



December 2010

A Faithful Church for Today's Vermont

“That Your Joy May Be Complete”
-John 15:11

I tend to be a very goal-oriented person. I set personal goals and work goals ever January, and I come back to those markers throughout the year. This directed attitude impacts all areas of my life, whether it's work, family, or the music and writing I am trying to squeeze into the nooks and crannies of my week. In fact, when I sit back and think about it, I can see that almost every activity I'm engaged in is a part of some greater plan or design.

Often this attitude serves me well. With my personal interests outside of work, it's extremely helpful to be focused, because there's just not a lot of spare time for those things. In my work at St. Andrew's, it helps me stay

focused on our goals, and I find that I'm doing a better job these days of keeping those goals in front of the congregation as well.

Lately, however, I've been discovering that there is a drawback to being so focused on goals and results. Ironically, we sometimes miss the point when we're constantly tallying up numbers and adjudicating successes and failures. Because as much as God desires for us to take full advantage of this life and everything He has entrusted to us, His joy does not depend on our performance. I'm sure that God celebrates our successes with us, just as I celebrate with my daughters every time they reach another milestone. At the same time, though, we don't need to earn God's love. His love falls on us simply because we are His children, the objects of His creativity. Even when we turn away from Him, He cannot love us any less.

YEAR-END MATCH.

Friends of St. Andrew's will match new gifts to the ministry up to \$3,000 until December 31, 2010.

Qualifying donations are any “unexpected” contributions to the church. In other words, if you do not give to St. Andrew's or do not give regularly, your gift qualifies. If you are a monthly donor, any additional donation beyond your regularly giving will qualify.

Please consider partnering with us through the matching grant. Your gift will go a long way toward the continued growth and mission of our young church.

You do not need to do anything special to apply your donation to the match. If it is not a regular monthly gift, it will automatically apply.



Leonardo DaVinci's Annunciation.

For more information about St. Andrew's, please visit our website: www.standrewsvt.org.
Or feel free to contact Kevin Fitton at Kevin@standrewsvt.org or (802)922-3569.
Checks are payable to St. Andrew's Christian Church and are tax deductible.

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"Love must go beyond that sort of pragmatism. When we love someone, we want to be with that person for no other reason than our desire to enjoy their proximity."

This fall at St. Andrew's, we spent a lot of time talking about spiritual practices, and in step with that conversation, I have unearthed in myself a growing desire to connect with God—and not just because it will make me a better person or a better pastor. Of course, those things are good; of course, I want to grow; of course, I want to be a pastor who knows the Scriptures, who is connected with Jesus Christ in prayer. And I believe strongly that good fruit will come from my life when I am connected with the Father, who is the source of my life.

But my relationship with God is just that—a relationship. And what kind of relationship is based solely on what it is able to produce? How would my wife feel—how would I feel—

if my relationship with Rebecca was something I perceived only as a beneficial arrangement for sharing resources, raising children, and preventing loneliness? Love must go beyond that sort of pragmatism. When we love someone, we want to be with that person for no other reason than our desire to enjoy their proximity.

This is what I find myself wanting more and more: those times when I don't have anything to prove—those times when I am able to feel His joy in me and I can know that it's not anything I deserve. In *John*, chapter 15, Jesus describes the importance of being connected to the Father, about our need to be close to Him if we are going to produce fruit in this life. Then Jesus adds this: "I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete" (v. 11). In other words, at its most fundamental level, God's desire to be with us comes out of the fact that this, quite simply, is the place where we belong.

It's almost Christmas time again. Advent began this week. And soon enough I will turn to the process of setting goals and then trying to go about meeting them. But this Christmas, my hope is to remember that Jesus came to earth, ultimately, because he wanted to be with us. Because he love us. Because he loves you. Because he loves me.

Merry Christmas!
Kevin, Rebecca, Naomi, and Adelaide.



The Fittons having a good time at the Trapp Family Lodge. Well, except Addie.