



October 2010

## A Faithful Church for Today's Vermont

### STICKING WITH IT.

Looking at the picture below, you can see that Rebecca and I have been living in Vermont for a while now. When we moved here almost 5 years ago we didn't have children. Now Naomi is 4 and Addie is 2, and they're growing up fast. Naomi can write her own name and her sister's, and she's beginning to move in a social world among her peers at preschool. A couple of weeks ago, she said to me, "Dad, something special happened today. During snack-time, a friend invited me over to her house."

Adelaide is growing up as well. She likes to tell us the story of *The Three Little Pigs*, often playing the role of the wolf. "Little pig, let me in," she says, trying to deepen her little voice.

St. Andrew's is growing up, too. As of September, we have been meeting for worship for 3 years. We have successfully transitioned from an outside leadership model to internal leadership. We have recently revamped our mission statement, and at this point, it's never been as clear to our community what we're all about as a church.

We've also been growing, bit by bit.

### YEAR-END GIVING.

Beginning on Nov 1, friends of St. Andrew's are offering to match new contributions to St. Andrew's. (Amount yet to be determined.)

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 monthly giving qualifies.

Please consider partnering with us through the matching grant. Your year-end 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, beginning October 15, 2010.

This fall, we've had a handful of new people come, and our average worship attendance is up to around 40 from around 35 in the spring.

We would have thought, based on our first year, that the growth would have come more quickly, but this more gradual path actually makes more sense when I reflect on it. I mean, the church is a living organism, and living organisms grow at a speed and in ways that aren't always noticeable. What happens is that, once in a while, you realize that things have changed. "Wow, they've really grown up!" you find yourself saying. It almost always feels like a surprise.

And of course, St. Andrew's is not yet an adult church. In New England, and perhaps even more so in Vermont, it takes time for anything new to become established. First of all, there's just a lot of work that has to be done, establishing an identity, building up the leadership, creating administrative and financial systems, casting a clear vision. But it also has to do with the fact that this isn't California.



Naomi and Adelaide excited about Halloween pumpkins.

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

St. Andrew's  
81 St. Paul Street  
Burlington, Vermont 05401

"You can't snap your fingers and create a ministry in Vermont that will last for generations. You have to stick with it; you have to persist; you have to be creative."

In a place where people spend vast amounts of energy trying to preserve their heritage and way of life, *new* isn't a positive word.

Which all means that you can't snap your fingers and create a ministry in Vermont that will last for generations. You have to stick with it; you have to persist; you have to be creative.

Right now, as I mentioned, our worship attendance is 40 (not counting the kids' room), which comes from 50 regular attenders and another 5-10 who visit sporadically. By my completely non-scientific estimation, with a church that is structured in a traditional way, you really need about 70-100 people who are committed for the system to work effectively. This has a lot to do with the number of volunteers who are available to support the various ministries the church is operating. It also has to do with the way a church perceives itself. At some point, people need to be able to look around the room and think, "OK, we're good; this is working."

Slowly but surely, we're getting there. I was told, repeatedly, when we moved here that this process would take 7 years, and that's feeling

more and more like a sage prediction, as we wrap-up our 5th year. In terms of people united around the mission, we're about 60-70% of the way there. In terms of finances, we're moving forward at about the same rate. Since the beginning of September, over 60% of our income came from the local community.

The reason I'm explaining all this is to make the point that, while we're over the half-way mark, we're not there yet. You can't raise your children up to maturity and send them off into the world of adulthood in a couple of years. And the same thing is true with a new church. We still need your prayers. We still desperately need more people who will bring a Christian maturity to our young congregation. And we still need your financial support. For us, outside support has dropped off significantly this year. And that's expected. Some have given faithfully to St. Andrew's for 4 and 1/2 years, and for that we are extremely grateful. We're grateful for all of you who have supported this ministry.

And if you're still passionate about the Gospel being communicated to a largely unchurched population of young adults here in Vermont, we would ask that you would continue to pray and continue to give.

In particular, there are 2 key areas toward which you can contribute. The first is that we are asking that God would send us more mature Christians to help with leadership and discipleship at St.

Andrew's. That group of faithful adults has grown, but we are still stretched thin.

We also ask that you would consider participating in our year-end matching grant. The past couple of years, that year-end money has made a huge difference for us, helping us to finish in the black each year and having some "seed" money for a new year of ministry. Because we have partners who put the up-front money on the table, this money goes a long way.

Once again, thank you. I've said it before but it's true: we truly could not do this without you.



(left) The whole family at Burlington's Waterfront Park.