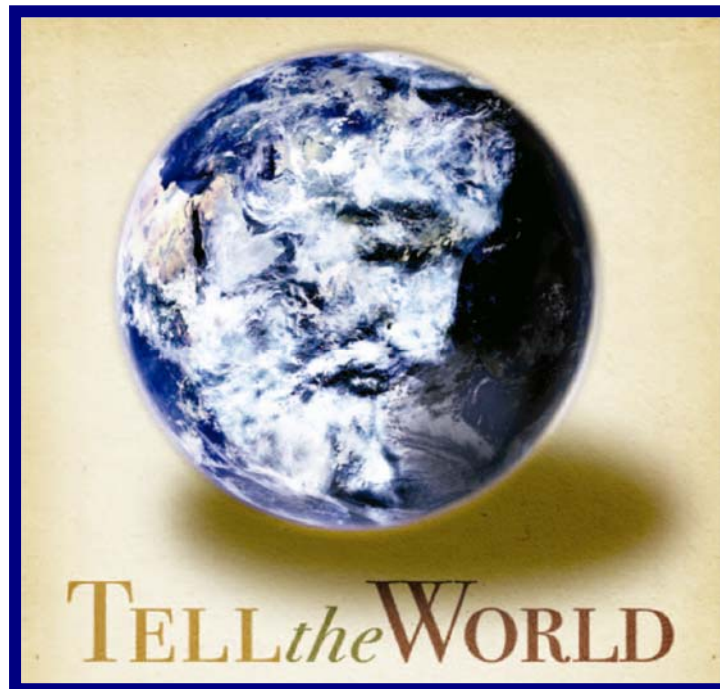


2020

Offertory Readings

English



Oregon Conference
of Seventh-day Adventists

STEWARDSHIP

Our mission as a church is “to reach the North American Division territory, with the distinctive, Christ-centered Seventh-day Adventist message of Hope and Wholeness.” Stewardship Ministries is dedicated to helping members catch the vision of “*funding the mission to finish God’s work.*” These funds make an impact on preaching the gospel to save the lost.

Systematic giving is part of being a faithful steward. When we tithe, we are recognizing that God owns everything. Offerings express our gratitude for what Christ has done for us. He loves a cheerful giver and has chosen this method to support those who preach the gospel as they reach the world with His message.

The 2017 English offertory readings were written by Nelson Silva. He is a native of Venezuela. Nelson earned his Doctoral degree in Ministry in Youth, Family and Culture. He currently serves as the Associate Youth Director for Young Adults, Public Campuses, and Hispanic Youth Ministries, in the Kentucky and Tennessee Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists.

This year we will not videotape the offertory readings, but you can find an extensive generic collection of previous years with all the offering appeals at www.iGiveSDA.org, under Offertory Materials.

Revival and reformation will drive your actions. Wherever revival and reformation are present, tithe appears. These three: revival, reformation, and tithing, will deepen your spirituality. Remember to *fund the mission to finish God’s work.*

John Mathews
NAD Stewardship Ministries Director

Bonita J. Shields
Associate Director

Dear Presenter,

Thank you for your willingness to share the following appeals with your local congregation. It is a wonderful and gratifying responsibility. How you present these readings could determine how effective they are. Here are some suggestions you may want 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 of the congregation.

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

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

PRESENT WITH PASSION: Read slowly and clearly. It is an amazing responsibility to lead out the worship in giving. Fill your heart with the thoughts presented, and God will do the rest.

PRAY: Each appeal has a prayer that has been prepared as a guide to go along with the thought of the day. Present to God what is on your heart as it relates to the appeal. Please keep the prayer concise and to the point.

May God richly bless you and speak through you as we take this journey together in 2017.

