

**2020
Offering
Appeals**

January 4, 2020

Local Church Budget

When we serve, miracles happen. For nine decades Oseola McCarty lived an unassuming, humble life. A washerwoman, like her grandmother, she learned early to be frugal. She started saving at 8-years old. When she died at the age of 91, her bank account stood at \$280,000, of which she donated \$150,000. The McCarty scholarship helps needy students. Her example inspired Ted Turner to donate one billion dollars to charity.

President Clinton awarded her the Presidential Citizens Medal. Harvard University gave her an honorary doctorate. The United Nations distinguished Ms. McCarty with the Avicenna Medal for her selfless commitment to education.

When we serve others, miracles happen. Let us commit to supporting our local church budget with a zest worthy of our Lord. Our local church budget sponsors programs that affect our communities and neighbors.

When asked why she chose the University of Southern Mississippi as a recipient of her donation, Ms. McCarty responded: "Because it's *here*." Our local church budgets are *here*, in need of our support. Let us pledge our systematic, long-term support this entire year to our local church budget.

January 11, 2020

Rocky Mountain Conference Advance

Probably the least understood offering is one that is collected ten times a year. One Sabbath each month is set aside for Rocky Mountain Advance, except for one month when we take up a special offering for evangelism and one month when we take up a special offering for education.

This year we will provide a little bit closer look at the six specific budget items that are supported by the Advance offerings. We believe that knowing more about the projects will allow you to more comfortably support the mission of our conference through the Advance offerings.

Those six programs are the following:

Church/School Buildings 10%

Evangelism 40%

Youth Camp 10%

Secondary schools 25%

Summer Camp Programs 10%

La Vida Mission 5%

Each of these important programs will get a closer look during the offering appeals in 2020. We hope you will be attentive and remember these offerings in your planning.

Our local conference ministries depend on our sacrificial and systematic support. Let us be faithful and support the work of our local conference with our generous financial contributions.

January 18, 2020

Local Church Budget

A couple remains financially faithful. The unexpected news was raw: “You have cancer!” The treatment was very costly and the insurance company declined coverage. The choices were stark: empty the retirement funds or challenge the insurance company for payment. The expenses increased with a major unexpected home repair which was also declined by an unrelated insurance company. The amounts owed by these institutions were very similar. The husband and wife prayed for divine counsel. Prior to receiving the bad news, the couple had made commitments to invest significantly in God’s Church and its related local ministries. These major financial blows were perceived as “Satan’s justly excuses” to dishonor the commitments made earlier.

After careful consideration, the couple decided to remain faithful to their pledges to the Lord. Several months later, within five minutes of each other, both insurance companies called and said they would pay. This couple remained faithful despite very difficult circumstances. They did not waver. The best news: there is no more cancer!

Today, we remain faithful by supporting our local church budget.

January 25, 2020

Religious Liberty

Thus saith the Lord! Recently, I read the following quote from a cherished book called *Christian Service* by Ellen G. White: “Men will exalt and rigidly enforce laws that are in direct opposition to the law of God. Though zealous in enforcing their own commandments, they will turn away from a plain ‘Thus saith the Lord’” (*Testimonies* vol. 9, p. 229).

This beautiful quote reminded me that around the world there are people, systems, and powerful decision-making bodies that enforce a view of Christianity that is diametrically opposed to Scriptural truth.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America advocates for religious tolerance and mutual respect toward other religious traditions through its magazine, *Liberty*, and its efforts in the public sphere. *Liberty* is sent free of charge to many lawmakers and public figures. Our church likewise advocates and defends the religious rights in employment disputes for our Seventh-day Adventist Church members.

Our generous offering today will provide continued resources to expand this indispensable work in defending religious liberty across the North American Division.

February 1, 2020

Local Church Budget

Help, at the right time. A physician and his wife walked into a store and met a fellow church member. The member was frequently absent from church meetings. When asked why, the reply was: “we had some hard times, and needed to go to the local food bank open on Saturdays.” The physician and his wife felt impressed by the Holy Spirit to purchase a gift card from a local grocery store. They quoted a beautiful Bible verse on the card and set it in the church mailbox for this member.

Several weeks later, the member walked up to the couple and gave them a hug. She said: “I know this gift card was sitting for a while in my mailbox, but it came just at the right time. Thank you.” The physician and his wife were overwhelmed with gratitude. Tears welled up in their eyes. God had used them to help another person in need just at the right time.

Today’s offering is for our local church budget. We have worthy causes that minister to our local communities “just at the right time” for those who need it the most. Let us be generous with our contributions. Let us be part of God’s plan described in the book of Matthew: “for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in” (Matthew 25:35).

February 8, 2020

Adventist Television Ministries

“Who is that new person?” The pastor leaned over to the elder and asked: “Who is that new person sitting in the back pew?”

Elder: “He is a visitor who also came last week.”

Pastor: “How did he hear about us?”

Elder: “He was channel flipping and found Hope TV.”

Pastor: “That is excellent.”

Elder: “Yes. He said that the ‘preacher’ was talking about the Sabbath on TV and it was very interesting.”

Pastor: “Did you talk with him?”

Elder: “Yes, I did last week when you were at the other church.”

Pastor: “Did he enjoy his first visit last week?”

Elder: “It looks like it, since he came back this week again. I think he wants to meet you, pastor.”

This conversation takes place more and more often in churches around the world. Our Seventh-day Adventist television ministries here at home and across the world are making a huge impact in promoting the Gospel to millions of viewers. With your help, commitment, and sacrificial giving, we can continue to provide these modern-age services. Let’s commit a portion of our income to these ministries.

February 15, 2020

Local Church Budget

The angel recorded every offering made to God. In *Testimonies to the Church* (vol. 2, p. 518), Ellen White notes the following statement: “I was shown that the recording angel makes a faithful record of every offering dedicated to God and put into the treasury.” She continues on page 520 with the following words: “Duties in this direction are binding upon all who profess to be followers of Christ. God’s law specifies their duty to their fellow men: ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.’”

