



The Grapevine

CONNECTING THE CONGREGATIONS OF THE PRESBYTERY OF DETROIT

June 2012

Message from the Thika Partnership

While the Rev. Dr. Allen D. Timm, Executive Presbyter is on Sabbatical we will be using articles by other authors.

The following article was submitted by the Rev. Gretchen Denton, Honorably Retired member of Presbytery and Past Moderator.

In 2004, when the Presbytery of Detroit members visited our Thika Partners in Kenya we were hosted by the Moderator and Stated Clerk of the Thika Presbytery. The Rev. John Kinoti Alfred was Moderator and we enjoyed his quiet ways and deep scholarship. He had been involved in translating the Old Testament into his native language Meru.

A few years later John had the opportunity to study Hebrew and Old Testament at the University of Dubuque and then at Wartburg Lutheran Seminary (ELCA) also in Dubuque, Iowa. In order to accomplish his study goal of being able to teach ministers in the Presbyterian Church in East Africa (PCEA) the Presbytery of Detroit paid for his airfare and well as additional fees.

The following is a part of the letter we received in April:

Greetings in the Name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

I hope your family is doing okay. In Kenya, I am doing good and still enjoying the fruits of the ministry. My family is also okay and many greetings from Mercy, Joy, Judy and Eric. Mercy is currently working with the Ministry of Immigration in Nairobi while my first daughter Joy is in College in Karen here in Nairobi. My second born daughter Judy is in high school (form two) While our last born son Eric is also in High School - in Form one. Our good Lord has been on our side since I left US.

Currently I am the Moderator of Ngarariga Parish in Limuru and also a Lecturer at Presbyterian University of East Africa where I teach Biblical Hebrew and the Old Testament Studies. I have been doing the same since May 2009 and I am happy of the progress.

We have been thinking of you this Easter! **My family is really indebted by you and the Presbytery of Detroit.** We remember as a family that were it not for the Presbytery of Detroit under your leadership, I could not have afforded the ticket to University of Dubuque in August

2007. What actually touched my family is when I informed them that the Presbytery of Detroit paid for part of my fees almost \$2000 at Wartburg Theological Seminary so that I could graduate. This really touched them and they cried.

So the purpose of this email is to thank you on behalf of the Presbytery of Detroit for what you have done for our family. May the good Lord bless you and the whole members of the Presbytery.

What a joy it was to hear from John! While most of our efforts in Thika have been related to providing water, we have accomplished more. Our impact continues as theology students study the scripture under John's leadership and we are glad that we have been able to participate in the building up of Christ's church in Kenya. Thank you, Presbytery of Detroit, for your ongoing support of this mission ministry.

Gretchen Denton, member of Thika Partnership Team.

Thirty-seven presbyteries honored for generosity in 2011

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) honors giving in several categories

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (June 19, 2012)—The General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) is honoring presbyteries large and small across the country for their generous support of Presbyterian mission in 2011.

“Presbyterians are passionate about mission on a local, national and global scale,” said **Linda B. Valentine**, GAMC executive director. “The money donated by presbyteries each year means that together we can continue to engage in mission and ministry across the country and around the world.”

Donations from presbyteries in 2011 helped support the vital mission and ministries of the church, including programs such as the Presbyterian Council for Chaplains and Military Personnel. More than 200 Presbyterian pastors serve as military chaplains, and their role is becoming ever more important as tens of thousands of soldiers return from wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Deborah’s Daughters is also supported by these funds. Deborah’s Daughters provides opportunities for women leaders in the PC(USA)—including clergywomen, elders, deacons, commissioned lay pastors, and Christian educators—to discuss issues related to women in ministry. The New Beginnings program and the Company of New Pastors are two more examples of funds at work in the church. *New Beginnings* works with churches in the latter stages of their life cycle; it assesses a congregation’s strengths and challenges, as it seeks to engage in ministry that is not just surviving, but thriving. The Company of New Pastors helps seminary students develop a deep theological core as they enter pastoral ministry. Together with a vocational mentor, they engage in the apostolic practices of daily prayer, disciplined study, mutual encouragement and admonition, and table fellowship.

“Donations from the presbyteries make these and similar programs possible,” said Valentine. “We truly appreciate their stewardship and support.”

“Top Ten” lists were compiled in four categories: total mission giving, Basic Mission Support, Special Offerings and other specific appeals. The lists are sorted by total giving and by average giving per member.

National Capital Presbytery topped the list for total mission giving, while Hanmi Presbytery capped the list for total giving per member. Cascades, Donegal and National Capital presbyteries were each honored in five of the eight categories. Chicago, Mission, Philadelphia and Southeastern Illinois were each honored in four categories.

