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 this vision.

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

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

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

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

Bonita J. Shields
Director
About the Author

Andrew Raduly is a Seventh-day Adventist minister who started his ministry 20 years ago in Minnesota. He continued on to serve in Canada, Montana, and Virginia. He is happily married to Judit, and together they have five-year-old rambunctious triplets.

Originally from Hungary, Andrew is a polyglot, speaking several languages. He is an avid reader, most recently in the areas of on history, finance, futurism, artificial intelligence, singularity, and quantum physics. He enjoys photography and traveling. His travels have extended to Switzerland, the EU countries, Africa, and South America. He also enjoys running and has completed numerous marathons around the world. Andrew is the founder of three FM radio stations in the Midwest that serve a market of more than 100,000 people on a daily basis.

In 2018, Andrew completed his doctorate degree in organizational leadership from Andrews University. His dissertation focused on financial literacy. The thesis of his work probed the hypothesis that cognitive ability and financial information alone will not produce a markedly large difference in financial literacy levels. Other variables such as policy decisions, political will, economic background, family, cultural affinity, geography, and personal motivational factors also contribute to an overall positive financial literacy health.

Andrew is currently working on his first book due to be published in 2022 on the topic of wealth inequality and its corrosive effect on democracy and spirituality.
About the Readings

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About My Personal Giving Plan

The North American Division encourages the use of the “My Personal Giving Plan.” This plan was developed as a guideline to assist members in systematic giving. The plan suggests that, in addition to returning 10 percent of a member’s personal income as tithe, certain percentages may be dedicated as offerings to three main categories:

- Local Church Budget: 3-5 percent
- Conference Advance: 1-2 percent (Education, evangelism, VBS, summer camps, and union magazines)
- World Budget: 1-3 percent

*Visit [https://www.personalgivingplan.com](https://www.personalgivingplan.com) to see a more extensive breakdown for each category.

The My Personal Giving Plan encourages each of us to renew our commitment to the principles of Christian stewardship. While it blesses the church as a whole, its real impact is on us as individuals in our faith-based covenant with God.

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

Where Do My Offerings Go?

13th Sabbath Offering

You’ve heard how everyone in an Amish community comes together for a barn raising. Well, Seventh-day Adventists also have projects where we all pitch in to accomplish a goal. That is the purpose of the 13th Sabbath offering. Every 13th Sabbath, the church focuses on one of its world divisions to accomplish a mission goal. Often, the offering goes toward constructing a
building that will be used for education, evangelism, or media outreach. Thirteenth-Sabbath offerings have been used to establish schools such as Central Philippine Adventist College. A recent offering made a youth camp possible in Belize. All the church members around the world join hands on these projects through sacrificial giving. In 1913, the 13th Sabbath overflow amounted to 474 dollars. Now, it exceeds a quarter-million dollars. We call it an overflow offering because it encourages extra giving beyond the usual mission offering. In practice, 25 percent of the 13th Sabbath offering is considered overflow. The rest is more broadly distributed to continue mission work around the globe. Also, you can give a 13th Sabbath offering anytime by marking it on your tithe envelope. Do you want to be part of something big? You'll be part of a worldwide community expanding Adventist mission work when you give to the 13th Sabbath offering. Remember: Our giving funds the mission to finish the work.

2020 Thirteenth-Sabbath Offerings

First Quarter: Inter-European Division
Second Quarter: Trans-European Division
Third Quarter: West-Central Africa Division
Fourth Quarter: Southern Asia Division

Birthday Thank Offering

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

So, what happens to the Birthday Thank Offering? This gift is directed to church divisions outside North America to do mission work. Much of it is used in evangelistic activities. But some also goes to clinics, hospitals, and educational institutions. A portion of your gift goes to administer the General Conference mission program, helping to move missionaries into new fields and advance the Adventist message. So, your gift of gratitude goes to missionaries and church institutions around the world who in turn will accept it with gratitude. It shows that being thankful can be contagious, doesn’t it?

Conference Advance

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

Local Church Budget

Perhaps the most obvious need addressed in the Personal Giving Plan is the local church. Like every family, the local church family has financial obligations to meet. Some are easy to see like power and heat, but many are not so obvious: children’s magazines, Sabbath School Bible study guides, teaching supplies, staff salaries, cleaning services, church school operating expenses, property insurance, worthy student fund, and community outreach. These are but a few of the costs that must be met month after month as the local church seeks to be a light in the community. Because these expenses are constant, My Personal Giving Plan recommends that 3-5 percent of one’s income be set aside for the local church budget. This systematic giving ensures that all share both in the blessings and the responsibilities of the local congregation.

(Beginning in 2020, local churches will retain three additional offerings to be used for their local church budgets.)

