepted their answer and they brought the animals to their Master.

God had already touched the heart of the owner. The Bible never explains how this happened, but the owner had everything ready for Jesus.

There come times in our lives when God sends a messenger to let us know that God needs us for some special purpose. We don't always understand, but we can know the Lord is calling.

Do you listen to the voice of God when He calls you? Or do you ignore His voice? God wants to use you to meet the needs of the various ministries of His church. You will often hear the voice of God and sense the Lord speaking to you to bring your gifts to Him.

September 11, 2021

World Budget

Everyone old enough to have experienced September 11, 2001, will remember that day. One of the most tragic events in the history of the United States happened when two planes flew into the Twin Towers in New York City. Our world has not been the same since.

As the news spread, the Greater New York Conference and the North Eastern Conference joined forces to provide immediate help.

A Manhattan church opened its doors for the Fire and Police Departments. Rapid response task force meetings met in the church boardroom.

Various Sabbath School classrooms gave police officers and fire department personnel a safe place to sleep between shifts.

The church location provided quick access to ground zero. Church cooks worked in the fellowship hall to prepare food for the emergency workers. On the Hudson River Park Pier, Community Services departments worked to help unload essential supplies needed at the site of the tragedy.

To this day, those efforts have impacted the reputation of our church in a positive way.

In our uncertain world, we never know when our gifts to World Budget, along with gifts of time and effort, will be needed. God can accomplish great things for His glory when His people commit their lives and resources to Him.

The Bible says, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Matthew 18:20
Let us work together to impact the world for Christ.

Today's offering is for World Budget, which provides support for various ministries including Sabbath School.

September 18, 2021

Local Church Budget

During the early days of the Seventh-day Adventist movement, church buildings were few. Battle Creek, Michigan, had become the center for the Seventh-day Adventist Church. They needed to build a church large enough to house the rapid membership growth, camp meetings, and General Conference sessions.

Elder James White, one of the founders of the church, thought of a plan. He suggested, "If each month, every member would donate one dime, within one year we could raise enough money to build a new church structure." At that time, the average price of a home was around \$2,000.

The members adopted the project. On April 20, 1879, they dedicated the new church, debt-free. The "Dime Tabernacle," capable of seating 4,000 people, became the fourth church structure of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination.

The fund-raising plan was simple; Give a dime per month. A dime then would be equivalent to \$2.25 today. Even though \$2.25 is 22 ½ times more than a dime, it still isn't much money in today's economy!

Widespread participation brought success. When the members took this as their project, the Lord blessed.

When God's people come together, like they did with the Dime Tabernacle, God will move hearts to accomplish His will through His children. "And he said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God." Luke 18:27

September 25, 2021

Michigan Advance Partners-Camp Au Sable

The funds given through Michigan Advance Partners or MAP are used all over the Michigan Conference in a variety of ways. One area of God's work here in the Michigan Conference, which receives a portion of every MAP dollar given, is beautiful Camp Au Sable.

Camp Au Sable is the Michigan conference youth camp located in Grayling, Michigan. Camp Au Sable has been used by God since 1948 to reach young people as well as adults. It is here on these 828.9 acres that thousands have met Jesus and have accepted Him as their personal savior. That is still the purpose of Camp Au Sable today.

Camp Au Sable operates as a summer camp for youth ages 8-18, where Jesus can be seen in activities such as horseback riding, swimming, nature study and much more. It is also a summer camping destination for entire families. During the remainder of the year Camp Au Sable is used for many church and school retreats as well as numerous conference events.

Part of the funding for this extensive evangelistic outreach is from your faithful, systematic gifts to Michigan Advance Partners. By returning a faithful tithe, giving 1 % of your income to MAP, and giving to all aspects of God's work, God is able to multiply our meager offerings many times over and above what we could ever imagine.

God has blessed us with the opportunity to reach out to thousands of His people through the programs and facilities of Camp Au Sable. Your offerings today will continue to move God's work forward in this part of His vineyard and beyond. Thank you for your faithfulness and support of MAP here in the Michigan Conference.

October 2, 2021

Local Church Budget

A family in Tennessee was car-pooling to their son's graduation when one of the children asked, "What is ministry?"

Another one asked, "What ministry is most impactful to the community?"

The lively discussion paused when the GPS directed them off the highway for no apparent reason. At the stoplight was a man who had a sign asking for food. The temperature that day was close to 100-degrees Fahrenheit. The man was turning red and was covered with sweat. He looked as if he was close to fainting.

The driver pulled a sandwich, a dessert cup, and a bottle of water from the cooler. With grateful words the man shared that this was an answer to prayer. He had prayed that the Lord would send food and water so he could survive in the intense heat.

