



# CHRISTMAS JOY SPECIAL OFFERINGS

LEADERSHIP: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

## What child is this?

THE  
PERFECT  
GIFT.



# 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 the hymn, “What Child is This,” we sing of a flesh-and-blood human, born under the most vulnerable of conditions. We sing of Emmanuel, “God with us.” And the words “so bring him incense, gold and myrrh” remind us not only of the gifts the Magi offered to the baby Jesus but also how we can support those whom God loves with our own gifts.

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.

## 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

Shanea Leonard  
800-728-7228, Ext. 5458  
[shanea.leonard@pcusa.org](mailto:shanea.leonard@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)

 INSTAGRAM | [instagram.com/special\\_offerings](https://instagram.com/special_offerings)

## 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)





CHRISTMAS JOY

SPECIAL OFFERINGS

LEADERSHIP: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

## 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).



STILLMAN COLLEGE

# 1 OUR GIFTS AT WORK:

## SUPPORTING OUR PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE LEADERS

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 the 2022 Offering 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 272 individual recipients, assisting retired church workers and surviving spouses with the means to provide for themselves.
- ✦ Housing supplements from the BOP helped more than 223 individual recipients remain in their homes, afford assisted living, or long-term care.
- ✦ Emergency Assistance Grants from the BOP helped more than 621 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](http://pensions.org)

“Thanks to the Board of Pensions and the Christmas Joy Offering, I can now be of more service to the church than I would otherwise have been without this assistance. I just can't express enough how grateful I am.”

**Rev. Peggy Krong,  
Honorably Retired  
Pasadena, California**

*Read Peggy's story on page 15  
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 2022 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 Christmas Joy Offering isn’t just a program, it touches individuals’ lives, and I’m so grateful.”

Carla Louca,  
student  
Stillman College

*Read Carla’s story on  
page 14 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 24, 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: *What child is this?* 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).



What Child is This? insert



We Are There 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



**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!
- ✦ Please join our podcast, *Between Two Pulpits*, as we discuss ministry, mission and the Special Offerings with a variety of guests, plus creative suggestions for promotion and engagement. Learn more (or find the podcasts) at [pcusa.org/B2P](http://pcusa.org/B2P)
- ✦ Use the pre-designed art and graphics found at [www.pcusa.org/christmasjoy](http://www.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.



What Child is This? 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.



*What Child is This? insert*



*We are There 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.

✦ Receive the Christmas Joy Offering on December 24 or any time during the Advent or Christmas season.



“Former church workers who have served long and well deserve to be recognized for their efforts over their lifetime. Your gifts to the Christmas Joy Offering serve to validate their life and their ministry.”



**Sue Anne Fairman**  
Former mission worker  
New Wilmington, Pennsylvania

*Read Sue Anne’s story on page 13 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 Instagram to stay up-to-date.

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

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

 INSTAGRAM | [instagram.com/special\\_offerings](https://instagram.com/special_offerings)

## 6 MINUTE FOR MISSION

### CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING WHAT CHILD IS THIS?

Why is the Christmas carol “What Child Is This” so meaningful to us? Yes, it links a beautiful tune with inspiring words. But it is more than that. It is in the vision behind and beyond the tune and text where we find the deeper truths.

When we sing “What Child Is This,” we sing of a flesh-and-blood human, born under the most vulnerable of conditions. We sing of Emmanuel, “God with us.”

When we sing “What Child Is This,” we are reminded of infants born in our own life stories, our congregational communities and beyond, down the street and around the world.

The words “so bring him incense, gold and myrrh” remind us not only of the gifts the Magi offered to the baby Jesus — the perfect gift — but also how we can support those whom God loves with our own gifts.

With the words “the babe, the Son of Mary,” we sing of all those who are vulnerable and in need, which includes those who receive support from the Christmas Joy Offering. Emergency and health assistance and educational opportunities are real, human needs — needs that we can help meet.

The Christmas Joy Offering supports retired ministers and church workers and their families through the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions as they face medical and emergency costs.

The Offering also supports students in Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color, as they pursue their education and prepare to bring their gifts in service to the church and world.

Thank you for your generous gifts to the Christmas Joy Offering, and your ongoing prayers for all those it supports. Your gifts make a difference, and bring praise to the babe, the son of Mary.



*Let us pray,*

*Loving God,*

*we thank you for the good news  
of Christmas, and Jesus,  
the perfect gift.*

*As we hasten to “bring him laud”  
with loving hearts, bless our gifts  
and bless our giving  
to the Christmas Joy Offering,  
that needs may be met,  
and that all may know your love.*

*Amen.*

## 6 MINUTE FOR MISSION

### WHERE THE HEART IS

If home is where the heart is, then Sue Anne Fairman's heart is blessed to call several places home. For Sue Anne, a deacon and ruling elder, home is New Wilmington, Pennsylvania. It is also home to the New Wilmington Presbyterian Church, which supported her family during many years as international mission workers.