Mission Investment Offering

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

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

There are all kinds of ways to enter into partnership with God. For example, you might dedicate the money you save using coupons at the grocery store, or you can dedicate the money you save by skipping dessert when eating out. One person picked up aluminum cans that she found on her morning run and gave the proceeds to investment. Every dollar you raise goes to advance Adventist missions overseas. Come up with your own mission investment idea today.
2020 North American Division Sabbath School Mission
Investment Projects

SOUTHWESTERN UNION

MULTIPLY CAMERON COUNTY: Cameron County (Brownsville, Harlingen, San Benito), a very poor area at the southern tip of Texas and the Mexico border, has a rapidly growing population (approaching ½ million) yet the Adventist work has been declining over the last few decades. The Adventist work in neighboring counties has experienced rapid growth through soul winning, church planting and a strong Adventist educational presence. This project will use the methods proven in neighboring counties to take the Adventist message to everyone in Cameron County, Texas in a healthy, wholistic way.

The objectives of Multiply Cameron County are to:

1. Plant six new churches/Centers of Influence (English, Spanish, Bilingual).

2. Start one new Adventist school.

3. In each church (current & new) start, strengthen and multiply...
   a. Club ministries (Adventurers, Pathfinders, Master Guides)
   b. Ministry Groups & Events (Health, Family, Finance, Prophecy, Tutoring, ESL, etc.)
   c. Sabbath School groups
   d. Reaping meetings

4. Area Lay Training Events Twice a Year

This is the fourth “Multiply” two-year initiative from the Texas Conference. The other events were: “Multiply” San Antonio
2014-2015; Austin 2016-2017; and Tarrant County 2018-2019. These initiatives resulted in many new churches planted and rapid growth in baptisms and membership in these areas.

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH IN CANADA

MASKWACIS OUTREACH CHURCH & COMMUNITY CENTRE: The building will serve as a base for the reserve congregation to help heal Maskwacis residents spiritually as well as physically. It will be a safe, accessible, permanent place on the Reserve where Adventist principles can be modeled, experienced, learned, and incorporated into the lives of individuals and the Cree community.

The objectives of Maskwacis Outreach Church & Community Centre are to:

1. Increase attendance at Sabbath services and prayer meetings by 10 percent each year;

2. Offer practical assistance for daily living through seminars on health-related topics, which have proven of great interest when offered—especially those addressing mental health; and

3. Increase local church leadership from within the Reserve community.

It is time to transition from an off-reserve offering of assistance and services to a Reserve-based program. This will move the group from the “outside” to the hub of Reserve life. As First Nations Adventists are seen regularly participating at the church-community centre, it is anticipated that there will be greater acceptance of the Church as part of the Reserve community.

SQUAMISH CHURCH PLANT: The Sea to Ski Corridor north of Vancouver in British Columbia, including the towns of Squamish,
Whistler, and Pemberton, is an area with little Adventist presence. Only one active Adventist member lives full-time in Pemberton and one active family lives part-time in Whistler. Presently, no Adventists live in Squamish. Our aim is to plant a church in Squamish and establish small groups in Whistler and Pemberton. Squamish is a fast-growing city with a working-class population. It attracts people who like the outdoors and want to live close to the ski resort at Whistler for work and play. Pemberton is a bedroom community that mostly supports Whistler. Pemberton also has a sizeable First Nations community. Whistler has a world class ski resort that attracts clientele from throughout the world.

The objectives of Squamish Church Plant are to:

1. Place a pastoral family in Squamish in January of 2020. Robert Folkenberg III is uniquely qualified to reach the Sea to Ski Corridor. He is young, an experienced outdoor enthusiast, and has a heart to reach the area.

2. Make contacts through socializing in different communities, through outdoor adventures, through socializing with neighbors, and through literature evangelism.

3. Begin small group meetings and invite contacts to join them.

4. Follow up on the known inactive Adventists living in the area.

5. Work with Summer Megabook workers and follow up on the interest generated.

This is a dark area. A donor has a burden for the people in the growing town of Squamish and is willing to fund part of the expenses over a four-year period. This project’s success will be
measured by the sustainability level of the church in four years (January, 2024). British Columbia Conference AdCom will assess this in coordination with the Ministerial Director.