In February we celebrate love in secular society. But from a spiritual perspective, God also celebrates the importance of love toward our fellow human beings. Mrs. White is very explicit in stating that loving our neighbor is a “duty” for all of us who profess to be “followers of Christ.” Such an imperative is inescapable. God desires that we serve, in love, those closest to our spheres of influence. These could be our neighbors, coworkers, or anyone we come into contact with regularly.

This week our offering is dedicated to the local church budget. Our local churches have ministries that reach out corporately to our local communities and our “neighbors.” Let us be generous with our tithes and offerings so that our outreach may be a substantial blessing for those who receive it.

February 22, 2020

Rocky Mountain Conference Advance

There are two kinds of congregations in The Rocky Mountain Conference: those which own a church building and those which plan to someday.

If your congregation owns the building in which you are worshipping, you can count on the fact that the Rocky Mountain Advance Offering helped to pay for it. In many cases, major capital improvements like renovations or additions also received funds from the Advance offering.

If your congregation is saving up to own a building someday, you will be pleased to know that support for your new building will come from the Advance offering. There is a formula that takes several factors into consideration that will help pay for your new building when the time comes.

Unfortunately, the income from Rocky Mountain Advance cannot keep up with the demand for school and church projects. It may be up to three or four years after a building is purchased before the local congregation receives a check for their share from the Advance budget.

If we all gave sacrificially, the time between buying a church and getting assistance from the Advance offering could be shortened. In gratitude for what the Advance offering brought to your congregation, or in anticipation of what it can someday do for you, please be generous in your support today and all year.

February 29, 2020

NAD Evangelism

A legacy to remember. Charles Marshall Kinny was the first African-American ordained minister in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Kinny organized the first African-American Adventist churches in the United States. He was born a slave in Virginia and after the Civil War ended Kinny accepted the Advent message and became a Seventh-day Adventist in 1878.

He worked as a pastor, evangelist, and lecturer in several states. His work was very fruitful and he is considered by many to be the “founder of Black Adventism.” The General Conference leadership turned to Kinny many times for advice on how to reach African-American brothers and sisters for Jesus Christ.

February is Black History month. We celebrate the achievements of our brothers and sisters in faith. This Sabbath our offerings go to support new church plants across the North American Division. Let us cherish the legacy of our spiritual forefathers, such as Charles Marshall Kinny, and give generously.

Charles Marshall Kinny information was retrieved from:
<http://www.blacksdahistory.org/charles-kinny.html>

March 7, 2020

Local Church Budget

Faithful in small things. The university student riding the subway had to make a choice: Would he spend his last 50 dollars on discretionary spending or give it to God as an offering? A verse came into his mind: “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Matthew 6:33). As a new Adventist, he understood that miracles happen when the people of God stay faithful to the ideas and values that lift us closer to heaven. His offering, he argued, would help the local church reach others just like him.

The reason he became an Adventist Christian was due to a local Seventh-day Adventist church sponsoring a teacher who in turn gave Bible studies to students. He was one of those students who accepted Jesus Christ and chose to be baptized. The student decided to stay faithful to his pledged promise and give an offering to God in the local church.

The local church has an array of ministry opportunities that reach out to students, single parents, economically disadvantaged people, the sick, and the imprisoned. Our faithful and generous support of these ministries will have a tremendous dividend for eternity. Let us be liberal and magnanimous in supporting our local church budget. This support will serve people in need and introduce them to Jesus.

March 14, 2020

Adventist World Radio/Hope Channel

Maria had hit rock bottom. After escaping an abusive marriage, she eventually found love again with a kind policeman. But then the unthinkable happened and she and her husband were ambushed during a drive-by shooting. Her husband shielded her with his body. She survived; he didn't. Her anguish became unbearable. She succumbed to depression and even turned to séances.

One day, her sister forwarded her an AWR360° cell phone sermon about the state of the dead. She became convicted about the Bible truth and prayed for forgiveness. That Sabbath, she walked into an Adventist church with her children, and has attended ever since.

But the Lord wasn't done with her. She wanted to reach others with the Three Angels' Messages. Incredibly, she forgave both her abusive first husband, and her second husband's killers, and started sending them cell phone sermons. They now listen every week.

This is just the tip of the iceberg. Hundreds of thousands of people are regularly listening to AWR360° cell phone sermons, and that number continues to grow worldwide.

The offering today goes to support Adventist World Radio and Hope Channel Ministries. Both are transforming lives for eternity.

March 21, 2020

Local Church Budget

God opens doors we can't imagine. A small church and school decided to start a building project. They contracted a local architect to design the project. The architect priced the construction cost at \$75,000. The quoted price was within the local church's saved budget. The project commenced, but the excavation cost of the building site was higher than expected. The church realized that the project was significantly underestimated and that they lacked sufficient funds.

The contractor abandoned the project and the architect left the area. "What are we going to do now?" asked the church members. They decided to pray. There was no miraculous descent of dollar bills from the sky. Yet, something happened. A church member started a fundraiser for the needed funds. The church members saw that she needed help and offered to work with her. This brought the church together. Her project succeeded in providing more than \$36,000 a year and sparked a growth in unity, faith, and trust. Tithes and offerings increased. The church grew. Within a few years, the church completed a million-dollar project and saw what God can and will do when people unite, humble themselves, and pray.

Today's offering is for the local church budget. Let us unite, pray, and ask God to show us a miracle. Let us become accessories to this miracle by returning faithfully His tithes and offerings.

March 28, 2020

Rocky Mountain Conference Advance

The church exists for one purpose only: To grow the kingdom of God. Everything we do from Pathfinders to building maintenance must somehow be connected to that purpose.

Nothing is more directly associated with that mission than evangelism. Today's offering is for Rocky Mountain Advance, and 40% of every dollar taken in from every Advance offering through the year goes to evangelism in our conference.

Look around you today and take note of all the people who are here because of evangelism. If not you yourself, perhaps your parents or grandparents came to a meeting and heard the truth about God, His people, and His plan of redemption. If not for evangelism we would never be here.

The lifeblood of evangelism is the support that comes from faithful members who are grateful that they know Jesus and are anxious to provide a means for others to know Him as well.

Thank you for your generous support of the Rocky Mountain Advance offering and the evangelistic efforts funded by it.