But home, too, will always be Kenya, where the family lived and worked among the Maasai people. It was there that Sue Anne raised her two daughters and spent 14 of her nearly 25 years in mission service volunteering at Mother Teresa's Orphanage in Nairobi.

She recalls, "Our family's years in southwestern Kenya were the most difficult. I think this was the most formative time of my life."

But as we age, things change — and home may come to mean someplace else. For Sue Anne, that place is Shenango on the Green, a Presbyterian continuing care community.

When initially faced with the financial realities of moving, she was feeling "more than a bit stressed." She said, "I had lunch with my friend Dave (David Dawson, former executive presbyter of Shenango Presbytery), who said, 'Why don't you apply to the Board of Pensions for income and housing assistance.' He explained that the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is there for retired pastors and mission workers facing financial need."

Sue Anne made the call, and good news was soon to follow.

The support that she receives is made possible, in part, by the annual Christmas Joy Offering, which distributes gifts equally to the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions and to Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color.

Most of Sue Anne's years of service as a pastor's wife and missionary in Kenya were not covered by the Board of Pensions, because her ex-husband was the one who was called into ministry. This meant she wasn't afforded full benefits by the Board of Pensions until 1998.

But, with the Board's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion, the Assistance Program expanded access to existing programs and created new ones. Now pensioners, like Sue Anne, who served the church for many years without full benefits, may be eligible to receive support.

Sue Anne shares, "Church workers who have served long and well deserve to be recognized for their efforts. There are many today who are struggling financially because of inflation and other challenges. Your gifts validate their life and their ministry."

Please support the Christmas Joy Offering. For as we always say ... when we all do a little, it adds up to a lot.

*Let us pray,*

*Loving and welcoming God,  
we thank you for those who serve,  
in places nearby or across the globe.*

*When they face need,  
be present with them.*

*Bless our giving to the  
Christmas Joy Offering,  
supporting those who serve,  
that they may know your  
deep hospitality and love.*

*We pray in Christ's name.*

*Amen.*

## 6 MINUTE FOR MISSION

### ‘THERE’S REALLY NO WAY YOU CAN FAIL’

Like the Magi from the East who followed the star to Bethlehem only to return home another way, the route of mother-daughter duo of Carla Louca and Susannah LeMay took some unexpected turns.

Their respective roads surprisingly led them to study in the same place at the same time, at Presbyterian-related Stillman College in Tuscaloosa.

Carla began her undergraduate education in 1998, but she left school after only a year. When her daughter Susannah was born, followed by twin sons not long afterward, she took a break to raise her family. After years of working unsatisfying jobs, she knew she needed something more — an intellectual challenge and spiritual connection — and she found it at Stillman.

Meanwhile, her daughter Susannah was living and studying in South Korea, where her military father was stationed at the time. But she also wanted to find something meaningful.

Wanting to go into music, her mom suggested she come to Stillman to study music journalism. Once Susannah transferred and joined in activities at the school, she learned that as you get into the community, “there’s really no way that you can fail,” she said. “If you want to succeed, people will absolutely give you the tools and the knowledge that you need.”

Providing students like Carla and Susannah with the support they need to succeed is what the PC(USA)’s Christmas Joy Offering is all about. The Offering distributes gifts equally to Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color and to the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions.

“Stillman College has long been the place where students can find an opportunity to work on making their dreams a reality,” said Dr. C. Mark McCormick,

provost and vice president for Academic Affairs. “Carla and Susannah have unique stories. The fact that they have both flourished in their studies, and they both confess that their relationship with one another has grown to new breadths and depths, is in no small part due to the nurturing community they found here.”

Carla is grateful to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for the gifts that made her and her daughter’s education possible. She shares, “When I think about how I have grown more spiritually and what I have learned at Stillman, especially what Dr. King said about the light of Christ being in everyone, to be able to see that light of Christ reflected in my own child is a really beautiful thing to experience as a mom.”

Your gifts to the Christmas Joy Offering help bring the light that can help those like Carla and Susannah — and so many others — shine. Please give what you can, for when we all do a little, it adds up to a lot.

*Let us pray,*

*God of wisdom and compassion,  
we thank you for ways  
that you shape our hearts and  
souls and minds.*

*Be with those who learn  
and those who teach.*

*May our generous gifts to  
the Christmas Joy Offering  
support this vital mission.*

*In Jesus’ name we pray.*

*Amen.*

## 6 MINUTE FOR MISSION

### NAVIGATING THE ROAD TO RETIREMENT

When the Apostle Paul wrote about the varieties of God-given abilities conferred by the Spirit, the Rev. Peggy Krong would be the first to admit that she likely missed out on the gift of financial expertise.

