
GROWING THE GIFT OF FAITH

During this Advent and Christmas season, we reflect on the birth of Jesus as God's greatest gift, given to all of us. Giving to the Christmas Joy Offering is one way we can celebrate and honor that gift, by faithfully supporting church workers in times of need and the development of the future racial ethnic leadership of our church.

PLEASE GIVE GENEROUSLY.



Text **JOY** to **56512** to learn more or to give to the Christmas Joy Offering.



Resources:

1 "2013 Survey of Pastors." Research Services for the Presbyterian Church (USA).

12136-16-305

THE GIFT IS GIVEN.

Honor the wondrous gift to the world with a gift of your own. Please support the Christmas Joy Offering.



CHRISTMAS JOY
SPECIAL OFFERINGS

GIVING TO THOSE WHO SERVE SO FAITHFULLY



It's been more than 50 years since Jim Irwin learned first-hand what help from the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions—which is supported by gifts from the Christmas Joy Offering—means to the families of church workers. And he's never forgotten.

In 1962, Jim's father, a pastor who had served small rural parishes across the country, died suddenly from a heart attack. He left behind four sons who were in the midst of pursuing their educations, one son who had just started his own pastoral career, and a wife who was suffering from Parkinson's disease. The Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions stepped in with housing

help and long-term assistance. Mrs. Irwin was able to live out her years comfortably, in the Sterling Presbyterian Manor in Kansas.

The assistance also meant her sons could continue their educations without taking on additional financial burdens. Jim went on to medical school and became a surgeon. Every year, he and his wife, Francie, give faithfully to the Christmas Joy Offering. Whenever he makes his offering, Jim reflects on the assistance his mother received so many years ago, and what that support means to so many families today. Jim says, **“We've always supported the Christmas Joy Offering because it contributes to the well-being of those who have made a life decision to serve the church.”** The Christmas Joy Offering is a way to give back to those who have given so much in service.

Support of the Christmas Joy Offering allows the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions to offer vital ministries to church workers and their families. A recent survey of Presbyterian clergy has found:

42% are concerned about affording medical costs¹

40% of pastors carry, or expect to carry, more than \$40,000 of student loan debt when they finish school¹

56% worry about their retirement¹

In 2015, gifts to the Offering helped make it possible for the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions to provide \$3.8 million in grants to more than 600 households in need:

- Nearly **300 households** shared **\$2.2 million in income supplements**.
- More than **200 households** received **housing supplements** totaling nearly **\$1.3 million**.
- Another **100+ households** benefitted from **emergency assistance** and shared grants totaling a **quarter of a million dollars**.



“And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.” —Matthew 2:6



Your gift to the Christmas Joy Offering works for those who have so faithfully served our church. **Please give generously.**