

Local Church Budget

October 4, 2025

My wife and I were committed to teaching our children to be self-reliant from an early age. We encouraged them to master basic tasks such as washing hands and dressing, and to take responsibility for their life choices, including choosing a career and who to marry.

However, while cultivating their independence was a priority, we also wanted them to understand the importance of spiritual dependence. In a spiritual sense, the Bible does not promote self-reliance. Instead, it champions the idea of depending on God in all aspects of life. It teaches us that we must learn to trust God completely and surrender our worries and plans to Him.

In our pursuit of self-reliance, we often find it difficult to let go and trust God. We worry about our jobs, our health, our finances, and our future. We fret over things we cannot control which leaves us anxious and stressed. This anxiety and stress consumes our energy and thoughts, diverting us from the time we should be devoting to prayer, worship, and service to others.

We must learn to "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight" as it says in Proverbs 3:5-6. This reliance on God is achieved when we place our complete trust in Him, rather than depending on our own wisdom.

Our offering for today is for the local church budget.

Union Adventist University

October 11, 2025

In the parable of the Rich Fool, Jesus talks about a person who was poor spiritually because he invested in the wrong things in life. Despite his worldly affluence, he is deemed spiritually impoverished because he hoards wealth for self-gratification, while neglecting to invest in God's kingdom. Jesus concludes the parable with a warning, in Luke 12:13-21. It says, "This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God".

So, the key is to be rich toward God. How do we do that? It means treasuring what He treasures: our relationship with Him and others, love and compassion for hurting human beings, and a heart that seeks to do good and be generous.

Paul echoes this sentiment in 1 Timothy 6:18, urging believers "to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share." This isn't just about charitable acts or monetary donations. It's about an attitude of generosity that permeates all aspects of our lives, reflecting God's own generosity towards us.

Remember, we are most like God when we are generous with our money and our actions. What has God given you to invest in others?

Our offering for today is for Union Adventist University in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Local Church Budget

October 18, 2025

My wife and I have the privilege of conducting discipleship training for pastors and church members around the country, speaking to diverse cultures and backgrounds. One of these encounters with the Samoan community left a lasting impression on us. What struck us most was their deep respect for pastors and elders, a reverence that is almost akin to the honor bestowed upon royalty.

The younger members serve the adults first during potluck with a unique level of respect towards their pastors, treating them with reverence. This act of respect wasn't just a duty, but a privilege and joy.

Reflecting on this cultural practice, it made us ponder upon the importance of prioritizing Christ in everything we do. We believe that when our actions and intentions demonstrate the highest respect for Him they are a form of worship that deeply touches His heart. He is blessed when we worship Him, when we voice our praise, and when we present Him with our offerings of love.

On page 197 in the book, *Our High Calling*, it states, “It is the humble, grateful, reverential heart that makes the offering as a sweet-smelling savor, acceptable to God”.

It is this act of giving with love that truly counts. It's not about the monetary value of what we give but the intention of our hearts. Today, let's put God first in our lives through our tithes and offerings. Our offering for today is for the local church budget.

Combined Youth Ministries

October 25, 2025

For many years the story of the widow who gave her two mites has always intrigued me. In terms of monetary value, she didn't give much. So why was her deed even mentioned in the Bible? The reason is profound—God values the giver's heart more than the amount given.

The widow, in her poverty, gave all she had out of love. Her offering consisted of two mites, the equivalent of one-fourth of a penny in today's money. However, it was everything she had. She had sacrificed everything, unlike the others in the temple who had only contributed out of the abundance of their funds. The widow's example has inspired thousands throughout history to give.

God grants everyone the privilege to give. If given from a heart of love, they are as acceptable as the large donations of the rich. This is expressed in volume 3 on page 398 of *Testimonies for the Church*, as, “The poor are not excluded from the privilege of giving. They, as well as the wealthy, may act a part in this work. The lesson that Christ gave in regard to the widow's two mites shows us that the smallest willing offerings of the poor, if given from a heart of love, are as acceptable as the largest donations of the rich”.

Let's give cheerfully, gladly, and willingly, while being thankful that we advance God's kingdom in the world. Our offering for today is for Combined Youth Ministries.