Leading from behind? *"A leader... is like a shepherd. He or she stays behind the flock, letting the nimblest go out ahead, whereupon the others follow, not realizing that they are being directed from behind all along*."-Nelson Mandela

In Mandela's autobiography "Long Walk to Freedom," he wrote: "It is better to lead from behind and to put others in front, especially when you celebrate victory when nice things occur. You take the front line when there is danger." He compared this kind of leadership to shepherding, describing how a leader "stays behind the flock, letting the nimblest go out ahead, whereupon the others follow, not realizing all along that they are being directed from behind."

In the Presbytery of Mackinac's case, when leading from behind, the shepherd enables all members of every church to move our Presbytery forward. Leading from behind is still active leadership. It means shaping our culture and driving change. We must build a strong community united by shared values and goals to lead from behind. As the Shepherd, I must continually clarify our goals, whether developing a new direction or overcoming a problem our Presbytery might face. Ensuring everyone works towards the same goals while leaving space for different solutions, I also want to promote core values that will unite our Presbytery and keep our achievable goals on track.

Our Core Values within the Presbytery of Mackinac are set by our Mission Statement and Vision:

Our Mission Statement
By God's grace, the Presbytery of Mackinac supports, equips, and grows healthy congregations for intentional mission.

Congregations are healthy and vital when they:
- Bring others to Christ
- Worship vibrantly
- Participate actively in the mission of Christ's church.

Our Vision
To worship God, make disciples, and meet human needs.

Our Core Values
- The Word of God rightly preached
- The Sacraments rightly celebrated
- Nurture of congregations and pastors
- An inclusive, caring community
- Worship
- Spiritual Growth
- Education
- Evangelism
- Intentional Mission

Our Presbyterian values are deeply rooted in a commitment to faith, community, and service. At its core, Presbyterians emphasize the importance of scripture as the foundation of its beliefs and practices, encouraging members to engage with the Bible not only as a historical text but as a living guide for daily life. Values such as compassion, integrity, and stewardship are central to promoting a sense of responsibility and care for one another and the wider world. Our churches within the Presbytery must

foster a welcoming and inclusive environment, striving to create a space where all individuals feel valued and supported in their spiritual journey. Our churches actively work to address social issues and help those in need, reflecting their commitment to living out their faith in tangible and impactful ways.

In my next newsletter, I will discuss ‘Presbytery Basics’ by asking the question, “What is the Presbytery?”

I look forward to the New Year of 2025 and meeting with each and every one of you.

Grace and Peace,
Ted