Editors note: Detroit was in the top ten in three out of eight categories for mission giving. The categories are **total giving by dollar amount**, **Special Offerings by total dollar amount**, and **appeals by total dollar amount**. The entire press release is on the table and on line at <http://www.pbydetroit.org/mMissionGiving.htm>.

Clergy Ordination Anniversaries

JUNE

CAMPBELL, DOUGLAS	15
CAMPBELL, EMILY	15
GAST, TERRI	15
WHITLOCK, KELLIE	20
AUSTIN, ANNA MARIE	25
SOEHL, HOWARD	30
KOSTER, EDWARD H.	35
DUNCAN, THOMAS	40
COWLING, NEIL D.	45
BYARS, RONALD	50
CAMPBELL, VERN	55
KESLER, JAMES W.	55
WRIGHT, DONALD	55
MacINNES, JOHN D.	60

JULY

AUE, CRAIG	30
HENDERSON, RICHARD	40
ROBERTSON, DAVID W.	45

The Parish Paper

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Bev Auger, ext. 209
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Charon Barconey, 313-770-5822
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The Rev. Wm Gepford, 313-933-4086

THE PARISH PAPER

IDEAS AND INSIGHTS FOR ACTIVE CONGREGATIONS

Coeditors: Herb Miller, Lyle E. Schaller, Cynthia Woolever - www.TheParishPaper.com

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What Message Are We Sending about Giving?

The largest source of congregational income is what individuals contribute through their offerings, pledges, donations, and dues. On average, nine out of every ten dollars a church receives come from what individuals give. Churches rely much less on other income sources such as trust funds, investments, bequests, and charges for use of their facilities. The typical worshiper gives an average of about \$1,500 a year, which breaks down to \$125 a month or \$28 each week.¹

What encourages or discourages members to give financially to their church? Part of the answer lies with the factors that motivate individuals. A second part of the answer rests with factors associated with the congregation itself.

Why Do People Give to the Church?

Research findings from a University of Notre Dame study on the motivations for religious giving identified four reasons people offer for making financial contributions to their church.²

They were taught to give. Many churchgoers say that they follow the example set by their parents or other important adults. Essentially, their habit of generous giving stems from the training they received as they were growing up. They internalized that concept and continue a giving practice as adults.

Their beliefs and values foster giving. Worshipers often attach significant theological meaning to their financial contributions. The belief that everything belongs to God—including one's material possessions—prompts some members to return a portion to the church. Others say that they give out of a sense of gratitude for God's love and goodness. Church members who express a sense of religious duty to give believe that God requires giving or that it is what the Bible teaches.

They respond to needs. Contributors often say that they want to contribute to God's work in the world. Worshipers who know about needs locally or globally report that they contribute to support those causes.

They give out of guilt. People can also give because they want to avoid the negative emotional consequences of *not* giving. For some, guilt is a motivator for giv-

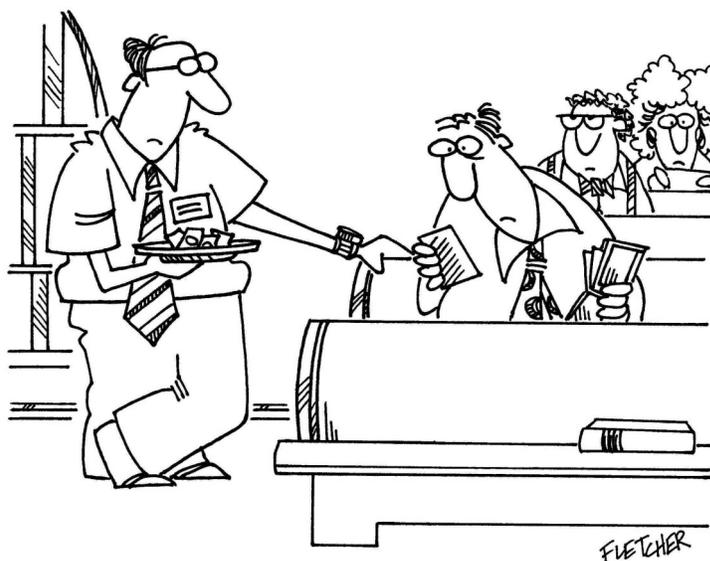
ing. These givers say that if they do not give, they will be doing something wrong or letting someone down.

What Are the Obstacles to Giving?

Despite their relative affluence, American Christians give less than two percent of their income to charity. While some factors push people to give, other things constrain people to give less or nothing at all. The Notre Dame research also reveals several interesting challenges to generous giving.

They feel insecure financially. Some worshipers indicate that they cannot give as much as they would like because they lack the resources to do so. They are afraid to give away money due to the risk of losing security or status. However, people at all income levels offered this reason—hinting that, in many cases, the *perception* of security plays a larger role than actual resources.

