

A Thanksgiving Letter from the Minister

"I thank my God every time I remember you." Philippians 1:3



Dear Friends,

There is something about autumn that naturally invites us to take stock. The pace of summer changes, the leaves begin to turn, familiar routines return, and before long Thanksgiving is upon us. It is a season that reminds us to notice again the goodness of God and to give thanks. And as I think about First Presbyterian Church this Thanksgiving, I find myself giving thanks for you.

I am grateful for a congregation that worships, serves, cares, learns, laughs, feeds people, welcomes children, supports neighbours, sings, prays, and continues to seek where God is leading us. Some of you are with us in the sanctuary nearly every Sunday. Others worship with us online, join us when you are able, or remain connected through our pastoral care ministry and worship services in local care facilities. However you are able to participate, please know that you remain an important part of our church family.

This autumn is also an important season in the life of First Presbyterian. Through New Beginnings, we have entered a Season of Discernment in which we are listening carefully to one another and asking where God may be calling us in the years ahead. I am excited about the conversations still to come and deeply grateful that we get to undertake this journey together.

I especially hope you will join us for our **New Beginnings Congregational Gathering on Friday, October 23 at 7:00 p.m.** We will be joined by **Rev. Ian Fraser, who is coming from Quebec to be with us for the weekend.** This will begin a special time of renewal and encouragement, culminating in worship on Sunday, October 25. It will be an opportunity to gather as a church family, celebrate God's faithfulness, listen together, and look forward with hope to where God may be leading us next.

You will also find enclosed a colourful sheet highlighting some of the many opportunities coming this fall and into Advent. I have been working on Advent since the month of August and I can't wait for you to see what we have cooked up! I hope you will take a few moments to look through all that is coming up over the next few months. There is a great deal happening at First Presbyterian and many ways to worship, learn, serve, connect, and simply enjoy being together.

Also enclosed is a Thanksgiving offering envelope for those who would like to make a special gift to the ministry of First Presbyterian as an expression of gratitude. Your generosity throughout the year helps make our shared ministry possible, and I am deeply thankful for the many ways you support the life and work of this congregation.

As Thanksgiving approaches, may we take time to notice the blessings that can so easily be overlooked. May we **look up** with gratitude, **lean in** to one another with love, and **reach out** with the grace and compassion of Christ. On behalf of our whole church family, I wish you and those you love a joyful and blessed Thanksgiving.

With thanksgiving in Christ,

Rev. Alton J. Ruff.

Lead Minister

First Presbyterian Church, Collingwood

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Alton J. Ruff".