April 4, 2020

Local Church Budget

When we serve, we create a better future. Shellie and her two children walked into a local library. She struck up a conversation with another mother who also had two children of similar age. A friendship ensued. A few months went by and Shellie learned that her friend struggled financially, living paycheck to paycheck.

The Lord impressed Shellie, a nurse, to help. She talked with her husband and they decided to purchase a few boxes of diapers and clothes, and send them to her friend anonymously. They learned that the struggling mother did not have any means to purchase the much-needed diapers. The gifts could not have come at a better time.

Despite desiring to remain anonymous, Shellie and husband were discovered and were thanked for their kindness. Such acts of kindness are examples of how we can serve and, in the process, create miracles in other people's lives.

Today, single-parent households are one of the fastest growing demographics. Single parents live in our local communities; working, shopping, and eating.

When we are faithful in our giving, we serve the needs of our local communities such as single-parent households. Let us give generously today to our local church budget.

April 11, 2020

Christian Record Offering

How much is your sight worth? A few years ago, Claudia was talking with Roger, a recently baptized Adventist teenager, about disabilities. Roger was in awe of how Claudia was able to get around, read, and function with a severe disability that drastically reduced her sight. Claudia had lost her eyesight 10 ten years prior and was totally and legally blind. She was studying to become a Seventh-day Adventist Christian and was reading several publications that were provided by Christian Record Services.

After Roger left Claudia's home, he decided to put a bandana on his eyes and try to function without his eyesight for an entire day. He tried memorizing the placement of furniture, dishes, and other essentials in his room. He only lasted for one hour. Roger kept bumping into things in his house, could not find anything, and felt frustrated. He took off his bandana and understood how important it is to have eyesight and be able to function.

Christian Record Services is an organization that provides materials and services for the visually impaired. It also provides camps for children who are blind and cannot afford to attend them.

Our monetary gifts on behalf of Christian Record Services bring us closer to Jesus and also fulfill the commission described in Matthew 28:18-20.

April 18, 2020

Local Church Budget

Dream big. Susan Herbert Timmons managed 5,000 volunteers who served local communities in Virginia.

The women's ministries team sat at the table planning activities to reach women in the community. The discussion centered on how to reach out to young moms, busy working women, and the homebound. Down the hall, the deacons were discussing ways to spruce up the church grounds. The children's ministry team was designing the summer Vacation Bible School and ways to reach neighborhood children. The worship team was planning a special music program to inspire our local community as well as church members. The evangelistic team was scheduling a series of speakers to address end-time events. Each team member volunteered time and talent to spread God's love.

While each congregation has unique needs and a similarly unique community to serve, the willingness of volunteers is needed to provide the guidance, direction, and support to engage others in Christ's ministry and our calling to spread the gospel.

When you support your local church budget, you provide the resources to enable the work of these ministries in your community. At the same time, you honor and encourage the volunteers to dream big so that they may draw others closer to Christ.

April 25, 2020

Rocky Mountain Conference Advance

We are blessed in the Rocky Mountain Conference with two summer youth camps: Glacier View Ranch and Mill Springs Ranch. Both are spectacularly beautiful, both serve our people beyond the summer camp programs, and both have capital and maintenance needs.

It's a constant effort to keep the plumbing in order, the roads repaired, and the buildings in top condition. Periodically improvements are necessary. We are always improving and always looking for new ways to better serve our constituents. However, we believe the effort and expense are well worth it in terms of the service we receive from our camps. Family gatherings, camp meetings, continuing education, and a host of other activities are possible because of these two properties.

Today's offering is for Rocky Mountain Advance. Part of the funds from the Advance offering are to keep our facilities at Glacier View Ranch and Mill Springs Ranch growing and improving.

Thank you for your generosity.

May 2, 2020

Local Church Budget

Do we know our neighbor? Ellen G. White once noted: "Wherever a church is established, all the members should engage actively in missionary work. They should visit every family in the neighborhood and know their spiritual condition" (*Testimonies*, vol. 6, 296).

To a postmodern, ultra-busy, perennially distracted Western mind (such as a North American Seventh-day Adventist Christian), such counsel seems surreal or out of this age. Did she really say that we should know our neighbor's "spiritual condition"? Wouldn't that be a bit nosy? Perhaps offensive to our neighbor? Did she mean we should do that personally? Or corporately as a church?

Her counsel seems to be clear: "wherever a church is established, all the members should engage actively" in ministry that will denote empathy, care, and genuine service. This was the model that Jesus Christ also followed. Our Savior cared for the people whom He served in the local communities.

We are called to serve our local communities personally and also corporately as a local church. Let us be faithful and support the ministry of our faith community and thus hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

May 9, 2020

Disaster and Famine Relief

Adventist Community Services. In a small town near Baltimore, Maryland, flooding destroyed homes and businesses within a two-hour time frame.

Adventist Community Services Disaster Response (ACS DR) volunteers organized a “Muck Out” for the affected homes in the community. Each home they visited was close to a waterway that had produced river-like water flow out in the streets. Many boxes and furniture had held water for more than two weeks. Additionally, some of the homes developed mold.

One family whose basement was flooded with more than 24 inches of water appreciated the help. Volunteers worked on their home removing furniture, carpet, drywall, and the remaining debris. The ACS DR teams were also able to provide other needs, such as food, water, and basic items.

ACS DR works throughout the North American Division serving communities in times of crisis. Today, your offering will be gratefully received to support the North American Division Adventist Community Services and the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) internationally to assist before, during, and after disasters and traumatic events.

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

May 16, 2020

Local Church Budget

Yes, we can. Yes we should! A couple of years ago, *The Compass Magazine* had an interesting article about tithe and offerings. The article noted that in 2017, close to 1.02 billion dollars were given in tithe in the NAD. There was more interesting statistical data: one third of “active” Adventist members did not return a tithe. Young people and old alike “neglected” to be faithful in returning a tithe to the Lord. Why didn’t they give? The reason was not theological. It was not pastor-related (whether they liked or disliked the pastoral service). Believe it or not, it was simply a case of forgetfulness. People just plain forgot to pay their tithe.

Another subset of the same demographic noted that “they needed to tithe more regularly.” The Bible concurs. We can, and we should, remember to pay an honest tithe to our God. It is estimated that if most active Adventists would return an honest tithe, our annual income would easily double to \$2 billion.

