

Offertory Readings

2021



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

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

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

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

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

Michael Anthony Harpe



Director
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About the Author



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

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

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

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

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Calendar of Offerings – NAD 2021

Special Offerings

January 23	Religious Liberty
February 13	Adventist Television Ministries Evangelism
March 13	Adventist World Radio
April 10	Hope Channel International, Inc.
May 8	Disaster and Famine Relief
June 12	Women's Ministries
August 14	Christian Record Services
November 13	World Budget (Emphasis: Radio Ministries)
December 11	Adventist Community Services

Thirteenth-Sabbath Offerings for 2021

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

Summary of Offerings

Local Church Budget	27
Conference Advance	12
Union Designated	2
NAD	5
World Budget	6

PROLOGUE PAGE

Dear Presenter,

Thank you for your willingness to share the offering appeals with your local congregation. May God richly bless you and speak through you as you take this wonderful and gratifying responsibility.

***Arizona Conference Advance:**

Offerings given to Arizona Conference Advance are divided as follows:

- 50% Arizona Evangelism
- 20% Elementary Schools
- 15% Camp Yavapines
- 15% Thunderbird Adventist Academy

Every month the Arizona Conference Advance offering has an emphasis area or focus. One month the focus may be on Arizona Evangelism, another month it may be Camp Yavapines but every Conference Advance offering is divided in the percentage calculation designated above.

With this in mind, it would be more accurate if from the pulpit the Elder makes the announcement that the offering is going to “Arizona Conference Advance” and not solely the emphasis area noted for that month.

The purpose of the emphasis is to simply highlight ONE of the ministries the Conference Advance offering supports. It is incorrect to assume that 100% of the Conference Advance collected on that Sabbath goes to the area of emphasis, but instead correct to understand that the Conference Advance is split in the percentage manner noted above for each month.

January 2, 2021

Local Church Budget

A visitor arrived at a church in the middle of winter. He noticed it was cold inside the sanctuary, and everyone wore winter coats and scarves. The visitor found the head elder and asked, “Is your furnace broken?”

“No, the furnace is fine. We just don’t have enough money to pay the heating bill.”

Startled, the visitor asked, “Doesn’t the local church budget handle these issues?”

The elder shook his head.

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

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

Most of the congregation raised their hands. He read this passage: “Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.” 2 Corinthians 9:7

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

January 9, 2021

Arizona Conference Advance

** A 15% portion of this week's offering goes to support Thunderbird Academy*

One hundred years of Adventist education in Arizona

Part 1: In August 1920, Arizona Academy opened with 21 high school students. Today over 3,500 students have attended, the campus has moved from downtown Phoenix to the current Scottsdale location and the school name has changed to Thunderbird Adventist Academy, but one purpose has remained, educating for eternity.

This century-long ministry has impacted more than students, but also their families and the community. An alumnus from the 1950's shared that his father did not want him attending Arizona Academy, feeling that a religious education was a waste of money. Through the years and many interactions, the father had with the faculty and the change in his son, he came to give His life to Jesus.

Alumni have also shared how the faculty impacted them. They recall the dorms being a place for students to stretch their wings and experience independence under the loving guidance of the deans. Others remember times when faculty took the time to hear them, encourage them and pray with them.

Today the same thread of life-changing impact on individuals still rings true. Thunderbird Adventist Academy is more than a mission statement we quote or the academics we provide, it is the students and staff striving together to reflect Jesus and become new creations in Him.

These life-changing moments are what your offering for Thunderbird Adventist Academy will support. These moments are not just for this lifetime, but moments that will lead to a great reunion in Heaven where we will be able to celebrate together.

---Tanna Allison is VP for Advancement at TAA

January 16, 2021

Local Church Budget

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

The pastor said, “You are not alone. About a third of our congregation’s members have gone through tough times. Our church can assist you for a month or two to give you time to get back on your feet.

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

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

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

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

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

January 23, 2021

Religious Liberty

A pastor stood on a ledge with a long drop before him. This group of Houston pastors had gone on a team-building exercise as part of a faith-building experience.

They helped each other through obstacle courses and challenges to accomplish tasks they could not have done alone. They called the final challenge “the step of faith.” The pastor was hooked to a harness. Then he would step forward and drop 50 feet to the ground.

The coach reminded him, “We are here for you. We’ve got you. Just believe and take the step of faith.”

After a moment of silent prayer, the pastor stepped forward. The seconds felt like an eternity as he dropped into what seemed an endless descent. Then the tension on the line increased, and at last his descent decreased in speed. When he landed, the pastor dropped to his knees and thanked the Lord.

All the pastors learned how teamwork could bring a group together to achieve a common goal. Each individual, when they gave their best, enhanced the entire team’s abilities to complete their mission. The exercise reminded them how faith in God helped the team triumph in what seemed impossible.