As the family resumed their trip, the driver joined the discussion and stated, "This is ministry. When you touch the lives of people, not only to convert them, but to minister to their needs, that is ministry."

Each one of us can minister to those we meet. And when we give to the local budget, we are supporting the ministry of the church to reach our community for Christ.

What is ministry? Here are the words from Jesus. "Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me." Matthew 25:45

October 9, 2021

Radio Expansion

Michigan churches and Strong Tower Radio are still working to cover all of Michigan with radio stations. Why?

Radio is one of the most effective means for spreading the gospel in these last days. Radio, like reading, has a personal connection to the mind and soul. Many Pastors report that Strong Tower Radio (STR) listeners are the most prepared for baptism. Here are a few testimonies:

*A couple walked into their local Seventh Day Adventist church saying that they couldn't attend first-day church any more after all they had learned from listening to STR.

*The delivery man stopped by and we learned he has been listening to Strong Tower Radio. He says STR preaches the Word of God like no other station he has heard.

*An Adventist couple had to be out of state due to an emergency for 2 months. They often felt the emptiness of a radio station without solid Bible teaching and reverent music. They were overjoyed to be back in Michigan to hear Strong Tower Radio. It was a "double home-coming!"

*Nan worked a job that kept her in contact with people in their cars. At one car she couldn't resist asking if they were listening to Strong Tower Radio. They were! She asked if they had the address for the nearest Adventist church. Nan turned up there the following Sabbath.

*One listener couldn't make sense of what the Bible said & what churches taught. Then he found Strong Tower Radio! After his first Adventist church service, he said, "I'm home!"

Your generous offering marked "MI Radio Expansion" will help make covering Michigan with the gospel through radio a reality!!

October 16, 2021

Local Church Budget

Jesus was en route to Jerusalem when He heard ten lepers shouting "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." Luke 17:13

Christ acknowledged their request and told them to show themselves to the priest. As they were walking away, they noticed Jesus had already healed their leprosy. Their skin was soft and silky. No trace of disease remained.

Only one of the former lepers turned around and returned to honor Jesus for the miracle. Often, we are the recipients of God's grace. We pray, we plead; we come before the Lord with our petitions. When God grants us His grace, we may forget to thank the Lord for His mercies.

There are many ways of thanking the Lord. One way is by giving Him a thank offering. When a child is born in good health, some give a thank offering to express gratitude to the Lord. A successful surgery can be an opportunity to give a thank offering to Jesus, the Great Physician. When a child returns home after having wandered away, we rejoice. In the story of the prodigal son, the father held a feast thanking the Lord for the return of his son. Today, we can honor our Lord for His many gifts.

We can thank Him for His grace, for His protection, and for His love toward us. "And when ye will offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving unto the LORD, offer it at your own will." Leviticus 22:29

October 23, 2021

Michigan Advance Partners-McMillan Church

In early 2020 the McMillan Northwoods church began considering how they might reach into the community and also have a way to draw the community in. They wanted to begin having a bigger footprint in their district.

As the world began to shut-down due to the world-wide COVID-19 pandemic, the desire to have a stronger digital presence and the need for equipment to present, prepare and distribute digital media became stronger. The only thing standing in the way was a severe shortage of funds. Times had been hard, and special appeals had been made to help get the church back on a good financial footing.

Many were the projects that needed attention. With work needed on the roof, the need for a ramp, and the changes taking place in the world, was this what the Lord wanted them to do? Prayer and several meetings later, the consensus came that if the Lord would provide the way, the church would move forward.

A request was made and MAP was able to be the answer to their prayer. Now the church has internet access, a streaming computer and has participated in both Hope Awakens and Revelation NOW! Members have been blessed, the worship experience enhanced, and the online videos and DVDs they are sharing with their friends and neighbors are helping the Gospel look even more attractive. Several connections have been made in the community and Bible Studies have been initiated.

This is the mission of MAP, giving opportunity for every member to be able to help expand the reach of the gospel thru local projects. Whether it is maintaining the current facilities or current projects, or beginning something new, your gift to MAP is going to help keep the Gospel fresh and relevant and take it to the world. Thank you for your support, as **Michigan** continues to **Advance** through **Partnering** together to spread the gospel until Jesus comes.

October 30, 2021

Local Church Budget

And the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years." But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. (Genesis chapter 6)

Because of the wickedness of man, God chose to destroy the earth with the flood. But He used Noah to appeal to the people and provide a means of safety and protection through the flood. The finances for such an undertaking were enormous, but the command of God was clear. "Make yourself an ark of gopherwood;" Genesis 6:14

If God asks you and me to do something, it's because He has already provided a way for it to be accomplished. God provided the wood, the manpower, and the finances to accomplish Noah's great task. He provided some in advance and others as they walked by faith.

