

Dear \_\_\_\_,

One of the most powerful things that Christians claim is that God saw the great needs of the world and offered a perfect gift in response, a gift that brought God and humanity closer together. God’s perfect gift, Jesus Christ. “Emmanuel, God is with us!” our Advent dream proclaims, as God joins in human life, and draws us together as a result. “God is with us” shows God values togetherness and relationship with us, leading us to value togetherness and relationship with one another. When we are all together — and even when we are apart.

During these past months, we weren’t able to be together in person, but we have always been together in spirit, and in faith. We have missed seeing faces we love — up close and personal, but the physical distance has also revealed, for us, the importance of those things which bring us together, even when we are physically far apart.

We offer our gifts during this Advent Season to the Christmas Joy Offering because God shows us the power and importance of being together, of “being with.” We might not be able to meet face to face with those who need the support that our gifts provide, be we are very much still together.

We support the potential of students of color who will become our leaders and we seek to come alongside them, to encourage them, to be together with them. And we support church workers and their families who have critical financial needs and we come alongside them, to assist them — we are with them. And we see the witness of the whole Church, either gathered in buildings or connected home to home, member to member, sharing what we have, together. We thank God for being “with us” through the gift of Jesus and for joining us together as the Church and, through our gifts, with those who have need.

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,