Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God,
serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.
- 1 Peter 4:10, NRSVUE

Beloveds,

God's grace meets us where we are, but it does not leave us unchanged. Through the love we receive, the relationships we build, and the gifts we share, grace invites us into a new way of living. Our stewardship theme, **Transformed by Grace**, asks us to consider how that invitation is shaping our lives—and what becomes possible when we respond together.

At Hamline Church, we see this transformation in the life we share. This has been quite a year. We welcomed 32 new members including eight confirmands. Our youth deepened their faith through service at the Cheyenne River Reservation and connections with young United Methodists from around the world at the Global Young People's Convocation in Dublin. Our Wednesday night meals brought generations together, and our garden produced approximately 2,000 pounds of fresh food for elders in our neighborhood. These ministries offer more than programs and activities. They create opportunities to belong, discover our gifts, and learn to love one another more fully.

We experienced that love in a particularly powerful way during Operation Metro Surge. As fear and uncertainty touched our community, ordinary people brought their courage and care together to stand up for our immigrant and refugee neighbors. Hamline Church gathered for prayer and public witness, hosted neighborhood groups, stood vigil at local mosques, protested in the streets, offered community dinners, provided rent relief and legal support, and partnered in community trainings. Each person's contribution became part of a shared response: neighbors showing up for neighbors, putting compassion into practice.

No one person could do everything. But together, we could make space for connection, learn how to stand alongside our neighbors, and bear witness to their dignity. This was not only an opportunity to serve. It was an experience of being changed ourselves—learning to trust one another, discovering courage we might not have found alone, and allowing our neighbors' lives to become more deeply connected with our own.

Your generosity sustains the community where this transformation takes place. It supports worship that renews us, ministries that nurture children and youth, and relationships that help us navigate difficult seasons. It provides the people, spaces, and resources that turn our desire to care into a faithful, organized response. Long before a crisis arrives, your giving helps build a community ready to meet it with love.

As we prepare for 2027, I invite you to prayerfully consider how you will share your time, talents, and financial resources. Our goal this year is a stretch $700,000 in pledged support to sustain Hamline Church's mission and ministry in the coming year.

Please return your annual giving commitment by November 15, and join us on November 22 as we bless our commitments and share a Thanksgiving celebration together. Every gift matters, and everyone belongs, regardless of their ability to give financially.

I am deeply grateful for the ways you have shown up this year: sharing what you have, caring for one another, and making room for your lives to be changed by God's love. May we continue to say yes to grace, growing together into the people—and the church—God calls us to be.

With deep gratitude and abiding hope,

Rev. Mariah Furness Tollgaard

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Senior Pastor