_Sabbath School Mission Offering_

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

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

_World Budget Offering_

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

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

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

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

These offerings include ministries such as Women’s Ministries and Christian Record Services. My Personal Giving Plan doesn’t recommend a specific percentage for these since the need and scope will vary from project to project. For example, these offerings support undertaking local church building initiatives or a mission trip. The special projects also include requests for help from denominational entities such as ADRA and Adventist World Radio, as well as other Adventist supporting ministries that you may wish to assist.
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 2020.
January 4, 2020

Local Church Budget

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

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

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

When asked why she chose the University of Southern Mississippi as a recipient of her donation, Ms. McCarty responded: “Because it’s here.” Our local church budgets are *here*, in need of our support. Let us pledge our systematic, long-term support this entire year to our local church budget.
January 11, 2020

Evangelism

Kathy Topper was just one of 75 homes Pastor Lynnwood Spangler dropped off Bible studies to in the Hanover area last year. But she was hard to find home. After five attempts, Spangler spent time praying for the home and left the study on the door. As he left, Kathy pulled up, arriving home from her job of driving a small bus of physically challenged students to school. The two talked. Spangler learned that Kathy was faithful grandmother, taking seriously her responsibility of caring for eleven people in her home. He left the lesson with her and committed to coming back. But she was still hard to find at home. Over the next six weeks, he was only able to meet with her twice. Spangler was persistent. When they finally made contact, Kathy asked him, “Do you preach at a church?”

He told her that he did but assured her he was not trying to fill his church, just connect people to the Bible and help them study scripture. Not deterred, she asked, “What day do you worship on?” Spangler smiled. He knew that she was studying the lessons he was dropping off and had discovered the Sabbath. He asked her, “What day do you think we should worship?”

“Well, I hope on Saturday,” she replied. The two visited another hour on her front porch, talking, studying, and growing a friendship. That October Kathy and her husband, Bob, attended Spangler’s evangelistic series and were baptized.

“She’s greeting all the guests in this year’s evangelistic series in Hanover,” shares Spangler. “And doing the best job anyone would want. She knows each person’s name and is bringing her grandchildren. Evangelism still works!” Your gift to the evangelism offering today enables churches to reach people like Kathy. Please give generously.
January 18, 2020

Local Church Budget

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

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

Today, we remain faithful by supporting our local church budget.
January 25, 2020

Religious Liberty

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

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

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

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

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

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

Today’s offering is for our local church budget. We have worthy causes that minister to our local communities “just at the right time” for those who need it the most. Let us be generous with our contributions. Let us be part of God’s plan described in the book of Matthew: “for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in” (Matthew 25:35).
February 8, 2020

Elementary Worthy Student

Attending Gettysburg Adventist Christian School has changed Regan’s life. She not only learned math, geography, reading and other academics, but she fell in love with Jesus and wanted to learn more. Regan asked her parents, who are not members of the local church, for permission to take baptismal lessons and began eagerly studying and preparing for baptism. Her grandmother seeing the difference in her granddaughter said, “It is unbelievable the change in Regan. We used to force her onto the school bus each morning--now we can’t keep her home from school even if she’s sick.”

“Education is evangelism. In no other setting does a minister have an audience for up to eight hours a day, 180 days a year. This is why education, when done correctly, is the strongest avenue for reaching someone with the life-changing message of Jesus Christ,” states Jeremy Garlock, education superintendent.

Please give generously to today’s worthy student offering and impact the lives of children like Regan who will impact the lives of her family. Your gift makes a difference for eternity!
February 15, 2020

Local Church Budget

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

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

This week our offering is dedicated to the local church budget. Our local churches have ministries that reach out corporately to our local communities and our “neighbors.” Let us be generous with our tithes and offerings so that our outreach may be a substantial blessing for those who receive it.
February 22, 2020

Blue Mountain Academy

Each Sunday morning, students from Blue Mountain Academy who are a part of the ASSIST outreach ministry, visit local nursing homes. On one visit, students were invited to a pie and cake social after spending time visiting one-on-one with residents. The activities director told Craig Johnson, ASSIST program coordinator, about a male resident who stated that he didn't want these students to preach Jesus to him. He assured her that we would be vigilant to his concerns.

After the pie and cake social, the aide then proceeded with a trivia game. In one question, she asked the residents "What were the names of Santa's reindeer?" Noticing that the residents were struggling a little, Johnson began singing the song "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" to help them remember the names. Soon everyone was singing the song.

After finishing the trivia game, two students started softly singing hymns. This triggered a song service with the residents. One by one they requested one song after another. Belting away with "Bringing in the Sheaves" to "The Old Rugged Cross."

As Johnson watched, he noticed a resident sitting out in the lobby who started to hover around the door that led into the dining room. If you haven't guessed it by now, that resident was the one who stated he didn't want to hear about Jesus.

“I am in awe of the power of Jesus,” shares Johnson. “To be witness of how He uses our students to bring others out of darkness to a small spark of joy.”

