



CHRISTMAS JOY  
SPECIAL OFFERINGS

LEADERSHIP: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

And the Word became flesh  
and lived among us...

—JOHN 1:14



THE PERFECT GIFT.

2022

LEADER'S GUIDE  
NOVEMBER 27 - DECEMBER 18



Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)  
Presbyterian Mission

# Thank you!

...for your energy, creativity and support in promoting the Christmas Joy Offering. For those of us gathered together in Advent expectation, we know that the only perfect gift ever given was the one we received in Jesus Christ — a perfect gift from a gracious God. In Matthew’s Gospel, one of the names given to Jesus is Emmanuel, which means “God is with us.” We know that in Jesus, we receive the perfect gift of God *being with* us. What a powerful gift, a perfect gift — a gift that opens so many doors for us. Although we cannot give the perfect gift, we can give generously to support and *be with* our past, present and future leaders in their time of promise and their time of need, opening doors that may not have been available to them.

## QUESTIONS?

You’re always welcome to contact us!

### CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING

800-728-7228, Ext. 5047  
[special.offerings@pcusa.org](mailto:special.offerings@pcusa.org)  
[pcusa.org/christmasjoy](http://pcusa.org/christmasjoy)

### SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES EQUIPPING COMMUNITIES OF COLOR

Tim McCallister  
800-728-7228, Ext. 5230  
[tim.mccallister@pcusa.org](mailto:tim.mccallister@pcusa.org)  
[pcusa.org/scecc](http://pcusa.org/scecc)

### BOARD OF PENSIONS

Ruth Adams  
215-587-7295  
[radams@pensions.org](mailto:radams@pensions.org)  
[pensions.org](http://pensions.org)

### STANDING ORDERS

Customer Service  
800-541-5113  
[customer\\_service@presbypub.com](mailto:customer_service@presbypub.com)

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## WHERE DO I REMIT MY GIFTS?

### MID COUNCILS

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)  
PO Box 643751  
Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3751

### CONGREGATIONS

*(through your normal receiving agency,  
usually the presbytery, or)*  
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)  
PO Box 643700  
Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3700

**THREE EASY WAYS  
TO STAY UP-TO-DATE  
ON ALL THINGS  
SPECIAL OFFERINGS.**



BLOG | [pcusa.org/blogs/weekly\\_offerings](http://pcusa.org/blogs/weekly_offerings)



FACEBOOK | [facebook.com/specialofferings](https://facebook.com/specialofferings)



TWITTER | [twitter.com/pcusa\\_so](https://twitter.com/pcusa_so)



2022

## LEADER'S GUIDE

NOVEMBER 27 - DECEMBER 18

### Get the Most Out of Your Christmas Joy Offering Resources

When you're busy, figuring out the best ways to share and promote the Christmas Joy Offering can be difficult. So, we've highlighted important facts, histories, statistics, and programs to make it easier to inspire your congregation to get involved.

In this guide, you will find a variety of materials to help you promote the Christmas Joy Offering and teach your members about the work supported by their gifts. This guide will walk you through these materials, as well as some effective ways to celebrate the Offering and motivate your congregation to give.

***But this guide is just a start.*** We encourage you to add your own ideas and enthusiasm to create a unique Offering experience for your church.

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**Interested in an electronic version of the Leader's Guide?**

Find it at [pcusa.org/christmas-joy-leaders-guide](https://pcusa.org/christmas-joy-leaders-guide)



Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)  
**Presbyterian Mission**



## THE PERFECT GIFT

When Jesus was born among us, he came as a helpless baby destined to bring joy, peace and salvation to his people. This child, God's Word made flesh — fully human and fully God — became one of us. One with us. One among us. In all of our vulnerabilities, struggles and triumphs, Jesus became one of us — leading us, knowing us, connecting us to himself and to each other, and offering us his gift of eternal life.

*The perfect gift.*

Through the Christmas Joy Offering, we reflect God's perfect gift to us, with generous support of church leaders among us — past, present and future — who have pointed us to God.