Oregon Conference Offering Schedule – 2020

| Date | Offering | Code | Date | Offering | Code |
|-------|--------------------------------------|------|-------|---|------|
| JAN 4 | Local Church Budget | 9001 | JUL 4 | Local Church Budget | 9001 |
| 11 | Oregon Conference Evangelism | 7504 | 11 | Women's Ministries (NAD) | 1782 |
| 18 | Local Church Budget | 9001 | 18 | Local Church Budget | 9001 |
| 25 | Religious Liberty (NAD) | 3002 | 25 | Oregon Conference Evangelism | 7504 |
| FEB 1 | Local Church Budget | 9001 | AUG 1 | Local Church Budget | 9001 |
| 8 | Adventist Television Ministries (WB) | 0500 | 8 | Oakwood / Andrews Univ / Loma Linda Univ (WB) | 0500 |
| 15 | Local Church Budget | 9001 | 15 | Local Church Budget | 9001 |
| 22 | Oregon Conference Youth Support | 7515 | 22 | Oregon Conference Youth Support | 7515 |
| 29 | NAD Evangelism (NAD) | 3001 | 29 | Alaska Conference (NPUC) | 5501 |
| MAR 7 | Local Church Budget | 9001 | SEP 5 | Local Church Budget | 9001 |
| 14 | Adventist World Radio (WB) | 0500 | 12 | Local Church Budget | 9001 |
| 21 | Local Church Budget | 9001 | 19 | Local Church Budget | 9001 |
| 28 | Oregon Conference Youth Support | 7515 | 26 | Oregon Conference Youth Support | 7515 |
| APR 4 | Local Church Budget | 9001 | OCT 3 | Local Church Budget | 9001 |
| 11 | Christian Record Services (WB) | 0500 | 10 | Voice of Prophecy / La Voz de Esperanza (WB) | 0500 |
| 18 | Local Church Budget | 9001 | 17 | Local Church Budget | 9001 |
| 25 | Oregon Conference Youth Support | 7515 | 24 | Oregon Conference Youth Support | 7515 |
| MAY 2 | Local Church Budget | 9001 | 31 | Walla Walla University (NPUC) | 5005 |
| 9 | Disaster & Famine Relief (WB) | 0500 | NOV 7 | Local Church Budget | 9001 |
| 16 | Local Church Budget | 9001 | 14 | Annual Sacrifice / Global Mission (WB) | 0500 |
| 23 | Oregon Conference Youth Support | 7515 | 21 | Local Church Budget | 9001 |
| 30 | Local Church Budget | 9001 | 28 | Oregon Conference Youth Support | 7515 |
| JUN 6 | Local Church Budget | 9001 | DEC 5 | Local Church Budget | 9001 |
| 13 | Local Church Budget | 9001 | 12 | Adventist Community Services (NAD) | 3511 |
| 20 | Local Church Budget | 9001 | 19 | Local Church Budget | 9001 |
| 27 | Oregon Conference Youth Support | 7515 | 26 | Oregon Conference Youth Support | 7515 |

WB = World Budget Offering

13th Sabbath Offerings

| | | | | | |
|--------|-------------------------|------|--------|-------------------------------|------|
| MAR 28 | Inter-European Division | 0502 | SEP 26 | West-Central African Division | 0502 |
| JUN 27 | Trans-European Division | 0502 | DEC 26 | Southern Asia Division | 0502 |

2020 Mission Investment Projects

Canadian Union
Southwestern Union

Offertory Reading for . . .

Sabbath 1

January 4, 2020

Today's Offering: Our 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.

Offertory Reading for . . .

Sabbath 2

January 11, 2020

Today's offering: Oregon Conference Evangelism

For this offering appeal, there will be a video provided by the Oregon Conference. It should be available online one week in advance.

(If you choose not to use the video, you can use the reading below)

It won't happen in heaven.

Many of the activities we engage in as a church, we will also do in heaven.

In church, we enjoy food. In heaven, the tree of life will bear a new type of fruit every month.

Perhaps mangoes the first month? Revelation 22:2

In church, we enjoy music. In heaven, we will be singing a new song before the throne, joining together with the angels. Revelation 5:9

In church, we enjoy fellowship. In heaven, our fellowship will never be broken by distance or death. Revelation 21:1

There is, however, one key activity of the church that will not take place in heaven.

