

# THE CONTACT

A Publication of the Village Congregational Church, Whitinsville, Massachusetts

January 2010

25 Church Street, Whitinsville, Massachusetts 01588

508.234.7901

## *Robert's Thing for the Contact*

***Blessed are all who fear the LORD, who walk in his ways. You will eat the fruit of your labor; blessings and prosperity will be yours.  
(Psalm 128:1-2)***



Can you believe that it is 2010! I am always amazed that in the course of one minute, it is a new year. I am also amazed that there are a lot of people who still make resolutions. Life changing decisions, life altering maxims that are usually not kept. Changed lives that do not change and life altering decisions that alter nothing. Sad, yes, but a part of the human condition. Sometimes a part of the church condition too.

I was recently given a book to read called Three Cups of Tea. It is the story of Greg Mortenson, who in 1993 began to build schools, schools for girls in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The book is inspiring to read and proves that in fact one person can make a difference in the world, but there is more. In those countries there is an adage, spoken of in the book and on the rear cover that says:

"Here, we drink three cups of tea to do business;  
the first you are a stranger,  
the second you become a friend.  
And the third, you join our family,  
and for our family, we are prepared to do anything- even die."

That has really stuck with me, it is an incredible statement of life and to me should be THE paradigm for the Christian church in this day and for however many days we have left. There are few church's that do not have a coffee hour on Sunday morning. Coffee hours, where by and large the same people drink their coffee (or tea or punch) with the same people. There is a small group that they have one, two or many more cups with, while others stand alone.

I would like to suggest, challenge if you will everyone who reads these words to put them into practice at their coffee hours, at their church and in their lives. Seek out people you do not know and have that first cup with them. You will be strangers, but then comes the second cup and you will be friends. By the time you have that third cup, you may not really be family, but it will feel like it. Your base of friends, of church family will increase and with that comes an openness to help, to support and to love all of those people, perhaps even to death. That is after all what Jesus did.

Put the three cups into practice and let us see the difference that it brings, it cannot hurt, only help. Is there someone that you would not do anything for?

## Stewardship News

To: Members and Friends of VCC  
From: The Stewardship Committee  
Re: Stewardship Update  
Date: December 14, 2009

We want to keep everyone informed about how we are doing with the stewardship of our church. Our collection totals in the months of October and November were approximately \$6500 and \$8600 respectively. Thank you for contributing to this increase! Our average expenses are approximately \$17,500 per month. As you can see, we still have a long way to go to meet our ultimate goal of covering our operating expenses with our collections.

We can achieve this goal by bringing in new members and making the work of Jesus Christ in the Village Congregational Church a priority in our daily lives. This is very exciting for our congregation because with changed attitudes and priorities we can make a real difference in our communities large and small. If you are interested in learning about giving in other churches, we have included (see next page) an excerpt from the book *Before You Build* by Stephen Anderson that discusses average giving per person in Protestant Churches in the eastern half of the United States. Please read this article and prayerfully consider what you can pledge (and give) to the Village Congregational Church. Thank you for your continued support of our wonderful church and remember that all donations to the church are tax deductible.

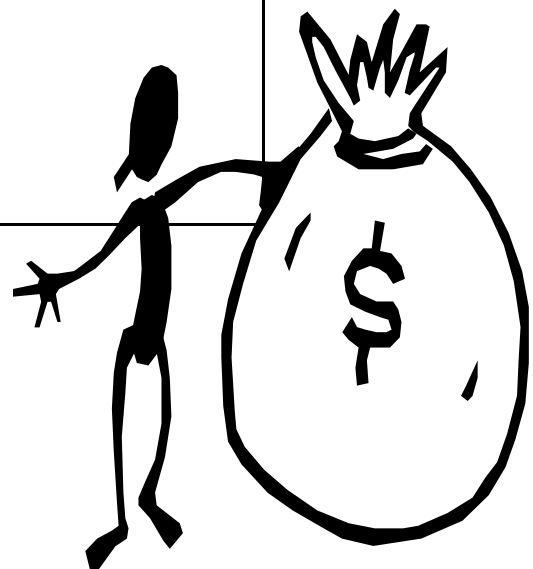
Respectfully yours,  
Jayne Knott and Tony Plitouke

### ANNUAL GIVING UPDATE: FINAL 2009 RESULTS

**2009 Pledge Goal: \$105, 000**

**2009 Pledges Received: \$83, 215.09**

**79% OF GOAL**



## **Giving in the Church: An Analysis of Average Giving per Person**

Excerpted from the book, "Before You Build" by Stephen Anderson

December 14, 2009

Do you ever wonder how your church compares in the giving department to other churches? Many churches "feel" like their members give sacrificially, but have little real objective data on which to make an evaluation or comparison.