Your generous gift to the Blue Mountain Academy offering today helps young people learn to be light to others.
February 29, 2020

Laurel Lake Camp

Donna* attended a women’s retreat weekend at Laurel Lake Camp just to be with friends and get away from work and home. She knew her friends were Adventist Christians and had made it very clear to them that she would never become a Seventh-day Adventist. Ever. She came with them just for the weekend away with friends. She didn’t expect it to be a turning point in her life.

“I was listening to them sing during worship, but not joining in,” she shares. “And something finally clicked. All the excuses and reasons just didn’t seem valid any longer. For the first time, I sang and worshiped with my friends.”

Donna went home and began studying the Bible with her friends. She was baptized that spring and now is an active part of her local church.

The beauty and peacefulness of Laurel Lake Camp is a great place for people to not only getaway and relax, but to be still and hear God and respond to His call on their hearts. Your financial support helps create a place where adults, children and teens can learn and grow in their relationship with God. Please give generously to the Laurel Lake Camp offering today.

*name changed
March 7, 2020

Local Church Budget

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

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

The local church has an array of ministry opportunities that reach out to students, single parents, economically disadvantaged people, the sick, and the imprisoned. Our faithful and generous support of these ministries will have a tremendous dividend for eternity. Let us be liberal and magnanimous in supporting our local church budget. This support will serve people in need and introduce them to Jesus.
March 14, 2020

Evangelism

Do you ever consider why our church is here? Is it just tradition—passed down through time, woven into the fabric of society? Possibly, we do church simply for our own benefit. I suppose there are many answers, some helpful and others not so much.

Perhaps the best answer comes from Jesus when He said, “Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:18-20). In a chapter titled God’s Purpose for His Church, my favorite author describes it this way, “The church is God’s appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world. From the beginning it has been God’s plan that through His church shall be reflected to the world His fullness and His sufficiency.” (Ellen White, The Acts of the Apostles)

Your continued financial support of the evangelism offering is impacting lives across our state. Thank you for your support and prayers as we share the good news of Jesus Christ with the world! United together, we fulfill the mission.
God opens doors we can’t imagine. A small church and school decided to start a building project. They contracted a local architect to design the project. The architect priced the construction cost at $75,000. The quoted price was within the local church’s saved budget. The project commenced, but the excavation cost of the building site was higher than expected. The church realized that the project was significantly underestimated and that they lacked sufficient funds.

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

Today’s offering is for the local church budget. Let us unite, pray, and ask God to show us a miracle. Let us become accessories to this miracle by returning faithfully His tithes and offerings.
March 28, 2020

Blue Mountain Academy

Celeste Ryan Blyden is a graduate of Blue Mountain Academy (BMA)--of the “great class of ’88.” “Our class was a very close-knit bunch and still are today,” says Celeste, vice president for strategic communication and public relations for the Columbia Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. “Many of us live in the DC area and see each other at church or events, have our kids in school together, are friends on Facebook, and we have a social media group where we connect frequently. We really did make friends for life at BMA. I remember fondly the many people who impacted my life at BMA including my former dean, Ms. Onalee Hartman; my typing teacher, Mrs. Marian Striedl; my senior English teacher Mr. Jeff Trubey, and—I could name them all one by one! No joke! My two years at BMA were key to my growth and development, and the spiritual, social, and academic nurturing I received there was foundational to my becoming who I am today. BMA is where I met God and He’s been ordering my steps ever since. I am thankful for the ministry of BMA and the role it played in my life.”

For more than 60 years Blue Mountain Academy teachers and leaders have intentionally pursued the mission, “they shall be all taught of God.” Through those years many students have walked BMA’s hallways and been exposed to a God that deeply loves them, redeemed them, and called them by name. It is with this passion that the dedicated staff of BMA provide a distinct Seventh-day Adventist Christian education that leads students into lives of service for God. When you look at the many accomplishments of our graduates, it is clear that Blue Mountain Academy has had a dramatic impact in shaping our students lives and moving them toward a calling of purpose and mission. You can be a part of that impact in the lives of young people by giving generously to the BMA offering today.
April 4, 2020

Local Church Budget

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

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

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

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

When we are faithful in our giving, we serve the needs of our local communities such as single-parent households. Let us give generously today to our local church budget.
April 11, 2020

Evangelism

Three years ago, Pastor Fernando Rocha moved to the Wilkes Barre, Pa., area and began serving two churches in the district. Last year, Rocha and members began focusing on growing small groups, an important part of Hispanic ministries.

“God blessed us in ways I didn’t expect,” Rocha shares. “We welcomed 103 new people into membership, and most of them were because of small groups.”

Today this district has grown from the two initial churches to four churches with 17 small groups across Allentown, Hazelton, Wilkes Barre, and Scranton. Willy Terrero, Jr., one of those previously baptized, says, “I used to drink alcohol with friends. But as I attended the small group, I felt God’s call to change my life.” God changed his life and today Terrero leads five small groups in the Hazelton area.