When talking to the disciples, Christ gave them a message. “And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God.” Mark 11:22

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

January 30, 2021

Local Church Budget

Have you ever attended church in a house? There are many home churches across America. But home churches are easy to outgrow!

One of these house churches in Vermont, the Brattleboro church, stepped forward by faith in outreach to their community. As the congregation grew, it became obvious they needed a new location to become even more effective for the Lord. The house itself could no longer handle the various ministries and the growth of the congregation.

They brought the matter before the Lord. Land opened in the adjacent town of Vernon, and the members raised funds to move to the new location. Week by week, the members gave according to their abilities. The church project went forward, and construction began on the new building.

The new structure started as only a dream in the hearts of the members. Now faithful members worship in their beautiful building today.

Members are able to have a wider impact in the community. The community is grateful for their presence. When God's people come together for the Lord and follow the dream that the Lord placed in their hearts, great things will happen.

Today, as you give to the local church budget, ask God to place in your heart a vision for your church. Catch the inspiration of how your congregation can bless your community. Look for the greater mission to souls who will come and praise our wonderful Savior. "Where there is no vision, the people perish." Proverbs 29:18

February 6, 2021

Local Church Budget

The new pastor arrived early in the week for a tour of the church and school. When the deacon showed the new pastor the sanctuary, he gasped.

“What happened here?” he asked. There were large streaks of watermarks running down the walls on two sides of the sanctuary.

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

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

His first Sabbath, after the conference president introduced him, the pastor stood still and looked at the walls of the church. The eyes of the members followed the eyes of the pastor as he scanned the walls.

“Beginning next week, we shall work together as a church. We shall restore God’s Holy Temple,” he said to the congregation. The church erupted with praise!

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

February 13, 2021

Adventist Television Ministries

Media consumption is at an all-time high. People watch television on big screens in their living room, on computers in their office, and on laptops, tablets, and smart phones in their hands.

Americans spend a staggering amount of time watching TV programs. We even have a new word for it called “binge watching.” People get most of their information from looking at a screen. Thus it’s a great way to reach them with the Adventist message.

During World War II, television was a pretty new invention. By 1950 only about five million TV sets existed. Adventists thought it might be a good idea to use this new medium. So, a program called Faith for Today was launched. It has the distinction of being the first nationally broadcast religious program on TV.

Soon other Adventist television programs followed. It Is Written in 1956, Breath of Life in 1974, and, more recently, the Jesus 101 Biblical Institute. Today these continue to be the four television ministries owned and operated by our North American Division. They provide a primary evangelistic thrust.

Adventist television has been transforming lives for 70 years and is still going strong. Every year, thousands continue to discover a Christ-centered message of hope through the creative productions of Faith for Today, Breath of Life, It Is Written, and Jesus 101.

More people are reached through TV programming than any other way. You can help Adventist Television Ministries touch hearts and change lives. Please give liberally today.

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

February 20, 2021

Local Church Budget

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

February 27, 2021

Arizona Conference Advance

**A 15% portion of this week's offering goes to support Camp Yavapines (refer to prologue page)*

One Sabbath afternoon, a Texas pastor walked down a trail and discovered a large anthill. He knew the area often flooded, so he figured that these ants had built their home above the floodplain. His curiosity got the best of him, so he grabbed a stick and poked a small hole.

Part of the top area of the colony collapsed, and the ants rushed out in an offensive formation. First came the warriors to protect the perimeter. Following the warriors came the workers. The worker ants scouted the breach. Then they began touching antennas and went to work to close the breach.

The colony worked in unison. Each ant had his or her unique and specific task. It was an emergency, and all placed their backs into it, making sure they restored the nest.

We can learn a lot about how ants work as a team. They work as one body.

We are told in the Bible that we are the body of Christ “that there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.” 1 Corinthians 12:25–27

As a church, when we work together, we can move mountains for His glory. Let us work together today as we give toward our Conference Advance.

March 6, 2021

Local Church Budget

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

March 13, 2021

Adventist World Radio

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

March 20, 2021

Local Church Budget

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

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

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

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

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

March 27, 2021

Arizona Conference Advance

**A 50% portion of this week's offering goes to support Arizona Evangelism (refer to prologue page)*

2020 was a year to forget. COVID-19 changed everything around us, including our ability to do evangelism. However, even in the midst of this pandemic, several Arizona Conference churches found creative ways to keep evangelism at the center of their ministry. For example, the Chandler Church held several evangelistic efforts and as a result of these meetings, 21 precious souls were baptized through September 2020. Both Yuma Spanish and Yuma Central Churches were also active in their communities, making disciples for Jesus. As a result of their evangelistic efforts, Yuma Spanish baptized 11 precious souls, while Yuma Central Church baptized 8 new members into the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Finally, the Paradise Valley and Cottonwood Churches each baptized 7, while the Chinle Church reported 6 baptisms through the end of the 3rd Quarter. Many other churches also reported baptisms even in the midst of this pandemic.

