

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

In the lead up to Christmas, many of us spend time in search of the *perfect gift* — the gift that communicates to friends and family how much we know and love them. We search our memories for indications of what gift might cause the faces of our loved ones to light up on Christmas morning. We scour the stores and shops, hoping to come across the thing that will communicate a depth that our words cannot.

Although we cannot give the perfect gift, we can give generously, knowing, as the New Testament letter of James says, “every generous act of giving ... is from above.”

For those of us who gather in Advent expectation, we know that the only perfect gift ever given was the one we received in Jesus Christ. The Christmas Joy Offering celebrates the coming of Jesus Christ, the “perfect gift” from a gracious God.

Devoted and caring leaders have led many of us in the way of Christ. Church workers have shaped our faith and they have been God’s gifts among us. As we celebrate Christ’s coming, and think of the profound impact these individuals have had on us, the Christmas Joy Offering provides a way for us to offer a gift in response.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), through the Christmas Joy Offering, helps us respond to God’s gift with generous gifts supporting church leaders among us, retired, present and future, who have pointed us to God. For church workers in need of financial help, whether due to declining health or a catastrophic event, such as Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico, Christmas Joy provides for those needs through the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions.

Even as we support our current and former church leaders, God is calling new leaders for our Church and world, through the ministry of Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. For students receiving scholarships and support at Menaul and Presbyterian Pan American secondary schools, and Stillman College, a Historically Black College, the generosity of Presbyterians means a brighter future and enhanced opportunities to use their talents and skills to serve God, the Church and the world for years to come. When you give to the Christmas Joy Offering, you help sustain these promises and uplift our brothers and sisters in Christ by reducing their burdens and opening new paths of opportunity.

We can never match God’s perfect gift in Jesus, but through the Christmas Joy Offering, we *can* testify to who we have known God to be. Our perfect gift comes from above. Our gifts reflect our generous God. Our gifts support leaders in our Church and world — past, present and future.

God bless,