“During the “GPS Life” campaign last spring, Hispanic churches are sharing the gospel in 142 small groups and already have had 40 baptisms,” reports Saud Elias, Hispanic Ministries Coordinator. Our evangelism offering provides the resources for these evangelistic campaigns. Your gifts are making a difference in people’s lives and making new churches necessary. Thank you for continuing to support our churches and pastors through your prayers and gifts.
April 18, 2020

Local Church Budget

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

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

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

When you support your local church budget, you provide the resources to enable the work of these ministries in your community. At the same time, you honor and encourage the volunteers to dream big so that they may draw others closer to Christ.
April 25, 2020

Blue Mountain Academy

“I attended Blue Mountain Academy (BMA) for my junior and senior years. The work-study program was a positive experience for me—adding to what I was taught as a little boy about physical labor. I was not afraid to get my hands dirty. I worked on the dairy farm my junior year and the mushroom farm my senior year. The mushroom farm was an off-campus job with only four students chosen to work there. Even now as a pastor, members are always surprised by how much I get involved in physical labor around the church,” shares Randy Nims, pastor of the York and York Springs Seventh-day Adventist Churches here in Pennsylvania and Blue Mountain Academy graduate.

Today, BMA students continue the long tradition of working along with education through the Vocational Education program. The program is designed to help students develop an appreciation for work, develop good work habits, and enable them to earn scholarship monies towards their education. All students participate, starting at level one and then progressing as they take leadership classes, learn to work and be on time, and apply for new positions at the annual job fair—where students learn to create resumes, dress for interviews and how to interview well.

It’s just one aspect of the Blue Mountain Academy experience which also includes quality academics, advanced and dual enrollment classes, outreach and ministry opportunities, a strong music program with two touring groups, physical fitness, and leadership development—all taught from a biblical Adventist perspective. BMA is preparing students for their future and for eternity. Unite together with them in fulfilling the mission by giving generously to the BMA offering this morning.
May 2, 2020

Local Church Budget

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

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

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

We are called to serve our local communities personally and also corporately as a local church. Let us be faithful and support the ministry of our faith community and thus hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
May 9, 2020

Worthy Student Offering

One of the more challenging students who can’t read, approached his teacher and shared, “Hey, I want to get baptized! I’ve wanted to get baptized since I was 5 and now I’m 11-years-old.”

This startled the teacher, who wondered if she had hesitated to offer him the opportunity of baptismal lessons because he couldn’t read. After all, how can you do the lessons if you can’t read? She talked to Pastor Lynnwood Spangler about Traiden’s desire and the challenge of helping him prepare for baptism. An evangelist at heart, Spangler said it wouldn’t be a problem.

Fifth grader Traiden and Pastor Spangler studied 25 lessons together with Spangler patiently telling or reading each lesson. Each time they met, Traiden insisted they pray at the beginning and the end of their time. “Dr. Rose Gamblin is doing a wonderful job leading the young people to a powerful walk with Christ at our Gettysburg Seventh-day Adventist School,” shares Spangler. “Adventist education still works!”

Adventist education prepares kids academically, socially, equips them with leadership skills, teaches them how to serve, but more importantly, prepares them for eternity. Please give generously to today’s worthy student offering and change the lives of students like Traiden now and for eternity.
May 16, 2020

Local Church Budget

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

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

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

Article sourced and retrieved from:
May 23, 2020

Blue Mountain Academy

Through the years thousands of students have walked the campus of Blue Mountain Academy. For many of those students, their families sacrificed much so their children could come and be part of the BMA experience.

One father in particular exemplifies this commitment. Sacrifice was key to Everton Davis, father of three BMA graduates. Everton’s wife went to sleep in the Lord when his children were still young, but still he found a way to keep them in Adventist Christian education; first at Pocono Adventist Christian School, then Blue Mountain Academy and for two of his three children, Andrews University.

Through hard work, dedication, and sacrifice, he has one daughter who graduated with her PhD, another who graduated with her MPP, and the third who currently on his journey to higher learning.

Many families want the BMA experience for their students and are sacrificing in order to make that possible—but they need a little help. Join us in partnering with families and enabling our young people the opportunity to attend BMA and learn to impact the world for God.
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.
June 6, 2020

Local Church Budget

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

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

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

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

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

—Carol Doudiken is a local elder in the Potomac Conference, and this story is about her uncle.
June 13, 2020

Evangelism

“In October, I received a postcard that would change my life,” says one of more than one hundred people who attended the Bucks County Seventh-day Adventist Church’s fall evangelistic series. “It talked about a prophecy seminar called, The Midnight Cry. I was extremely interested in prophecy and Revelation but had no one to study it with me. So when the postcard came, I decided to go the first night only and see if I was terribly bored. I was hooked that first night.”