The Arizona Conference is blessed with the faithfulness of many churches who remain committed to the Great Commission. But this faithfulness goes beyond baptisms and the Great Commission. Evangelism is only possible, thanks to the faithful giving of our church members to the Arizona Conference ADVANCE. Today, we are appealing once again to your generosity. We invite you to give to ADVANCE. A major portion of this offering will go to support many more evangelistic efforts throughout our Conference. May God bless your faithfulness as we continue to grow His kingdom in this territory.

-----*Jorge Ramirez is Executive Secretary/Ministerial Director/Evangelism Coordinator for Arizona Conference*

** Conference Advance breakdown: 50% Evangelism, 20% Elementary Schools, 15% Camp Yavapines, 15% Thunderbird Academy*

April 3, 2021

Local Church Budget

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

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

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

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

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

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

April 10, 2021

Hope Channel International, Inc.

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

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

“I liked the name,” Sarah said. “I thought okay, Hope Channel’ – I am really looking for hope right now!” She immediately began to watch the program Table Talk. Through this program, Sarah was able to see and understand God's grace. Her life began to transform. This led to finding Let's Pray LIVE. “They say ‘the place where you don't have to pray alone,’” said Sarah. “My husband is not a believer so a lot of times I do pray alone, and since I found them, I'm not!”

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

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

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

April 17, 2021

Local Church Budget

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

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

The children from their church school would grow to be the church of the future. Not only that, but there would be eternal, heavenly rewards for this church who had invested in the Christian education of their young people.

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

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

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

April 24, 2021

Arizona Conference Advance

**A 20% portion of this week's offering goes to support Elementary Education (refer to prologue page)*

COVID has brought many economic challenges to everyone, not the least to Adventist Christian Education. Of the current students enrolled in our schools for the 2020-2021 school year, only around 20% are funded by their parents/direct tuition payments. The remainder rely heavily on grants and scholarships from such sources as AAA, and the Arizona Tax Credit Scholarship with just a few benefiting from the AZ Conference worker subsidy. The scholarship programs are beginning to feel the severe impact that the pandemic has had on donors, and we are told that the future is going to be less certain than ever for relying on these resources. This means that donations (even if you go through the Tax Credit Scholarship Program) will be more important than ever to help the nearly 80% of our students be “taught of the Lord” in preparation for His soon return. To give you an idea of the actual impact on giving, for the 2018-2019 school year donations totaled over \$481,000 to help keep our students in school. In the 2019-2020 school year we received over \$367,000. On a bleaker note, we have collected only around \$32,000 for this school year as of December 2020. As you can see, we have a long way to go and we desperately need your help. Please consider investing in the lives of young people who are being equipped daily for the Kingdom. It is a guaranteed investment with the very best returns!

---Nicole Mattson is Superintendent of Education for Arizona Conference

** Conference Advance breakdown: 50% Evangelism, 20% Elementary Schools, 15% Camp Yavapines, 15% Thunderbird Academy*

May 1, 2021

Local Church Budget

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Deuteronomy 16:17 Today, let us come together and give as our wonderful God has blessed us.

May 8, 2021

Disaster and Famine Relief

“Fatal,” “Devastating,” “Horrendous,” “Unforgettable,” “Death Toll Rises!” Just some of the words to describe news reports on natural disasters and traumatic events.

Your gift to the Disaster and Famine Relief offering allowed Adventists to give a sense of HOPE to thousands from the Camp Fire tragedy. Hundreds of kitchen kits were provided to use in their travel trailer and hundreds of sheds to secure any belongings they were able to grab. Instant pots, along with cooking classes on how to use them, were given to bring some normalcy.

One resident shared, “I’m so excited to receive this kitchen kit that I’m going back right now to make brownies.” She made a plate of them and shared them with the clean-up crew.

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

Our friends on the Island of Saipan were able to return to their homes after ACS DR team members traveled the long hours to rebuild homes that had been uninhabitable after Typhoon Yutu devastated the Island.

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

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

May 15, 2021

Local Church Budget

“The Church is on fire!”

We can talk about being “on fire” as a good thing. But when flames and fire trucks appear, a church on fire is never good news!

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

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

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

The Pathfinders didn’t know that it was impossible for them to raise the funds within months. They had faith God would bless. Their motto was Matthew 19:26. “But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.” Today, let us remember that what seems impossible becomes possible when a church works together to support the local church budget.

