

Dear Beloveds of Hamline Church,

There is no doubt that the Holy Spirit is alive and working in and through Hamline Church!

Amidst a world of declining religious and secular engagement and a pandemic of loneliness, Hamline Church offers much of what people are longing for: welcoming and inclusive community, space to question and wrestle with faith, experiences of wonder and grace, and opportunities to make a difference in the world. While the numbers don't tell the whole story, they offer an insight into the here and now. Since 2013, Hamline Church has experienced the greatest growth in membership of any other United Methodist Church in Minnesota. In 2023 we baptized 13 babies and our average weekly worship attendance rose to 230 surpassing pre-pandemic levels thanks to livestream technology.

Right now, God's presence is powerfully at work among us at Hamline Church, inspiring *new energy, new vision, new life*. We are vibrant and growing thanks to God's grace and your generosity. I am grateful to all of you who have said YES to living more deeply into God's dream for yourselves and Hamline Church. *Because of you, our church changes lives.*

As we launch the 2024 Annual Stewardship Campaign, we invite everyone to reflect on God's loving and faithful presence among us and dream with us.

My family's pledged gift to our congregation grows from my appreciation of the lives we touch. Generosity in all its forms comes as my expression of gratitude for this community. I hope you will join me in making a commitment to give this coming year, and, if possible, to join Ryan and me in increasing your giving for the year ahead.

Hamline Church thrives through shared commitment to our mission and through our gifts of time, skill, and financial resources. Explore the pages of this book to learn more about the impact your gifts have made in peoples' lives and in our community. And prayerfully consider how you can help us reach our goal of \$600,000 for the 2024 *Releasing God's Blessing* campaign.

God has done and continues to do remarkable things through us and with us – things that matter in our community. Thank you for your ongoing support and for walking alongside me as a part of Hamline Church.

With deep appreciation,

Rev. Mariah Furness Tollgaard

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