As a church construction consultant, I have worked with a large number of churches over the past 5 plus years that were looking to build or relocate. One of the many factors I help churches analyze is financial ability. Even though many lenders will apply a formula based on per giving unit, I prefer to deal in a simpler unit of measure when doing initial evaluations. Drawing upon my years of being a church treasurer, I went back to a calculation I used to monitor giving patterns that is based on a simple and effective formula: giving per person.

When initially working with churches that need to build, I always ask two very simple questions.

- 1) What is your average attendance, counting men, women and children of all ages?
- 2) What was your total income in offerings last year (or last 12 months)?

Once these two numbers are ascertained with reasonable accuracy, it is a simple process to divide the total income by the total average attendance to determine the average giving per person per year. A church with 150 average attendance and annual giving of \$165,000 would be \$1,100 per person per year.

Over the years I had accumulated hard data, including giving and attendance information, from churches into a database. I exported the information into a spreadsheet and did the simple math. An analysis of nearly 200 churches, with average total attendances ranging from 9 to 2,500 persons, indicated a median giving per person per year of \$1,038.

There appears to be no significant correlation between the size of the church and giving per person. In fact, 80% of the churches that ranked in the top 10 for giving per person had attendance of less than 500 with 2 of those reporting attendance of less than 50 persons and 2 reporting 1000 or over. The average attendance of churches in the giving per person top 10 was 305, with an average income to the church per person per year (counting men, women and children of all ages) of \$2,250.

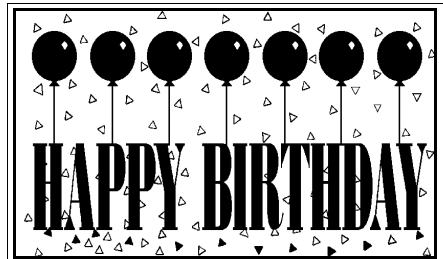
It is important to remember that averages are just that, an average. There are churches with giving per person well above the average and those that are well below. The churches in the analysis were primarily protestant evangelical churches in the eastern half of the United States. The analysis included downtown mainline churches and small independent churches in the cotton and tobacco fields of the Deep South. Economically, these churches ranged from dual income families in major metropolitan areas to financially challenged areas where unemployment or social security was the primary source of income for a significant percentage of the church.

What does this mean for your church? It is impossible to say how this information can be applied in an "across the board" fashion to all churches. Each church must take the information presented here, perform their own giving analysis and try to apply it to their situation. If you feel your church is above average in financial ability, but giving is less than average, you may want to consider how to better communicate the blessings of good stewardship. If you feel you are right on the mark with respect to the averages, you may decide you don't want to be an "average" church and look to bless the Lord (and your congregation) by striving for excellence in giving.

To the congregation:

I just wanted to express my sincere gratitude to all of the individuals and families who responded to my call for assistance with the Couples Shelter. Within one day of the e-mail being sent, I received twelve phone calls about donating bedding, dishes, clothing, and silverware. Through these donations, I was able to assist two formerly homeless couples who had just been placed into permanent housing. I was also able to set aside bedding and dishware for the next set of couples that I am readying to place into housing. Thank you again.

Melissa Fijol



1/1 Stephen Ivey  
 1/5 Elizabeth Aldrich  
 1/5 Jay Athanas  
 1/5 Karen Ivey  
 1/5 Michelle Masters  
 1/7 Erin Nicholson  
 1/8 Leo Collard  
 1/9 Jeff Smith  
 1/10 Grace Hatfield  
 1/11 Mario Maturi  
 1/11 Sophia Watanabe  
 1/13 Kristin Reeves-Hall  
 1/13 Peter Reeves-Hall  
 1/13 Greg Schouler  
 1/14 Dean Rheaume  
 1/14 Bethany Sherwood  
 1/16 Marcus Deane  
 1/16 Hannah McKenna  
 1/16 Doug Valk  
 1/18 Curtis Gogolinski  
 1/18 Jacob Gogolinski  
 1/19 Judy Streeter  
 1/20 Reagan Masters  
 1/20 Brent Schouler  
 1/21 Nancy Knott  
 1/22 Austin Van Lingen  
 1/23 Alison Ohman  
 1/28 Jessica Jane'  
 1/28 Wesley Morawiec  
 1/29 Nicole Benson  
 1/29 Jennifer Roberts  
 1/30 Norma Aldrich  
 1/31 Matthew Benson  
 1/31 Zachary Polucha

Is your birthday missing? Please send your birthday and anniversary dates to the church office ([office@vccucc.org](mailto:office@vccucc.org)) or leave a note in the church administrator's mail-

Please pray for:

Geryl Anderson, Mary Andrews, Darcy Cassidy, Anna Fijol, Penny Gustafson, Pauline Guyette, Lola Harper, Charles Hill Sr., Billy Hindes, Kristen Kent, Barb Knight, Ken & Lois Macomber, Kristine Thompson, Ren Yeo, Hany.