May 22, 2021

Arizona Conference Advance

**A 15% portion of this week's offering goes to support Camp Yavapines (refer to prologue page)*

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

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

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

Fund raising was simple. Give a dime per month. A dime then would be equivalent to \$2.25 US today. Even at today's rate of exchange, that's not very much money! Widespread participation brought success. When the members took this as their Conference Advance project, the Lord blessed. What Conference Advance project needs your support today?

Today, our offerings serve the various ministries of the Arizona Conference Advance including Camp Yavapines. Let's give generously. Jesus reminds us to seek God's kingdom first and all other things will also be given to us (Matthew 6:33).

May 29, 2021

Union Designated

In the Bible, the King of Syria besieged the capital of Samaria. As a result, a great famine ensued. The famine was so severe that a donkey's head sold for 80 pieces of silver. The prophet Elisha went to the king and made a strange proclamation.

“To morrow about this time shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria.” 2 Kings 7:1

The king did not believe him. How could this be? He had not learned never to limit what God can do for His people.

That night the Lord caused the Syrians to hear chariots, cavalry, and a marching army. In fear and confusion, the Syrians forsook their belongings and ran for their lives.

The next morning, some lepers decided to surrender to the Syrian army. It surprised them to discover that the large army had gone, their tents were empty, and they had left all their belongings behind. The lepers sent word to the king of Samaria. In one day, the city went from famine to abundance, just as Elisha had predicted.

This story reminds us that God holds our future in His hands. When a crisis comes in God's work, He provides ways for us to overcome. As we give to our local field today, remember that we worship a God of miracles. He will take what we give and increase it to touch lives in supernatural ways.

June 5, 2021

Local Church Budget

A New York church school fell behind on their payments to the conference. The conference had to set a deadline. “We can only give you three more months. If you are not current by March first, we cannot reopen the school in September.”

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

“We could have a bake sale.”

“We could have a garage sale.”

“Maybe the students could sell Christmas candles.” But none of these ideas, nor even all these ideas together, would raise enough.

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

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

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

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

June 12, 2021

Women's Ministries

The woman had lost her husband. Creditors were coming to collect. She had no money to pay them. What was she going to do?

She went to the prophet Elisha and told him her trouble. "They will take my two sons as slaves," she cried.

The prophet asked one question. "What do you have in your house?"

"I have only one small pot of olive oil," she replied.

He instructed her to borrow as many empty vessels as she could from all her friends and neighbors. Then, in private, she should pour that same oil into the borrowed containers.

Her sons brought vessel after vessel until there were no more available. She began pouring oil from her little pot. When she filled the last jar, the oil stopped flowing.

The next day she told Elisha what God had done. He told her, "Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest." 2 Kings 4:7

When this widow came to the Lord, our Father heard her prayer and intervened.

Today, we have many members who are in debt, and as a result it becomes difficult to contribute tithes and offerings. I want to introduce you to a God who hears the cries of mothers and fathers who are in need. God opens the windows of heaven in our behalf. When you receive His blessings, remember to thank the same God by giving offerings so that others can also receive a blessing.

June 19, 2021

Local Church Budget

The General of the Army of Syria was a leper. During one of the conquests against Samaria, the general captured a young girl and gave her to his wife as a maid. The Bible never gives the name of this precious child, but her influence would be great. She spoke of the God of Israel who could heal the husband of her mistress.

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

After several delays, Naaman arrived at the home of the prophet Elisha. He found a humble home. To make matters worse, Elisha didn't even come out in person to meet the general. He sent his servant out to deliver the simple message. "Go and wash in Jordan seven times." 2 Kings 5:10

Angry, Naaman headed home. But his servants urged him to follow the command of the prophet. When he did, God healed him of the leprosy.

A little girl shared with her mistress. The woman shared with her husband. The general shared with the king of Syria. Naaman came before the prophet of God, and God changed him. Today, we can do the same. When we give to the local budget, the funds are used to help share the gospel with others. Your name may never be known, but by sharing—like the little maid—lives will change as did that of Naaman the General.

June 26, 2021

Arizona Conference Advance

** A 15% portion of this week's offering goes to support Thunderbird Academy (refer to prologue page)*

One hundred years of Adventist education in Arizona

Part 2 - A summer program at Harvard, lunch and a Glow Tract. These three things were the trifecta for Francine and Glenielle to share about being a Seventh-day Adventist while attending a Harvard summer business program for high school students.

It was during lunch with other participants that the topic of conversation turned to religion and beliefs. From her wallet, Francine pulled out a leftover Glow Tract from her work with Youth Rush, "Why I go to church on Saturday" and gave it to Michael, who proceeded to read it to the entire table. That lunch was one-way Glenielle and Francine saw Jesus Christ open doors for them to share their faith on the Campus of Harvard. It was simple and natural.

