

# Local Church Budget

**August 6, 2022**

1 Chronicles 29:14 says, “But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand.”

Our generosity is inspired by God’s generosity. In preparation for the construction of the temple, the Bible reports about the generosity of Israel. First, King David gave lavishly out of his personal treasures. Then the other leaders gave willingly, following his example. Inspired by their leaders, the rest of the people gave “freely and wholeheartedly to the LORD” (1 Chron. 29:9). Seeing such an expression of generosity, David burst into praise and mentioned the factor driving such a profusion in giving: “Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand”. David considered giving as a response to what God had already provided: air, forgiveness, His presence, promises, and abundance. No one can outgive God. Even if someone chooses to give everything, God has all the means to replenish that person’s resources. This was the mindset of David, a leader and giver in Israel.

Abraham, a Masai man, had a similar mindset. He was the owner of 1,000 head of cattle and large herds of sheep and goats. Acknowledging that God was the Source of his blessing, he decided to be faithful to God. He placed his cattle in large pens and counted them as they walked through a chute. Every tenth cow Abraham dedicated as tithe for God. His friends and acquaintances were amazed. In their culture, people’s wealth is measured in cattle. One doesn’t just give away his cows! They began to mock him, and many people declared him to be crazy. But the laughter abruptly stopped nine months later when 40 of Abraham’s cows gave birth to twins! In addition, many of his goats and sheep birthed triplets!

“Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?” (Num. 23:19). This week, as we worship with our tithe and regular offerings, let us reflect on the truthfulness of these words in our own life.

# Christian Record Services

**August 13, 2022**

John 6 :12 says, “When they had all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, “Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted.”

Christian Record Services, Inc. is a ministry of compassion of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to children and adults who are blind, with nearly 18,000 members throughout the United States and in countries around the world.

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

These services and programs are free of charge to people who are legally blind; your offerings will help further the mission to empower people who are blind to engage their communities and embrace the Blessed Hope.

# Local Church Budget

**August 20, 2022**

Exodus 29: 1 says, “This is what you are to do to consecrate them, so they may serve me as priests: Take a young bull and two rams without defect.”

We worship God with our offerings because they are sermons without words. After the tabernacle was built from the freewill offerings of the people, it was time to set apart Aaron and his sons for the holy ministry. Exodus 29 provides details about the ordination service of the first priests in Israel. Interestingly, Moses, the leader, did not deliver a special speech or preach a sermon for this occasion. But what was prominent were offerings of various kinds: Sin offering, burnt offering, and wave offering. What were the messages conveyed by these offerings?

The sin offering was for the atonement of sin. The priests were reminded that they needed God’s grace and forgiveness to qualify for their duty. The burnt offering was burned completely on the altar. It pointed to the total commitment that was required from those called to service. Finally, the wave offering was presented in a waving-type motion, elevated and swung to and fro toward heaven. It symbolized the priest’s dedication to God’s service and was about God’s provision for those who sacrificed themselves in service to Him. Through these multiple offerings, they learned the true meaning of their ordination.

Do we have some doubts about the pertinence of worshiping God with our offerings? If a local church already has enough financial resources to support its ministries, should it maintain offerings as an element of the worship service? Offerings have a value far beyond monetary. Offerings are sermons without words. They represent acts of worship and convey essential spiritual lessons. Among other things, they remind us of God’s gift of salvation, His daily blessings, and our adequate response of total commitment. It would be unwise to silence God’s voice by renouncing the practice of offerings. This week as we worship with our tithe and regular offerings, let us be attentive to God’s voice.

# Combined Youth Ministries

**August 27, 2022**

2 Chronicles 29:3 says, “In the first month of the first year of his reign, he opened the doors of the temple of the Lord and repaired them.”

We worship God with our resources because we are in a time of revival. “A revival of true godliness among us is the greatest and most urgent of all our needs.” Revival is an invitation to turn away from other gods and acknowledge the sole Lord of our lives. The book of 2 Chronicles tells us about the revival during the time of King Hezekiah: The temple was repaired. The worship services were restored. The Passover was celebrated once again. Levites were reinstated to ministry. Restoration of true worship was at the heart of true revival.

The people’s response to the call to revival comprised a concrete element: “Then Hezekiah said, ‘You have now dedicated yourselves to the LORD. Come and bring sacrifices and thank offerings to the temple of the LORD.’ So the assembly brought sacrifices and thank offerings, and all whose hearts were willing brought burnt offerings”. Spiritual revival acknowledges God as Lord, and one tangible means is to honor Him with our gifts.

The story of Zacchaeus in the New Testament presents giving as a result of true spiritual revival. Before he welcomed Jesus as his guest of honor, Zacchaeus was the greediest man in Jericho. He was ready to betray his country, lose his friends, forsake his religion, and sacrifice his reputation for just a little more. However, when salvation entered his house, he was prompted to give more than what he owed: “I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount” (Lk. 19:8). That was his love response to the love he received from Jesus. We can give without loving, but we cannot love without giving.

The call for a spiritual revival is resounding loudly in our churches. This week as we worship with our tithe and regular offerings, is it evident that the revival message has taken root in our hearts?