Let us make a new covenant with our Lord to be faithful and return a faithful tithe to He. Yes, we can, and yes, we should!

Article sourced and retrieved from:

https://thecompassmagazine.com/blog/the-tithe-conundrum-what-percent-of-adventists-actually-tithe#_edn2

May 23, 2020

Rocky Mountain Conference Advance

Inflation by the numbers. Hungary has the distinction of having had the world's highest ever printed denomination banknotes at a staggering quintillion Pengo (the local currency between 1927 and 1946). That is a one followed by 18 zeros. Such hyperinflation hit the country between 1922 and 1924. In fact, Hungary managed to win another record by introducing a 100-quintillion note in 1946. After the second world war, inflation doubled every 15 hours. How much was 100 quintillion Pengo worth? A grand total of twenty cents.

Over the past several decades, average inflation in the United States has been around 3 percent. When inflation occurs, purchasing power erodes. Thus, every year, our dollar will buy three percent less.

As a non-profit organization, our church relies and depends on benevolent donations. If we always give the same amount without accounting for inflation, the ministries of the local fields will at some point run deficits. As we plan our systematic giving, let us increase our donations and account for the yearly purchasing power loss caused by inflation.

When we think strategically and account for inflation in our giving, we strengthen and secure the ministries of our local conferences.

May 30, 2020

Rocky Mountain Conference Education

School is wrapping up for the year. Teachers across the Rocky Mountain Conference are packing up their classrooms. Nominating committees will soon be voting new members to school boards for the next year. Parents are already thinking about the new clothes and supplies their children will need in the fall. At the Conference office the Education Department is rolling out new curriculum and finalizing personnel decisions

It takes a lot to keep Adventist education moving forward. Classes might be suspended until fall but the school year never really stops. And the financial support needed to keep Adventist education going can't take a break either.

Today's offering is normally for Rocky Mountain Advance, but each year we pause that for a Sabbath so we can take up a special offering for education.

Teachers, boards, parents, and conference personnel put a lot of time and effort into Adventist education and they need a lot of support. It can come in the form of encouragement, volunteering, or just showing up to cheer at a soccer game. But it's all for nothing if we don't have the financial support necessary to keep our schools alive.

Everything you do for our schools is appreciated.

June 6, 2020

Local Church Budget

Church money. Max was just a young boy living in rural Virginia with his parents and his sister. One summer evening, they went for a short drive to the river to eat their picnic supper.

Soon it was time for the family to pack up and go home. When they arrived home, they found the back door broken and wide open. Someone had broken into their home and stolen many of their belongings.

Later that night while Max was lying in his bed trying to go to sleep, he remembered something very important. He ran to his parents' room excitedly asking if the robber had found their "church money." His parents got up and they all went to the kitchen. Sure enough, the jar full of money was still there.

The family had been saving their extra coins and an occasional dollar to give as an offering on the coming Sabbath. They were so thankful that the gifts for the church were safe. With thankful hearts they carried the jar to church the following Sabbath and happily placed the money, jar and all, in the offering plate.

Let's be thankful today for the blessings we have and the monies we can generously share as we give to support the local budget needs for our church today.

—Carol Doudiken is a local elder in the Potomac Conference, and this story is about her uncle.

June 13, 2020

Local Church Budget

A chaplain hero serves, and lives are saved. Brad Brown lost his wife to cancer only five months before the devastating Camp Fire destroyed Paradise, California, in 2018. He worked as a chaplain at a nearby Adventist hospital when the fire enveloped the entire region. He called his two teenage children and told them that he loved them, after which he lost cell phone coverage.

More than 80 percent of Paradise was destroyed and close to 90 fatalities were reported. When the fire was the most intense, Brad decided to use his minivan to transport critical care and hospice patients from the burning hospital to safety. His actions and service saved lives. *TIME Magazine* named Brad Brown one of the heroes of 2018.

Nearly 1,300 Adventist church members were affected, with many losing everything except their lives. In crises such as these, it's inspiring to witness the outpouring of support from our faith community. Today, let's give to our local church budget to support those in need in times like this.

June 20, 2020

Local Church Budget

Appreciating our earthly and heavenly fathers. Sonora Smart Dodd was 16 when she lost her mother in childbirth. Her father, a Civil War veteran, single-handedly raised six children, including a newborn. They lived in Washington State and life was not always easy. Years later, as Sonora sat in church listening to a Mother's Day sermon, she felt a deep desire to honor her father, William Jackson Smart. She started a petition in her town to designate June 5, her father's birthday, as a holiday. The town obliged, and a few weeks later the first Father's Day was celebrated on June 19, 1910.

In 1972, President Richard Nixon elevated the local statute to federal level and proclaimed Father's Day a national holiday. The affection of a grateful daughter led to fathers across the world being recognized and appreciated.

Every Sabbath, when we gather in churches across the country, we celebrate a close and intrinsic relationship with our heavenly Father. Let us cherish not only our natural earthly fathers, but also our Heavenly one.

As we collect our local offerings and tithes, let us be grateful to our Father for our lives, health, and families.

June 27, 2020

Rocky Mountain Conference Advance

It's the middle of the year and time for a reminder about the Rocky Mountain Advance offering. We have been using these offering appeals to further inform everyone of how the fund is used within our conference. One important thing to remember about the Advance offering is that it stays within our Conference. The worldwide mission matters and we are privileged to support it, but the mission within the Rocky Mountain Conference is no less important than anywhere else.

Already we have presented information about the church and school building program that receives 10% of the Advance offering, evangelism which receives 40%, and the youth camp facilities that receive 10%. Further into the year we will also hear about secondary schools which receive 25%, the summer camp programs that receive 10%, and La Vida Mission which receives 5%.

We hope that these appeals have brought greater understanding of the Advance offering, and that knowing how it is used will make your giving decisions easier.

Thank you again for your support of these vital programs.

July 4, 2020

Local Church Budget

Our citizenship is heaven. Ever since the fifth grade, Andrew desired to move to the United States and be one of its citizens. This incredible honor materialized when Andrew arrived in New York City in 1999. From the beginning, Andrew was spellbound. The skyscrapers, the hustle and bustle of the city, and the kindness and generosity of its people were electrifying.