In heaven, there won't be any baptisms. You won't find a baptistery anywhere. No one will be praying for the lost. There won't be evangelistic reaping meetings. No more beast brochures. Why? Eternal decisions have already been made while here on planet Earth. The primary reason the church exists is to reach others for Jesus. Baptisms represent the pinnacle of church life.

We would like to encourage your church to plan, in faith, a baptism Sabbath on a quarterly basis. Publish these dates in advance and make appeals for decisions. As we look forward to the joys of heaven, let's begin celebrating now. Luke 15:7,10. Every time we see the baptistery, every time it is filled, may we be reminded of our purpose.

The Oregon Conference Outreach Ministries team is committed to partner with your church to experience a maximum harvest. Already, over 60 reaping series have been scheduled for 2020, with a significant focus on advance preparation and retention. Financial resources are essential to maximize results. Sabbath, January 11, is a special offering for evangelism in the Oregon Conference. Your contribution will go directly to front-line soul winning ministry right here in Oregon, and Southwestern Washington.

Thank you for your generosity toward seeing many baptisteries filled.

Offertory Reading for . . .

Sabbath 3

January 18, 2020

Today's Offering: Our 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.

Offertory Reading for . . .

Sabbath 4

January 25, 2020

Today's North American Division Offering goes toward 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.

Offertory Reading for . . .

Sabbath 5

February 1, 2020

Today's Offering: Our 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).

Offertory Reading for . . .

Sabbath 6

February 8, 2020

Today's Offering: World Budget

A portion of today's World Budget Offering goes toward 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.

Offertory Reading for . . .

Sabbath 7

February 15, 2020

Today's Offering: Our 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.

Offertory Reading for . . .

Sabbath 8

February 22, 2020

Today's Offering: Oregon Conference Youth Support

For this offering appeal, there will be a video provided by the Oregon Conference. It should be available online one week in advance.

(If you choose not to use the video, you can use the reading below)

Once Upon A Time a congregation of committed Christians decided it was important to provide their children with a High School education that placed "Knowing Jesus" first.

"Rather than just teach math, language skills, biology, and music like all other high schools" they asked, "what if our educators taught each subject as God would teach it?"

The result was a chain of Christ-centered Seventh-day Adventist academies stretching from Maine to Nebraska, Colorado, California, and Oregon. Each of these new schools developed similar academic programs, ones designed to prepare the best-equipped missionaries in America.

The plan worked, and today the Oregon Conference continues to operate three of these training campuses: Columbia Academy, Milo Academy, and Portland Adventist Academy. Each is an educational center you can be proud to support.

Like the first Seventh-day Adventist high schools, our academies are havens of safety and centers of service. Wonderfully different from government-sponsored schools, these academies help students learn how to experience the world as sons and daughters of our Creator – the God who made us, loves us, and who is eager to have us as His representatives.

You can be certain that our academies continue to place, "Knowing Jesus" as the first item in the curriculum.

Each month the Oregon Conference invites you to participate in the success of these schools through giving to the Oregon Conference Youth Support offering. This is an opportunity for you to be part of growing our youth into strong models of God's Love.

Thank you for giving.

Offertory Reading for . . .

Sabbath 9

February 29, 2020

Today's Offering: North American Division 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>

Offertory Reading for . . .

Sabbath 10

March 7, 2020

Today's Offering: Our 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.

Offertory Reading for . . .

Sabbath 11

March 14, 2020

Today's Offering: World Budget

A portion of today's World Budget Offering goes toward 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.

Offertory Reading for . . .

Sabbath 12

March 21, 2020

Today's Offering: Our 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.

Offertory Reading for . . .

Sabbath 13

March 28, 2020

Today's Offering: Oregon Conference Youth Support

For this offering appeal, there will be a video provided by the Oregon Conference. It should be available online one week in advance.

(If you choose not to use the video, you can use the reading below)

Have you ever been a camper at Big Lake Youth Camp? If so, you probably remember the fragrance of the forest on a cool Big Lake morning, the cold waters of the lake, the delicious meals in the lodge, and the loud evening programs.

You probably also remember the name of your cabin counselor, and are likely still friends with some of the other campers you met at Big Lake.

