

# North American Division 2024 Offertory Readings

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

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

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

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

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

Michael Anthony Harpe



Director

Stewardship Ministries

North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists

Dear Presenter,

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

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

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

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

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

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

May God richly bless you and speak through you as we take this journey together in 2024.

January 6, 2024

## **Local Church Budget**

Each new year brings with it a new promise of change. As a college professor, when I look into the eyes of new students each semester, I see hope and excitement for a better future. Similarly, many have entered the doors of our local churches in search of hope for a better future. Like a student who is given a clean slate on the first day of class, the gospel of the hope in Jesus that we have as Christians provides us all with a clean slate through salvation!

Students sit in my classroom, hopeful to have their thirst for knowledge filled by what they will learn day after day together. And the thing I like to impress on all of my classes is that they will get exactly what they put into the class. If they show up, engage in discussion, and choose to intentionally connect, they will get a lot out of it.

Much of the blessing of being part of a local church comes from choosing to intentionally connect. One profound way to do that is through giving to our local church offering. “You, God, are my God, earnestly I seek you; I thirst for you, my whole being longs for you, in a dry and parched land where there is no water” (Psalm 63:1, NLT). Our local church community exists to serve those in the immediate surrounding community as well as believers worldwide.

*By Heather Thompson Day*

January 13, 2024

## Religious Liberty

Today, more than two-thirds of the world's population live in countries where there are restrictions on religious liberty. As we worship together this morning, religious freedom is denied in places such as North Korea and Saudi Arabia. In Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, and many other countries religious minorities face hostility and danger. In China, people of faith endure government surveillance and restrictions.

This morning, in North America, we are blessed. We have the constitutional right to worship—openly and without fear. We can share our faith freely with others. Yet even here, we can't take this blessing for granted. As we read the headlines and look at the culture around us, we can see that the God-given gift of religious freedom is not always valued as it should be. And even today, in this land of liberty, Sabbath-keepers still face challenges in the workplace.

More than 150 years ago, Ellen White urged us to “hold high the banner of truth and religious liberty” in these last days. The offering we will collect now allows our church in North America to do exactly that—to defend religious freedom in the courts, to support church members who face discrimination in the workplace, and to send almost a million copies of *Liberty* magazine each year to lawmakers and thought leaders across our nation. Please give generously as together we work to safeguard the precious gift of religious liberty.

January 20, 2024

## Local Church Budget

Did you know that a Chinese bamboo plant takes, on average, about five years of caring for it before you see any part of the plant burst through the soil?<sup>1</sup> That means for five long years you have to water it, care for it, and ensure it gets all of the nutrients required, without seeing any immediate results. However, once it is ready to come out of the ground and grow tall, it can grow as much as ninety feet in just five weeks! All of the years of caring for the plant led to seemingly “quick” growth.

Similarly, we can sometimes miss the long-term impact of our local church ministries. We may not witness with our own eyes anything extraordinary occurring in a single children’s Sabbath School class, during a Women’s Ministry Bible study, or at a Wednesday night prayer meeting. Yet, at each and every one of these gatherings, souls are being watered and nurtured, little by little.

Today’s offering is for our local church budget. “And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart” (Galatians 6:9, NKJV). The seeds we sow through our offering help to support the mission and ministry of our local church. Today, I invite you to reflect on the blessings that have been sown in your own life through our church as we collect our offering.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://mycollaborativeteam.com/the-growth-of-a-bamboo-tree/>

January 27, 2024

## **Minnesota Advance**

Birthdays are a big thing in our family. We never pass up a chance to celebrate God's blessing of another year of life for someone in our home. When we come together around food and laughter to celebrate one of our family members, it feels as though it binds me even closer to my spouse and children. Birthdays are just one type of celebration that bonds me closer to the ones I love. We celebrate holidays, when we get promotions at work, and when people get married, just to name a few.

Celebrations come in all sizes, and for a variety of reasons. God's word says, "Clap your hands, all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy" (Psalm 47:1, NIV). When was the last time you celebrated what God is doing in your life, or the life of your church family members? When was the last time that you celebrated another person giving their life to God? Our Conference advance goes to support a variety of different projects of the gospel mission. One of those is evangelism. We are told that all of Heaven throws a party when just one sinner repents and turns toward God! Today, as we prepare to return our tithes and offering, consider praying for God to plant in your heart the desire to see how you can partner with the mission of our church to win souls for Christ.

*By Heather Thompson Day*

February 3, 2024

## **Local Church Budget**

“And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all” (Acts 3:16, NKJV). In the book of Acts, Jesus’ followers were given incredible power through Jesus to heal people! How amazing is that?

The scriptures teach us about our all-powerful God who desires to work through us. I have found that God places people in my path to remind me of His power. One time, a young woman came to see me during my office hours. She did not come to discuss class assignments – she came looking for this God of miracles that I share in my communications classes. Meeting after meeting, I was delighted to listen to her wrestle with her faith, and I was grateful to pray with her. Most of the time when we met, I just listened. And yet, in our busy world, listening to someone can be one of the greatest gifts you can give to them.

That woman has since graduated and left our university, but I know without a doubt that our meetings, shared laughter, and prayer allowed her to see the love of Christ more fully, through having someone to lean on spiritually. Friends, today we have the opportunity to give so that our local church continues to be a blessing to those around us.

*By Heather Thompson Day*

February 10, 2024

## **Adventist Television Ministries Evangelism**

“Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth...” (Revelation 14:6).

Today, this verse is being fulfilled with television ministries. The Adventist gospel message is flying in the midst of heaven in the airwaves of television. There are seven media ministries under the umbrella of the North American Division: Faith for Today, It Is Written, Breath of Life, Jesus 101, Voice of Prophecy, La Voz de la Esperanza, and Lifetalk Radio. All of these ministries have television content that is not only reaching the United States and Canada, but the whole earth. The speakers for these ministries are holding evangelistic meetings in North America and around the world with many baptisms and many more lives touched by the wonderful messages of hope for these last days.

Today’s offering is for these media ministries to continue the gospel commission to preach the gospel to every inhabitant of this planet. In many cities, it is hard to knock on doors and share a piece of literature because people live in apartment buildings, condominiums and gated communities. But people are coming to Christ because of TV.

We invite you to be generous in your offering and support these ministries who are using television and the internet to go inside homes to preach the Advent message.



