

## **Local Church Budget**

**May 4, 2024**

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

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

Hebrews 10:24-25 says, “And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching”.

Today’s offering is for the local church budget. This will help provide the resources necessary to allow us to continue to meet together and worship as one!

## **Disaster & Famine Relief**

**May 11, 2024**

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

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

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

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

## **Local Church Budget**

**May 18, 2024**

A passionate woman stood on our church platform and shared how our church was reaching our local community by offering free English classes to people in our community who desired to learn how to speak English. What struck me most was the deep bonds she and the team from our church had developed with the people who were coming once a week to our community room to learn. What was even more beautiful was that our church had partnered with a local business that donated household goods, and as a church, we were meeting some of the physical needs of those who were coming to these classes as well! One couple had been praying for a reclining couch to meet the need of a sick family member who needed to sit and sleep in a reclined position. The woman sharing the testimony told our church that just then she called the family to offer them one that had just been given to the church by this local business! It's not a coincidence – I saw God moving through the faithfulness of those dedicating their time and energy to run this ministry.

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

## **Combined Youth Ministries**

**May 25, 2024**

As the month of May draws to a close, we can all unite in heartfelt gratitude for another successful year of Adventist Education.

This year, over 250 elementary students from the Iowa-Missouri Conference had the opportunity to attend Adventist schools. Over the course of 180 school days, students participated in daily worship and weeks of prayer in which they praised the Lord together. They learned academic lessons in the context of Biblical truth. Recesses were spent playing dodgeball and four square and friendships were made that will likely last a lifetime. Students were blessed to have dedicated teachers who worked daily to help mold their characters as they witnessed for Jesus each day.

Now, as graduation caps and robes have been put away for another year and students relish summer breaks, the empty school halls seem to be filled with the echoes of students' voices and laughter. The teachers of the conference are still hard at work, cleaning empty classrooms, finishing the final grade reports, and making early preparations for next school year.

There is a work for us as a congregation to do as well. There are three things we can do this summer to help support the work of Adventist Education.

1. **Evangelize through Testimony:** We need to remember to spread the virtues of Adventist Education to our neighbors, coworkers, and friends. There are students in our schools who are only there because someone shared with their hairdresser the special things that were happening at their local Adventist school. Embrace the role of Ambassador and look for opportunities to share unique qualities of our school and the holistic education they provide.
2. **Financial Stewardship:** Pledge your support to the Combined Youth Ministries through your generous offerings. A commitment from each tithe-contributing member to dedicate just 1% of their

income to this important fund would shower blessings upon our elementary schools, Sunnydale Academy, and Camp Heritage.

3. Intercessory Prayer: Please dedicate a portion of your prayer time to uplifting our schools, students, and teachers. Our collective prayers can help to fortify our teachers, guide our students, and keep Christ at the center of our education programs.

In embracing these three acts of support – spreading the word, contributing financially, and committing to prayer – we not only aid the sustenance and growth of Adventist Education but also partake in the broader mission of leading children to Christ. As we enter the summer season, let us carry forward this work ensuring that Adventist Education continues to shine brightly until Jesus' glorious return.