You also know that Big Lake Youth Camp is far more than just a great Summer week, it's an experience that becomes part of your life, an adventure you wish you could have every year.

Here's the good news. Whatever you may remember about being at Big Lake in the past, it's even better today.

The lake is still cold and the mornings crisp, but today there are more horses, nicer cabins, hotter showers, and faster ski boats. Classes like kayaking and climbing and wake boarding test your strength and there are still trained cabin counselors who will become life-long friends. The evening programs? They're even louder – and more spiritual - than you remember.

Big Lake Youth Camp is just plain good Christian fun!

Each month the Oregon Conference invites you to participate in the success of our camp through giving to the Oregon Conference Youth Support offering. This is an opportunity for you to be part of growing our youth into strong models of God's Love.

Thank you for giving.

Offertory Reading for . . .

Sabbath 14

April 4, 2020

Today's Offering: Our 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.

Offertory Reading for . . .

Sabbath 15

April 11, 2020

Today's Offering: North American Division

A portion of today's offering goes toward Christian Record Services of the North American Division.

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.

Offertory Reading for . . .

Sabbath 16

April 18, 2020

Today's Offering: Our 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.

Offertory Reading for . . .

Sabbath 17

April 25, 2020

Today's Offering: Oregon Youth Support

For this offering appeal, there will be a video provided by the Oregon Conference. It should be available online one week in advance.

(If you choose not to use the video, you can use the reading below)

The Oregon Conference cares about Young Adults.

We care about reaching out to the youth who have moved beyond high school and we're eager to provide a safe home for them to grow in God's Grace while they are discovering their place in society.

We care about our young adults because they have So Much to contribute to the life of our congregations. Their voices, their ideas, and their leadership bring energy and strength to church worship and community outreach.

When they preach – we all listen.

When they teach the Sabbath School lesson – we all study more diligently.

When they speak up in board meetings – their ideas lead us to new ministries.

When they lead us in service – we are energized.

When they worship beside us – we are all blessed.

Your Oregon Conference Young Adult ministry provides encouragement, training, and resources to help all of this happen. We're here to help each young adult experience the love of Jesus, and then to equip each one for meaningful ministry.

Each month the Oregon Conference invites you to participate in the success of our ministry with young adults through giving to the Oregon Conference Youth Support offering. This is an opportunity for you to be part of growing our youth into strong models of God's Love.

Thank you for giving.

Offertory Reading for . . .

Sabbath 18

May 2, 2020

Today's Offering: Our 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.

Offertory Reading for . . .

Sabbath 19

May 9, 2020

Today's Offering: World Budget

A portion of today's World Budget Offering goes toward Disaster and Famine Relief (Adventist Community Services)

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.

By Wynelle Stevens, Assistant Director at Adventist Community Services

Offertory Reading for . . .

Sabbath 20

May 16, 2020

Today's Offering: Our 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

Offertory Reading for . . .

Sabbath 21

May 23, 2020

Today's Offering: Oregon Conference Youth Support

For this offering appeal, there will be a video provided by the Oregon Conference. It should be available online one week in advance.

(If you choose not to use the video, you can use the reading below)

At about 8:50 each Monday morning the day's leader for staff worship in the Oregon Conference office asks for special prayer requests. Immediately one of our long-time employees raises her hand and asks that we pray, "for our children." Her request receives a number of affirming, "Amens," and "our children" once again become a key part of the morning prayer.

We're that way about the people who are special to us. We want them included in every prayer. We post their pictures on the refrigerator, in our workplace, and on our bathroom mirrors. We keep them as the face pictures on our cell phones and computers. "Our children" are the most important and most valuable part of our lives.

That's also true in the ministry outreach of the Oregon Conference. Each month we even take a special offering that is dedicated for Youth Ministry Support.

The major portion of each month's offering is dedicated to help Milo, Columbia, and Portland Adventist Academies assure that our high school students receive the finest education possible.

Another portion helps provide resources and programming for the conference's outreach to young adults.

And the third portion enhances the ministry of Big Lake Youth Camp.

Our youth deserve only the best, and your contributions help make that a reality for "our children."