February 17, 2024

## Local Church Budget

Did you know that research has shown that people who write down what they are grateful for, even once a week, were likely to be “more optimistic and felt better about their lives.”<sup>2</sup> A while ago, I added the practice of writing down what I am grateful for in my daily prayer journal. My family, my work, and my faith often make the list. Some days, I am most grateful for an encouraging lunch with my colleague. Weekly, the realization that it is Sabbath and I get to rest in Jesus really overfills my heart’s “gratitude cup.” In the words of the Psalmist, “I will praise You, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will tell of all Your marvelous works” (Psalm 9:1, NKJV).

What are you grateful for today? When you look back over your past week, is there a moment or interaction that you can thank God for? I encourage you to take a moment to thank God for whatever is filling your heart with gratitude at this moment.

At this moment, I am very grateful for the word of God; specifically, Hebrews chapter 11, sometimes referred to as “The Faith Chapter.” As we all face different challenges in different seasons of our lives, it is incredibly refreshing to be reminded of God’s faithfulness. Today, as we return our offering, let us return to God our tithes and offerings from a heart overflowing with gratitude.

*By Heather Thompson Day*

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.health.harvard.edu/healthbeat/giving-thanks-can-make-you-happier>

February 24, 2024

## **Minnesota Advance**

The other day, I sat down on a plane and listened carefully as the flight attendant gave the safety instructions for the flight. Though I have flown before, that day, the words in the safety demonstration struck me as I listened. The flight attendant said the typical line about what to do in case of an emergency in which there is a loss in air pressure in the plane, which is to “put your mask on first” before stopping to help those around you. Clearly, even in our daily lives, we are best able to give back when we first take time to steward our own health, finances, and relationships, among other things. The Word of God says, “Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides...” (1 Peter 4:10-11, NIV).

*By Heather Thompson Day*

What gifts has God given you? Think back on this week, and consider what ways the Lord has blessed you, your family, or maybe your work. Now, think about how you can be a blessing to those around you. The Minnesota advance goes to support the network of churches in our state, so we can be God’s hands and feet through ministries like evangelism and summer camps. Today, let’s give with open hearts.

March 2, 2024

## **Local Church Budget**

When Joshua began leading the Israelites, there was likely a lot of uncertainty around how things would go. Moses had spent years leading the children of God through the wilderness and through many miraculous events! In Joshua 1, we can see that God calls Joshua to be both “strong and courageous” (Joshua 1:6, NIV) in a transition of leadership that surely may have felt overwhelming to Joshua at times.

And yet, God walked with Joshua through the ups and the downs of his journey as a leader. Joshua proved to be a faithful steward of what God gave him. God gave him the task of leadership, and Joshua leaned on God to see that through. The beautiful thing about Joshua’s story is that God did not just give Joshua an enormous task – God took it upon Himself to provide Joshua with the wisdom to be the leader that Israel needed at that moment.

We too have been given the privilege of supporting the work of God at a local level. Our offering today will go to support our local church budget. The ministries of the local church are the heartbeat of the gospel spreading in our community. As we collect our offering today, consider how you can best steward all of the resources that God has blessed you with!

March 9, 2024

## Adventist World Radio

(Note to the offering reader: Download the AWR 2024 video and the latest offering resources at [awr.org/offering](http://awr.org/offering).)

Adventist World Radio (AWR) uses many forms of technology to reach people where they are, in their local dialect. From AWR's shortwave towers in Guam to 1,800 radio stations around the world, these messages are broadcasting in more than 130 languages every day. And for those who aren't in range of a radio station, AWR's YouTube videos and ministry app are ministering to millions.

In addition, solar-powered Godpods are reaching everyone from prisoners to shepherds! And the ministry's semi-truck in Ukraine is both meeting needs in the community and broadcasting Bible-based messages of hope wherever it goes.

Recently, the ministry tried something unique in Ghana. After renting airtime on 10 radio stations near the Sahara Desert, AWR started sharing the good news of the gospel over marketplace loudspeakers in 12 cities. AWR also paired this with a "Question of the Day," where callers were invited to receive a prize (such as a copy of the book *The Great Controversy*) by answering a question about the prior day's broadcast.

The results have already been astounding. In the last six months, more than 10,000 people have been baptized, with approximately 5,000 from the market loudspeakers alone. God predicted that one day we would be "utterly amazed" (Habakkuk 1:5, NIV) at what He would do—and we are!

Thank you for your support of Adventist World Radio.

March 16, 2024

## **Local Church Budget**

The beach is one of my favorite places. My family lives close to the beach, and it is a wonderful place to come to, especially when the weather is warm. My husband and I have taken many walks along the water and prayed for God to guide the next steps of our lives.

Looking at the water, we can all be reminded of God's sovereignty. That's a big, theological word that simply means that God reigns above everything. God is in control. When the disciples, in the book of Mark, were caught in a storm, they cried out to Jesus for His help. Jesus was fast asleep, but they woke Him up and He calmed the storm that threatened their lives. Their response was, "...[they] said to one another, 'Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!'"(Mark 4:41 NKJV).

Today, we can rest in knowing that our God is able to calm all of the storms in our lives. Even deeper than that, God is able to give us a sense of peace, even when the world around us feels like it is in chaos. We are blessed to be able to gather as believers and encourage each other with our testimonies of how God has carried us through the storms of our lives. As we return our tithe and offering today, let our hearts give from a place of gratitude for our "storm-calming" God.

***By Heather Thompson Day***

March 23, 2024

## **Minnesota Advance**

One of my favorite things to do to clear my mind and connect with God is to go on a run outside. Whether it is sunny or even on a cold day, running has been a great way to reset my thinking. Running consistently has been shown to improve memory, increase overall health, and provide people with better moods and more energy.<sup>3</sup> When I used to run on a track team, our coach always emphasized focusing on the race ahead of us, not what is happening to the right or to the left.

*By Heather Thompson Day*

There are many things happening in our world today, and if we focus on all of the turmoil, it can become very discouraging. Yet God encourages us with these words, “You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you” (Isaiah 26:3, NIV). Together, we can “run” this race together, and one way to support one another is by giving to Minnesota Advance.