Today, God may ask us to take a leap of faith, to start a new ministry that will impact the community, to start a new Pathfinder club or Vacation Bible School for the children of the church. Often, we may sense God calling us to step forward. Every time God has done this in the past, He has provided the resources as His people moved forward by faith. Remember Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Esther, Deborah, and Daniel, just to name a few.

The church budget includes many ministries that will enhance the lives of the church and the local community. Today as you give, you can become an Esther, a Daniel, or a Joseph for the Lord. When God touches your heart, give so you and others can take that step of faith and fulfill His will through your life.

November 6, 2021

Local Church Budget

A church told their pastor they wanted a direct mission project, from one church to another. As they tried to decide what mission project to sponsor, the board prayed together.

They investigated and discovered there was a church on the shore of Lake Victoria in Kenya that met under the trees because it had no church structure. After working out the logistics between the two conferences, the church raised funds for the project. Within six months, the church had raised enough money to build a church for this sister congregation.

Representatives from the church visited Africa to be part of the dedication service when the building there was completed.

At the dedication service, the Conference officer asked the pastor, "Why did the congregation in America choose this church?"

"We prayed, we asked for direction, and God pointed the way," answered the pastor.

"Did you know this church prayed that God would send a miracle?" asked the Conference officer.

"No, but God knew!" the pastor replied.

Let us remember that the church belongs to God. When we give to the local budget, we can watch for God to open the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing. "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 will not be room enough to receive it." Malachi 3:10

November 13, 2021

World Budget

Over ninety years ago, in 1929, an Adventist preacher started a radio ministry called The Voice of Prophecy. His name was H. M. S. Richards. Back then radio was “live” rather than recorded. This meant Pastor Richards would sit in front of a microphone at a designated broadcast time each week.

During World War II, the Voice of Prophecy became the first religious coast-to-coast broadcast across North America on the Mutual Broadcasting Network. That same year, 1942, it launched the first Adventist Bible correspondence school. Also that year, a Spanish-language version was created called La Voz de la Esperanza.

Both of these Adventist radio ministries continue broadcasting around the world. They form part of the Adventist Media Ministries owned and operated by our North American Division. Today the Voice of Prophecy can be heard in nearly three dozen languages. This media ministry operates the Discover Bible School with Bible lessons available in more than 70 languages. It also operates Bibleinfo.com, a Bible question-and-answer website that receives more than 1.2 million visitors monthly. That’s nearly 15 million contacts every year!

Ninety-three percent of Americans listen to radio every week while 88% watch television. This makes radio the leading media, even more than television. The Voice of Prophecy and La Voz de la Esperanza use radio to proclaim the everlasting gospel of Christ. They are leading people to accept Jesus as their personal Savior. Please give liberally to World Budget , together, we can reach people through media, including the radio and television.

—Fred Knopper is Marketing Director at the Adventist Media Ministries Support Services.

November 20, 2021

Local Church Budget

One day a few weeks before Christmas a pastor received a phone call. "Is your church looking for a Christmas project?" the voice on the other end of the line asked.

"What do you have in mind?" the pastor responded.

"Many children in our community will not receive any Christmas gifts this year. Their families are struggling. Can the church do anything to help?"

The pastor and his team brought this need before the Lord. God led them to begin a ministry called "The Christmas Project."

They asked the church members to provide the names of anyone from the community who might appreciate a Christmas gift. The deacons passed out forms with blank spaces to list the age of the child and gift suggestions.

For four weeks, the members brought gifts to the church. A corner of the platform was filled with wrapped presents in bright colors. Each gift had an address attached to it.

After the last service before Christmas, members took various gifts and gave them to the parents. All they said was this: "We are your friends from the Adventist church. We want to let you know we are here for you. God's blessings on you and your family." Because of this outreach, many parents and children attended the church.

Give to your local church budget today and support the ministries that bless your community. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." James 1:17

November 27, 2021

Michigan Advance Partners-Williamston

The Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Williamston, Michigan had seen its membership decline steadily over many years and by the time that our state had moved into "lockdown" status in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the church and its pastor had been forced to downgrade to a company with less than a dozen regularly attending members. The church was in dire need of repairs and upgrades, including a pot-holed, dirt parking lot that had damaged more than one car. Two kind saints, touched by the churches need and the members earnest desire, helped the church begin a massive renovation project.

Once all the expenses were calculated for parking lot improvements, an updated sign, mold remediation in the basement where water damage had brought the mold count to dangerously high levels, painting, decorating, a new furnace, landscaping and a host of other projects, the small company was looking at a grand total that seemed well beyond the reach of their financial capabilities! However, they prayerfully decided to move forward and to supplement their own fundraising and giving efforts, submit a request to MAP for an additional one third of the total project cost. They were elated and humbled when MAP approved their request!