They show signs of giving illiteracy. When interviewed, many members were confused about what the standard of giving should be and about how to apply this standard. Some members held the belief that they



...THE OFFERTORY SOFTLY PLAYS...
USHERS MOVE THROUGH THE SANCTUARY...
AND EUGENE CONSULTS HIS
"CALCULATE YOUR TITHE" CHART.

are high givers when in reality they were not. What are the sources of this giving misperception? Members might not know about others' giving habits (how often and how much), especially if there are processes to shield worshipers' privacy. Or the individual or household simply does not keep track of how much they give.

They experience a comfortable level of guilt. Another obstacle to generous giving is a low level of guilt. When members feel guilty about not giving more and yet they do not experience enough discomfort, their giving stagnates. In the absence of strong push factors, a little guilt goes a long way to prevent increased giving.

What Does Our Method Say About the Message?

Just as individuals are not all alike, the congregations they attend are quite different too. Differences in church theological beliefs and tradition set the stage for particular financial approaches. Among churches, three philosophies, which are linked to typical giving methods, are common.³

Tithing churches. In these churches, all members understand that to be in good standing with God and the congregation they need to tithe 10 percent of their annual household income. As a result, the church does not ask members to pledge. Nor does the church hold an annual stewardship program or annual appeal. Many conservative Protestant churches (like Assembly of God or Seventh-Day Adventist) fit in the category of tithing churches.

Pledging churches. These churches favor tithing but tend to believe it is unrealistic to expect all members to tithe. As a result, the church asks members to consider an annual dollar amount or a percentage of their annual household income when making a financial pledge. Typically, these churches conduct an annual stewardship campaign. Many mainline Protestant churches (like Evangelical Lutheran, Presbyterian, and United Methodist) fit in this category.

Offering churches. Some churches believe in tithing and pledging but they do not stress either. As a result, they rarely launch annual campaigns, do little teaching about the theology of giving, and offer little guidance about the spiritual meaning of gifts. To increase giving, church leaders emphasize the size and quality of programs, costs of buildings and properties, and future plans. While churches of all denominations can fall in this category, the majority of Catholic parishes fit here.

Motivation + Method = Results

The percentage of tithers is the key feature that distinguishes one congregation from another. Overall, only one in four worshipers report tithing to their church. Yet

among conservative Protestant members, four in ten are tithers. Fewer mainline Protestants (only two in ten) and Catholics (only one in ten) tithe regularly to their church. These percentages relate to the proclaimed message and methodology used in these congregations.

When worshipers make their giving decisions based on a percentage of their annual income—the pattern for conservative Protestants—their church's total contributions soar. Contributions are somewhat lower when worshipers decide instead on an annual amount to give—a pattern common among mainline Protestants. Worshipers' contributions are lowest when the amount is decided on a weekly basis—a typical pattern in Catholic parishes, where contributions per worshiper are about half that of Protestant churches.

The Bottom Line

High contributors are also high in motivation. As one member stated, "You put your money where your blessing is." *Low givers* focus on giving obstacles. They mention tight budgets and seem misinformed about expectations. They tend to provide an additional rationale for giving less—that time spent volunteering is a substitute for their below-average giving. In reality, worshipers who invest the most time also invest the most money.

High-percentage-tithing churches teach giving-literacy to children and adults by linking faithful giving to faithful living. Leaders encourage a movement to percentage giving with the goal of growing that percentage over time.

Ultimately, leaders need to answer these questions: How do we communicate the connection between faith and money? Do we use methods and strategies that help members make the connection? Do we focus on the need for the giver to give or on the church's budget gaps? Are we willing to change the culture of giving in our church?⁴

1. Cynthia Woolever, "Getting to the Bottom of a Full Collection Plate," <http://www.uscongregations.org/pdf/how-values-enhance-giving-woolever-ppt.pdf>.

2. B. Vaidyanathan and P. Snell, "Motivations for and Obstacles to Religious Financial Giving," *Sociology of Religion*, 72:2 (2011), 189-214.

3. Dean Hoge, et al., *Money Matters: Personal Giving in American Churches* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 98-127.

4. See *Church Effectiveness Nugget, Vol. 5: How to Increase Financial Stewardship* (www.TheParishPaper.com).

Presbytery of Detroit Calendar of Events

To have your Churches event posted please send the information to sandy@detroitpresbytery.org.