Did you know that your Conference advance goes to support ministries that serve our region and touch peoples’ lives? One example of this is our summer camp, North Star Camp, which is a place where many young people serve God and work together to bring other young people to Christ through music, games, and activities. As we give today, let’s give with an open heart.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.webmd.com/fitness-exercise/health-benefits-running>

March 30, 2024

## **Maplewood Academy**

Warm greetings to each one of you as we come together in worship this Sabbath. Today, I bring to your attention a significant and impactful initiative that requires our collective support—the Worthy Student Fund at Maplewood Academy.

As we strive to reach our Worthy Student Fund goal of \$156,000 for the year, I am delighted to share positive news. Maplewood Academy is currently operating within a balanced budget and is on track to fulfill all financial obligations owed to the Minnesota Conference by the end of this school year. We praise God for these favorable trends, and express heartfelt gratitude for your continued generosity.

The Worthy Student Fund is not just about meeting numerical goals; it's about ensuring that most of our students can continue their education at Maplewood Academy. For many, this fund is a lifeline that allows them to remain enrolled and actively participate in the rich tapestry of our school community.

Your generous financial gifts go beyond supporting a budget; they enable these young minds to contribute their unique gifts and talents to the Maplewood Academy family. Our students, such as Carl, embody the transformative impact of a Maplewood education. Carl shares, "I am a senior at Maplewood Academy, and I've grown to enjoy being in a school where the center focuses on God. If I were not at Maplewood, I do not think I would be able to have the deep and personal connection with God I have today."

Thank you for your generosity, and may God bless you abundantly for your commitment to Christian education.

Today's offering will go to support Maplewood Academy. "The Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive'" (Acts 20:35, NIV).

April 6, 2024

## **Local Church Budget**

Years ago, a mentor of mine encouraged me to take my relationship with God as seriously as I take my career. She saw me as a very driven person, but she instructed me to make sure I connected with God at the beginning of every day. That began my habit of waking up before the sun rises, around 5 am, to spend quiet time reading God's word and reflecting on it through prayer.

A little bit ago, my husband and I noticed our daughter taking out her Bible in the morning before getting ready for school. She found a corner in our living room to pray. When my husband asked her why she was up so early, she said, "Mommy gets up early to speak to Jesus, and I want to be like Mommy." I was so struck by my daughter! It was and is my desire that my daughter develops a deep personal connection with Jesus. I simply wasn't aware of just how much my silent witness of waking up early impressed on her.

Whether this is your first time at church, or your family built this church, if you look around, it's likely that you will see someone whose spiritual journey with God you can learn from. Today's offering goes to our local church budget. In order to keep our church ministries functioning, we depend on the generosity of members returning that faithful offering to support our local church.

*By Heather Thompson Day*



April 13, 2024

## **Hope Channel International, Inc.**

Give hope through your offering today.

The impact of Hope Channel is evident in the inspiring stories of God's children like Pastor Ross and baby Aurora. Ross overcame drug addiction to become an ordained Seventh-day Adventist pastor after discovering Hope Sabbath School. Following baby Aurora's brachial plexus injury at birth, she was miraculously healed thanks to our most watched *Let's Pray* program and prayers on her behalf from our global community.

With your offering today, Hope Channel can continue to share the transformational love of Jesus Christ with people all over the world by producing high-quality Christian content to reach new audiences in innovative ways.

Our hope.study platform is online and offers Bible studies on a range of topics. So far, over 300,000 people started a course – just one year after the platform went live! People are hungering for Bible truth.

As we read in Proverbs 11:25 (ESV), "Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered." By faithfully supporting Hope Channel International, you are not only blessing others but yourself as well by bringing hope to those who need it most and by telling them of the love of Jesus Christ.

After celebrating 20 years of Hope Channel and reaching over 80 countries with the Adventist message, let's make 2024 the most impactful year yet in sharing hope in Jesus with people everywhere.

April 20, 2024

## **Local Church Budget**

Smells can bring a flood of memories to your brain. A special family recipe can spark a whole host of thoughts and emotions as it passes through your home if someone is making a meal. There are recipes that my mother and my grandmother have made, that still brings me joy when we get together and they are cooked for the family.

One thing I am still mastering is the art of making good bread. I love the smell of fresh-baked, homemade bread, and it is always something that I look forward to making. What has brought even more joy is involving my children in the baking process, when it is possible.

Baking and cooking are skills that can be taught and learned. Similarly, our church has a rich heritage of passing along the lessons we know in order to build up the next generation. The Bible encourages teaching and sharing what we know! “And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others” (2 Timothy 2:2, NIV). Ministries such as Sabbath School classes help us connect and better know the “recipe” for a better life in Christ, and how to practically live out our Christianity outside of these church walls. Today’s offering is for our local church budget, which supports ministries such as Sabbath school.

April 27, 2024

## **Minnesota Advance**

As we sang our closing song for worship that night, I knew this week would be a special one I would remember forever. I was in high school, and I signed up to work at FLAG Camp, which stands for Fun Learning About God. It is a day-camp based at Andrews University in Michigan, and before the summer even began, we as staff went to a staff training week where we bonded and learned how to best serve the children who would come to our camp that summer.

Camp, for that summer and several after, served as a key turning point in my relationship with God. Though I was still figuring out my own faith, I saw God use me and my team members in such mighty ways! Children, even our youngest campers, were turning their hearts towards God and giving their lives to Christ.

I still think fondly of my days as a camp counselor, and I credit the confidence I built during that period in my life as the reason why today, as an adult, I am able to freely share the hope I have in the gospel of Jesus Christ!

*By Heather Thompson Day*

Today's offering is for the Minnesota advance, which goes to support things such as our camps and youth and young adult ministries that span our conference. Please know that when you give, your seed of a gift will ripple beyond that amount, and touch people forever.

May 4, 2024

## **Local Church Budget**

“Ding!” My phone went off again in my pocket. It was just one of those busy days I was having as a college professor, but with deadlines looming, and students waiting to be taught, I did not really want to deal with my phone notifications at the moment. Can you relate to that feeling? I have found that technology can often be a wonderful blessing, as it allows me to connect meaningfully with my family members who live all over the world. At the same time, it can sometimes disconnect me from the life that is happening right before my eyes.

One thing I decided to do years ago was to take a weekly Sabbath, on the Sabbath, from my devices, as often as I can. That way, when I gather in worship with my family, my fellow believers, and my students, I can be fully in tune with what is going on.

