



October 2025

Dear Chapel in the Pines,

For 20 years, Chapel in the Pines has been worshipping God as a community of faith. We are here by the grace and blessing of God.

This moment of celebration might call forth a flood of stories from the first years: ketchup bottles moved from restaurant tables, chairs set out in carefully measured arcs, paraments and pottery lovingly commissioned, and a mighty center pole girded with prayers of a community etched upon wooden pegs.

Or perhaps recent memories come to mind: stringed instruments playing outside, children running up a new playground, baptisms in the sanctuary, and stretching your arms out wide to declare, “We are beloved by God!”

I have served as pastor since 2018, which is long enough to become keenly aware of empty chairs and the faces who join us only in memory and from that great cloud of witnesses. I offer thanks every time I remember those who came before me.

And I offer thanks for all those today who have continued to open their hands and hearts and minds to pledge their gifts not so much to a structure but to creating a place: a house of worship, a community building bridges, advocating for equity, and stewarding the earth. A place of gladness, laughter, and warmth; of energy, intelligence, imagination, and love.

I pray that you will join Ginny and me, as well as our elders on session, in pledging toward our 2026 budget. For I am grateful for all that God has done, and I am bold to pray for more.

I pray that the foundations laid 20 years ago will continue to be a holy footing from which we continue to work, play, sing, and pray toward an ever more expansive realization of God’s heavenly kingdom.

Let me close with the words of the late Rev. Mitzi Leshner-Thomas, who prayed at the 10-year anniversary: *As we celebrate and speak of ‘our’ church, remind us again whose church this is, who is its head, and by whose grace we have been gifted and called to serve.*

To God be the glory.

In hope,

Andrew