Thank you for giving.

Offertory Reading for . . .

Sabbath 22

May 30, 2020

Today's Offering: Our Local Church Budget

Seek you first the kingdom of God.

From cashless societies, to mega metropolises, to positronium fueled space exploration, humanity is rapidly accelerating its existence into an uncertain future.

Lifespans are prolonged. In the near future, medicine is personalized via nanotechnology to an unprecedented molecular level. Some argue that singularity (the science of merging humanity with algorithmic computer artificial intelligence) will redefine the very essence of what it means to be a human. The exponential growth in scientific advances and its related experiential continuum of our lives will most likely create insecurity and by extension will question identity.

The Bible promises us that certainty and a spectacular future (John 14:1-3) will be given to us by our Savior Jesus Christ. There is a caveat here: we are to seek the kingdom of God **first** (Matthew 6:33).

In this age, traditional orthodoxy is challenged, assumptions are discarded, and biblical counsel is dismissed as archaic and trivial. Yet, the God of the universe reassures us that if we seek Him first, we will spend eternity with Him (Revelation 21:4).

Let us seek Him, first. A glorious future awaits with Him.

Offertory Reading for . . .

Sabbath 23

June 6, 2020

Today's Offering: Our 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.

Offertory Reading for . . .

Sabbath 24

June 13, 2020

Today's Offering: Our 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.

Offertory Reading for . . .

Sabbath 25

June 20, 2020

Today's Offering: Our 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 tithe, let us be grateful to our Father for our lives, health, and families.

Offertory Reading for . . .

Sabbath 26

June 27, 2020

Today's Offering: Oregon Youth Support

For this offering appeal, there will be a video provided by the Oregon Conference. It should be available online one week in advance.

(If you choose not to use the video, you can use the reading below)

Ready? Here's a big question for you today:

What is the most successful evangelistic outreach ever conducted in the Oregon Conference?

You're right! Big Lake Youth Camp is the correct answer.

Each Summer more than a thousand children and teenagers come to Big Lake as campers. They participate in cabin worships, sing scores of Christian songs, share in the nightly religious drama, and become inseparable friends with their camp counselor.

Visit the waterfront and you'll see trained staff mentoring teens who are eager to listen as they learn new skills. Visit the horse corral and you'll see teens become expert riders under the guidance of kind, spiritual trainers. Join breakfast, lunch, or dinner and you'll see spiritual mentoring in action as counselors and other staff members teach campers how to be kind, how to share, and how to pray.

Come to the daily Camp Council where the subject is always "Living With Jesus." Watch as the camp chaplain leads worship and see how the campers and staff grow together in Christ.

Each year more than a thousand kids are part of the Big Lake adventure, and each year more than 200 of those ask Jesus Christ to be their personal Savior. Many of those are baptized in the lake, some by the Big Lake leadership team, others by their pastor "from home" who comes up Sabbath afternoon to celebrate the decision with their teenage church member.

Evangelism is about leading people to know and accept Christ. It's also about growing the church with new members who are on fire for God.

Each month the Oregon Conference invites you to participate in the success of the Big Lake evangelistic ministry through giving to the Oregon Conference Youth Support offering. This is an opportunity for you to be part of growing our youth into strong models of God's Love.

Thank you for giving.

Offertory Reading for . . .

Sabbath 27

July 4, 2020

Today's Offering: Our 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.

Offertory Reading for . . .

Sabbath 28

July 11, 2020

Today's Offering: North American Division 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.

Offertory Reading for . . .

Sabbath 29

July 18, 2020

Today's Offering: Our 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.

Offertory Reading for . . .

Sabbath 30

July 25, 2020

Today's Offering: Oregon Conference Evangelism

For this offering appeal, there will be a video provided by the Oregon Conference. It should be available online one week in advance.

(If you choose not to use the video, you can use the reading below)

As an investment for when my sister and I enrolled in college, my parents purchased a 2-acre piece of land that adjoined our small farm through an easement.

One Spring, when I was about 12 years old, I asked my dad if I could plant corn on the property. He agreed and I got busy preparing the soil. I was thrown about by the rotor tiller, but eventually cultivated a significant garden spot.