Upon their return to school in the fall, Francine and Glenielle excitedly shared their adventures and as student leaders, challenged their fellow students to have a deeper relationship with Jesus and share that relationship with anyone who asks.

When you financially support Thunderbird Adventist Academy, you support opportunities for students to confidently share their faith and relationship with Jesus as well as participate in a strong academic program. Our sacrificially giving today will have eternal results, let us show these young people how much we believe in them and give today.

---Tanna Allison is VP for Advancement at TAA

** Conference Advance breakdown: 50% Evangelism, 20% Elementary Schools, 15% Camp Yavapines, 15% Thunderbird Academy*

July 3, 2021

Local Church Budget

Oshkosh is the largest Pathfinder event in the North American Division. It meets once every five years. But a church in Texas had a problem. They had elected a new director and staff for their Pathfinder club just nine months before Oshkosh.

The new leader said, “We have little money in our Pathfinder fund in the church budget. Oshkosh is expensive. How can we raise enough money to attend?”

They consulted with the former Pathfinder director to get ideas. How could their small group find money to pay for transportation, food, the entrance fee, and all the incidentals that are part of Oshkosh?

The church board gave permission for placards, donation boxes, and other promotions. They had some response, but the club was always short of their goals each month.

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

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

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

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

July 10, 2021

World Budget

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

July 17, 2021

Local Church Budget

A church member enjoyed fishing from a bridge in a park. One day, he felt a tap on his boot. He ignored it at first, but then he felt many small taps. He looked down and saw a squirrel. The small animal looked up with longing eyes.

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

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

Have you ever gotten a tap in church? Have you had a tap on your heart to respond to an offering appeal? Is God tapping on your heart right now to support the church budget ministries that touch the lives of the people in your community? If you feel that tap, take out your mix of bills and coins and hand them over with joy, because you are touching the lives of others.

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

July 24, 2021

Arizona Conference Advance

**A 20% portion of this week's offering goes to support Elementary Education (refer to prologue page)*

This school year, the Arizona Conference has 478 students currently enrolled. Our students are learning daily about the saving love of a wonderful Savior. Not only that, they are also learning about job opportunities and career developments while they are discovering how to seek God's will for their lives. That means over the next 12 years, should Jesus delay His coming that long, we have 478 well-educated evangelists that will be equipped to lead others to Christ. If they each reach only one person for Jesus in their lifetime, that's nearly 1000 people who will be your neighbors in Heaven. If they each reach two the number climbs to nearly 1500 new neighbors for you to call "family" up above. If each of those people reach two more, we suddenly are looking at almost 4500 people who will call Heaven home. And so it continues... it is such a wonderful ministry to think exponentially about the people who might be saved for the Kingdom through Adventist Christian Education. We aren't just producing students who can build a webpage, write a book, engineer a rocket, or serve through various ministries... we are producing leaders who are engaging others in the Good News of salvation and leading them to Christ. Your donations will not only help support our students and keep Adventist Christian Education alive, but you are also helping to build a wonderful neighborhood in Heaven. Won't you help today to build our community for Eternity?

--- Nicole Mattson is Superintendent of Education for Arizona Conference

July 31, 2021

Local Church Budget

During the retreat by Japan from the Philippines during World War II, one Japanese soldier named Hiroo Onoda received an assignment. He was to stay behind at his post until his commanding officer, Major Yoshimi Taniguchi, relieved him of his duties.

On the day of the Major's departure, he made a promise. "Stay here until I come back to relieve you of your duties. Whatever happens, we will come back for you."

As an intelligence officer, Onoda had learned the art of blending into his environment and sustaining himself off the land. The war ended in 1945, but for 29 years, he stood by his post.

At last, the emperor learned that the lieutenant was still on the island. He sent Onoda's former commanding officer with a letter from the emperor telling him he was free to go. On March 9, 1974, the Major arrived and at last Onoda could leave for home.

To all Christians, our commanding officer Jesus gave orders before He left. He said, "But that which ye have already hold fast till I come." Revelation 2:25

Are you holding and maintaining your post until He comes? As Christians, we are to work for the Lord and help support Christ's ministry through our tithes and offering. We are to do all we can for our Master till He comes again and relieves us of our earthly post. As we give to the local budget, let us hold fast till He comes.

August 7, 2021

Local Church Budget

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

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

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

The Bible says, "In the first year of Cyrus the king the same Cyrus the king made a decree concerning the house of God at Jerusalem, Let the house be builded, the place where they offered sacrifices, and let the foundations thereof be strongly laid." Ezra 6:3

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

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

Some might argue, how could the nation of Israel accept such a gift from a pagan king? Let us remember it was God Himself who touched the heart of the king to support the cause of spreading the Gospel. Today, may our hearts also be open to support the gospel ministry that each church has for its community.