We honor and celebrate leaders like retired pastors, church workers and their families who have faithfully guided and led us but who now find themselves in critical financial need. We honor and celebrate emerging leaders like students in schools and colleges equipping communities of color, who develop leadership skills as they pursue their education and prepare to bring their gifts in service to the world God loves so much

Jesus' example as a child born to be among us and lead us to eternal life provides a pattern for us to follow as we celebrate those who have led us in the past and will lead us into the future. Through the Christmas Joy Offering, we come together to support past, present and future leaders, embodying God's perfect gift to us, Jesus Christ.

## ✦ WE'RE ON A MISSION WORTH JOINING

It's our goal to assist church workers and their families in their time of critical, financial need and students of color in their time of promise — opening doors for healing and doors for opportunity. Check out the Minutes for Mission and bulletin inserts for powerful stories of lives changed — all because of your gifts to the Offering.

## ✦ YOUR ASSISTANCE GOES A LONG WAY

Research shows when church leaders like you encourage their congregants to support initiatives like the Christmas Joy Offering, their members give significantly more. Thanks to your commitment, we can continue to make, and keep, the vital promises of the Offering.

## ✦ IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO LEARN MORE

Each year, we have more amazing reasons for you to continue your support of the Christmas Joy Offering. Visit our website to discover even more resources: [pcusa.org/christmasjoy](http://pcusa.org/christmasjoy).

## ✦ SHARE YOUR STORIES WITH US!

We'd love to hear the unique ways you promoted the Christmas Joy Offering, as well as any suggestions for us to improve your experience. Contact us via social media or email [special.offerings@pcusa.org](mailto:special.offerings@pcusa.org).



MENAUUL SCHOOL

# 1 OUR GIFTS AT WORK: SUPPORTING OUR PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE LEADERS

By supporting the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions (BOP), the Christmas Joy Offering honors the faithfulness of current and retired church workers and their families in need. Thanks in part to support from this Offering, church workers can receive critical financial assistance to support them through life's challenging circumstances. These generous actions bear witness to our faithful response to God's charge to love one another as Christ commanded.

- ✦ \$1.1 million of gifts from 2021 are being used to provide critical financial support and grants for current and retired Presbyterian church workers in their times of need.
- ✦ Income supplements from the BOP helped nearly 278 individual recipients, assisting retired church workers and surviving spouses with the means to provide for themselves.
- ✦ Housing supplements from the BOP helped more than 227 individual recipients remain in their homes, afford assisted living, or long-term care.
- ✦ Emergency Assistance Grants from the BOP helped more than 246 individual recipients facing times of great financial need or uncertainty due to unforeseen circumstances.

## ASSISTANCE PROGRAM OF THE BOARD OF PENSIONS

2000 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103-3298

800-773-7752

[pensions.org](https://pensions.org)



“How greatly we understand the uniqueness of the Presbyterian Church in its call to help people as Christ commands. And now, having so carefully laid out the importance of giving to the Christmas Joy Offering in the rural area congregations where Ben was pastor, we are so grateful to directly benefit from such financial assistance in our great need since Ben's stroke.”

**Helen Whitfield,  
wife of Rev. Ben Franklin Whitfield,  
Honorably Retired, Rochester, IN**

*Read Ben and Helen's story on page 14 of this guide.*

## 2 OUR GIFTS AT WORK: PREPARING THE WAY FOR FUTURE LEADERS

The PC(USA), with its historic commitment to higher learning, has long promoted education and leadership development through the establishment and support of Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. Our future church leaders of color can receive much-needed assistance while they discover and pursue their professional goals at these schools and colleges. Your gifts allow these ministries to continue — sustaining a tradition Presbyterians have carried out for nearly 140 years.

- ✦ \$1.1 million of gifts from 2020 are being used to provide education and leadership development skills at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color.
- ✦ Many of the students attending Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color are the first in their families to enroll in higher education.

