



The gifts we share connect us

“Many hands make light work.”

“Teamwork makes the dream work.”

“If we all do a little, it adds up to a lot.”

There are lots of ways to say it — but working together really does make bigger and better things possible. And, lots of times, working together makes it more fun, too. In fact, there are times made better just by our ability to be together, to be with one another.

That is something that really rings true, doesn't it? *Being together*. During these past months, many of us weren't able to be together in person. We have always been together in spirit, and in faith. But we missed seeing each other. We missed seeing faces we love — up close and personal. But that doesn't mean we haven't been together. And we definitely have not been alone.

There is a word that comes up a lot during this season we call Advent in the Church, and it points to the same sentiment, but about God: “Emmanuel.” Emmanuel means “God is with us,” and, in Jesus, we Christians claim that God took on human form to be *with us*. “God is with us” is more than just saying God is along for the ride. It states God values togetherness and relationship with us, leading us to value togetherness and relationship with one another. When we are all together as we are today — and even when we are apart.

The Christmas Joy Offering is one way we join together as Presbyterians from around the country. We do this to meet the needs of vulnerable people we might not be able to meet as individuals or as single congregations. We might not be able to meet face to face with those who need the support that our gifts provide, but we are very much still together.

The gifts we share connect us. They also change lives. Through the Christmas Joy Offering, we support church workers and their families who experience critical financial needs through help from the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions. We connect with the young people attending Stillman College, Presbyterian Pan American School and the Menaul School, supporting the education and leadership development for students of color, who will soon be leaders in our Church and in the world.

“God is with us.” All the time. During this season of Advent, as we approach Christmas, I can't think of a more perfect gift than that. Thank you for sharing those lessons and those truths, through your gift to the Christmas Joy Offering.

Please give generously, for “if we all do a little — *together* — it adds up to a lot.”