

The PCA Ministerial Relief Fund is used by our denomination to care for the needs of retired and disabled pastors, missionaries, and their widows. The information below is from their website. Learn more at <https://genevabenefits.org/relief-fund/>.

“Words can never express our appreciation and gratitude for all you have done for us. We would have literally been on the streets if it wasn’t for the support you have given to us. God bless you a hundredfold.”

Widow and Relief Recipient

About the PCA Relief Fund

Established in 1973, the Relief Fund offers special support to PCA pastors, widows, and ministry staff in times of need. This fund gives hope to ministry families at their most desperate hour. Our denomination has a growing number of pastors who, for varying reasons, are not financially ready for retirement or are in financial hardship. Your gifts to the Relief Fund help provide for their widows and families through every season of ministry. As the church, we have a responsibility to look after those who have faithfully served our churches. We need your help to meet these growing needs. Please join us at genevabenefits.org/give.

Why We Serve/Key Stats

Pastors and ministry workers faithfully serve and care for Christ’s church. Our research shows that many face significant financial and emotional stress during their working years and in retirement. It’s our duty to care for those who serve our churches.

1. 71% of PCA pastors are not confident they have enough savings for retirement
2. 2 PCA pastors’ wives become widows every month (on average)
3. \$1615 is the average amount of financial assistance provided to a PCA widow each month

About the Look After Offering

In 1973, the first PCA General Assembly established an annual offering to be received during the Christmas season for Ministerial Relief. Every year since then, PCA churches across the country have taken a special offering in support of PCA ministry families served through the Relief Fund. The Relief Fund is 100% supported through the generous donations of individuals and churches. The offering is now called the “Look After” offering, a name based on James 1:27. Although we provide financial assistance to retired PCA pastors and ministry staff, nearly 80% of the financial assistance we provide each month supports widows of PCA pastors. Learn more at: genevabenefits.org/lookafter.



CHRIST COVENANT

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Christmas Eve 2024

A Service of Lessons & Carols

PRELUDE

Christmas Medley

CALL TO WORSHIP

From Luke 2

Leader: The shepherds said to one another, “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us!”

All: **O come, let us adore Him!**

LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE

**Isaiah 9:2, John 8:12,
Revelation 21:22-25**

The Ellerbee Family

INVOCATION

CHRISTMAS CAROL

O Come, All Ye Faithful

TEXT: Latin 18th cent., Tr. By Frederick Oakeley, 1841 MUSIC: Unknown, 18th cent.

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem!
Come and behold Him, born the King of angels!
O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!

Sing choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
O sing, all ye bright hosts of heav'n above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest!
O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!

Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born this happy morning,
Jesus, to Thee be all glory giv'n,
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing!
O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Luke 1:26-38

Clara Peek

²⁶In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.” ²⁹Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. ³¹You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. ³²He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, ³³and he will reign over the house of

Fall on your knees! Oh, hear the angel voices!
O night divine, O night when Christ was born;
O night divine, O night, O night Divine.

Truly He taught us to love one another;
His law is love and His gospel is peace.
Chains shall He break for the slave is our brother;
And in His name all oppression shall cease.
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we,
Let all within us praise His holy name.

Christ is the Lord! Oh, praise His Name forever,
His pow'r and glory evermore proclaim!
His pow'r and glory evermore proclaim!

SCRIPTURE READING

Ephesians 5:1-2

MESSAGE

“The Gift of Love”

COMMUNION

CANDLE LIGHTING

CHRISTMAS CAROL

Silent Night

TEXT: Joseph Mohr, 1818 TUNE: Franz Gruber, 1818

Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright
Round yon virgin mother and Child, Holy Infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night, shepherds quake at the sight.
Glories stream from heaven afar, heavenly hosts sing alleluia;
Christ the Savior is born! Christ the Savior is born!

Silent night, holy night, Son of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from Thy holy face, with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth. Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.

BENEDICTION

For Christ is born of Mary, and gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wond'ring love.
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth!
And praises sing to God the King, and peace to men on earth.

*O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!*

How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is giv'n.
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His heav'n.
No ear may hear His coming, but in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive Him still the dear Christ enters in.

