



# Missions Update

December 2015



## PROMISES MADE. PROMISES KEPT.

### *Give to the Christmas Joy Offering*

SUPPORTING PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE LEADERS

"For God who has promised is faithful." -Hebrews 10:23

During Advent we remember God's promises to us. We gather together and wait in hope for the coming of the promised Emmanuel, God with us. And God, who has promised, is faithful (Heb. 10:23), so on Christmas Day we celebrate that the promise is kept in the birth of Jesus Christ! The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) provides the opportunity for congregations to join this celebration of God's faithfulness by supporting those in need of help and hope.

Thanks to your gifts, the Christmas Joy Offering is able to help provide financial assistance to individuals and families that have dedicated their lives to the church and also support racial ethnic education and leadership development for students attending Presbyterian-related schools and colleges.

The promise made is one of hope in situations where hope can be hard to find. When we give, we declare that our hope is well founded, because it is God who has promised, and God who is faithful.

Thank you for your support of this vital offering.

### HOW IS MY GIFT USED?

A gift to the Christmas Joy Offering helps provide financial assistance to current and former church workers and their families and also enables deserving students to attend Presbyterian-

related racial ethnic colleges and schools.

#### **The Assistance Program**

of the Board of Pensions provides critical financial assistance to eligible workers in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and their families, and to qualifying retired church workers and their families. The Assistance Program also sponsors grants for vocational training of clergy.

#### **Racial Ethnic Leadership Development**

The Christmas Joy Offering provides opportunities for deserving students to attend Presbyterian-related racial ethnic colleges and schools. Your generous gifts to the Christmas Joy Offering will shine the One True Light of Christ's love.

#### **The Healing Spirit – Board of Pensions**

Rev. Thomas "Tom" Gard and his wife Laurel believe the Board of Pensions is a godsend. This recently retired teaching elder, from Fergus Falls, Minnesota, is referring to the Shared Grant contributed by the Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys, the Synod of Lakes and Prairies, and the Board's Assistance Program.

"The grant allowed them to purchase a used van and have it converted to accommodate his wife's wheelchair."

Laurel has multiple sclerosis and prior to this, Tom had to lift her out of the chair and into the car and vice versa.

"I'm getting too old for that," he says. In addition to the physical relief for Laurel's back, the van is making the quality of her health and life better. Pressure sores are a constant worry for folks who have to spend extensive time in sitting or lying positions. Being lifted back and forth is very painful and slows down the healing process. The van is aiding in her ability to heal, which in turn, improves her mobility," Tom says. **"It also improves her spirit."**

They have had the van almost six months now, and the couple looks forward to their increased mobility beyond doctor's visits and physical therapy. Newly retired, Tom hopes to add to the quality of their lives with the newfound flexibility the van allows. Tom learned of the assistance program through his executive presbyter. "It's a great example of Christians working together, sharing, and all those things that we aspire to do," he says.

Tom was overwhelmed by the support from everyone. "More people should know about this program, and how their gifts to the Christmas Joy Offering help make this possible. It really is a beautiful thing."

The Christmas Joy Offering honors God's promise by making and delivering upon meaningful promises of our own: to church workers through assistance in their time of need.

## NEWS FROM NADIA AYOUB – We support Nadia in Ukraine

Dear Pastor Lance and Church family,

Greetings to you, with the peace of Christ our Savior and Lord. I thank God for his love that continues to keep us close to himself always. Thank you so much for your great prayers and encouragement and support. Thank God for his grace and favor in his sight and in the people's sight. It is always great to hear from you. Thank God, for he continues to show his favor among the Roma community in Peterfolvo area.

The Lord has sent a good local pastor Elemer Barta, who loves the Roma people and the children, and he is a great help to me. The Roma Mission House has begun to be used efficiently. Early at 8:00 am, the preschool program starts and continues until 2:00 pm, and then the After school program goes until 4:00 pm for the 1st & 2nd grades. Also, I have the bible club for the older children. Over the Summer, 20 children were able to attend one week of Christian summer camp for their first time. We have some family visitations and on Sunday we have a service in 3 different settlements. We pray we will be able to ask the Roma people to come to the Mission House for the Sunday service soon.

I really thank God for all that is happening with the Roma people who were very neglected, and now we visit with them and they hear more about God's love for them. There are some signs of change in the people's behavior, but very little change in a spiritual way.

This Friday we waited for the children to come for the bible club at 2:00. After we lost hope, 14 children came one hour late at 3:00, but we did not want to keep them late at the evening, so we finished at 4:30, and when we asked them to go home, they refused and wanted to stay longer, but we said, "next time come early at 2:00 so you can have enough time." We usually sing, pray and have a bible story along with some handcraft, and do some games.

Tomorrow, October 25th, we have election for the district's mayors and the parliament. My helper said nothing will change, but I pray it will be peaceful and God will have the control of all. October and November are difficult months because they pick up the young men for the army so all the young men they leave the country and stay out 'till they stop the drafting time.

With the help of P. Elemer, this summer has been good for me. I was able to go to America for 6 weeks during July and August. I went mainly to attend the Sharing conference and have some training in Louisville, KY. But I was able to visit few churches in New Jersey too.

Again thank you so very much for writing and for your prayers, encouragements and support. Because of you I was able to be and participate in what God is doing among the Roma people. Thank you, I pray God encourage and bless you in your ministry. Have a great World Communion Sunday.

Joyfully serving Christ with you,

Nadia