My choice for a crop was golden jubilee corn. It grew remarkably well and soon it was time to market the harvest. I set up a roadside stand and sold dozen after dozen of delicious corn. The return was fantastic, but when I ran out, something occurred to me. I could have planted more. I should have sowed more abundantly.

This experience reminds me of a Bible verse, "But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So, let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver." II Corinthians 9:6-7

Evangelism is about sowing abundantly in order to reap a bumper crop. We can sow in two very practical ways: generous giving of financial resources and generous giving of our time.

Today is the camp meeting offering for evangelism. We are calling the offering: MaxHarvest. We are praying for a bumper crop this year and going into next year. Our goal is to see a 40% increase in baptisms during 2020, reaching a total of 1000 souls for Jesus.

We would like to ask you to partner through financially supporting Oregon Conference evangelism. Every gift, small or large, will be used for front-line evangelism including: our conference evangelist, evangelistic pre-work, Bible workers, community engagement, innovative evangelism approaches and church planting.

May we be cheerful givers as we make an investment in God's kingdom.

Offertory Reading for . . .

Sabbath 31

August 1, 2020

Today's Offering: Our 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.

Offertory Reading for . . .

Sabbath 32

August 8, 2020

Today's Offering: World Budget

A portion of today's World Budget Offering goes toward Oakwood University, Andrews University, and Loma Linda University

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

Offertory Reading for . . .

Sabbath 33

August 15, 2020

Today's Offering: Our 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

Offertory Reading for . . .

Sabbath 34

August 22, 2020

Today's Offering: Oregon Conference Youth Support

For this offering appeal, there will be a video provided by the Oregon Conference. It should be available online one week in advance.

(If you choose not to use the video, you can use the reading below)

Once Upon A Time a congregation of committed Christians decided it was important to provide their children with a High School education that placed "Knowing Jesus" first.

"Rather than just teach math, language skills, biology, and music like all other high schools" they asked, "what if our educators taught each subject as God would teach it?"

The result was a chain of Christ-centered Seventh-day Adventist academies stretching from Maine to Nebraska, Colorado, California, and Oregon. Each of these new schools developed similar academic programs, ones designed to prepare the best-equipped missionaries in America.

The plan worked, and today the Oregon Conference continues to operate three of these training campuses: Columbia Academy, Milo Academy, and Portland Adventist Academy. Each is an educational center you can be proud to support.

Like the first Seventh-day Adventist high schools, our academies are havens of safety and centers of service. Wonderfully different from government-sponsored schools, these academies help students learn how to experience the world as sons and daughters of our Creator – the God who made us, loves us, and who is eager to have us as His representatives.

You can be certain that our academies continue to place, "Knowing Jesus" as the first item in the curriculum.

Each month the Oregon Conference invites you to participate in the success of these schools through giving to the Oregon Conference Youth Support offering. This is an opportunity for you to be part of growing our youth into strong models of God's Love.

Thank you for giving.

Offertory Reading for . . .

Sabbath 35

August 29, 2020

Today's Offering: Alaska Conference – North Pacific Union Conference

Hoarding.

One of the most striking parables of Jesus has to do with the rich farmer, who was enjoying a bumper harvest one year. What did he do? He said to himself, "You know what? I'm going to have to build bigger barns for this harvest!" He certainly had visions of living the good life. Only problem was, he didn't reckon with the fact that it was going to be his last day on earth.

Many of the Bible's parables deal with one or more aspects of stewardship. The rich young ruler, the widow's mite, Esau selling his birthright, Ananias and Sapphira—over and over we are given lessons about fixing our hopes on heavenly wealth, not on the earthly.

One of the saddest diseases is that of hoarding. One church member, who lived alone, was obviously a hoarder. In order for his pastor to enter his home, he had to turn his body sideways due to the huge stacks of newspapers and magazines in the living room, reaching to the ceiling. The place was a firetrap!

One of the roots to hoarding is a basic insecurity that causes him or her to store an inordinate amount of everything, and it hurts them greatly to throw anything away. In many cases, professional help is needed to overcome this disease.

