



## CHRISTMAS JOY

### SPECIAL OFFERINGS

CHURCH LEADERS—PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

## Christmas Joy Offering 2020

### Children's Message

*Supplies: Images of "perfect gifts" from internet searches or cut out from catalogs or magazines to show the children. You will need two sets of images:*

- 1. images of two or three "hot" gifts of the year — perhaps video game consoles, clothing items or other popular or hard to get items.*
- 2. images of an electric scooter, a graduation mortarboard or other items that tie in with the stories told in the Minutes for Mission/bulletin inserts for this year's offering.*

This is a time of year when many people have just one thing on their mind: the perfect gift.

Maybe they are trying to *give* the perfect gift — it can be a challenge to find something for that "hard to shop for" family member, or to get your hands on this year's "hot" item.

Maybe, they are hoping to *receive* the perfect gift — perhaps they have even dropped one or two hints in the hope that just the right present will be under their tree this year.

*(Hold up #1 printouts)* Which of these gifts might be the perfect gift for you?

It honestly feels strange to be talking about gift-giving in church — aren't we supposed to be focused on the more "church-y" parts of the season? Of course, not all gifts in this season come under a tree. The story of Jesus' birth is, in a way, the most perfect gift there is ... God's gift of Jesus — the gift of Emmanuel — God WITH US.

And as we celebrate this wonderful story, this great gift of God with us, it is only right that we also share our joy with others, and so today, I want to talk especially about the Christmas Joy Offering that our congregation will be receiving. This offering is all about supporting leadership: past, present and future. This offering:

- provides assistance to current and retired church workers in their time of need.
- Helps develop our future leaders at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges that are equipping communities of color.

For some of these leaders, these *(hold up #2 printouts)* were the perfect gifts.

Caring for church workers who are in need and building leadership among people of color certainly seems to be a pretty great gift for a church to be giving at Christmas time!

And truly, whether the perfect gift for you is the newest LEGO or a scooter to help you get around, the perfect gift that we all share is the great gift of God being with and living among us — Emmanuel.

Prayer: Dear God, in this season of joy, show us the joy of both receiving and giving. May we be thoughtful and generous givers, and grateful and joyful recipients, and may we always hold the gift of God with us as the most treasured gift in our hearts. Amen.

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