“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching” (Hebrews 10:24-25, NIV). Today’s offering is for the local church budget. This will help provide the resources necessary to allow us to continue to meet together and worship as one!

May 11, 2024

## **Disaster & Famine Relief**

As we approach Christ's return, the Bible tells us that crisis events will increase around the world. Emergency Management officials, who have tracked disasters for over 50 years confirm that tornadoes are touching down with greater impact, hurricanes are moving at greater speeds and mass shootings continue to affect our communities on a regular basis.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church serves those affected by these types of devastating events. Adventist Community Services (ACS) responds throughout the North American Division. Volunteers open collection centers to support those whose homes have been destroyed, support communities that have been struck by senseless shootings with Emotional Spiritual Care teams, and deliver supplies to areas of greatest need in the aftermath of a disaster.

Your offering this Sabbath will ensure ACS is able to prepare, respond, and work in recovery efforts that take place within the North American Division, which includes the United States, Canada, Bermuda, Guam, and Micronesia. While ACS is responsible for these areas, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has not forgotten the rest of the world and has another humanitarian organization that responds to events outside of the North American Division called ADRA (Adventist Development and Relief Association).

Please give this Sabbath to the disaster and famine relief offering, where your donation will support both ACS and ADRA. We look forward to continuing our work to serve communities in Christ's name.

May 18, 2024

## **Local Church Budget**

A passionate woman stood on our church platform and shared how our church was reaching our local community by offering free English classes to people in our community who desired to learn how to speak English. What struck me most was the deep bonds she and the team from our church had developed with the people who were coming once a week to our community room to learn.

What was even more beautiful was that our church had partnered with a local business that donated household goods, and as a church, we were meeting some of the physical needs of those who were coming to these classes as well! One couple had been praying for a reclining couch to meet the need of a sick family member who needed to sit and sleep in a reclined position. The woman sharing the testimony told our church that just then she called the family to offer them one that had just been given to the church by this local business! It's not a coincidence – I saw God moving through the faithfulness of those dedicating their time and energy to run this ministry.

When you give to our local church budget, which is what today's offering is for, you give to meet needs both for our church to function, as well as for us to be a blessing to the community around us.

*By Heather Thompson Day*

May 25, 2024

## **Minnesota Advance**

Evangelism and sharing the gospel with the greater community is the heartbeat of our church and our mission. Jesus Christ himself instructed us to “go” into the world and share the good news! An Adventist church in Hawaii was hosting an evangelistic series a few years ago, which lasted for several weeks. They shared flyers around the island, and invited people to come before the meetings for a hearty dinner, and then stay to learn about our beliefs and the life-changing power of God’s word.

One man, who was in the military and stationed on this island, but knew nothing about Adventism, decided to give these meetings a try. He was initially drawn by the offer of a free dinner, but he was soon compelled by the message of the gospel. “For the love of Christ controls and urges and impels us, because we are of the opinion and conviction that [if] One died for all, then all died...” (2 Corinthians 5:14, AMPC). This man in Hawaii had heard of Jesus, but learning about the gospel, prophecy, and God’s guidance for our lives today really compelled him to give his life and commit to God once and for all.

Today’s offering will go to the Minnesota advance. Money that is collected will go to support similar evangelism efforts across our conference, to help share the gospel with those around us!

June 1, 2024

## **Local Church Budget**

There is something to appreciate about every season of the year. The coolness of fall is a symbol that soon the beautiful colors of falling leaves will cover the ground. The warmth of summer brings nice weather to enjoy being outside. Even the cool, stillness of winter reminds us that rest is necessary. The freshness of the rain in the spring reminds us that rain and storms can be the catalyst for new things. Different seasons bring different things into our lives.

“See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland” (Isaiah 43:19, NIV). As we gather from Sabbath to Sabbath, God longs to do new things in our hearts. Our church is moving forward, and we want to be receptive to how God is doing a new thing among us. Regardless of the season, and regardless of the weather outside, the word of God should be planted in our hearts. By coming together, we can encourage one another throughout the various seasons we all face in our lives. Today’s offering is for our local church budget. Our church has ministries and plans, and our support helps us continue to serve our members and community in new ways.



June 8, 2024

## **Women's Ministries Offering**

All around the North American Division women find creative ways to serve their communities. Today's annual Women's Ministries offering helps provide opportunities for more women to become involved, and out of these opportunities come stories of those whose lives have been changed by your generosity.

These include the group of Adventist women who are helping provide for the personal needs of teen girls living in a shelter. Stories like the woman who, from her own personal experience, understands the challenges facing a single mother, and with some friends started a ministry to provide single moms and their children with a safe place to live, life skills training, and after-school tutoring. Stories of a group of women who decided to take seriously the mentoring words of Titus 2, teaching younger women in their church and women in their community financial skills, how to preserve food, how to cope with grief, and more, and now some of those women are in Bible studies!

These funds also help provide leadership training for women. Additionally, a portion of our Women's Ministries offering helps to supplement the scholarship fund from the proceeds of the Women's Ministries Devotional book, continuing the legacy of faith and service to future generations.

As you give, please pray for more opportunities for women in our local church and beyond to live out Hebrews 13:16 (NIV) "Do not neglect to do good and to share with others..."

June 15, 2024

## **Local Church Budget**

“After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.” (Revelations 7:9 NIV). As I look around my college classroom, I’m always amazed at the rainbow of faces that I see. The gospel is beautiful because our great hope is that one day, we will all be united in heaven, and we will get to worship God for eternity.

In the meantime, we must exist in this fallen world. As I discuss with my students what is happening in the world today, we wrestle with our place as Christians and as a church body. God has called us to be His hands and feet, and this generation of college students has a strong desire to see impactful outreach within our local church ministries that they can connect with to help our community. In one such example of ministry, one student said that their church back home would support mothers in need with free diapers if they didn’t have money. The multitude described in the book of Revelation will be composed of many people who have allowed Christ to live through them and bless others.

Today’s offering is being collected to support the local church budget. Our church is able to serve as a house of worship for all people because of your generous gifts, so thank you!

