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Dear Westminster Family,

I was born into the Presbyterian Church. Dr. Daniel W. Nelson, my father, was the founding pastor of Southminster Presbyterian Church in Waukesha, Wisconsin. I recall with surprising clarity watching Dad and other Southminster leaders ceremonially breaking ground nearly 50 years ago at the spot of the future sanctuary. I enjoyed being a Preacher's Kid and was proud of my father and his work. My mother led various choirs at Southminster, and her musical influence has deeply impacted the expression of my faith throughout my life.

For many years my father guided my faith journey. In a Stewardship sermon he preached many years ago, my father said:

*There is no more fundamental part of discipleship than stewardship. It may not be the most exciting theme of Christian theology, but it is at the very heart of responsive faith. Stewardship is not glamorous, but basic; not style, but substance; not what appears, but what is; not the superstructure, but the foundation; not the running backs, but the blocking backs; not the wait staff, but the cook; not the dessert, but the main course; not the store window, but the storeroom; not the car body, but the engine; not the symphony encore, but the major work.*

By the time I was 10 years old my dad had literally lined the walls of our house in Wisconsin with bookshelves that held thousands of books, mostly on Christianity and history. If I had questions about Christianity he could answer my questions and suggest a book on the subject from his library. Growing up, I felt privileged to be born into Christian faith in this way.

In the summer of 1986 Linda and I were engaged. That fall she began working as a full-time Violinist for the Symphony. At the invitation of Diane Helle, Linda first attended and then joined Westminster. I lived in Chicago and would continue to pursue a music degree for the next two years. I would visit and we were both inspired by Jack Stewart's thoughtful preaching and by Ruth Nicely's passion for sacred music and Westminster's choir program. Long before living in Grand Rapids I knew that I wanted to move to this city and would join Westminster when I did.

Having grown older and no longer having Dad to rely on, I realize more and more that the sense of privilege I enjoyed in my youth has been replaced by a sense of responsibility to live and grow into a responsive faith of my own expression. Living a responsive faith means for our family, in part, giving time, talent, and treasure to Westminster, and beyond.

Linda and I have three nearly grown children: Elizabeth, Andrew, and Hannah. All three were baptized in Westminster's sanctuary by then Senior Pastor William Evertsberg. Our entire family has attended Camp Henry, sung in all the choirs at some point, attended Sunday school, and our kids, of course, have participated in youth group. The outstanding preaching and excellent music that brought us to Westminster with joy, continues to inspire our family.

We are grateful and thankful to God for all we have been provided and to Westminster for witness, nurture, and support. In response and with gratitude we will continue to strive to live to the words of Matthew 6:21: *For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

Roger Nelson