### THE CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING SUPPORTS THESE INSTITUTIONS

Menaul School  
Albuquerque, NM  
[menaulschool.com](http://menaulschool.com)

- Most diverse private high school in the Albuquerque area. Students from 15 – 20 countries are represented each year and the majority of students self-report identifying with minority ethnicities.
- Ranked best Christian High School and 5th best private school in New Mexico by *Niche* ([niche.com](http://niche.com))

Presbyterian Pan American School, Kingsville, TX  
[ppas.org](http://ppas.org)

- 100% of graduates are accepted into colleges and universities in their home countries or in the United States
- Welcomes a diverse international student body, with 26 countries represented in the last 25 years

Stillman College  
Tuscaloosa, AL  
[stillman.edu](http://stillman.edu)

- Stillman has been selected a College of Distinction for 2019-20 and 2020-21 and 2021-22 for Christian Education, Teacher Education, Support of the Military and Veteran Students, Preparing Business Leaders, and Equity and Inclusion ([collegesofdistinction.com/school/stillman-college](http://collegesofdistinction.com/school/stillman-college)).
- Stillman's student population is 87% first generation in college.



“The money you give goes directly to students and keeps them in college. Like me, many students often feel like they are hanging by a thread. Your donation fills in the threads and makes a rope — a lifeline of financial assistance.”

**Kylee Thompson, Graduate, Stillman College, Tuscaloosa, AL Student, University of Alabama, Master of Library and Information Science degree**

The Christmas Joy Offering helps Stillman College and other Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color prepare future leaders like Kylee to serve the church and society.

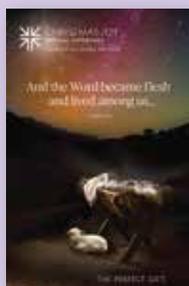
*Read Kylee's story on page 13 of this guide.*

### 3 PROMOTING CHRISTMAS JOY: BEFORE THE OFFERING

#### SEPTEMBER – OCTOBER

Ask the session to set a date to receive the Christmas Joy Offering. This is traditionally received on the Sunday before Christmas, December 18, though any time during the Advent and Christmas season is appropriate. Encourage the session to set a giving goal higher than last year.

- ✦ Develop your interpretation plan by reviewing the resources, tips, and updates on the Christmas Joy website at [pcusa.org/christmasjoy](http://pcusa.org/christmasjoy).
- ✦ Once you receive your shipment of materials, review them and continue planning your Offering promotion. Order any additional materials you may need by emailing [customer\\_service@presbypub.com](mailto:customer_service@presbypub.com) or calling 800-533-4371.
- ✦ Begin planning events around the theme: *And the Word became flesh and lived among us ...* (John 1:14). Choose the individuals who will present Minutes for Mission. Work with the worship committee to plan a special Christmas Joy Offering worship service as well as a suggested litany for a Christmas Eve candlelighting service (found on pg. 17 and online).



The Perfect Gift insert



Connected by Love insert



Offering Envelope

Visit

[PCUSA.ORG/CHRISTMASJOY](http://PCUSA.ORG/CHRISTMASJOY)  
TO DOWNLOAD THESE OFFERING RESOURCES:

Bulletin Inserts

Poster

Minutes for Mission (in large print for easy reading and video form)

Sermon (written and video)

Children's Curriculum

Worship resource

Graphics and Social Media images

Christmas Joy Offering PowerPoint slides

Customizable bulletin inserts



#### THREE WAYS YOUR MEMBERS CAN GIVE



Through your congregation



Text CHRISTMASJOY to 91999



[pcusa.org/give/christmasjoy](http://pcusa.org/give/christmasjoy)

*If giving online,  
members should provide the name  
of their congregation so the church  
will receive credit for their gifts.*