When we learn to trust in Jesus, our great Provider, we can live a more wholesome life knowing that He will take care of all our needs—now and in the future.

Offertory Reading for . . .

Sabbath 36

September 5, 2020

Today's Offering: Our 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>

Offertory Reading for . . .

Sabbath 37

September 12, 2020

Today's Offering: Our 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.

Offertory Reading for . . .

Sabbath 38

September 19, 2020

Today's Offering: Our 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.

Offertory Reading for . . .

Sabbath 39

September 26, 2020

Today's Offering: Oregon Youth Support

For this offering appeal, there will be a video provided by the Oregon Conference. It should be available online one week in advance.

(If you choose not to use the video, you can use the reading below)

Have you ever been a camper at Big Lake Youth Camp? If so, you probably remember the fragrance of the forest on a cool Big Lake morning, the cold waters of the lake, the delicious meals in the lodge, and the loud evening programs.

You probably also remember the name of your cabin counselor, and are likely still friends with some of the other campers you met at Big Lake.

You also know that Big Lake Youth Camp is far more than just a great Summer week, it's an experience that becomes part of your life, an adventure you wish you could have every year.

Here's the good news. Whatever you may remember about being at Big Lake in the past, it's even better today.

The lake is still cold and the mornings crisp, but today there are more horses, nicer cabins, hotter showers, and faster ski boats. Classes like kayaking and climbing and wake boarding test your strength and there are still trained cabin counselors who will become life-long friends. The evening programs? They're even louder – and more spiritual - than you remember.

Big Lake Youth Camp is just plain good Christian fun!

Each month the Oregon Conference invites you to participate in the success of our camp through giving to the Oregon Conference Youth Support offering. This is an opportunity for you to be part of growing our youth into strong models of God's Love.

Thank you for giving.

Offertory Reading for . . .

Sabbath 40

October 3, 2020

Today's Offering: Our 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.

Offertory Reading for . . .

Sabbath 41

October 10, 2020

Today's Offering: World Budget

A portion of today's World Budget Offering goes toward *Voice of Prophecy and 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.

Offertory Reading for . . .

Sabbath 42

October 17, 2020

Today's Offering: Our 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.

Offertory Reading for . . .

Sabbath 43

October 24, 2020

Today's Offering: Oregon Conference Youth Support

For this offering appeal, there will be a video provided by the Oregon Conference. It should be available online one week in advance.

(If you choose not to use the video, you can use the reading below)

The Oregon Conference cares about Young Adults.

We care about reaching out to the youth who have moved beyond high school and we're eager to provide a safe home for them to grow in God's Grace while they are discovering their place in society.

We care about our young adults because they have So Much to contribute to the life of our congregations. Their voices, their ideas, and their leadership bring energy and strength to church worship and community outreach.

When they preach – we all listen.

When they teach the Sabbath School lesson – we all study more diligently.

When they speak up in board meetings – their ideas lead us to new ministries.

When they lead us in service – we are energized.

When they worship beside us – we are all blessed.

Your Oregon Conference Young Adult ministry provides encouragement, training, and resources to help all of this happen. We're here to help each young adult experience the love of Jesus, and then to equip each one for meaningful ministry.

Each month the Oregon Conference invites you to participate in the success of our ministry with young adults through giving to the Oregon Conference Youth Support offering. This is an opportunity for you to be part of growing our youth into strong models of God's Love.

Thank you for giving.

Offertory Reading for . . .

Sabbath 44

October 31, 2020

Today's Offering: Walla Walla University – North Pacific Union Conference

Lunch money.

In the communist regime of Romania, a teacher felt called by God to teach in a government-run school. The all-boys boarding academy was no picnic for her. She often tried talking to the students about Jesus, but was unsuccessful.

The teacher decided to pray for a venue in which God would use her to be a witness. She noticed that the students' state-provided school lunches were a bit on the light side. This observation impressed her to save a little money every month and put it in a special jar. When she would hear of a hungry student, the jar would be emptied, food would be purchased, and the student would be filled.