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June 22, 2024

## **Minnesota Advance**

"I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen. Not only because I see it, but because I see everything by it." That is a quote by C.S. Lewis. A friend of mine went to a large public university for his undergraduate and graduate studies, and he faced many challenges as he tried to live out his Christian walk while being surrounded by those who thought faith was a laughable concept. He had this C.S. Lewis quote taped to his mirror and in his Bible, as a reminder that his faith in Jesus Christ is the most important illuminating factor in his life and the force that guides his steps.

Fortunately, a few years into college, a small Adventist campus ministry was started, which was supported by the local church. He got connected to this ministry, and while studying to become an architect, he was also learning leadership skills such as how to lead Bible study through this campus ministry. College campus ministries can be lifelines for college students who are looking to connect with other believers while away at college. Today's offering is for the Minnesota advance. Campus ministries is one ministry that benefits from the offering that is returned to our conference, to support the work of these young people.

June 29, 2024

## **Local Church Budget**

I grew up in a small town where our county fair and ice cream socials at the local grocery store gathered us each summer. In some ways, I believe that heaven is really like a small town. When I go to our local diner with my husband for breakfast, the server knows my name because we are there so frequently and have been for years.

Similarly, my most treasured memories of church throughout my life are when the people I go to church with move from acquaintances to what I would consider family. Years ago, my husband was pastoring a smaller congregation, and the people who lead the musical worship part of the service became some of the closest people to us. In that season, we were far away from the small town I had grown up in and our families, and yet these people became our family.

As we gather from week to week, we have a lot that goes into allowing us to meet to create those connections. Our leaders over the church and ministries prayerfully work together so that the unity God desires can be felt in our church family. Today's offering is for the local church budget. Please consider how different ministries in our church have impacted your life, and give freely as you are impressed!

July 6, 2024

## **Local Church Budget**

Fireworks brilliantly light up the darkest sky when they are set off. My family and I go to see firework displays in the summer time, and it is a truly exciting activity for my children. My favorite kind of fireworks are when we are able to see them over water by our local beach. That way, they are not only brilliant in the sky, but they are also brilliantly displayed in the reflection in the water.

The word of God tells us, “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:14-16, NIV). One bright light we have as Christians is our ability to pray for one another. When we pray for others and let them know they are being prayed for, it can be a bright light in someone’s day. I have seen prayer change the trajectory of someone’s life.

Would you partner with our church being a “town build on a hill” both in your prayers and your giving? Today’s offering goes to the local church budget. Please prayerfully consider what you are able to give to help our church.

July 13, 2024

## **GC Session Offering: Digital Strategy for Mission**

When the Seventh-day Adventist Church was organized in 1863, it had only 3,500 members. Now there are over 21 million Adventist members worldwide. Thanks to your generous mission offerings, prayers, and personal involvement, the Seventh-day Adventist Church shares the love of Jesus in more than 200 countries around the world with 153,253 congregations meeting every Sabbath, 7,792 schools, and over 700 health care institutions.<sup>4</sup> All of this has been made possible due to the “Revolutionary Generosity” of our faithful members.

Revelation 18:1-2 says, “After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, ‘Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen’...” (NKJV).

The Adventist church has a special message to wake up the world and invite people to leave Babylon and join the “Remnant Church” who keep the commandments and have the testimony of Jesus.

Thank you for funding the mission to preach the three angels’ messages. Today’s offering is for the World Budget. As you give your offering today, remember to pray for God’s Spirit to touch lives so people can prepare for Jesus’ soon return.

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<sup>4</sup> [Who are Seventh-day Adventists? | North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists \(nadadventist.org\)](https://www.nadadventist.org/who-are-seventh-day-adventists/)

July 20, 2024

## **Local Church Budget**

One day several years ago, while I was teaching one of my college communications courses, a student of mine entered the classroom after the lesson had already begun. She looked visibly tired and in bad shape, and I decided to not make a big deal about her coming in late. Later, after class, the student came to my office to explain their tardiness. “I got the news that my parent died this morning, and I just didn’t know where to go.” My heart sank, but I also felt a spark of hope at that moment. I grieved with my student for the great loss the family was experiencing. I also praised God that while this student was away from her home, she saw our classroom as a safe space for her to find refuge.

The church can be that place for many people as well. When we walk in each Sabbath we are not always aware of the burdens that those around us are carrying into church. A church is more than a building – a church is us, the people, who lean on one another to help create that safe space for others to share their burdens. The Bible instructs us to, “Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ” (Galatians 6:2, NIV). Today’s offering is for our local church budget.

*By Heather Thompson Day*

July 27, 2024

## **Minnesota Advance**

There is a research-backed theory in communication called “Social Penetration” that states that the more we know about each other, the more we like one another and are able to develop deep bonds.<sup>5</sup> One way we get to know more about one another is through our stories. Have you ever had someone, perhaps a colleague or acquaintance, share a story from their own life with you? I know that when people around me share more about their background and faith it strengthens my own faith.

Did you know that many conferences publish a magazine or printed publication in which stories are shared from across the conference by different people? Today’s offering is for the Minnesota advance, which supports such publications. The more we are able to hear one another’s stories, the smaller the divide between us gets. When I’ve flipped through my local conference magazine, I discover that in the next state over, people are working together to organize events that are meant to spur on revival and reformation. When we listen and hear what is happening in other places, it can be just what we need to encourage our next step in ministry. Consider giving a generous offering to support our local conference advance today.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-realworldcomm/chapter/6-4-self-disclosure-and-interpersonal-communication/>



August 3, 2024

## **Local Church Budget**

Several of my friends are educators in our Adventist school system. Because I teach on the college level, I am often intrigued by the stories that my friends who teach elementary school share with me. Children can often say very silly though heartfelt comments. For example, one student, though they seemed to enjoy being at school, shared this thought one day, “I feel like I’ve been in school forever! When will it end?” Another child on another day asked, “Does God like to eat chocolate like I do?” Young children may often share their unfiltered thoughts with anyone willing to listen. If you spend any amount of time with children, you may realize that they tend to be curious about God and who He is.

God’s word tells us, “Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it” (Proverbs 22:6, NIV). Children’s Sabbath School is a great place for children to come and learn and explore those emerging questions about God, what He is like, and His love for all of us. Today’s offering is for our local church budget. Sabbath School is a wonderful time of the week that I’m sure many children look forward to. Prayerfully consider giving to our local church budget today, for in doing so you will be investing in our youngest members.