August 14, 2021

Christian Record Offering

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

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

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

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

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

August 21, 2021

Local Church Budget

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

The church board discussed the problem. “We don’t have enough money,” they agreed. “But let’s at least get a few estimates so we know how much we will need.”

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

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

The pastor suggested a third option. “Let’s take this matter to the congregation. Perhaps, when they understand the need, they will give extra offerings to the church budget to repair the roof.”

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

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

August 28, 2021

Arizona Conference Advance

**A 15% portion of this week's offering goes to support Camp Yavapines (refer to prologue page)*

A member moved into his new home. The house had wall-to-wall carpet. He never thought of what might be underneath the carpet.

Then one day, as he looked into one of his children's rooms, he noticed a partial lift in the carpet. He looked closer and found rich oak wood flooring underneath. He could not believe his eyes.

When he removed the carpet from that room, he discovered that all the wood floor needed was a little sanding and a fresh coat of Poly. The ordinary room was transformed into a majestic room. Room by room, he removed carpet to reveal the hidden beauty. Within weeks, the entire home changed into a mansion.

Our Lord sees us as His workmanship. His goal is to restore us to our original luster. He wants us to become elegant, rich in tone, and unique in design. When we place our lives into His hands, He removes the layers of sin and pain and recreates us into His image.

The Bible says, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Ephesians 2:10

By your gift today, the gospel message can open new doors to let hope and transformation touch the lives of others.

** Conference Advance breakdown: 50% Evangelism, 20% Elementary Schools, 15% Camp Yavapines, 15% Thunderbird Academy*

September 4, 2021

Local Church Budget

Jesus told two of His disciples to go to the village next door. He said, “Ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me. And if any man say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them.” Matthew 21:2, 3

This is one of the perplexing stories in the Bible. A modern equivalent might be if you were told to find two limousines with the keys left in them. You find them. As you start the engine, there is a knock at the window. The owner asks, “What are you doing?”

You reply, “The Lord has need of these.”

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

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

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

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

September 11, 2021

World Budget

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Bible says, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."
Matthew 18:20

Let us work together to impact the world for Christ.

September 18, 2021

Local Church Budget

One day a fisherman was fishing on the edge of a lake when a grey herring landed next to him. The bird looked into his bucket and saw a feast. When the bird tried to take the fish from the bucket, the fisherman tapped him with the end of his rod and made a deal with him.

“Every other fish I will give to you on the condition that you don’t steal.” The fisherman named the bird Henry.

So the fisherman caught a fish and tossed it to Henry. The next catch went into the bucket. Henry waited for his turn. In an hour, he must have eaten at least 10 to 12 fish. Then he flew away. Each time the fisherman returned to that lake, Henry would fly and land next to him.

The fisherman didn’t have financial resources to give to the local church budget. But he wanted to contribute to the ministries of the church. He donated the fish in the bucket to the new immigrant people who were attending his church. The fisherman questioned if this ministry was a way of working for God since he had limited resources. Henry was God’s answer to him.

In the Bible, God uses animals to touch our lives. “And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.” 1 Kings 17:4

Giving can also come in many forms: time, talent, or tender.

September 25, 2021

Arizona Conference Advance

**A 50% portion of this week's offering goes to support Arizona Evangelism (refer to prologue page)*

Evangelism is the heart of our mission. This is the reason why the church exists. It is rooted in the Great Commission: "Go therefore and make disciples" Matthew 28.19. It is the responsibility of every Christian to be actively involved in this mission.

One way we can all be involved is through our financial giving to Evangelism, through the Arizona Conference ADVANCE. Every year in November, the Evangelism Committee of the Arizona Conference meets to distribute thousands of dollars to churches planning evangelism events for the following year. From public evangelism to community outreach programs, this offering allows congregations to engage in kingdom growth activities which result in people accepting Jesus Christ as their personal savior.

In 2018, \$633,366 was approved for evangelism and distributed among more than 60 churches. That year, more than 495 people were baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church here in Arizona. Again, in 2019, \$425,600 contributed to more than 539 baptisms. We are growing God's Kingdom thanks to your generosity.

Today, we are appealing to your generosity once again, as we ask you to consider giving to the Arizona Conference ADVANCE. May your financial sacrifice today help win many more souls for Jesus. And maybe, just maybe, one day, when we all celebrate that great family reunion in Heaven, you may see the fruit of your giving.

---Jorge Ramirez is Executive Secretary/Ministerial Director/Evangelism Coordinator for Arizona Conference

October 2, 2021

Local Church Budget

The family was car-pooling on their way to their son's graduation in Tennessee when someone asked, "What is ministry?"

Someone else asked, "What ministry is most impactful to the community?"