Everywhere Andrew traveled, people from all backgrounds, colors, and cultures welcomed him as one of their own. Andrew could barely speak English, but that hardly mattered. America's people displayed a decency and desire to help even when communication was difficult.

Andrew fell in love with America: its zest for life, its optimism, and its belief in the collective potential for a better world. Andrew became a citizen and for the past 20 years has made the United States his temporary home. He has studied, married, and welcomed children in its land. He calls it a *temporary* home because as much as he loves his country, he looks forward to a permanent eternity with our God.

With an eye towards a country promised by our Savior, let us be faithful in returning our tithes and offerings to hasten its coming.

July 11, 2020

Women's Ministries

We don't know all of their names. Women invested in Jesus's cause from the beginning. When Jesus traveled, the Twelve went with him, along with Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna, "and many others who provided for Him from their substance" (Luke 8:1-3). Lydia, a businesswoman, became the first follower of Jesus in Europe. Priscilla and her husband, Aquila, hosted Paul in Corinth, Ephesus, and Rome.

Women's investment goes beyond financial. Jesus met a Samaritan woman who became the first evangelist in John's gospel. Mary Magdalene was the first witness of Jesus's resurrection. Tabitha, or Dorcas, shared the gospel through acts of service. Phoebe, a deacon, traveled hundreds of miles to deliver Paul's letter to Rome. Junia, an apostle, went to prison for Jesus's cause.

Our mothers, sisters, and daughters still face unique challenges as we serve Christ together. Women's Ministries provides opportunities and resources for women to experience spiritual growth, freedom from abuse, mentoring, networking, and greater service at home, church, and in the community.

You may not know all of their names, but your investment today will impact the lives of women and men across this division, for Jesus's cause.

—Raewyn Orlich is a pastor in Victorville, California.

July 18, 2020

Local Church Budget

God never takes a break. July is a summer month perfect for vacations. Some of us are getting ready to spend some leisure time at the lake, in the mountains, or even in a foreign country. We disconnect, leaving behind our work, hectic schedules, and the minutia of the daily grind. Hopefully, we return refreshed and ready for a new cycle of work, family, and routine.

Many know John 3:16 by heart. Its core message is that God loves humanity and came to save it. From the moment humanity chose sin in the Garden of Eden, God never had a day off from His “work.” Every day, the Creator of the universe “shows up for work” by healing, protecting, advising (via the Holy Spirit), admonishing, hoping (for wise choices), crying, and smiling.

Can you imagine the 9-to-5 grind in God’s schedule?” The sheer magnitude of God’s presence in our universe at all times and being of service to a fallen humanity is overwhelming—yet encouraging. He is there for us—we can count on Him. At all times.

Let us remember God in the midst of our vacation preparations. God never takes a day off, or a break. He is serving humanity 24 hours a day, every day, until His Son returns again.

July 25, 2020

Rocky Mountain Conference Advance

The secondary educational institutions of the Rocky Mountain Conference, Champion Academy and Mile High Academy, are here to serve the education needs of our entire Conference and beyond. Young people travel across oceans for the privilege of receiving the quality education that we have right in our backyard.

It is a blessing that travel and communications have advanced well beyond what was available in the early days of our academies. Many of our parents or grandparents were dropped off at a train station in the fall, and the only thing to connect them with home was snail mail until parents collected them at the station in the spring. Today if you don’t have an academy within daily driving distance you still have the option of Adventist education but with a closer connection to your child than in previous generations.

But the reality is that education, whether in our schools or elsewhere, is a lot more expensive than previous generations faced. To help keep costs under control, the Rocky Mountain Advance offering provides 25% of its funds to our academies. It’s an opportunity for all of us, whether we or a family member are enrolled or not, to support those who are already stretching hard to provide the best for their family.

Bless you as give generously to the Advance offering.

August 1, 2020

Local Church Budget

A lifesaving serum. In 1925, a major diphtheria epidemic was just about to sweep Nome, Alaska. The harsh and excessively cold Alaskan environment hindered the transportation of a lifesaving serum that would stop the spread of the epidemic. It was so cold that the engine of the sole aircraft that could have potentially delivered the medicine did not turn on.

Dogs were employed with sleds to transport the medication. It was an arduous journey with limited visibility, high winds, and temperatures of minus 31-degrees Celsius. Balto, a Siberian husky, relied solely on his senses to keep Gunnar Kaasen on the right track and lead him into Nome. Their delivery averted the epidemic.

God also staved off a major catastrophe by sending His only Son Jesus Christ to deliver a lifesaving sacrifice on the cross. Jesus endured ridicule, mockery, abuse, and violence for the salvation of humanity. Isaiah 53 tells us that Jesus was led as a lamb to a slaughterhouse and did not object. It was His choice to finish the journey and provide a lifesaving option.

The local church is a body of believers that reaches out on a regular basis to people who do not know Jesus Christ. Our tithe and offerings are an intricate part in this outreach. Let us be faithful in returning that which is God's.

August 8, 2020

Oakwood/Andrews/Loma Linda Universities

Find your place – faith, friends, future. Serving more than 9,500 students combined, Andrews, Loma Linda, and Oakwood Universities are specially tasked with preparing future church leaders for the mission fields of healthcare and pastoral work.

You can tangibly help a student like Vanessa, who chose to attend Loma Linda University because of its holistic approach to health. To her, health went beyond physical healing. It included the social, emotional, intellectual, environmental, and spiritual health of her patients.

Or you can help a student like Christian, who was raised Roman Catholic in Ecuador and decided to leave a career in technology to become a pastor and attend the Seminary at Andrews University. His friends, family, sponsors, and mentors at Andrews helped him “rekindle the spark that ignites a commitment toward a true revolution of thought and action.” And he now wants to “wholeheartedly change this world with Christ and for Christ!”

Please give generously to help make a difference for students like Vanessa and Christian. Your help will be greatly multiplied by all those who are assisted by these future leaders of our churches and communities.

