

October 2026

Dear Westminster Family,

In these first weeks among you, I have had the gift of seeing Westminster with fresh eyes.

I have noticed the familiar faces in the pews, the conversations before and after church, the music rising in the sanctuary, the meals and gatherings, the people who quietly repair, organize, welcome, pray, visit, craft and care. I have also begun to hear the stories — of people who have loved this church deeply, carried it through difficult seasons, and given generously so that its ministry could continue.

When you are new to a place, sometimes you notice things that those who have been there a long time can easily take for granted.

And what I have noticed is this:

There is much here for which to be grateful.

Not because everything is easy. Not because there are no challenges before us. But because beneath the life of this congregation — its history, its people, its worship, its service, and its hopes for the future — is the generosity of God.

The Apostle Paul writes:

*“God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance... You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us.”*

— 2 Corinthians 9:8, 11

I love the movement in those words.

Everything begins with God.

God gives. God sustains. God provides. And as we receive with gratitude, something begins to happen in us. What we have received becomes something we are able to share. Blessing becomes generosity. Generosity becomes ministry. And ministry becomes thanksgiving to God.

That is the heart of Christian stewardship.

We do not give simply because there are bills to pay, or because a church building needs care, or because there are programs to sustain. Those things are real and important. But Christian giving begins somewhere deeper.

We give because we have first received.

We give because grace has met us.

We give because somehow, in offering back a portion of what has been entrusted to us, we become part of what God is doing in the world.

And there is so much of that happening already at Westminster.

Thank you for all the ways you give of yourselves.

Thank you to those who give financially, faithfully and quietly.

Thank you to those who sing and play, cook and serve, repair and clean, organize and plan, visit and telephone, pray and encourage, welcome strangers, sit with those who are hurting, offer rides, make coffee, prepare meals, decorate, craft, serve on committees, care for this building, and notice when something or someone needs attention.

Thank you for the gifts that are visible.

And thank you for the gifts that almost no one sees.

Together, all of these acts of faithfulness become the life of the church.

This has also been a year of transition. We give thanks for the long and faithful ministry of Rev. Paul Miller among you, and for all that has been planted and nurtured through those years. As a new season begins, I am deeply grateful for the welcome I have received and for the privilege of learning Westminster's stories, traditions, people, and hopes.

There is important work before us. Our historic building requires thoughtful and faithful care. There are projects underway and decisions to be made. But the calling of the church is always larger than the building.

God continues to call Westminster to worship, pastoral care, hospitality, community partnership, justice, compassion, and the sharing of Christ's love.

And all of this is made possible because people give.

As we celebrate Thanksgiving this year, I invite you to consider making a special Thanksgiving offering to Westminster United Church.

If you are able, I hope you will make that gift prayerfully and joyfully — not out of pressure or obligation, but as an expression of gratitude.

A way of saying:

Thank you, God, for what I have received.

Thank you for this community.

Thank you for the people who have carried its ministry before me.

And may what I give help carry that ministry forward for generations to come.

Whatever you are able to offer — financially, through your time and abilities, through prayer, service, care, or encouragement — please know that your offering matters.

Every gift becomes part of something larger than any one of us.

Every act of generosity can become grace in the life of another.

And, as the apostle Paul reminds us, generosity has a way of becoming thanksgiving to God.

May this Thanksgiving season open our eyes again to the abundance of grace around us.

May we recognize what we have received.

May we give thanks for those who have carried us.

May we trust God with what lies ahead.

And may our gratitude overflow into generosity, service, and love.

With thanksgiving to God, and with deep gratitude for each of you,

**Rev. Kassandra Matthews**

Minister

Westminster United Church