## 4 PROMOTING CHRISTMAS JOY:

### DURING THE OFFERING

#### NOVEMBER

- ✦ Display the Christmas Joy Offering poster in a prominent location, and feel free to order more if you need them!
- ✦ Join us for *Between Two Pulpits* on Monday of each week at 12:00 p.m. ET, where we discuss theology, mission and the Special Offerings. Each week features a special guest and includes ideas for promotion and engagement.
- ✦ Use the pre-designed art and graphics found at [pcusa.org/christmasjoy](http://pcusa.org/christmasjoy) in newsletters, bulletins or Facebook.
- ✦ Make a promotional board or display! If you don't know where to begin, take a look at an idea from the Special Offerings team by visiting [pcusa.org/cjo-display](http://pcusa.org/cjo-display). You can also call 800-728-7228, ext. 5047, to speak with a staff member who can help you with ideas for your own promotional boards. Whether building on these ideas or coming up with your very own, remember to tag us on Facebook when you post pictures of your congregation's Christmas Joy display.
- ✦ Use the children's curriculum in Sunday school. Available for download are a Children's Sermon, two lessons with activities, and ideas to connect worship and the congregation. Download these materials at [pcusa.org/christmasjoy](http://pcusa.org/christmasjoy).
- ✦ Promote the Offering on your church's website, and share your promotional ideas with other congregations through your Facebook page. Please remember to tag us to reach an even wider audience.
- ✦ Remind your congregation about the Offering. Distribute coin boxes and promote the Offering through your church newsletter or other mailings. A ready-made newsletter article is available at [pcusa.org/christmasjoy](http://pcusa.org/christmasjoy).
- ✦ Enclose the Offering brochure/self-mailer envelope in your mailings as a giving opportunity for those who may be out of town when you receive the Offering.

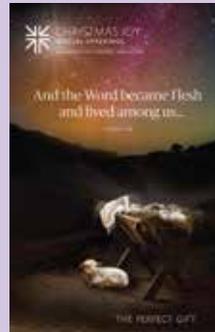


The Perfect Gift poster

## 4 PROMOTING CHRISTMAS JOY: DURING THE OFFERING

### DECEMBER

- Place an insert in the Sunday bulletin every week. There are two inserts this year, so each insert can be used for two Sundays.
- Ask individuals to present Minutes for Mission for three or four Sundays, including the Sunday when the Offering is received. The Minutes for Mission complement the stories in the bulletins, and can be found in this guide or downloaded from the website.



The Perfect Gift insert



Connected by Love insert

- Put Offering envelopes in the pew racks or use the sample pastor letter on our website to mail along with an envelope to your members.
- Visit the page 17 for a Christmas Eve Candle Lighting Service.
- Use Offering materials during a worship service, potluck, zoom meeting, and/or other congregational gatherings.
- On the Sunday your congregation receives the Offering, have the children share the art they created using the Christmas Joy curriculum. Visit [pcusa.org/christmasjoy](http://pcusa.org/christmasjoy) for more information.
- Receive the Christmas Joy Offering on December 18 or any time during the Advent or Christmas season.

MENAU SCHOOL



"We teach that faith is to be lived out in the world. Because so many young people today see the church as building walls to isolate and separate, we at Menaul are all about opening doors to the richness of God's creation."

**John Sitler**  
Upper School teacher  
Menaul School, Albuquerque, New Mexico

The Christmas Joy Offering helps Menaul School and other Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color prepare future leaders.

*Read Menaul student Samuel's story on page 15 of this guide.*

## 5 PROMOTING CHRISTMAS JOY:

### AFTER THE OFFERING

Thank your congregation for participating in the Offering.

- ✳ Report to your congregation how much was received and which programs, schools, and colleges will receive gifts from the Offering.
- ✳ Throughout the year, remind your members they can contribute to the Offering at any time at [pcusa.org/give/christmasjoy](https://pcusa.org/give/christmasjoy).
- ✳ Make your congregation's check payable to PC(USA). Send it through the normal receiving agency at your presbytery or synod. If your church does not have a receiving agency, the check can be sent to:

#### Mid Councils

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)  
PO Box 643751  
Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3751

#### Congregations

*(through your normal receiving agency, usually the presbytery, or)*  
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)  
PO Box 643700  
Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3700

- ✳ Share your stories with us! We'd love to hear the unique ways you promoted the Christmas Joy Offering, as well as any suggestions for us to improve your experience. Contact us via social media or email [special.offerings@pcusa.org](mailto:special.offerings@pcusa.org).

## Stay Connected

Subscribe to the Special Offerings blog, "Like" the Special Offerings Facebook page, or follow Special Offerings on Twitter to stay up-to-date.