—Marc A. Grundy is Director of Marketing for the Association of Adventist Colleges and Universities

August 15, 2020

Local Church Budget

Is it really too much? After her baptism, Luzia made a plan to return her offering as a percentage of her income. She did not want to “forget” to be grateful to God. While living in Brazil, Luzia got a well-paid job, and writing checks for the tithes and offerings became painful. She always understood that tithes don’t belong to us and we return them to God. But she wasn’t so sure about offerings anymore.

Luzia prayed and finally understood that offerings are a way to show God our gratitude for the blessings received, and the only way to reduce the amount was if God reduced her blessings. Looking back, she can see that after returning tithe and giving offerings she always had enough to pay her bills, buy all she needed, and even make trips around the world.

She says the best thing happened when she and her husband moved to the United States. They sold their condo in Brazil and with that money bought a house for cash in the States. Daily she thanks God for this blessing and miracle, because, by her calculations, it should never have been possible.

God doesn’t need our money. He only wants us to learn to trust Him and His plans for our life. Luzia encourages you to try and see God’s generosity!

—Luzia Raleigh is a local elder in the Roanoke, Virginia Seventh-day Adventist Church

August 22, 2020

Rocky Mountain Conference Advance

How many of our young people here today were at camp this summer? How many of our families went to family camp? And if you couldn’t make it this summer, how many of you had at least one magical week at Glacier View Ranch or Mill Springs Ranch?

We have already focused on the facilities of these camps as receiving funds from the Rocky Mountain Advance offering, and now we celebrate the summer programs that go on there. These programs allow young people to experience things not available at home, form lasting friendships, and be a part of a spiritual program with their friends. They provide summer jobs for college students where the boss won’t be asking them to compromise their principles. They uplift Jesus for campers, staff, and visitors.

It’s a lot of work, and it is our hope that we all appreciate how much goes into the quality programming that blesses the campers. As you give to the Rocky Mountain Advance offering today, thank God for the opportunity to support such a wonderful mission.

August 29, 2020

Local Church Budget

Can we make a difference? With fewer than 40 people in attendance, the Roundup and Lewistown Seventh-day Adventist churches in rural Montana asked a very important question: “How can we impact our local communities with such small congregations?” Its “graying” constituency felt inadequate and had mobility, health, and age issues. Many argued that the modern technology was “way over our head.” We prayed, and then... God had a sense of humor.

In 2014, a man named Richard called asking: “Would you like a radio station? I will pay for most expenses and help set it up. Please tell me, Pastor, how many radio stations would you like to have?” Richard did not listen to the pastor’s arguments, and the rest is history!

In 2014, three FM radio stations were founded in the communities of Lewistown, Roundup, and Billings, Montana. In the first two churches, the members run these stations: Producing weekly content for their entire city, running computers, setting up microphones, broadcasting on social media.

Whether it’s running radio stations or supporting our local church budget, together we can make a difference!

September 5, 2020

Local Church Budget

Debt. In 2018, Americans collectively owed nearly four trillion dollars in consumer debt. A big chunk of this debt was credit card debt. The interest payment on such debt servicing alone stood at an astronomical \$104 billion.

One would ask, why are we borrowing so much? In 2014, a Gallup World Poll commissioned a study asking adults from more than 140 countries some basic questions related to “financial concepts, interest rates, compounding, inflation, and risk diversification.” Only one in three adults was able to give a correct answer. Collectively, we are becoming a financially illiterate society.

In contrast, the Bible gives us very strong counsel when it comes to debt: Don’t have it. “The borrower is servant to the lender,” the book of Proverbs (22:7) warns us. Borrowing robs us of the freedom to sponsor causes that are important to God.

Our offering today is for local church budget. Are we able to stay faithful in our giving or do we have to fret and worry that we are not able to meet all of our obligations due to excessive debt?

Information retrieved from:

<https://www.lexingtonlaw.com/blog/news/investment-literacy-survey.html>

September 12, 2020

Local Church Budget

Start where you are. Chris Gardner's fascinating story is portrayed in the movie, *The Pursuit of Happyness*. As a single parent with a young boy in tow, Gardner's character, played by Will Smith, had a hard time making it. He struggled to find adequate housing, as he had odd jobs and poor transportation. The story was emotional, raw, and uncomfortable at times. In the end, Gardner's exasperated pursuit of happiness was successful.

In real life, Chris Gardner becomes very prosperous. In his #1 New York Times best seller, *Start Where You Are*, he describes a roadmap that invites his success to be replicated. One of the most important points a reader takes away reading this book is that for anyone to succeed they need to start where they are.

“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). Around the world a tired humanity is desperately searching for a substitute that will take away burdens and give peace. Yet, God reminds us that we can come to Him as we are.

Today, as we give to our local church budget, remember that our presence in this community allows us to reach people where they are.

September 19, 2020

Local Church Budget

Train up a child. Parents often feel guilty for not doing enough for their children. In fact, at times, some of us parents go overboard and indulge our children. Desires are satisfied, toys pile up in the guest bedroom, high-priced electronics are purchased. Soon after some of these articles are acquired, interest in them subsides and they are relegated to obscurity. Is this story familiar?

The Bible teaches us that we should “train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it” (Proverbs 22:6). Teaching children about tithes and offerings is best in their earlier years. They can be taught to count out the tithe from monies they earned. They can also participate in donating to worthy causes.

The key in this training is the selection of proper timing, attitude, and benevolence. The child should not feel compelled. If properly explained, most children desire to participate in a project that helps other people.

Recently, a local pastor learned with delight that a young boy was returning his tithe faithfully because “that’s what God desired.”

Let us teach our children to be faithful in their earning and return to God what is rightfully His. This training will reap extraordinary dividends in the future.

September 26, 2020

Rocky Mountain Conference Advance

A boot heel of the Rocky Mountain Conference extends down into New Mexico. There is the home of La Vida Mission.

Changes in the laws have affected the work there. Some of the programs that were such a blessing to the local people are no longer allowed to continue. But the education work goes on, in some cases providing the only practical hope for a better life for children from indigenous families.

The mission relies on volunteers, the generosity of others, and special offerings to continue its work. The Rocky Mountain Conference is blessed to be the host for La Vida Mission, and we take the responsibility seriously. That is why a portion of every dollar that is given to Rocky Mountain Advance goes to support La Vida Mission.

Thank you for your generosity in giving today to the Advance offering.