*By Heather Thompson Day*

August 10, 2024

## **Christian Record Services for the Blind**

Jeannie has attended National Camps for Blind Children for over 40 years. One of her favorite things is the music, especially when she gets to play her accordion and keyboard.

“Many people don’t know how great camps are,” says Jeannie. “I want them all to know what a great experience it is.” More important than the music, the games, and the new friends, is how her experience at camp draws her closer to Jesus. Jeannie recently rededicated her life to Jesus by being rebaptized.

I love that we can share the mercy and grace of Jesus Christ with people who are blind or experiencing vision loss, serving them together through Christian Record Services, a ministry of compassion of the Seventh-day Adventist Church since 1899, serving nearly 18,000 members throughout the United States and in countries around the world.

Christian Record Services offers an array of services and programs, including Bible study lessons, books, magazines, and Bibles in audio, braille, and large print from a library of more than 2,000 titles. Members also can deepen social, educational, and spiritual connections through PhoneFaith, scholarships for higher education, and National Camps for Blind Children.

These services and programs are free of charge to people who are legally blind. Your offerings will help further the ministry’s mission to *empower* people who are blind to *engage* their communities and *embrace* the Blessed Hope.

August 17, 2024

## **Local Church Budget**

I once met a student who entered college with such a low grade-point average from high school, that it's amazing he was even admitted to college. He went on to eventually graduate from college with high honors and a perfect grade point average. The only difference for this student between high school and college was that now, for the first time in years, he had a bed. The student had been unhoused in high school, and had bounced around from location to location. The instability had wrecked his ability to focus on his academics as his stomach grumbled in class and he was fighting to stay awake.

Within the last couple of years, I have been blown away by how much my local church has gone above and beyond to support people who have been impacted by the global pandemic. Our church's in-need fund has helped people with everything from buying groceries to paying their rent when they lost their job due to the pandemic. And what was amazing was that those who were able to gave even more, knowing that there were many in need. This sounds a lot like the church in the book of Acts. Today's offering is for our local church budget. Our church can have the ability to meet the needs of those in and outside of our church through outreach. Consider giving a generous offering today to meet the needs of our local church.

*By Heather Thompson Day*

August 24, 2024

## **Minnesota Advance**

My husband loves to camp, and because I love my husband, we go camping together from time to time! Besides camping on our own, camp meeting has served as a great time to reunite with our friends who live a little further away. Camp meeting tends to feel like a great big family reunion when we get together and sing and praise together. One beautiful thing about our church is the diversity within our family of believers.

*By Heather Thompson Day*

Today's offering is for the Minnesota advance. The past few years of camp meeting may have looked slightly different because of the global pandemic, but as we begin to gather again, camp meeting is once again serving as an opportunity to reengage with the greater church outside of our church building. Your local conference advance goes to support such gatherings and other conference-wide initiatives. The word of God says, "Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing" (1 Thessalonians 5:11, ESV). When we see what's happening across the conference, it can give us strength to keep working locally, knowing we are part of an even larger body of believers! Please consider giving generously to our local conference advance today.

August 31, 2024

## **Maplewood Academy**

Support the mission of Maplewood Academy, a school devoted to nurturing students into passionate followers of Jesus and future missionaries. Your generous contribution plays a crucial role in empowering the next generation to carry the torch of love and faith to others, actively participating in being tentmakers, spreading the gospel of Christ globally in whatever profession they may choose!

By donating today, you become a vital part of this transformative journey, influencing young lives and shaping a generation dedicated to the principles of compassion, service, and spiritual growth. Join us in making a lasting impact, investing in the development of our young people committed to making a positive difference in this world and the world to come!

Your support echoes through the halls of Maplewood Academy, creating a ripple effect that extends far beyond, leaving a mark on the lives of students and the communities they touch. By the grace of God, let's build a legacy of faith, education, and mission together. Donate today and make a positive change and contribute to the flourishing mission of Maplewood Academy!

September 7, 2024

## **Local Church Budget**

Sometimes, when I am given a task to do, it can be hard for me to keep focused on it. When writing a book, sometimes I get what's called "writer's block," when the words just don't come as easily to me. When I'm writing an article or a message to share, it can be hard too. One thing that helps me immensely is leaning into my "team" of family and friends. My husband is an excellent encourager and he provides me with the support and space to complete the job. My friends hold me accountable by asking how different projects are going.

Similarly, our church functions only because of many people working together as a team to keep our ministries running. Several volunteers help with things such as Sabbath School, ministry meetings, and leading out prayer meetings, just to name a few things. The Bible tells us, "Thus the saying 'One sows and another reaps' is true" (John 4:37. NIV). Each person serves a different, yet important, role to help the church function.

Today's offering will go to support our local church budget. There are many ways to support what our church does, and giving financially is just one. Pray and consider how God can use you to continue to move forward in the mission of our church.

*By Heather Thompson Day*

September 14, 2024

## **World Budget (Emphasis: Radio Ministries)**

If you've been feeling like the radio is antiquated and you are the only one who still listens to it, think again! Radio is actually alive and doing well. It turns out, more than 3 billion people in this planet tune in every week to listen to the radio!<sup>6</sup> The Adventist Church supports radio ministries so that our Advent message will enter even the most remote areas of our world.

Revelation 14:15 says, "And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, 'Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe'."

Through radio ministries the Adventist Church is reaching every country on this planet and making sure that the earth is ripe for the harvest. We invite you today to partner with God and be part of the final harvest.

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<sup>6</sup> [38 Staggering Radio Listening Statistics \(2023\) - Soocial](#)

September 21, 2024

## Local Church Budget

We live in an age where some people may desire to be an “influencer.” An “influencer” is defined as “one who exerts influence: a person who inspires or guides the actions of others.”<sup>7</sup> I can recognize that I have been influenced to buy or desire things. Years ago in high school, there was a certain brand of shoes that all of the best runners wore, so I bought that brand of shoes. We all have the capacity to be influenced.