 BLOG | [www.pcusa.org/blogs/weekly\\_offerings](https://www.pcusa.org/blogs/weekly_offerings)

 FACEBOOK | [www.facebook.com/specialofferings](https://www.facebook.com/specialofferings)

 TWITTER | [www.twitter.com/pcusa\\_so](https://www.twitter.com/pcusa_so)

## 6 MINUTE FOR MISSION

### AND THE WORD BECAME FLESH AND LIVED AMONG US ... (JOHN 1:14) THE PERFECT GIFT

When we gather with friends and family at Christmas, we celebrate the many gifts that we have both given and received. Looking toward the Star of Bethlehem, we give thanks for the blessings of the past year and anticipate a future filled with hope and possibility. We live in hope that the Christmas gift we offer is exactly what that special person has been hoping for. Yet for those of us celebrating Advent's expectation, we know that the only perfect gift ever given is the one we receive in Jesus Christ.

When Jesus was born among us, he came as a helpless baby destined to bring joy, peace and salvation to his people. This child, God's Word made flesh — fully human and fully God — became one of us. One with us. One among us. In all of our vulnerabilities, struggles and triumphs, Jesus became one of us — leading us, knowing us, connecting us to himself and to each other, and offering us his gift of eternal life.

*The perfect gift.*

Through the Christmas Joy Offering, we reflect God's perfect gift to us, with generous support of church leaders among us — past, present and future — who have pointed us to God.

We honor and celebrate leaders like retired pastors, church workers and their families who have faithfully guided and led us but who now find themselves in critical financial need because of changing health situations or emergency circumstances. Our gifts restore hope and stability through the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions.

We honor and celebrate emerging leaders like students in schools and colleges equipping communities of color, who develop leadership skills as they pursue their education and prepare to bring their gifts in service to the world God loves so much. Our gifts support a bright future with enhanced opportunities for students to grow and build lives

of faith, honing talents and skills to serve God, the Church and the world for years to come.

Jesus' example as a child born to be among us and lead us to eternal life provides a pattern for us to follow as we celebrate those who have led us in the past and will lead us into the future. Through the Christmas Joy Offering, we come together to support past, present and future leaders, embodying God's perfect gift to us, Jesus Christ.

Thank you for your generous gifts — for when we all do a little, it adds up to a lot.

*Let us pray,*

*O Holy Child of Bethlehem,  
be born in us,  
live in us,  
live among us,  
and lead us to where  
we may know you  
as the Word made flesh  
and The Perfect Gift.  
Amen.*

## 6 MINUTE FOR MISSION

### WEAVING THREADS TO MAKE A LIFELINE

When Kyley Thompson's grandmother died, she lost her role model, biggest cheerleader and best friend. Her grandmother was a tower of strength as well as a gifted teacher and the immediate family's only college graduate.

Determined to follow in her grandmother's footsteps but facing the prohibitive cost of higher education by herself, Kyley enrolled at a large public university. She quickly realized it wasn't a setting in which she could thrive, so she turned to Stillman College.

Stillman, in Kyley's hometown of Tuscaloosa, Alabama, was founded in 1876 by a group of Presbyterians led by the Rev. Dr. Charles Allen Stillman, pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Tuscaloosa. Established as a training school for African American ministers, today the college is committed to fostering academic excellence, providing opportunities for diverse populations, and maintaining a strong tradition of preparing students for leadership and service.

Dr. Cynthia Warrick, Stillman's president since 2017, says, "When Kyley enrolled at Stillman, she found small classes with a family feel, peers and teachers who expressed support, and advising that lifted her through tough moments while working on her degree."

The toughest of those moments was the death of her grandmother during Thompson's sophomore year at Stillman.

"She was really the only support that I had," said Kyley. "And since I had no financial help other than loans, my family said just go work, just find a job. So, I took time off and thought about not going back because I couldn't afford it."