Pastor Joshua Plohocky baptized three people at the end of the series with five more continuing to study and prepare for baptism.

Your financial support of today’s evangelism offering impacts people and communities across Pennsylvania, making it possible for churches to offer meetings, send invitations, and as a result, reach everyone, everywhere with the gospel of Jesus Christ.
June 20, 2020

Local Church Budget

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

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

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

As we collect our local offerings and tithe, let us be grateful to our Father for our lives, health, and families.
June 27, 2020

Laurel Lake Camp

As we gather to worship in our churches this summer Sabbath morning, children from across Pennsylvania are enjoying worship at the outdoor chapel at Laurel Lake Camp. 2017 and 2018 saw record numbers of children and teens attend summer camp at Laurel Lake and ride horses, drive gokarts, ride mountain bikes, swim, canoe, kayak, jump on the blob, learn archery, create crafts, play sports, make new friends, play games, laughed, and most importantly, learned about Jesus and were invited to commit their lives to Him through baptism.

Kids like Ryan* who attended camp thanks to the generosity of the Adventist church in his community. Ryan’s family doesn’t attend church regularly. But they were excited for Ryan to attend camp when the church invited him to go with other kids. That week at camp changed Ryan’s life. He was one of more than half a dozen children baptized last summer. Today he attends church on a regular basis and even serves as a junior deacon, helping to take up the offering and helping however he can.

Today, let’s give generously to the Laurel Lake Camp offering and support the work they do in providing a place and opportunity for children and teens to learn more about Jesus.
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.
Women’s Ministries

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

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

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

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

—Raewyn Orlich is a pastor in Victorville, California.
July 18, 2020

Local Church Budget

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

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

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

Let us remember God in the midst of our vacation preparations. God never takes a day off, or a break. He is serving humanity 24 hours a day, every day, until His Son returns again.
July 25, 2020

Blue Mountain Academy

Forty-one years ago this summer, David LeRoy Weeden arrived at Blue Mountain Academy as a new student. A student determined to attend school, graduate and leave the Seventh-day Adventist Church. But his experience at BMA impacted his life. Today Roy serves as pastor of the Williamsport, Milton and Lock Haven Seventh-day Adventist Churches here in Pennsylvania. He has also pastored in New York, Rocky Mountain and Iowa-Missouri conferences and served as an administrator for Adventist Health International.

Blue Mountain Academy is a place where students encounter God. Not only through worships and FOCUS weeks, but through teachers, students, and in every class no matter what the subject. It is a place that changes lives.

You can unite with us to fulfill the mission of changing lives of young people for eternity through your prayers and through your generous gift to the BMA offering today.
Local Church Budget

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

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

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

The local church is a body of believers that reaches out on a regular basis to people who do not know Jesus Christ. Our tithe and offerings are an intricate part in this outreach. Let us be faithful in returning that which is God’s.
August 8, 2020

Laurel Lake Camp

“Laurel Lake Camp was a great experience for our son David who spent a whole week at summer camp,” shares one parent. “He came back saying all the good and fun things they do at camp, talked about the great staff and team who work to make this all possible. He sang the theme song and the Laurel Lake Camp song all the way home. God is so good! We are so blessed to have sent him to camp! I strongly believe God did His work.”

God is at work at Laurel Lake Camp. We have the opportunity to unite with God to fulfill His mission in the lives of children, teens and adults who discover a deeper relationship with Him or learn about Him for the first time while attending camp. Today, please give generously to the Laurel Lake Camp offering.
Is it really too much? After her baptism, Luzia made a plan to return her offering as a percentage of her income. She did not want to “forget” to be grateful to God. While living in Brazil, Luzia got a well-paid job, and writing checks for the tithes and offerings became painful. She always understood that tithes don’t belong to us and we return them to God. But she wasn’t so sure about offerings anymore.

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

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

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

—Luzia Raleigh is a local elder in the Roanoke, Virginia Seventh-day Adventist Church
August 22, 2020

Worthy Student Offering

Gettysburg Adventist Christian School applied for a Healthy to Learn School Grant from Adventist WholeHealth Network in the fall of 2018. The amount awarded was $2,000 and covered the NEWSTART initiative. Dr. Rose Gamblin, the teaching principal of the small school (8 students) wanted to use the money to start a puppet outreach that would not only engage her students and help them learn about nutrition, exercise, water, sunlight, temperance, air, rest, and trust in God, but would also give them an opportunity to reach out to other young people.