October 3, 2020

Local Church Budget

Financial infidelity. This a term that describes a myriad of actions, activities and attitudes about money hidden from a particular partner. Dr. Bonnie Eaker Weil notes in her book *Financial Infidelity* that such phenomenon is the number one destroyer of relationships. Many couples feel betrayed by the offending partner's actions done in secret. The surprising revelation in reading the book is that many people do not see themselves financially unfaithful to their partners.

The same pervasive attitude is present in the Christian context. In a previous write up we noted that one third of active Seventh-day Adventist members do not return a faithful tithe. One of the main causes for such unfaithfulness was due to plain forgetfulness.

In the Bible the Lord tells us that not returning His tithe and offering is alike to robbing God (Malachi 3:8). Such a strong statement may be unpalatable. Nevertheless, Scripture makes a very strong point that some of us are financially unfaithful to God.

Such financial infidelity may have deeper roots than a simple case of forgetfulness. Being faithful financially to our Lord is a predictor of our long-term relationship with Him. Let us remain faithful to Him.

October 10, 2020

NAD Voice of Prophecy / La Voz de la Esperanza

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

A leader in religious broadcasting, the Voice of Prophecy focuses on God’s love and heralds the soon return of Christ—providing hope to broken people and guidance for daily living. Founded in 1929 by H.M.S. Richards, the ministry continues today under the leadership of Speaker/Director Shawn Boonstra and Associate Speaker Jean Boonstra. In 1942, La Voz de la Esperanza began broadcasting to bring the gospel to the Spanish-speaking world.

The Voice of Prophecy can be heard in nearly three dozen languages, and Bible lessons are available in more than 70 languages. Local *Discover Bible Schools* have been established in more than 2,000 churches across North America, with hundreds more around the world. La Voz de la Esperanza also has a Bible School with four collections of lessons.

As the Voice of Prophecy and La Voz de la Esperanza look to the future, they will continue to focus on sharing the love of Christ with a hurting world.

Let us support this Christ-centered ministry with our resources on this World Budget Sabbath.

October 17, 2020

Local Church Budget

The golden rule. Luke 6:31 introduces us to the gold standard of behavior toward others. It states that whatever you would like from people, you should do the same for them first. This is very sound advice. Yet, Matthew asks the very poignant question: “if you love those who love you, what reward have you?” (Matthew 5:46). In other words, if we only offer a transactional love and desire something in return, that love is meaningless.

In many instances in the Gospels, Jesus teaches His followers to love, give, and help unconditionally.

As a Seventh-day Adventist nonprofit institution, we are called to look for opportunities of service to our local communities. A parishioner once related a story to his pastor about a church. This Adventist church became so vital to the lifeblood of the local community that, if it were to be relocated without a warning, the local community would greatly suffer.

Have we become such indispensable extensions of our local communities? Are we serving them unconditionally, without any ulterior motives? The golden rule states that we are to love as we are loved. Jesus goes one step further when He asks us to love unconditionally.

October 24, 2020

Rocky Mountain Conference Advance

Investing in our future. Desmond Doss was an unassuming army medic often ridiculed for his stance on non-violent approaches to military service. His army colleagues often threw boots at him when he kneeled for prayer. He was called a coward and other names for his firm stance as a noncombatant conscientious objector. Yet, in 1945, at the Battle of Okinawa, Desmond Doss saved the lives of 75 men. He braved enemy fire, snipers, and an inhospitable terrain to save lives.

For such valor and courage, he received some of the highest military honors. President Harry S. Truman awarded Doss the Medal of Honor on October 12, 1945.

This service came at a price. Doss was wounded and evacuated from battle. Seventeen pieces of shrapnel were present after his gallant rescue missions. For the next five-and-a-half years, Doss underwent medical treatments that eventually culminated in him losing his hearing.

Such an amazing life story reminds us that service comes at a price. Jesus Christ Himself offered His life for the salvation of humanity. What a beautiful example to follow and legacy to remember.

By giving generously to the Rocky Mountain Conference Advance, we are supporting programs and initiatives that are greatly appreciated in our local communities.

October 31, 2020

Rocky Mountain Conference Evangelism

In most conferences across the North American Division the offering taken today will be for the local conference Advance offering. But in the Rocky Mountain Conference we pause that today to take up a special offering for Evangelism.

The Rocky Mountain Advance offering already sets aside 40% for evangelism, the single largest ministry supported by the Advance offering. But evangelism is so crucial to our mission that once a year we give the entire offering to evangelism, in addition to 40% of what is collected on the regular Advance offering Sabbaths.

Like all living things, conferences grow or they die. We continue to see growth in our conference but like all living things, if you stop feeding it, it will die.

We are grateful to each of you who give so generously to the Advance offering. On this special day of supporting evangelism, we ask that you please continue to bless our mission.

November 7, 2020

Local Church Budget

Is our faithfulness to God first? Ellen G. White noted the following: “We are not to consecrate to Him what remains of our income after all our real or imaginary wants are satisfied; but before any portion is consumed, we should set apart that which God has specified as His. Many persons will meet all inferior demands and dues, and leave to God only the last gleanings, if there be any. If not, His cause must wait till a more convenient season” (R&H., May 16, 1882).

When we are unfaithful with our tithes and offerings, we are sending a message. We send a message when we choose to put God and the spreading of the Gospel as a secondary or tertiary priority. We send a message that His cause must wait.

The plan of salvation was activated and Jesus volunteered to die for humanity on the cross. But what if He would have said: “I don’t really know about this.” Or, “Why don’t we wait a bit and see how this whole thing will play out?” Could you imagine if Jesus would have chosen to relegate humanity and its salvation as non-important?

God placed the salvation of humanity as a first priority in His life from the “foundation of the world” according to Ephesians 1:4. Let us remain faithful and place God first as well by returning His tithes and offerings.

November 14, 2020

Annual Sacrifice for Global Mission

Let’s sacrifice. Prem received medical training and then chose to live on a small stipend in a remote town in India as a Global Mission pioneer. Before Prem arrived, there were no Adventists in the region. The nearest hospital is several hours away, so pioneer Prem uses the talents God has given him to serve the town’s sick. He transformed his living room into a clinic where he lovingly teaches the locals how to adopt a wholistic lifestyle and treats their illnesses. Then he prays for the Heavenly Physician to heal and bless them.