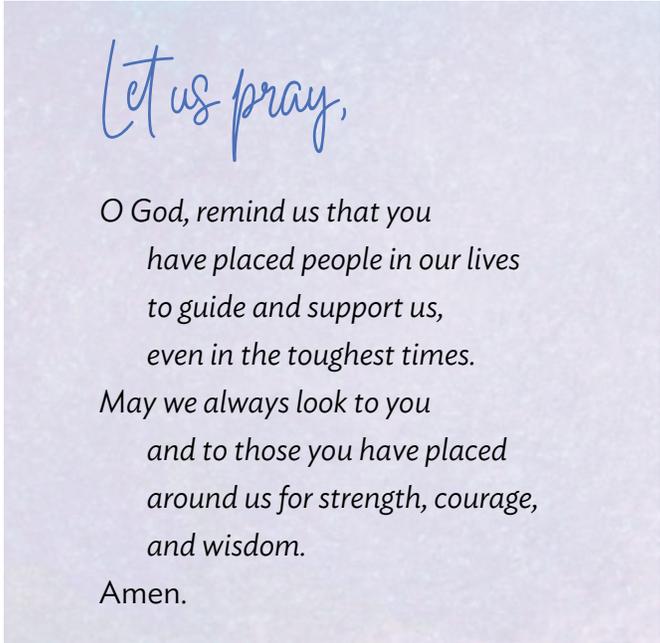
But Stillman takes to heart its commitment to remove financial barriers and assist its students in meeting the cost of their education. One of her professors helped Kyley access financial help in the form of scholarships and loans — even assistance for her rent. And although

she graduated two years later than originally planned, she graduated. With honors. And with a presidential fellowship to do historical research at Stillman waiting for her.

Stillman is proud of its affiliation with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), a denomination that has historically and consistently valued education and learning. The Christmas Joy Offering distributes gifts equally to Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color and the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions, offering much-needed support to the leaders of our church and communities, past, present and future.

Kyley shares, "A lot of us have struggled. It took a great deal of effort to get to college and stay there, especially because of financial and even family barriers. Like me, many students often feel like they are hanging by a thread. Your donation fills in the threads and makes a rope — a lifeline of financial assistance."

Please give what you can to the Christmas Joy Offering. For if we all do a little, it adds up to a lot.



*Let us pray,*

*O God, remind us that you  
have placed people in our lives  
to guide and support us,  
even in the toughest times.*

*May we always look to you  
and to those you have placed  
around us for strength, courage,  
and wisdom.*

*Amen.*

## 6 MINUTE FOR MISSION

### LIVING THE CALL TO CONNECT

As a lifelong advocate of the connectional nature of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Rev. Ben Franklin Whitfield never expected that this denominational doctrine would one day prove indispensable to him at his own time of greatest need.

Ben, honorably retired since 2007 in the Presbytery of Wabash Valley, suffered a stroke in January 2021. After a hospital stay followed by a period of rehabilitation, he was released into the care of his loving wife, Helen, and allowed to return home.

Facing financial hardships after a lifetime in ministry serving primarily rural congregations with limited budgets, the Whitfields received support from the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions, part of our Presbyterian connectional system. The Assistance Program provides need-based grants to help active and retired plan members and their families in times of financial crisis. The Whitfields received immediate help from an Emergency Assistance grant and long-term help from a monthly Housing Supplement for Retirees receiving Home Health Care.

The support the Whitfields receive is made possible, in part, by the Christmas Joy Offering, a Presbyterian tradition since the 1930s, which distributes gifts equally to the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions and to Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color.

Ben learned from an early age that the PC(USA) brings people together. During his seminary years, the Church connected Ben with the burgeoning civil rights movement in 1960s Chicago.

“Because the Presbyterian Church wanted to do something to be more relevant in the inner city,” he said, “they created this program where they would connect college students to come on board with churches in primarily Black communities. White and Black people were called to work together in these communities to develop the young people’s talents and skills.”

It was one of those very connections that brought the former Helen Simms, now his wife of 54 years, into his life. Already pioneers in the struggle for social justice as an interracial couple in the ’60s and raising four daughters, the Whitfields became accustomed to facing challenges that taught them enduring life lessons about gratitude.

As he recovers, Ben — who had earlier served as a teacher in the Chicago Public Schools — is currently working toward regaining enough strength to start tutoring out of their home.