Over the course of the year the students helped write, record edit, and produce a five-minute play for each letter of NEWSTART. The students performed a total of 9 times. The children and parents in the audience laughed at the antics of the puppets as each one tried to demonstrate that their healthy habit was the most important habit. Dr. Brainiac, played by Levi Harman, was the serious man (puppet with a brain cap) and interjected statistics about each healthy habit.

After the sixth performance calls started coming to the school seeking information about enrollment. Parents believed that a school that really cared enough about their students to want them to be healthy was exactly the kind of school they wanted their child to attend.

Adventist education cares about kids academically, physically, socially and spiritually, teaching them how to live healthy lives of service, using their education and talents, to impact the world around them for Jesus. Today we have the opportunity to unite with our educators in preparing our children for the future and for eternity by giving to the worthy student offering and making Adventist education possible for a family in need of assistance. Please give generously.
Can we make a difference? With fewer than 40 people in attendance, the Roundup and Lewistown Seventh-day Adventist churches in rural Montana asked a very important question: “How can we impact our local communities with such small congregations?” Its “graying” constituency felt inadequate and had mobility, health, and age issues. Many argued that the modern technology was “way over our head.” We prayed, and then... God had a sense of humor.

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

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

Whether it’s running radio stations or supporting our local church budget, together we can make a difference!
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:
September 12, 2020

Evangelism

“While listening and learning about the book of Revelation during the prophecy seminar, there were things I knew and things I didn’t know,” shares one of those baptized at the Bucks County Seventh-day Adventist Church, Warminster, Pa., last year. “But night after night I listened closely to God speaking. I have had the desire to be baptized for a long time, and as I listened to the seminar, I realized the urgency that Jesus is coming soon!”

They were just one of eight people who committed to baptism during the church’s Midnight Cry prophecy series. Your support of our evangelism offering provided the resources needed for the Bucks County church to hold these meetings. Thank you for uniting with us in prayer and giving as we fulfill the mission and share the gospel and Adventist message in churches across Pennsylvania. Your gift today will impact the lives of those who will attend meetings in just a few weeks.
Train up a child. Parents often feel guilty for not doing enough for their children. In fact, at times, some of us parents go overboard and indulge our children. Desires are satisfied, toys pile up in the guest bedroom, high-priced electronics are purchased. Soon after some of these articles are acquired, interest in them subsides and they are relegated to obscurity. Is this story familiar?

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

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

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

Let us teach our children to be faithful in their earning and return to God what is rightfully His. This training will reap extraordinary dividends in the future.
September 26, 2020

Blue Mountain Academy

Ellen White wrote, “…True education means more than the pursual of a certain course of study. It means more than a preparation for the life that now is. It has to do with the whole being, and with the whole period of existence possible to man. It is the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual powers. It prepares the student for the joy of service in this world and for the higher joy of wider service in the world to come.”

Blue Mountain Academy is committed to preparing our young people for serving in this world and for eternity. Students have the opportunity to not only pursue academics and also earn college credits while in high school, but develop their gifts for music and share Christ through orchestra, bell choir, choir and Bel Canto. They have opportunities to serve through mission trips abroad and right here in Pennsylvania. They learn to develop healthy lifestyles through the early morning exercise time, healthy meals, and evening gym time. Students grow friendships that last a lifetime and are impacted by a committed staff who care about young people and love God.

Join us in preparing our students for the joy of service in this world and for the higher joy of wider service in the world to come by giving generously to the BMA offering today.
Local Church Budget

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

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

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

Such financial infidelity may have deeper roots than a simple case of forgetfulness. Being faithful financially to our Lord is a predictor of our long-term relationship with Him. Let us remain faithful to Him.
October 10, 2020

Worthy Student Offering

Families sacrifice. Especially for their children. Jennifer McCary's family sacrificed for her and her brother, working multiple jobs in order to provide the Adventist education they felt was important. Jennifer shares her parents’ commitment to Adventist education and now serves as a teacher and principal at our York Seventh-day Adventist School. She was lucky. Her parents were able to juggle multiple jobs and pay for tuition. Unfortunately, today, many families struggle to make ends meet AND pay for tuition despite multiple jobs. As a church family, we can unite together with these families to fulfill their desire for their children to receive an Adventist education. Today, let's unite together to fulfill the mission of reaching our kids through Adventist education by giving to the worthy student offering!
Local Church Budget

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

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

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

Have we become such indispensable extensions of our local communities? Are we serving them unconditionally, without any ulterior motives? The golden rule states that we are to love as we are loved. Jesus goes one step further when He asks us to love unconditionally.
October 24, 2020

Blue Mountain Academy

“We had no idea how we were going to pull this off,” shares Joe Jimenez. “But we wanted our daughter to attend Blue Mountain Academy. We just put all things in our Lord’s hands and trusted in faith that He would see things through.”

