

Advent III—Joy

Joseph Runner
A Donor's Story



The Rev. Joe Runner has contributed to the Christmas Fund every year, and for good reason. Ordained in 1961, Joe served churches in Brentford, Lake Preston, and Irwin, South Dakota before coming east to be pastor of Amicable Congregational UCC in Tiverton, Rhode Island. A nursing home administrator and Newport mansion tour guide as well, Joe is currently the Pension Boards' longest-serving Annuitant Visitor, with 25 years of service as of 2016.

With the wisdom of those seasons of ministry, Joe faithfully supports the Christmas Fund, because he has seen firsthand the kinds of needs those funds can fill. One widow who lost her husband in his 50s faces a situation Joe says is quite common: "The opportunity for that couple to enjoy the miracle of compounding interest is cut short," and assistance from the Christmas Fund can make all the difference.

Joe also recognizes the circumstances of many local congregations, particularly smaller ones that may not have the resources to contribute adequately to a retirement plan for their minister. "Pastors are often given the option to allocate their salary package, but, torn between providing for retirement and meeting current expenses, they often have to choose the need of the present moment."

The caring provided through the ministry of the Christmas Fund also provides motivation for Joe's long-term financial support. "Gift checks sent to a retiree are a way of saying 'thank you' that he or she may not be hearing anymore, communicating they have not been forgotten." Some who might need assistance may not want to ask, so the feeling of relief that can come with getting that help, can be grace-filled. Growing up in a small family in Ohio, where "for a variety of reasons money was scarce, this has made me sensitive to the needs of others," Joe says. "In my own situation now, I get along pretty well and I'm grateful for that, and I find that contributing to the Christmas Fund nurtures a spirit of continuing gratitude in me."

★ THE CHRISTMAS FUND

for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund



In 2015, gifts to the Christmas Fund enabled:

- Small pension supplementation for 464 retired clergy and lay employees - \$1,500,203
- Health benefits supplementation for 235 retired clergy and lay employees - \$452,561
- Emergency grants for 58 individuals and families - \$91,694
- Christmas "Thank You" gift checks to 528 retired clergy and lay employees - \$211,200

Your gift in 2016 will be combined with the gifts of others to continue this vital mission. Thank You!