SCRIPTURE LESSON

John 1:1-14

Gloria Dotson

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was with God in the beginning. ³Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴In him was life, and that life was the light of men. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. ⁶There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. ⁸He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. ⁹The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world. ¹⁰He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. ¹¹He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. ¹²Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—¹³children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. ¹⁴The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

OFFERING

PCA Ministerial Relief Fund

CHRISTMAS CAROL

O Holy Night

TEXT: John Sullivan Dwight, 1855 MUSIC: Adolph Adam, 1847

O holy night! The stars are brightly shining,
It is the night of our dear Savior's birth.
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,
'Til He appear'd and the soul felt its worth.
A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices,
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn.

Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end.” ³⁴“How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?” ³⁵The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. ³⁶Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. ³⁷For nothing is impossible with God.” ³⁸“I am the Lord's servant,” Mary answered. “May it be to me as you have said.” Then the angel left her.

CHRISTMAS CAROL

Joy To The World

TEXT: Isaac Watts, 1719 TUNE: George Fredrick Handel, 1742

Joy to the world! the Lord is come; Let earth receive her King;
Let ev'ry heart prepare Him room, And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n and nature sing, And heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

Joy to the earth! the Savior reigns; Let men their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy, Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow, Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make His blessings flow Far as the curse is found,
Far as the curse is found, Far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace, And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness, And wonders of His love,
And wonders of His love, And wonders, wonders of His love.

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

TEXT: Charles Wesley, 1739 TUNE: Felix Mendelssohn, Bartholdy, 1840

Hark! the herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King;
Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!”
Joyful, all ye nations rise, Join the triumph of the skies;
With th'angelic host proclaim, “Christ is born in Bethlehem!”
Hark! the herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King.”

Christ, by highest heav'n adored; Christ, the everlasting Lord!
Late in time behold Him come, Offspring of the Virgin's womb:
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; Hail th'incarnate Deity,
Pleased as man with men to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel.
Hark! the herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King.”

Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings, Ris'n with healing in His wings.
Mild He lays His glory by, Born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth, born to give them second birth.
Hark! the herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King.”

SCRIPTURE LESSON**Luke 1:39-56**

Olive Robb

³⁹ At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, ⁴⁰ where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴² In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! ⁴³ But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴ As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!" ⁴⁶ And Mary said: "My soul glorifies the Lord ⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, ⁴⁸ for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, ⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me— holy is his name. ⁵⁰ His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation. ⁵¹ He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. ⁵² He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. ⁵³ He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty. ⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful ⁵⁵ to Abraham and his descendants forever, just as he promised our ancestors." ⁵⁶ Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months and then returned home.

CHRISTMAS CAROL***What Child Is This?***TEXT: Trad.carol adapted W.C. Dix, 1865 TUNE: Greensleeves, 16th century

What Child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet, while shepherds watch are keeping?

*This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
Haste, haste to bring Him laud, the Babe, the Son of Mary.*

Why lies He in such mean estate where ox and lamb are feeding?
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here the silent Word is pleading.

So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh, come, peasant, king to own Him;
The King of kings salvation brings, let loving hearts enthrone Him.

SCRIPTURE LESSON**Luke 2:1-20**

William Haynes

¹In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. ²(This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) ³And everyone went to his own town to register. ⁴So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. ⁵He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, ⁷and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. ⁸And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." ¹³Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God

and saying, ¹⁴"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests." ¹⁵When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." ¹⁶So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, ¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

CHRISTMAS CAROL***Angels We Have Heard On High***

TEXT & TUNE: Traditional. French carol & melody

Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply Echo back their joyous strains.
Gloria in excelsis Deo. Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?
Say what may the tidings be, which inspire your heav'nly song?
Gloria in excelsis Deo. Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Come to Bethlehem and see Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee Christ the Lord, the newborn King.
Gloria in excelsis Deo. Gloria in excelsis Deo.

SCRIPTURE LESSON**Matthew 2:1-12**

Elizabeth Haynes

¹ After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem ² and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." ³ When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴ When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵ "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written: ⁶ 'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.'" ⁷ Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. ⁸ He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him." ⁹ After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. ¹¹ On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. ¹² And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

O Little Town Of Bethlehem

TEXT: Phillips Brooks, 1868 TUNE: Fernando Ortega, 2006

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie.
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.