A different way to look at the benefit of being an “influencer” is to ask, how can I influence the world around me for God? Jesus says in John 13:35, “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (NIV). Our love can be shown in many different ways. It can be displayed in asking another church member how they are doing, and offering to help with anything they are struggling with if you are able to. Love can be shown in kind words and serving one another in ministry. Today’s offering is being collected for our local church budget. As you consider how you can love and influence the world around you, also consider your giving as an extension of that.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/influencer>



September 28, 2024

## **Minnesota Advance**

It was cold and wet as we trudged back to our cabins, but there wasn't a complaint in our hearts. That is because our hearts had been filled this weekend from the wonderful messages and time spent together at this women's retreat. The testimony that the main speaker shared about how God had provided strength for her through a difficult health challenge really struck a chord with our group. There is something so powerful about a group of women coming together in prayer to encourage and uplift one another. This has been my experience for every women's retreat I've attended.

Today's offering is being collected for the Minnesota advance, which supports things such as our Women's Ministry. Women's Ministry is such a vital ministry to so many. Regardless of age or marital status, women can connect not just at retreats, but also throughout the year in other ways. Luke 1:45 tells us, "Happy is she who believed that the Lord would fulfill the promises he made to her." Sometimes it takes being around other believers to strengthen that faith. We appreciate those who facilitate this for both Women's Ministries as well as other conference-wide ministries.

October 5, 2024

## **Local Church Budget**

I have prayed and walked for miles and miles in my tennis shoes. One semester, I walked around the campus of our university with students and prayed over the people in our campus community. We walked around the entire property, making sure to both share words, and some quiet time of personal prayer, as we lifted up our campus. We wanted to see the Holy Spirit move in a mighty way and transform lives, and we had the audacity to believe that He would do it. We held close to our hearts verses like, “If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer” (Matthew 21:22, NIV). As I watched, I saw God transform my life and the lives of my students through prayer that year, and ever since then.

The beautiful thing about prayer is that we can do it at any time, anywhere, and it’s something that we are able to share with one another. Today’s offering is for our local church budget. Our church serves as a place we can come together and share in our joys and woes. We can listen and learn from one another, and grow together in Christ. We hope to keep this light on in the church for many years to come, and that is made possible by your generous gifts.

*By Heather Thompson Day*

October 12, 2024

## **Union Adventist University**

Today's loose offering has been designated for our local Union Conference territory, specifically the ministry of UAU.

The Bible says in Matthew 24:14, "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world..."

Many times we think that preaching the gospel to all the world means taking it to faraway places in other continents where there are few Christians. But with the large immigration of people into North America, it seems that the world is coming to live here. We have a mission field to cover even in our own union territory. One of the good things about the structure of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is that our unions focus on regional issues such as taking the gospel to every people group that exists in our territory. They promote innovative and comprehensive evangelism so that no one is left out.

Please pray for your local union leaders and invite them to be part of special events in your congregation.

October 19, 2024

## **Local Church Budget**

Isaiah 40:31 says, “but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint” (NIV). Have you ever been weary? Have you ever felt like throwing in the towel? You’re not alone. It’s normal to get tired. Some days I wake up and consider all of the different “hats” I wear – parent, teacher, friend, sister, daughter, speaker, author – and just thinking about all of them can make me tired. There may be a lot that is demanded of you, and that can be tough. In my mind, that’s why Sabbath is that much more beautiful; it gives us time to reset and focus on where our hope comes from. Hoping in the Lord gives us the strength we need to keep on going, even when we feel like we are drowning in responsibilities.

Today’s offering is being collected to support our local church budget. Our church serves under many different titles as well. To many, it is a house of prayer. To others, it is a place of learning in Sabbath School and during the divine worship service. Still, to others, it is a place of refuge. When you give to the local church budget, you give to support the mission and ministry of our local church, which touches many lives.

October 26, 2024

## **Minnesota Advance**

By this point in the year, if you are like most people, your new year's resolutions are long abandoned and forgotten. In fact, research shows us that, "55% of respondents kept their New Year's resolution for less than a year, with 11% lasting at least six months, 14% lasting at least three months, 19% lasting at least one month and just 11% lasting less than a month."<sup>8</sup> That means that almost one-third of people have given up on what they've committed within four weeks. According to that, if we are in October, it is quite possible that you don't even remember what you intended to do.

That's why it is such a beautiful thing that we serve a God of grace. Each new week, and even each new day, is another chance to reconnect with Him and start afresh. Think to yourself, what can you do today to impact your own life, as well as the lives of those around you? Our church has ministries that serve us all, and it may be time for you to prayerfully consider where your gifts and talents would be best used for the gospel. Today's offering is for the Minnesota Advance. The beauty of our church is that it exists within a group of other churches in our region, known as our conference. By giving to the local Conference Advance today, you can help our mission and reach go even further.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.forbes.com/health/mind/new-years-resolutions-statistics/#:~:text=The%20aforementioned%202020%20New%20Plate,lastings%20less%20than%20a%20month.>

November 2, 2024

## **Local Church Budget**

As a teacher, my favorite lessons are the ones that my students take and apply in their real life. I teach communication, and it is so important that students understand the power of their words. Proverbs 18:21 tells us that, “Death and life are in the power of the tongue...” (NIV) and helping my college students understand that and use their words for positive things is always so encouraging to see.

I once had a student who struggled to express herself. As the semester went on, and she had more opportunities and knowledge as to how to share more of herself in a positive way, her confidence increased and she was able to share more of what she was thinking. She learned how to speak life to others, and even to herself.

Look around the church today. Who have you taken time to “speak life” into? That is, who have you paused to encourage, say a kind word to, or pray for? Today’s offering is for the local church budget. Please prayerfully consider giving to support the ministry and mission of our church, as we seek to be a place where life-giving words are shared regularly.

*By Heather Thompson Day*

November 9, 2024

## **Annual Sacrifice for Global Mission**

Global Mission is the frontline mission arm of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Through the use of wholistic ministry, Global Mission pioneers are bringing light to cities of the world, with a special focus on the 10/40 Window. Since Global Mission began three decades ago, we've reached many new people groups and entered new countries. "I Will Go" is the strategic plan of the Adventist church for 2020-2025.

There are missionaries working right now in places like Sri Lanka, Malawi, Indonesia, Cambodia, and veiled countries where preaching the gospel is against the law. There are many mission challenges, because in some places where there is no Adventist presence, it takes about two years of sharing the love of Jesus with non-Christians who live in these areas before they open their hearts to Christ.

Please give sacrificially to support these missionaries and pray for these missionaries and their families. If you feel called to be a missionary there are many opportunities to work in unreached people groups. Visit [vividfaith.com](http://vividfaith.com) to explore missionary opportunities.