Through Prem’s compassionate words and actions, many of his former patients now come each Sabbath to the local church building.

Global Mission pioneers sacrifice much to take Jesus to the unreached cities, towns, and villages around the world and to put His method of outreach into action. The question is, What are you willing to sacrifice to help support them?

The November 14 Annual Sacrifice Offering is a great time to make a special gift to support the work of Global Mission pioneers. If you want to help share Jesus with unreached people, write “Annual Sacrifice Offering” on your tithe envelope.

November 21, 2020

Local Church Budget

Let's give for the right reasons. In 1939, U.S. president Franklin D. Roosevelt, at the behest of the retail lobby, decided to change the American* Thanksgiving Day from its traditional date to one week earlier. The retail community was worried that the short shopping season would have a negative effect on the still fragile economy, and the president was trying to help stimulate it. Several states celebrated the original Thanksgiving Day. About half of the states decided to keep the new, earlier version of the holiday. Disruption, confusion, and acrimony led Congress to pass a law that cemented Thanksgiving Day to its original fourth Thursday of November.

In the spirit of Thanksgiving Day, let us recount all of the blessings that we have received from God in this past year. And when we sit down and plan our systematic giving to our local church, let us remember to give for the right reasons. Let us give with a grateful heart. Scripture tells us that God “loves a cheerful giver” (2 Corinthians 9:7).

Today our offering goes to the local church budget. When we give for the right reasons, cheerfully, with a love-filled heart, God will bless us abundantly.

****Thanksgiving is celebrated in Canada on the second Monday in October.***

November 28, 2020

Rocky Mountain Conference Advance

Six vital programs of the Rocky Mountain Conference receive support from the offering taken today. Church and school buildings, evangelism, youth camp facilities, summer camp programs, secondary schools, and La Vida Mission. In addition, two special offerings a year are taken for Rocky Mountain Conference Education and for Evangelism.

The only offering taken more often in the year is for the local church budget. That should be an indication of how important the functions of those six programs are to us.

These are the programs that speak about who we are. They indicate how much we value youth, education, and outreach. They demonstrate that we understand the importance of our facilities. They show that we want to grow and to retain.

When you give to Rocky Mountain Advance, you have a part in all these things. If these programs speak to your values, please be generous in your support.

December 5, 2020

Local Church Budget

Consumerism or service? December is accompanied by holiday shopping anxiety for some of us. The holiday season implies spending and keeping up with “standards” that are self-imposed or copied from the proverbial Joneses. In November 2018, the American Research Group, Inc., noted that the average American would spend \$992 on holiday gifts. This number was up from the previous year (\$983 in 2017). Single-item purchases are becoming more expensive and larger.

But something is changing. Consumers are getting fatigued with the constant drumbeat of spend, spend, spend. Movements are springing up around the idea of consuming less and living more affordably. From tiny houses to skipping gifting entirely, our society is shifting priorities. More and more people are treasuring experiences, family, and opportunities to serve instead of purchasing objects with an arbitrarily inflated value.

The Bible reminds us that “where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:21). Before the holiday season begins, let us resolve to focus on people, needs, and opportunities to serve. Let us seek those in need in our local communities and cherish the opportunities God puts in our way. We have a choice: We can continue to be consumers, or we can be providers of vital services for those vulnerable and in need.

December 12, 2020

Adventist Community Services

You meet the most wonderful people. Jason Morgan and his wife retired from the Air Force after 27 years of service. Jason served as bodyguard to Four-star Generals and was also involved in other sensitive military tasks all around the world. They recently moved into the same neighborhood as Patty Marsh, Upper Columbia Conference Director of ACS, Adventist Community Services.

Patty and her husband, Larry, met them while on their walk as the couple was moving in. Somewhere in the conversation Jason mentioned that he loved to knit winter caps. Patty came up with a wonderful idea of utilizing his creative skills to knit winter caps for the kids at STEAM Ahead and the Spokane Better Living Center Food Pantry in Washington.

Jason was so grateful for this opportunity and thanked Patty for providing places for him to share his handiwork. Patty stated, “You meet the most wonderful people as you give your best to bless others.”

By supporting ACS, you can make a lasting impact in your community, whether it’s by volunteering your time or donating goods and financial contributions.

—Wynelle Stevens is Assistant Director at Adventist Community Services.

December 19, 2020

Local Church Budget

Accessory to a miracle. On December 22, Lauren heard that her father needed emergency open-heart surgery. He lived in Europe, but Lauren was in the States. To fly to Europe on short notice was prohibitively expensive. An expired passport was also a concern. Her desire was to take her young daughter, Sabine, on this trip. The least expensive tickets were \$1,200. She needed two. Lauren prayed.

On Sabbath, Lauren and her family continued to pray. Church members formed a circle of prayer. And the miracles came.

First, the passport was renewed in just a few days. Second, a sister in the local church felt impressed to send a check for \$1,000 to Lauren. (It was mailed before the Sabbath on which the family prayed for a miracle.) Third, Lauren discovered that she had enough reward points to purchase a ticket. Fourth, Delta was informed of the story behind the short notice trip and discounted the second ticket to \$731.

Lauren broke down with tears in her eyes and related the story of these miracles to her father. He also was touched by God's kindness. The following Sabbath he made amends with God and took part in communion.

This miracle was possible because ordinary people decided to serve others. When we give to the local church budget, we too become accessories to miracles.

December 26, 2020

Rocky Mountain Conference Advance

It's the last offering appeal of the year. What could be so important that we save it for the very end?

We hope that you have been blessed to be a regular attendee in our congregations this year, and have listened as snapshots of these special programs have been presented. If you learned a bit along the way, that's something to rejoice about.

The Rocky Mountain Advance offering covers the following:

Evangelism 40%

Church and School buildings 10%

Mill Springs Ranch and Glacier View Ranch facilities, and Camp programs:

 Youth camp 10%

 Summer camp programs 10%

Mile High Academy and Campion Academy 25%

La Vida Mission 5%

Keep these programs in your thoughts and in your prayers. And one final time in 2020, please be generous in your support to them.