Peggy, an active Presbyterian for more than 50 years, had always sensed a call to ministry. She was advised by nearly everyone that attending seminary and making a career change to ministry was not a good idea — for financial reasons.

But God’s call proved irresistible, and she entered seminary in 1992. After earning her degree and being ordained in 1996, she served Holy Trinity Presbyterian Church in San Antonio and Westwood Presbyterian Church in Los Angeles. She retired in 2012 after ministering for a combined total of nearly 16 years. However, her decision to change her career and follow her call left her with minimal resources for retirement.

Facing this financial challenge, she was blessed to find the support she needed through the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions. The Assistance Program helped immediately with the required entrance fee for the retirement home where she now lives and set her up with an ongoing Housing Supplement to help manage monthly fees.

The support Peggy receives is made possible, in part, by the PC(USA)’s Christmas Joy Offering, which distributes gifts equally to the Assistance Program and to Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color.

The Assistance Program provides need-based grants to help active and retired ministers and church workers and their families in times of critical financial need.

“A life committed to the work of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is one of selflessness and generosity,” said Lucas McCool, director, Member

Services, for the Board of Pensions. “Because Peggy has brought her gifts of valuing community above all — and at times even herself — I am grateful that she reached out to us for assistance in her time of need.”

“We’re all children of God, and we all struggle,” said Peggy. “Thanks to the Board of Pensions and the Christmas Joy Offering, I can now be of more service to the church than I would otherwise have been. I just can’t express enough how grateful I am.”

Through our gifts to the Christmas Joy Offering, we honor and celebrate leaders — past, present and future. 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,*

*Gracious and loving God,  
we thank you for those  
who serve your church,  
in all times and places.*

*Be present with them, especially  
when they face real need.*

*As we give to the  
Christmas Joy Offering,  
may they know of  
our support and care,  
and sense the important ways  
their ministry makes a difference.*

*We pray in the name of  
Christ our Lord.*

*Amen.*

## 6 MINUTE FOR MISSION

### GETTING READY TO RUN THE WORLD

If the life of faith is like running a race, Mikayla Rose Sierra is leading the field.

A two-time state champion in the 300-meter hurdles — as well as a stand-out in volleyball and basketball — Mikayla is a 17-year-old high school senior who entered the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)-related Menaul School in the sixth grade. A member of the Navajo (Diné) [di-nay] Nation, Mikayla considers Menaul to be her home.

“Menaul raised me in a way,” she says of the college preparatory day and boarding school in Albuquerque.

“Since my mom worked full-time for the airlines, she was sometimes gone for four or six days at a time. My dad was going through his own challenges as he managed his business, causing him to be gone a lot due to work.”

Mikayla’s life-changing experience at Menaul — both in the sports arena and in the classroom — is made possible, in part, by gifts to the PC(USA)’s Christmas Joy Offering, which helps the school provide scholarships to exceptional students.

The annual Offering distributes gifts equally to Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color and the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions.

Off the field, Mikayla has developed and matured into an amazing young woman. “Mikayla exemplifies the mission of Menaul School in that she is strong in mind, body and spirit,” said Melanie G. Davis, director of Institutional Advancement. “Proud to be Native American, Mikayla embraces her classmates at Menaul and their cultures from around the world.”

Mikayla shares that the Menaul community has helped her to grow in a variety of ways, including spiritually.

“I have definitely noticed an increase in my prayer life in recent years,” she said. “Chapel at Menaul always gives us a moment of reflection when we get to pray and give thanks for what we do have rather than being annoyed at what we might not have. I’m Native American so we also have a spiritual connection to the earth.”

When she graduates from Menaul, Sierra looks forward to becoming a lawyer because she wants to help people, just as her coaches, teachers and the Christmas Joy Offering have helped her. Her future is bright. And maybe one day she really will run the world; or at least a corner of it.

When we give to the Christmas Joy Offering, we share our love with the leaders of our Church — past, present and future. Please share your gifts with those share their gifts with us. When we all do a little, it adds up to a lot.

*Let us pray,*

*God of justice and hope,  
you desire all your children to  
thrive in body, mind and spirit.  
We thank you for schools that  
nurture and cultivate such growth.  
Bless them in their work,  
and bless our giving to the  
Christmas Joy Offering,  
that it may support  
this critical mission.  
In Christ’s name we pray.  
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

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- ✦ 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.
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DO A LITTLE,  
IT ADDS UP  
TO A LOT!



## QUESTIONS?

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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.