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## June 1, 2019 – Local Church Budget

**Motel 6 has had a long-time slogan:** “We’ll keep the lights on for you”. What they mean is that they will be ready for you, whenever you come.

Sometimes people say that church budget is about keeping the lights on at the church. While Motel 6 keeps the lights on to make money, the local church keeps the lights on for ministry. It’s nice to come to a church service, church activity, or church outreach event in a well-lit building that is warm in the winter and cool in the summer.

But church budget is about so much more than paid utility bills. It’s about any ministry your church does that makes a difference in people’s lives. Children have a place to go to learn about their Creator and leave with lessons they bring home. Pathfinder clubs provide great experiences of learning and Christian fellowship. Local evangelistic efforts are often funded in part or in whole by the church budget. Health ministries, Vacation Bible School, ministries to the poor, Christian education, and so much more come from the local church budget. In short, church budget is about church mission, and church mission is about changing lives.

When you give today, you are providing the financial resources to make a difference in the lives of your church family and local community. Remember, today’s offering is about a lot more than keeping the lights on.

## June 8, 2019 – Local Church Budget

**Would you hesitate to ask?** There was a roomful of doctors eating together on a certain occasion. One doctor got up from the table, left the room, and in minutes he was dead. A morsel of food had lodged in his windpipe, and so he choked to death.

The tragedy of this incident is heightened by the fact that probably any one of those doctors could have performed the Heimlich Maneuver, or, if need be, a tracheotomy to restore his breathing. But they did not know anything was wrong—he didn’t tell them.

A lesson is here for those of us in the church. A member may have a problem in his (or her) life—a problem with marriage or the children, with alcohol, money, grief, loneliness, depression, or whatever. He feels embarrassed about the situation, so he does not tell his brothers and sisters in Christ that he is struggling. Instead, he absents himself or puts on a brave front and struggles all alone. Sometimes he is crushed beneath the load, and no one knew until it was too late.

The Scriptures say, “Bear one another’s burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:2). That is one big reason why Christ in His wisdom placed us together in the church—to bear one another’s burdens. Of course, many problems cannot be solved as quickly as that of a choking victim, but most problems become more bearable when shared.

Our local church provides, among other things, help for our members in need as well as those in the community. I encourage you to give faithfully today!

## June 15, 2019 – Local Church Budget

**Father's Day.** A pastor recounts: "Several years ago, I received a phone call from Mary, one of our church members. She sounded quite excited and wanted my wife and me to come by her house to hear a marvelous story. Her elderly mother and disabled brother had been living with Mary and her husband for several years, but the mother had recently died. Now, Mary was visiting the Social Security office to report her mother's passing. Little did Mary know the surprise awaiting her:

"She handed over the death certificate and was going to make arrangements to halt her mother's monthly payments and change her brother's payments to herself. Then the lady said to Mary, 'What about the benefits from your father?' To which Mary replied, 'My father has been dead for many years.' Then the lady got a strange look on her face and said, 'No, dear, your father is very much alive.' Mary was totally shocked. Then the lady said, 'Listen, I am not allowed to reveal his whereabouts, but if you will write a letter, we will forward it to him.'

"As it turned out, Mary's parents had gone through a very bitter divorce when Mary and her brother were little, and her mother never told her about her father. Needless to say, a few days later her dad called from Chicago, and it brought an exceedingly happy reunion! And she was able to connect with half-sisters she never even knew about. God is so good."

## June 22, 2019 – Combined Youth Ministries

**Camp meeting memories.** This is the time of year when many local conferences conduct their camp meetings, and what a blessing they are! Many of us have fond memories of camp meetings, and some have even met their future spouses there!

Many years ago, a local conference had a big tent for their main meetings (and some still do). At the back was a wooden structure that served as the sound booth and the main control point for public address across the campus. In the booth, there was an intercom telephone that was connected to the various outlying departments.

One of our pastors was on duty in the booth when a curious thing occurred. Just as someone on the platform was about to offer a prayer, the intercom phone rang, and the following situation took place: The pastor on the platform began with "Dear Lord..." and at that precise moment the pastor back in the booth, distracted, picked up the phone and in a rather strong stage whisper said "Ye-e-e-s." Of course, everyone in the audience heard it and chuckled.

Wouldn't it be wonderful to have such direct answers to our prayers!

Let us faithfully and generously support our local conference in our Combined Youth Ministries projects and ministries.

## June 29, 2019 – NAD Evangelism

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

Many of the Bible's parables deal with one or more aspects of stewardship. The rich young ruler, the widow's mite, Esau selling his birthright, Ananias and Sapphira—over and over we are given lessons

about fixing our hopes on heavenly wealth, not on the earthly.

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

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

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

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