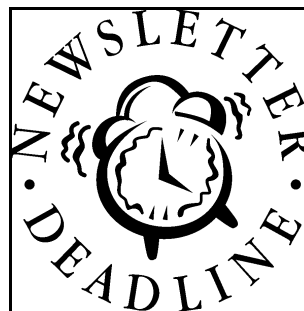


### NEW CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

The office is now open Monday, Wednesdays and Fridays. As of January 25th, the new church office hours will be:

Mondays: 9A-3P  
 Wednesdays: 12N-5P  
 Fridays: 9A-2P

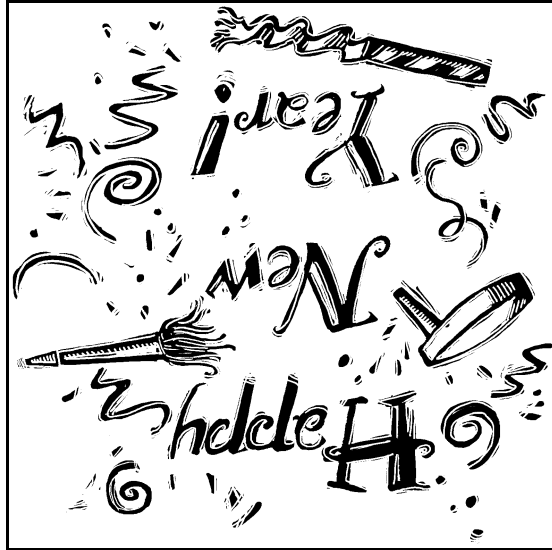
STOP BY ANYTIME!



All articles for February are due by Thursday, **January 28th!** Please leave articles in the church administrator mailbox or email them to [office@vccucc.org](mailto:office@vccucc.org). Thank you!

# January

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					<b>1 HAPPY NEW YEAR!</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3 Epiphany Sunday</b> 10A Worship & Sunday School 11:15A Children's Choir 6P Cadettes	<b>4</b> 4P VMS 4P Brownies 6P Diaconate 7P A Cappella	<b>5</b> 3:30P VMS 3:30P VMS 4:15P VMS 5P Cub Scouts 6:45P Village Bells 7P Boy Scouts	<b>6</b> 3:30P Brownies 4P VMS 5P VMS 6P Cadettes 6:30P Cadettes 7P Choir	<b>7</b> 3P VMS 3P VMS 4:30P VMS 5P Cub Scouts 5P Cub Scouts	<b>8</b> 4:30P VMS	<b>9</b> 10A Meeting
<b>10</b> 10A Worship & Sunday School 11:15A Children's Choir 6P Cadettes	<b>11</b> 4P VMS 4:30P Daisies 6P Music Committee 7P A Cappella	<b>12</b> 3:30P VMS 3:30P VMS 4:15P VMS 5P Cub Scouts 6:45P Village Bells 7P Boy Scouts 7:30P CE Committee	<b>13</b> 3:30P Brownies 4P VMS 4P Juniors 5P VMS 6P Cadettes 6:30P Cadettes 7P Choir	<b>14</b> 3P VMS 3P VMS 4:30P VMS 5P Cub Scouts 5P Cub Scouts	<b>15</b> 4:30P VMS	<b>16</b>
<b>17</b> 10A Worship & Sunday School 11:15A Children's Choir 6P Cadettes	<b>18</b> 4P VMS 4P Brownies 7P Church Committee 7P A Cappella	<b>19</b> 3:30P VMS 3:30P VMS 4:15P VMS 5P Cub Scouts 6:45P Village Bells 7P Boy Scouts	<b>20</b> 3:30P Brownies 4P VMS 5P VMS 6P Cadettes 6:30P Cadettes 7P Choir	<b>21</b> 3P VMS 3P VMS 4:30P VMS 5P Cub Scouts 5P Cub Scouts	<b>22</b> 4:30P VMS	<b>23</b> Girl Scouts Crayons For Cradle Drive
<b>24</b> 10A Worship & Sunday School 11:15A Children's Choir 12N Book Discussion 6P Cadettes	<b>25</b> 4P VMS 4:30P Daisies 7P A Cappella	<b>26</b> 3:30P VMS 3:30P VMS 4:15P VMS 5P Cub Scouts 6:45P Village Bells 7P Boy Scouts	<b>27</b> 3:30P Brownies 4P VMS 4P Juniors 5P VMS 6P Cadettes 6:30P Cadettes 7P Choir	<b>28</b> 3P VMS 3P VMS 4:30P VMS 5P Cub Scouts 5P Cub Scouts	<b>29</b> 4:30P VMS	<b>30</b>
<b>31</b> 10A Worship & Sunday School 11:15A Children's Choir 6P Cadettes						



**THE VILLAGE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**

25 Church Street  
P.O. Box 217  
Whitinsville, MA 01588  
Phone: 508-234-7901  
Email: [office@vccucc.org](mailto:office@vccucc.org)  
Website: [www.vccucc.org](http://www.vccucc.org)

Non-Profit Org  
U S POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
Permit No 32  
Whitinsville, MA