“I admire Ben tremendously,” said Lucas McCool, Assistance Program operations manager. “I’m grateful that our Assistance Program, which embodies our connectional Church at its best, was there for him and Helen at such a critical time in their lives.”

Through our gifts to the Christmas Joy Offering, we honor and celebrate leaders — retired pastors, church workers and their families — who faithfully guided and led us but now find themselves in critical financial need because of changing health situations or emergency circumstances. Our gifts restore hope and stability. Please give whatever you can; for when we all do a little, it adds up to a lot.

*Let us pray,*

*Our God, our help in ages past, present and future, be our guide, our protector and our sustainer through all the changes, challenges and victories of our lives so that we may always give glory to you and serve you through them all.*

*Amen.*

## 6 MINUTE FOR MISSION

### CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING HELPS MENAUL STUDENTS TO OVERCOME WALLS

Samual Polanco is no stranger to the power of walls.

Samual, a 2022 graduate of the Menaul School — a Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)-related, grades 6–12 college preparatory school in Albuquerque, New Mexico — has known and seen walls, both literal and figurative, that separated him and others throughout his life. Now, he credits his experience --at Menaul as being instrumental in breaking down life's many barriers.

His education at Menaul was made possible, in part, by gifts to the PC(USA)'s Christmas Joy Offering, which helps provide scholarships to students. A Presbyterian tradition since the 1930s, the annual offering distributes gifts equally to the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions and to Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. Menaul's student body is currently represented by 21 different countries.

“When I first came to Menaul, I was able to explore the ideas I wanted to explore, learn what I wanted to learn and just be myself. And that's what Menaul has done for all of us. We can just be ourselves here,” Samual said.

This past April, the 35 members of the class of 2022, including Samual, became student volunteers through Frontera de Cristo, a Presbyterian border ministry whose mission is to build relationships and understanding across borders. The students spent five days on the U.S.-Mexico border for the school's traditional “mission week.”

John Sitler, who teaches Upper School religious studies at Menaul praised Samual and his friends, Michael Hedenberg and Abi Nyase, as among their class's top leaders. They were all profoundly moved by what they saw and heard during mission week, especially walking the Migrant Trail to the border wall.

“It may sound like a cliché, but one thing the students got out of the experience of seeing this ‘scar’ on the earth is that the most dangerous walls are the walls in our mind,” John said. Menaul teaches breaking down walls toward our common humanity to be like Jesus, who broke down dividing walls and welcomed everyone.

John continued, “We teach that faith is to be lived out in the world. Because so many young people today see the church as building walls to isolate and separate, we at Menaul are all about opening doors to the richness of God's Creation.”

Abi said, “To support Menaul is to support kids who are going to be the future leaders of our country.”

Our gifts to the Christmas Joy Offering take down walls, break barriers, and build potential and future leaders of the Church. Please give what you can; for when we all do a little, it adds up to a lot.

*Let us pray,*

*God of all Creation,  
break down the walls  
that separate us from each other  
and from you.*

*Give us the strength and courage  
to give of ourselves to others  
as you so freely have given to us.*

*Amen.*

## 6 MINUTE FOR MISSION

### ‘SOMETIMES WE JUST NEED HELP’

The Rev. Sunjae Jung heard God’s call loud and clear. Although maybe not so clearly at first.

“When I heard about a Korean-American Presbyterian church in the Atlanta area, my first answer was, ‘I don’t think it’s my calling,’” he said. “Since I was living in Korea at the time, my first answer was no. Then, they contacted me again and told me the church was in a university city. I remembered being an international student in America when I was young and how much the church there helped me.”

He continued, “Serving as a minister in Korea, I remember praying that if I ever had a chance to help international students the way the church helped me when I was at Iowa State University, I would take it,” he said. “I talked with my wife and our senior pastor in Korea, who said they thought this was a good calling for me. After praying some more, we decided to come serve this church.”

The Athens Korean Presbyterian Church’s mission is to welcome and serve the larger university and especially the Korean community. It is not a “big budget” congregation, as most of its members are young and transitory. But Rev. Jung couldn’t possibly have anticipated the impact that Covid would have on both the congregation’s and his family’s finances when they moved to Athens in December 2019.

