

Dear \_\_\_\_,

In the story of God, as we tell it, there is a barrier that exists between the Created world and its Creator. A wall. Sin, we believe, separates us from God, and separation from God is unbearable.

Our story goes on to tell us that God, seeing that we had no hope in ourselves of getting over, or through or around what separates us, offered us a gift in Jesus Christ, who opens a door — a door we could not open ourselves.

*What a gift!*

But the story goes on to say that Jesus is the *perfect* gift; not only opening a door but coming through it. Our story says God is with us.

In Jesus, God joined with humanity, pointing the way to the end of our separation. And in his life, death and resurrection, so our story of God goes, Jesus *is* the door, now standing open. The giving continues because God is with us, still — and always.

Because being with us is part of God’s story, being with others is part of our call.

During this Advent Season, we are called to support the Christmas Joy Offering, to celebrate God’s perfect gift and open doors for those we might not be able to meet face to face, but who need the support that our gifts provide.

We support the potential of students of color who are becoming leaders in our churches and communities as we seek to come alongside them, to encourage and to open doors. And we support church workers and their families who encounter critical financial needs as we come alongside them, to assist them — we open doors for them. 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.

The story of God, as we tell it, is not about a barrier, but about a gift. It’s not about the separation, but about the gift of “being with.” Please give generously to the Christmas Joy Offering, in celebration of God’s perfect gift to us. Give because it brings us together, to open doors of relief and opportunity and to relationships that are part of God’s story, a part of God’s perfect gift to us.

Our gifts reflect our generous God. Our gifts support leaders in our Church and world — past, present and future.

God bless,