Four years later, Joe’s daughter graduated from Blue Mountain Academy and had earned twelve college credits while there!

“God is so good in allowing our daughter to have a beautiful Christian education. BMA has blessed our little girl and us abundantly.”

It’s your faithful support that enables BMA to partner with parents in providing an Adventist Christian education that prepares them for the future, enables them to earn college credit while in college, and also prepares them for eternity. Please give generously today to the Blue Mountain Academy offering and unite with us in blessing students and their families.
Union Designated

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

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

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

God placed the salvation of humanity as a first priority in His life from the “foundation of the world” according to Ephesians 1:4. Let us remain faithful and place God first as well by returning His tithes and offerings.
November 14, 2020

Laurel Lake Camp

Katelyn* has attended Seventh-day Adventist churches all thirteen years of her life. She’s a fourth generation Adventist. She’s a part of an active Sabbath School class. Attends camp meeting. Has even helped with service projects and church events. But when it came to talking about baptism, she just wasn’t interested.

Until she attended Laurel Lake Summer Camp.

Listening to the messages aimed at kids her age, watching the skits, seeing other children baptized in the lake, moved Katelyn’s heart. Family and friends gathered as she was baptized a month after summer camp.

Her story impacted other kids in her church. Six kids were baptized as a result of Katelyn’s commitment to be baptized.

Laurel Lake Camp not only impacts the lives of those who attend, but has a ripple effect as God works through those changed by camp to inspire others.

Your gift to the Laurel Lake Camp offering today will have that same ripple effect. You may not know until eternity how God uses your generous gift in the lives of people. Thank you for uniting with us to fulfill the mission at Laurel Lake Camp.

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

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

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

*Thanksgiving is celebrated in Canada on the second Monday in October.*
November 28, 2020

Blue Mountain Academy

“I am at peace knowing that my daughter is attending a school that is helping her academically, building friendships, work and social skills, but overall giving her guidance and emphasis on her spiritual walk with Jesus,” shares one Blue Mountain Academy student’s parent.

BMA is committed to providing an atmosphere where students can build friendships, learn leadership skills, develop healthy lifestyle habits, grow academically, and nurture a relationship with God. But we can’t do it alone. We need your help. Unite with us in praying for our students and their families, and by giving generously today to the BMA offering as we prepare young people who not only excel in their careers and relationships, but are committed to God and serving Him.
December 5, 2020

Local Church Budget

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

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

The Bible reminds us that “where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:21). Before the holiday season begins, let us resolve to focus on people, needs, and opportunities to serve. Let us seek those in need in our local communities and cherish the opportunities God puts in our way. We have a choice: We can continue to be consumers, or we can be providers of vital services for those vulnerable and in need.
December 12, 2020

Worthy Student Offering

Osceola McCarty was born in 1908. She lived with her aunt and grandmother in Mississippi. When her aunt returned from a hospitalization unable to walk, Osceola dropped out of school at 12 years old to care for her. She never completed her education. Instead she became a washerwoman; getting up early in the morning to light a fire under her wash pot, washing the clothes on a scrub board, hanging them on a 100-foot clothesline and when they were dry, ironing until 11:00 pm at night.

Osceola saved a portion of the funds she received for each load of wash, stashing it in her doll buggy until the buggy could hold no more. She opened a bank account and continued to save, until to her surprise, she had saved over $250,000.

When she was asked why she did not spend the money she’d saved on herself, she answered with a smile, that thanks to the pleasure that comes from making a gift, “I am spending it on myself.”

She established an endowment fund for worthy but needy students seeking the education she never had. She said, “I am proud that I worked hard and that my money will help young people. I’m proud that I am leaving something positive in this world. My only regret is that I didn’t have more to give.”
December 19, 2020

Local Church Budget

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

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

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

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

This miracle was possible because ordinary people decided to serve others. When we give to the local church budget, we too become accessories to miracles.
December 26, 2020

Evangelism

2,267 people from 54 churches across Pennsylvania gathered at 28 churches in southeastern Pennsylvania to worship and unite together to reach our communities, praying for people, offering free Bible studies, and inviting them to upcoming evangelistic meetings. This fall, pastors, lay pastors, our office team, and church members united together to fulfill the mission of sharing the gospel and Adventist message throughout Pennsylvania as part of our 120 in 2020 initiative. Thanks to you and the gift of your time, talents, and financial giving, we united together in evangelism in the biggest way our Conference has ever seen. This is just the beginning. Please give generously to the evangelistic offering as we prepare for 2021, reaching everyone, everywhere, and seeing lives impacted for eternity.