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

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

That's when the GPS redirected to the exit.

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

Each church understands the needs of their community. When you give to the local budget, you are being part of the ministry of the church to reach the community for Christ. What is ministry? Here are the words from Jesus. "Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me." Matthew 25:45

October 9, 2021

Union Designated

The young lad told his mother the news. Jesus, the Miracle Worker, would preach by the Sea of Galilee that day. He wanted to see Jesus. His mother packed him a lunch. The boy didn't realize that what he had in his hand would touch the lives of thousands that day and for centuries to come.

He arrived early and found a front-row seat. He never remembered his lunch until near evening. Then he heard the Master speaking to the disciples about a need for food. He offered Jesus all the food he had.

Jesus thanked him and asked the multitude to sit down. He "took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude."

Matthew 14:19

That day, 5,000 men, plus women and children, ate their fill of warm bread and salted fish. Jesus told them to gather up the leftovers. Can't you see the boy filling his bag with the miracle food and rushing home to share with his mother?

Not one of the four gospel writers tells us his name. But his actions are recorded for all eternity.

As we give to our local field I want to ask you, what do you have in your hand? God can take the offering you have in your hand and by His touch multiply your offering to bless the lives of thousands.

October 16, 2021

Local Church Budget

Jesus was en route to Jerusalem when He heard ten lepers shouting “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.”

Luke 17:13

Christ acknowledged their request and told them to show themselves to the priest. As they were walking away, they noticed Jesus had already healed their leprosy. Their skin was soft and silky. No trace of disease remained. One of the former lepers turned around and returned to honor Jesus for the miracle. Only one. Often, we are the recipients of God’s grace. We pray, we plead; we come before the Lord with our petitions. When God grants us His grace, there are many who forget to thank the Lord for His mercies.

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

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

October 23, 2021

Arizona Conference Advance

** A 15% portion of this week's offering goes to support Thunderbird Academy (refer to prologue page)*

One hundred years of Adventist education in Arizona

Part 3 - As a junior, Nahzoni shares what attending Thunderbird Adventist Academy means to her. "I have the pleasure of being able to go to school without dealing with the stereotypical high school bullying that happens throughout the U.S. Thunderbird Adventist Academy is like one big happy family since we all know each other. You get the chance to make long-lasting friends since you spend so much time together. The teachers teach beautifully and get to the core of the subject.

Over the years, I have seen God in many ways such as in the actions of students and the way the teachers speak of Him. Before each class we tend to pray, and this moment is very appreciated since I need Him before each class. TAA has expanded my knowledge of God and how to have a true relationship with Him, these to me are necessary in life. TAA also influenced my life by allowing me to become more self-sufficient by doing things myself without a lot of help from my parents or the teachers. I have also learned life skills such as punctuality, being productive and social skills.

My goals in life are to become a successful pediatrician and to become closer with God every day. I want to be able to live a life with God as the main focus. I chose this career because I love children, caring for others, and showing God's love to others. Even in my career I want Him to be made evident in it."

Nahzoni's story is one example of how our systematic and sacrificial giving impacts the young lives at Thunderbird Adventist Academy. Let us be generous in our financial support of our young people at TAA.

---Tanna Allison is VP for Advancement at TAA

** Conference Advance breakdown: 50% Evangelism, 20% Elementary Schools, 15% Camp Yavapines, 15% Thunderbird Academy*

October 30, 2021

Local Church Budget

John and Nellie had lost their jobs because of downsizing. They were living on unemployment. However, as they were applying for new jobs, they had an idea.

“Let’s volunteer for the church community service program,” John suggested.

Nellie agreed. “We can use this gift of spare time while we’re job hunting to serve others.”

Their own difficulties seemed few when they opened their eyes to the needs of the community. They saw parents struggling to feed their children, to pay for their rent, and to get proper clothing for their kids. They understood, because they too were in a similar situation. They learned compassion.

As the days turned into weeks, their hearts changed. When the Lord opened doors of opportunities and both went back to work, they saw with different eyes. When the time came for offerings, they gave to their community service program. Not only that, but when there were holidays, rather than taking all the time off for themselves, they continued to volunteer to serve others.

We might not always have monetary resources to give to a ministry, but we can give our time, hands, and feet. We can touch the lives of others for God’s glory. This places these scripture verses in a new light. “But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

Matthew 6:20, 21

November 6, 2021

Local Church Budget

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

An elder grabbed the globe in the office and took it for a spin. He asked another member to place a finger on the globe. It landed near Lake Victoria in the nation of Kenya.

They investigated and discovered there was a church in that place that met under the trees because it had no church structure. After working out the logistics between the two conferences, the church raised funds for the project. Within six months, the church had raised enough to build a church for this sister congregation. Representatives from the church visited Africa when the church there was completed to be part of the dedication service.