The Williamston company was able to improve their parking lot, complete the mold remediation and do several other updates with the funds provided. They are well on their way to completing the entire project which seemed so daunting in the beginning. The members now have a warm, welcoming, and healthy church that they are seeking to fill through outreach, canvassing and evangelism efforts.

Your cheerful giving today to MAP will allow MAP funds to bless churches like Williamston throughout Michigan and help us spread the Three Angels Message and pave the way for the soon return of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

December 4, 2021

Local Church Budget

And [Jesus] looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury, and He saw also a certain poor widow putting in two mites. So He said, "Truly I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all; for all these out of their abundance have put in offerings for God, but she out of her poverty put in all the livelihood that she had."

Luke 21:1-4

Donny and Johnny were the youngest of 7 children. Their family wasn't blessed with an abundance of money, but there was more than enough love to go around.

One Christmas there was no money to buy presents, so each person in the family exchanged something they already had with someone else. Donny and Johnny were chosen to exchange gifts with each other. Neither boy had much, but Donny had a shiny, silver flashlight that Johnny thought was pretty cool. It was the only possession of real significance Donny had.

On Christmas morning when the gifts were exchanged, what do you suppose Donny had given to Johnny? That's right, it was his silver flashlight! Rather than just giving Johnny something that wasn't very valuable, he gave him the best that he had.

When we give our offerings to God let us remember that it isn't the dollar amount that is of greatest importance. Rather, it is the sacrifice we make that renders our gift as valuable in Heaven's sight.

Today's offering is for Local Church Budget.

December 11, 2021

Adventist Community Services

If your church disappeared today, would anyone other than the members even notice?

“Our neighbors are not merely our associates and special friends; they are not simply those who belong to our church, or who think as we do. Our neighbors are the whole human family” (Ellen G. White, “The Role of the Church in the Community,” Ellen White Notes, 3Q 2016).

Community Services is God’s invitation to do amazing things with Him. Hard times come in all shapes, sizes, and colors, and Adventist Community Services (ACS) is responding to individual needs, developing relationships, and committing to make a difference in people’s lives.

ACS supports community outreach programs by funding development projects that make a major impact in your communities. A washer/dryer serves thousands of homeless to bring dignity and value to their lives. A shelter provides protection and offers hope. A portable shower trailer prepares someone for a job interview. And so much more.

One parent shared, “I had just lost my son Christopher to cancer.... The church couldn’t bring back my son to me, but what they did was they brought my life back to me.”

Jesus said, “For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”
Mark 10:45

By supporting ACS, you can make a lasting impact and know that your dollars are going to something that is making a difference in a life.

—Wynelle Stevens is Assistant Director at Adventist Community Services.

December 18, 2021

Local Church Budget

The Lord called Joseph and Mary to the responsibility of raising the Messiah who would take away the sins of the world. They were poor. They had no resources. They didn't know where their next journey would take them. But they trusted God. They knew God was guiding their lives one step at a time. God has a way of touching the hearts of people from all walks of life.

Soon after the birth of Christ, the magi arrived to worship Jesus. "They saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense and myrrh." Matthew 2:11

These gifts were unexpected. The magi traveled far from foreign lands to bring their gifts and worship. Through these gifts, God provided the income Joseph and Mary needed to take care of the Child Jesus.

When we step forward in faith to fulfill the ministry to which God has called us, He opens the way before us.

Today, you can be that person who God touches to help others. You can help a child go to school. You can join with your brothers and sisters in the church to provide funds to reach your community. You can win souls for Christ.

When the church calls for support, you can hear God speaking to you. Open your heart and watch how our Lord uses you to touch lives for the growth of His kingdom.

December 25, 2021

Michigan Advance Partners

It had been a hard year for the family. Expenses had been high, income ran low. They had to go to the food bank to receive powdered milk, blocks of cheese, and whatever other staples were available. They had few special treats.

By the middle of December, the children began asking questions.

“Will we have a Christmas tree?” “Will we get any Christmas gifts this year?” “What about Christmas dinner?”

Mom told the children to keep praying. “The Lord will provide,” she said. “You never know how God will bless us.”

A few days before Christmas, their uncle came to visit. He was the head elder of a church in the Bronx. He came to see how things were with the family. Tears welled up in his eyes as he hugged them goodbye. He hadn’t realized how bad it had been for them.

Two days later, someone delivered a Christmas tree. By the end of the week, presents appeared under the branches. A gift box came that contained a nativity scene.

We worship a wonderful God who promises to provide for our needs. God inspired their uncle to look after the family that year for Christmas. “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” James 1:17

Remember during this season, as we give for Michigan Advance Partners, that God wants to use our hands to give to others in their times of need.