We invite you to GO!

Go through prayer!

Go through giving!

Go through service!

November 16, 2024

## **Local Church Budget**

One time a friend of mine came over to my house, and I wanted to bake a dessert for him. He had an allergy to one of the ingredients, so I hastily used a substitute that I was unsure of. If you have ever baked, you know that even changing one ingredient can change the taste, texture, and really the entire baked good if you're not careful. I learned, on that day, that this ingredient should not have been swapped out! Needless to say, tasting this dessert was not a pleasant experience.

Similarly, God's word gives us words of wisdom for us to follow, and Proverbs 1:5 says, "let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance" (NIV).

What wise, Biblical knowledge have you learned lately? Have you taken the time to share it with someone? If you have not, take some time today or this next week to pass it along. Today's offering is for the local church budget. Let's continue to turn our church into a place where we can come together and grow in wisdom and knowledge of God. The more we study and learn together, the better equipped we can be to meet the needs of those who are around us.

*By Heather Thompson Day*



November 23, 2024

## **Minnesota Advance**

Isaiah 66:13 says, “As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you; you shall be comforted in Jerusalem” (NIV). As a mother, I truly appreciate this verse, describing God’s attitude toward us. When one of my children is hurt or in need of comfort for some other reason, I am the person they typically run to. When I was younger, I learned to run to my mother as well, and I enjoyed going into her warm embrace when I was in distress. As I grew older, I learned to lean on God in the same way. And I learned that, because I was blessed to have people in my life who taught me to call out to God in my distress.

Romans 10:14-15 states, “But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them? And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent? That is why the Scriptures say, ‘How beautiful are the feet of messengers who bring good news!’” (NLT). Today’s offering is for the Minnesota advance. Our churches have the opportunity to share the good news of Jesus and His soon return with the world, and you are invited to partner with us in that mission. Please prayerfully consider giving a generous offering to this cause.

November 30, 2024

## Union Adventist University

“The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles. The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit” (Psalm 34:17-18, NIV).

What are you crying out to God about today? Is there something you came in today with on your heart that only God can help you with? If so, you are certainly in the right place. When it says that God hears and delivers us from all of our troubles, He means **all**. I have sat by students in my office who have lost loved ones and grieved with them. I have comforted close friends who have faced difficult, disappointing circumstances. I myself have been in deep disappointment from time to time when I looked at how much more I needed to do to accomplish my goals.

Still, God has said that when we cry out to Him, He will deliver us. It is so good to know that God is close to the brokenhearted. That gives me encouragement to know that I do not have to have it all together in order to come to Him; I can just come as I already am. Today's offering is for Union Adventist University. Please give a generous offering to support this cause.

December 7, 2024

## **Local Church Budget**

Recently a friend of mine had major surgery on her jaw, which would prevent her from eating normal food. She lived far away from me, so I encouraged her in her recovery with texts and my prayers. When she recovered enough to be able to talk, she shared with me how well her local church had cared for her. From the moment she went into surgery, to the days that followed, they provided her with rides and round-the-clock care. She lived alone at the time, and she had been quite concerned about the logistics, but her local church family had acted as her own family would have, making sure she had everything she needed. They even went as far as providing her with a gift card to purchase smoothie drinks for the weeks that followed, until she could go back to eating solid food.

When I think of what it means to be a church family, my friend's recovery from surgery comes to mind. Not everyone is blessed to live in a loving family with others in their household. When the church steps in to provide that necessary comfort and care, our faith takes on a whole new meaning! Today's offering is for our local church budget. As you give today, give with an open heart, and consider all the ways our own church is touching lives.

*By Heather Thompson Day*

December 14, 2024

## **Adventist Community Services**

People come in all shapes and sizes, and so do their needs. For over 50 years ACS (Adventist Community Services) has offered diverse services tailored to fit the needs of the community. Often this is in the form of tangible goods and services (food, clothing, shelter, and showers) and sometimes emotional support is needed.

Portland ACS Director, Laura, was in a meeting when she heard a woman wailing outside her door. She excused herself to check on the situation, but found another staff member already sitting quietly with the grieving woman. The center's chaplain was called, who was able to spend more time listening and offering comfort. Most encouraging to Laura was a remark the woman made later, "I was overwhelmed and knew this would be a safe place to come."

Whether giving food and cooking gear, dental care, clothing, after school tutoring, or English language skills, hope and encouragement is the most valuable item found in ACS ministries.

Ellen White shared, "The Savior mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, "Follow Me"" (*Ministry of Healing*, p. 143).

Adventist Community Service's ministries mingle in our communities, bringing Jesus' goodwill to the people. Join us and become the practical hands and feet of God in our world.

December 21, 2024

## **Local Church Budget**

This time can be a busy time for many! If you have children in school as I do, it is a blur of Christmas programs, family traditions, and various gatherings of the people I love. It can be a time of great joy or a time of great sorrow, depending on many factors. Once all the busyness of the holiday is done, things actually slow down and reset.

One beautiful thing I have noticed is that where I live, there tends to be a stillness and a quietness in this season. The days are shorter, the weather is colder, and all of that combined slows me and my family down, and we simply adjust our pace to enjoy the rhythm of winter. I recently ran across the term “wintering,” referring to easing into the softer pace of the winter season.

As we look back on this year, let’s take time to reflect on how God has shown up for us this year. Was there a difficult thing your family went through? Is there a way you can see how prayer helped you navigate that time? Our offering today is for the local church budget. Let us give today from hearts grateful for all that we recognize God has done for us.

December 28, 2024

## **Minnesota Advance**

You may be familiar with the saying “out with the old, in with the new.” This is the time of year when that sentiment tends to ring the truest. Many of us may be looking back on our past year of life, reflecting on what has worked for us and what hasn’t. Perhaps there are some new habits you would like to pick up in 2025, and some habits you would rather leave behind as this year comes to a close. Thinking beyond your own life, are there things that you would like to see happen differently in our church? How can you be part of those changes and help us to continue to grow as we work for the Lord? What if we, as a church, and our conference, committed to serving one another even more in the upcoming year? What do you think that would look like? What if you committed to praying for another person in your Sabbath School class?

Today’s offering is for the Minnesota Advance. Our church is part of a larger organization that serves our region. Our conference advance goes to support the many ministries across the conference.