Dear Mission Council, staff and community,

Since introducing this newly formatted Weekly Report, I have been intentional in my efforts not to make it personal. Rather, I try to share more informational/relational things about Council, staff and our Boards and Commissions to help keep us connected. Today I started to include a “generic” Thanksgiving message, but based on the events of the morning have taken a detour.

This morning I had the privilege of joining with the family of a dear mentor and friend as we gathered around her hospital bed to say our final farewells. My career in public service has, in many ways, been influenced as much by her as just about anyone else over the last 28 years. A consummate professional, diplomat extraordinaire and one who led by example, Marilyn Ahnefeld’s passing will leave a gaping hole in my heart.

She served as the City of Gladstone’s City Clerk for 42 years, retiring in 2003 to a life full of continued civic involvement, volunteerism and genuine compassion for a City she loved so dearly. She taught me how to be a better listener (which I still need to practice), how to meet people where they are, that respect and civility in government is vitally important, and that a passion for what you do can help you weather many a storm.

I hope that in this season of gratitude, you will pause to remember a loved one, share a story with a co-worker, or lend a hand to a friend. Our connections to one another are what keep the fabric of our communities strong. This Thanksgiving holiday, I am especially grateful for my dear friend Marilyn.

The Mission Sustainability Commission kicked off their latest effort to reduce waste: a holiday light recycling program. Members of the public can drop off holiday lights at Mack True Value, 6004 Johnson Drive, through Jan. 17 for ongoing collection. There will also be a collection box at the Community Center, 6200 Martway.

After you’ve enjoyed turkey (or whatever your traditional favorites might be), remember to patronize our local small businesses as you tackle your holiday shopping! Get creative and see what great finds are waiting for you from our awesome Mission merchants. #shopsmall
100 Baskets Filled and Delivered!

Even more impressive than the number of families served was the volunteer turnout for Monday’s basket preparation. With residents from Welstone and Mission Square and students from SM North, we were definitely a “Community of All Ages,” ready to serve and give back. We were proud to show off our small town heart to the Harvesters staff and appreciate our continued partnership with them to serve NE Johnson County.