



December 2009

## A Faithful Church for Today's Vermont

### Tallying and Goal-Setting

There are some things I really dislike about this time of year. I dislike the short days. In Vermont, dusk looms at 3:30pm, darkness falls as early as 4:30pm. Life feels like it is being squeezed into a shorter and shorter window.

As a parent, I also get frustrated as cold weather pushes our family indoors. We try to get out, but our kids can't handle too much cold; Addie can barely move in her snowsuit.

On the other hand, though, there are things that I really do like about December. I like Christmas when so many layers are finally peeled away and the true promise, and hope, and joy are finally revealed. I like snow. I like cross-country skiing by moonlight.

I also like the tallying and goal-setting that comes with the end of one year and the beginning of another. I know some people don't find much joy in assessing their lives in that way. But, even though I'm rarely satisfied with my own accomplishments, even though I often miss my own targets, this year-end review process gives my life a sense of shape. After all, if we don't stop to evaluate our progress, do we ever notice what has grown and changed in our lives?

Or maybe I'm just spoiled. The ministry of St. Andrew's, though it's certainly been challenging, has given us much to celebrate at the close of each year— this year as much as any other.

*"Even though I'm rarely satisfied with my own accomplishments, even though I often miss my own targets, this year-end review process gives my life a sense of shape."*

One of the things that I'm really excited about, looking back on 2009, is the fact that St. Andrew's has begun to reach different demographic groups. This year, beginning with two teenagers, we've started a youth group which

New Gifts and Pledges, Year-End Gifts will be matched through January 31, 2010.

Maybe you've been considering a first-time contribution to St. Andrew's? Maybe you've thought about giving a little extra or making a year-end contribution?

If you make that gift or pledge now, key supporters of St. Andrew's will match these new contributions, up to \$4,000. What a great opportunity to make your money go further, as you help our church build a solid foundation for another vital year of ministry.

has grown to 10. This group is now meeting twice per month. Along with this change, we have also seen a growing involvement from those in middle-age. Our church, once a place almost exclusively made-up of college students and 20-something or 30-something singles, now better-reflects the demographics of the city we live in.



Botticelli's *Adoration of the Magi*, c.1475

This change is really important for the future of the church, because the new people who have been coming are more likely to be here 5 years from now. In 2009, 20% of our church moved out of Vermont. And while people will continue to be called away, that percentage will almost certainly be lower in 2010. And that will help us grow in many important ways.

But of course, what I'm talking about is the development of an organization. And while that is important, the organization is only useful in that it creates an opportunity for life-changing ministry.

"In 2009, 20% of our church moved out of Vermont. And while people will continue to be called away, that percentage will almost certainly be lower in 2010."

And when I look back on 2009, it is the lives which have changed, the people who have grown closer toward God, which matters most.

Below I have included a collection of quotations, which have helped me to evaluate the year we're just about to complete. These quotations come from past newsletters— they're from emails— they're from our annual survey. Perhaps more than anything else, it is these comments we receive which tell us that something important is happening here. God is working in our lives.

Thank you for helping to make this ministry a reality in 2009. Thank you for your continued support.

Blessings,  
Kevin

"It still boggles my mind that, two years ago, I considered myself an atheist—totally alone in the universe. Now I feel surrounded by these wonderfully loving, beautiful people. I never imagined such acceptance and understanding."

"I found friends here, began to meet and hang out with members. I found community. I couldn't have asked for a fresher breath of air."

"We haven't been here that long, but St. Andrews has been an encouragement to us spiritually, has fostered meaningful spiritual conversation with my wife and children, has offered opportunity for service and places (both Sunday worship and youth group) where my teens want to be involved."

"In short, St. Andrew's is the church I didn't expect to find when I returned to Vermont. And by that I mean that it is what I was hoping for."

"That Sunday changed my life forever, and God broke that sin's grip on my life."

"This is a loving and accepting community that nonetheless challenges members to re-examine their beliefs and flex some spiritual and intellectual muscle. The weekly messages always touch on real life experiences to which everyone in attendance can relate."

"So many of Kevin's messages raise really important questions that have allowed me to realize where I am failing to meet God in my life. And I really think that's half the battle, just knowing what is keeping us from God and how to move around those things."

"St. Andrew's has shown me that church can be more than just a place you go with a lot of people to hear a sermon and have a sing-a-long."

"St. Andrew's has challenged me to grow as a leader, and think about the Bible in a fresh way."

For more information regarding St. Andrew's Christian Church, visit [www.StAndrewsVt.org](http://www.StAndrewsVt.org) or contact Kevin Fitton @ (802) 922-3569 or email [kevin@standrewsvt.org](mailto:kevin@standrewsvt.org), [brian@standrewsvt.org](mailto:brian@standrewsvt.org), or [janet@standrewsvt.org](mailto:janet@standrewsvt.org). Checks are payable to *St. Andrew's Christian Church*.  
81 St. Paul Street, Burlington, VT 05401.