Soon, news got around in the student body about the teacher and her lunch provisions. The teacher rented a small house next to the school building. The students often walked to her house for food during recess. This idea of feeding hungry students became a ministry for her with great success.

Three of the students started listening to her stories about Jesus. They started reading the Bible and engaging in Bible studies. Two were baptized.

What ministry is God calling you to engage in and witness with? Do you have a talent and a desire to be used by God? God can use you and your talents to witness to others.

Offertory Reading for . . .

Sabbath 45

November 7, 2020

Today's Offering: Our 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.

Offertory Reading for . . .

Sabbath 46

November 14, 2020

Today's Offering: World Budget – 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.

Offertory Reading for . . .

Sabbath 47

November 21, 2020

Today's Offering: Our 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.*

Offertory Reading for . . .

Sabbath 48

November 28, 2020

Today's Offering: Oregon Conference Youth Support

For this offering appeal, there will be a video provided by the Oregon Conference. It should be available online one week in advance.

(If you choose not to use the video, you can use the reading below)

At about 8:50 each Monday morning the day's leader for staff worship in the Oregon Conference office asks for special prayer requests. Immediately one of our long-time employees raises her hand and asks that we pray, "for our children." Her request receives a number of affirming, "Amen," and "our children" once again become a key part of the morning prayer.

We're that way about the people who are special to us. We want them included in every prayer. We post their pictures on the refrigerator, in our workplace, and on our bathroom mirrors. We keep them as the face pictures on our cell phones and computers. "Our children" are the most important and most valuable part of our lives.

That's also true in the ministry outreach of the Oregon Conference. Each month we even take a special offering that is dedicated for Youth Ministry Support.

The major portion of each month's offering is dedicated to help Milo, Columbia, and Portland Adventist Academies assure that our high school students receive the finest education possible.

Another portion helps provide resources and programming for the conference's outreach to young adults.

And the third portion enhances the ministry of Big Lake Youth Camp.

Our youth deserve only the best, and your contributions help make that a reality for "our children."

Thank you for giving.

Offertory Reading for . . .

Sabbath 49

December 5, 2020

Today's Offering: Our 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.

Offertory Reading for . . .

Sabbath 50

December 12, 2020

Today's Offering: North American Division – 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.

Offertory Reading for . . .

Sabbath 51

December 19, 2020

Today's Offering: 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.

Offertory Reading for . . .

Sabbath 52

December 26, 2020

Today's Offering: Oregon Conference Youth Support

For this offering appeal, there will be a video provided by the Oregon Conference. It should be available online one week in advance.

(If you choose not to use the video, you can use the reading below)

Ready? Here's a big question for you today:

What is the most successful evangelistic outreach ever conducted in the Oregon Conference?

You're right! Big Lake Youth Camp is the correct answer.

Each Summer more than a thousand children and teenagers come to Big Lake as campers. They participate in cabin worships, sing scores of Christian songs, share in the nightly religious drama, and become inseparable friends with their camp counselor.

Visit the waterfront and you'll see trained staff mentoring teens who are eager to listen as they learn new skills. Visit the horse corral and you'll see teens become expert riders under the guidance of kind, spiritual trainers. Join breakfast, lunch, or dinner and you'll see spiritual mentoring in action as counselors and other staff members teach campers how to be kind, how to share, and how to pray.

Come to the daily Camp Council where the subject is always "Living With Jesus." Watch as the camp chaplain leads worship and see how the campers and staff grow together in Christ.

Each year more than a thousand kids are part of the Big Lake adventure, and each year more than 200 of those ask Jesus Christ to be their personal Savior. Many of those are baptized in the lake, some by the Big Lake leadership team, others by their pastor "from home" who comes up Sabbath afternoon to celebrate the decision with their teenage church member.

Evangelism is about leading people to know and accept Christ. It's also about growing the church with new members who are on fire for God.

Each month the Oregon Conference invites you to participate in the success of the Big Lake evangelistic ministry through giving to the Oregon Conference Youth Support offering. This is an opportunity for you to be part of growing our youth into strong models of God's Love.

Thank you for giving.