With the arrival of the pandemic in March 2020, not only did the church cease all its in-person activities and move Sunday worship to a streaming platform, but the whole town practically shut down.

Because Rev. Jung serves the congregation on a religious visa, he is not permitted to earn income beyond that of his ministry and the family found itself struggling to make ends meet. In December 2021, Rev. Jung sought and received an Emergency Grant split between the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions and Northeast Georgia Presbytery.

This grant was made possible, in part, by the Christmas Joy Offering, which distributes gifts equally to the Assistance Program and to Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color.

Rev. Jung said, “I thank the denomination for the help from the Christmas Joy Offering. I can say that after going through such a difficult time last winter, the big burden on me and my family was lifted.”

Sometimes we all could use a little help, and those who serve our Church are certainly no different. Please give what you can to the Christmas Joy Offering for when we all do a little, it adds up to a lot.

*Let us pray,*

*Thank you, God,  
for providing for your children  
in times of plenty  
and in times of need.*

*Thank you for opportunities  
to serve your people  
and to bring your care  
to those around us.*

*Amen.*

## 7 SUGGESTED LITANY FOR A CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHTING SERVICE



Some congregations receive the Christmas Joy Offering in the context of a candlelighting service. Whether or not that is your congregation's practice, you may find the following litany a helpful resource as you celebrate this season in your faith community.

**Leader:** In the beginning and in the midst of darkness, God spoke.

**All:** **Let there be light.**

**Leader:** In the beginning was the Word. And the Word came and dwelt among us.  
And the Word was the light of all peoples.

**All:** **Let there be light.**

**Leader:** We light our candles, knowing that the One who is the source and  
promise of all light is the One whose birth we celebrate.

**All:** **Let there be light.**

**Leader:** We are here to seek a little light by which we can see, by which we can live, by which we can love.

**All:** **Let there be light.**

**Leader:** We need to know that we are part of something greater than the flicker of our own little candles.  
We long to be assured that the light of Christ is with us even in the moment.

**All:** **Let there be light.**

**Leader:** So we light our candles in gratitude for the love and light that shine through the babe born in  
Bethlehem who became the Redeemer of us all.

**All:** **Let there be light.**

**Leader:** May we be so emboldened as to share the love of God with a world longing for light and hope,  
purpose, and love. May our actions and generosity shine in a world under the shadow of despair.

**All:** **Let there be light.**

**Leader:** We join the chorus of those whose carols have echoed through the years—  
“O come to us, abide in us, our Lord, Emmanuel.”

**All:** **Let there be light.**

## JOYFUL SHARING

### *Did you know?*

- ✦ The Christmas Joy Offering has been a cherished Presbyterian tradition since the 1930s.
- ✦ The Offering distributes gifts equally to the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions and to Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color.
- ✦ The Assistance Program provides critical financial support to church workers and their families.
- ✦ Presbyterian-related schools and colleges provide education and leadership development while nurturing racial and ethnic heritage. This has been a Presbyterian commitment for nearly 140 years.

*Thank you* for your support of the Christmas Joy Offering!

Text CHRISTMASJOY to 91999  
to give to the Christmas Joy Offering  
or visit [pcusa.org/christmasjoy](http://pcusa.org/christmasjoy)  
for more information.



JAKA SKRLEP

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*Thank you*  
for your support  
of the  
*Christmas Joy*  
*Offering.*

**IF WE ALL  
DO A LITTLE,  
IT ADDS UP  
TO A LOT!**

### QUESTIONS?

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Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)  
**Presbyterian Mission**

The Christmas Joy Offering is one of four annual special offerings. The four church-wide Special Offerings of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) — One Great Hour of Sharing, Pentecost Offering, Peace & Global Witness Offering, and Christmas Joy Offering — play an important role in defining what it means to be a connectional church. Over the years these offerings have provided ways for individuals and congregations to join together with each other and in partnership with other Christians in responding to a variety of concerns; and offer opportunities for partnership, learning, and witness that profoundly affect the life of the church as a collective witness to Jesus Christ's love for the whole church.