At the dedication service, the conference officer asked the pastor, “Why did the church in America choose this church?”

The pastor replied, “We prayed, we asked for direction, and God pointed the way.”

“Did you know this church prayed that God would send a miracle?”

“No, but God knew!” the pastor said.

Let us remember that the church belongs to God. When we give to the local budget, we can watch for God to open the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing. “Prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing.” Malachi 3:10

November 13, 2021

World Budget (Emphasis: Radio Ministries)

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

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

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

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

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

November 20, 2021

Local Church Budget

The pastor received a phone call. “Is your church looking for a Christmas project?”

“What do you have in mind?” he asked.

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

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

They asked the church members, “Can you bring a list of names of anyone from our community who might appreciate a Christmas gift?” The deacons passed out forms with blank spaces to list the age of the child and gift suggestions.

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

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

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

November 27, 2021

Arizona Conference Advance

**A 20% portion of this week's offering goes to support Elementary Education (refer to prologue page)*

The brain is an incredible and complex organ that few have found words to describe well. In varying stages of development, it makes incredible changes and adaptations to various input and stimuli. In the early stages or “formative years”, scientific research shows us that a child grows and changes more than any other time of life. In the middle-school time of life, the brain again changes in response to chemicals brought on by physical changes happening rapidly during puberty. In the later teen years, the brain retains its plasticity and learning ability; teenagers benefit from challenging academics and mental activities, exercise, and creative activities. It is throughout all stages of brain development that personal identity emerges and develops. The major goals of Adventist Christian Education are to engage the developing mind in enriching academics, harmonizing social activities, various forms of physical exercise, and foremost a spiritually invigorating and relationship-forming environment where each student finds their special identity in Jesus Christ. It is our goal to help each student learn to appreciate their uniqueness, their talents, and their worth through the eyes and heart of Christ. Your dollars are helping students to find their true identities as Children of the King through Adventist Christian Education.

---Nicole Mattson is Superintendent of Education for Arizona Conference

** Conference Advance breakdown: 50% Evangelism, 20% Elementary Schools, 15% Camp Yavapines, 15% Thunderbird Academy*

December 4, 2021

Local Church Budget

The Lord asked Noah to build an ark. Not by the riverfront, not by the ocean side, but on dry land. Each plank, each nail, and each cut was a testimony that he trusted in God. The finances for such an undertaking were enormous, but the command of God was clear. "Make thee an ark of gopher wood." **Genesis 6:14**

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

Today, God may ask us to take a leap of faith. To start a new ministry that will impact the community. To start a new Pathfinder club or Vacation Bible School for the children of the church. Often you may sense God calling you to step forward. I want you to understand that in every venture in the Bible, God provided the resources as His people moved forward by faith. Remember Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Esther, Deborah, and Daniel, to name a few.

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

December 11, 2021

Adventist Community Services

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

“Our neighbors are not merely our associates and special friends; they are not simply those who belong to our church, or who think as we do. Our neighbors are the whole human family”

(Ellen G. White, “The Role of the Church in the Community,” Ellen White Notes, 3Q 2016).

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

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

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

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

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

—Wynelle Stevens is Assistant Director at Adventist Community Services

December 18, 2021

Local Church Budget

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

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

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

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

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

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

December 25, 2021

Arizona Conference Advance

**A 50% portion of this week's offering goes to support Arizona Evangelism (refer to prologue page)*

The offering today has been designated for Evangelism Conference ADVANCE. A major portion of this offering will go to support evangelistic efforts by every church in the Arizona Conference. In 2020, the Ubumwe Company baptized eight precious souls during the month of November. Earlier in October, the Tucson Midvale Park church also held a baptismal service for Luis Yucupicio and Greg Collon. Each year, thanks to the generosity of many church members within the Arizona Conference, many people continue to find Jesus.

Also in 2020, Hispanic Ministries held two conference-wide evangelistic efforts in the months of June and September. Small groups were key in preparing for these meetings. As a result, 43 souls were baptized through the end of September. Regional and Multilingual Ministries also were active in soul winning in spite of the challenges of COVID-19. Through the end of the Third Quarter, Regional Ministries reported 9 baptisms, while Multilingual Ministries celebrated 15 new members into the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

As we contemplate giving to Conference ADVANCE, let us give generously. A major portion of this offering will continue to support Evangelism across the Arizona Conference. Thank you for making evangelism, the heart of our mission.

---Jorge Ramirez is Executive Secretary/Ministerial Director/Evangelism Coordinator for Arizona Conference

** Conference Advance breakdown: 50% Evangelism, 20% Elementary Schools, 15% Camp Yavapines, 15% Thunderbird Academy*