June 2012	
27-July 8	Summer Youth Institute at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. Apply at www.pts.edu/syi
30-July 7	General Assembly meets in Pittsburgh, PA
July 2012	
1-6	Covenant Gathering at Michindoh Conference Center, Hillsdale, MI. Click here for more information
3	Healing Service 6:00 pm at South Lyon, First
4	Presbytery Office closed in observance of Independence Day
9-20	Fort Street PC, 631 W. Fort Street, Detroit, MI 48226 holding Peace Camp 2012. Click here for flyer
10-14	Hands On Mission Faith Build with Habitat for Humanity. Click here for flyer
11-15	PCUSA 2012 Peacemaking Conference at Ghost Ranch Retreat Center, Abiquiu, NM Click here for more information
16-20	2012 Youth Mission Blast week 2. Click here for flyer
18-22	2012 Churchwide Gathering of Presbyterian Women - River of Hope at the Gaylord Palms Resort and Convention Center in Orlando, FL. Click here for more information
28-Aug 5	Debbie Blane, Presbyterian Church (USA) mission co-worker in South Sudan will be here. If you would be interested in having her come to your church, or if you would like to participate in a meeting with her, please contact Rev. Tom Rice at First Presbyterian Church of Royal Oak (trice@fpcro.org 248.541.0108).
30	Synod Mobile Health Van at Second Mile Center. Click here for list of needs
August 2012	
7	Healing Service 6:00 pm at South Lyon, First
28	Presbytery Meeting at Livonia, Rosedale Gardens, 9601 Hubbard Ave., Livonia, MI 48150; 734-422-0494
September 2012	
3	Presbytery Office closed in observance of Labor day
4	Taizé Worship 7:00 pm at Dearborn, Littlefield
4	Healing Service 6:00 pm at South Lyon, First
21-22	Transformation and Evangelism training with Ann Philbrick and Jack Stewart
22	Clerk Training 9:00 am - 11:00 am at the Presbytery office 17575 Hubbell, Detroit, 48235 in the Resource Center. Topic: What happened at General Assembly. There will be doughnuts and coffee.
24-25	Pastors in Transition meeting at DeWitt.
27	Retiree get together at the Village of St. Martha's, 15875 Joy Rd., Detroit, MI 48228 with a tour of Ste. Martha's Church and the Ford Family Cemetery. More information to follow.
October 2012	
2	Taizé Worship 7:00 pm at Dearborn, Littlefield
2	Healing Service 6:00 pm at South Lyon, First
23	Presbytery Meeting at Allen Park, 7101 Park Ave., Allen Park, MI 48101; 313-383-0100
27	Month of Mission Breakfast will be held at Plymouth, First 701 Church St., Plymouth, MI 48170 from 9:00 am - Noon
November 2012	
4	Daylight Savings Time Ends - set clocks back one hour
6	Taizé Worship 7:00 pm at Dearborn, Littlefield
6	Healing Service 6:00 pm at South Lyon, First
22	Presbytery Office closed for Thanksgiving Day
22	Detroit, Westminster 30th Annual Thanksgiving Dinner 11:00 am - 4:00 pm
27	Presbytery Meeting at Detroit, Westminster, 17567 Hubbell, Detroit, MI 482235; 313-341-2697

December 2012	
4	Taizé Worship 7:00 pm at Dearborn, Littlefield
4	Healing Service 6:00 pm at South Lyon, First
8	Men's Advent Communion Breakfast Keynote speaker is Chuck Gaidica, Channel 4 WDIV TV weatherman.
24-25	Presbytery Office Closed for Christmas Holiday
31-Jan 1	Presbytery Office Closed for New Year Holiday
January 2013	
1	Taizé Worship 7:00 pm at Dearborn, Littlefield
21	Presbytery Office closed in observance of Martin Luther King Jr's Birthday
22	Presbytery Meeting at Ann Arbor, First, 1432 Washtenaw Ave., Ann Arbor, MI 48104 734-662-4466. Installation of Moderator and Vice Moderator.
February 2013	
5	Taizé Worship 7:00 pm at Dearborn, Littlefield
10-12	Pastors in Transition meeting at DeWitt.
26	Presbytery Meeting at TBD
March 2013	
5	Taizé Worship 7:00 pm at Dearborn, Littlefield
10	Daylight Savings Time Begins - set clocks ahead one hour
April 2013	
2	Taizé Worship 7:00 pm at Dearborn, Littlefield
23	Presbytery Meeting at TBD
May 2013	
7	Taizé Worship 7:00 pm at Dearborn, Littlefield
27	Presbytery Office Closed in observance of Memorial Day
June 2013	
4	Taizé Worship 7:00 pm at Dearborn, Littlefield
25	Presbytery Meeting at TBD
July 2013	
2	Taizé Worship 7:00 pm at Dearborn, Littlefield
4	Presbytery Office closed in observance of Independence Day
August 2013	
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