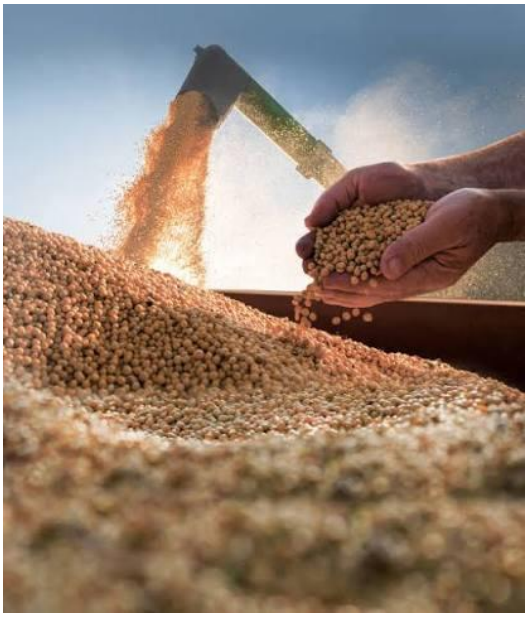
Julie Mann, IOWAY Coordinator
julie@iowadistrictwest.org
515-408-9696

"Dear brothers and sisters, be patient as you wait for the Lord's return. Consider the farmers who patiently wait for the rains in the fall and in the spring. They eagerly look for the valuable harvest to ripen." **James 5:7** Interestingly enough, my thoughts turned to this verse after driving past countless corn and soybean fields over the last few weeks thinking of how harvest was pushed back later by our September rains this year. I found myself marveling at the intricate details of God's creation. I understand not wanting to get your combine stuck in the mud, but my big question was, "How do corn and soybeans know when to stop absorbing water, so they're dry enough to harvest?" That also led me to think about Ecclesiastes 3 "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens", and God's perfect timing.



But those drives also reminded me of something important: God is our magnificent Designer. He created each plant with purpose, providing what it needs to grow and produce at the right time. And just as He thoughtfully designed the world around us, He created each of us with beautiful creativity and purpose.

Ephesians 2:10 reminds us, "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." What a wonderful reason to give thanks! We are God's handiwork, lovingly created by Him and redeemed through the death and resurrection of Jesus. Our salvation is a gift of grace, not something we earn. In gratitude for all He has given us, we respond by serving our neighbors and sharing His love through the good works He has prepared for us.



As we celebrate this season of thanks and gratitude, I am especially grateful for the many ways you live out that calling through IOWAY. So many of you have reached out with, "I have this little project…" or "We'd like to do a little something…" Please know that when God works through your generosity, those little projects can have an extraordinary impact. A simple act of kindness, a donated resource, a willing volunteer, or a new community partnership can grow into something far greater than we might imagine.

Through your generosity, God continues to provide for families and communities across our district and beyond. Your willingness to share your time, resources, and gifts helps connect people with care and reminds them that they are not forgotten. These efforts are needed, deeply appreciated, and worthy of thanksgiving.

So, the next time you pass a cornfield or watch a soybean harvest, take a moment to marvel at the wisdom of our Creator. Consider the thought He put into every detail of that cornstalk or

soybean, right down to the timing of the harvest. Then reflect on the care and purpose He has woven into you.

This Thanksgiving, may we give thanks not only for what God has provided, but also for the opportunities He gives us to share those blessings with others. What we may consider a little thing can become a beautiful expression of God's love when He works through our hands.