

# We Give Because...



Stewardship Campaign 2009



**SUNNYVALE**  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

# We give because...

by Rev. Steve Harrington

We give because God first gave. In the end (and for that matter, from the very beginning) all of life is to be lived as a response to God's gracious hand and help. We give because, as those made in the Creator's image, we are to reflect what is most central and basic to who God is: One who generously and endlessly gives.

We give because we understand that what we hold in life has been entrusted to us, and giving is our way of holding it lightly so that we do not become so attached to things that we cannot respond to people. "Blessed to be a blessing" is the biblical phrase that expresses this reason for giving. "Blessed to be a

blessing" teaches us that what we have and hold has been given to us with the invitation to hand some of it on to others and so become a part of the greater community of help and hope.

We give because we want to make a difference in life, because we want to be a part of something greater than our own trivial pursuits — because we believe that money is just a tool and that our resources are merely a means to an end, not the end goal of life.

We give because... well, because that's who we are: a giving people. And because that's who we want to become: a people who give freely in recognition of what we



have received, who give as a practice of discipleship to resist the bondage of hoarding and holding, and because, like God, we care about the world and want to do something to make a difference. 🌱

*Steve Harrington*

# A Welcoming Presence

We give because . . . we love guests who visit our church.

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We strive to be a welcoming congregation that extends hospitality to our guests. Thanks to that hospitality, many guests feel welcome and comfortable getting involved in — and even joining — our church.

On Sunday mornings a group of about 20 volunteers take turns staffing the Welcome Booth in Trinity Court. We offer a smile and a friendly “hello” to those who are visiting, as well as information about our church. Beyond Sunday mornings we use the booth on Christmas and Easter, at the Christmas play receptions, Vacation Bible School, back-to-school days for the Presbyterian Early Learning Center, as well as election days.

Sue Slavik has volunteered her time for a few years contacting guests who have visited our church more than once (first-time guests are contacted by a pastor). Some guests who went on to become members have commented that it

the New Friends’ Dinner. A few times each year we invite newer guests who have been attending services to join Pastor Steve Harrington for dinner. Thanks to Diana Aldrich, guests are treated warmly with beautiful ambiance and

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*“Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it.”*


— *Hebrews 13:2*

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was Sue’s hospitality that led them to seek membership.

Another way hospitality is extended is through

a delicious meal. Many of those guests go on to take our Next Step, or new member, classes.

***Help us, O God, to be a people who reaches out to our guests and makes them feel welcomed in our church family. Help us extend Your love and embrace others into Your Kingdom. Amen.*** 

# Serving God by Serving Others

We give because . . . we want our students have the opportunity to live out God's commandment to serve others.



*If there is a poor man among your brothers in any of the towns of the land that the Lord your God is giving you, do not be hardhearted or tightfisted toward your poor brother. Rather be openhanded and freely lend him whatever he needs.*

— Deuteronomy 15: 7-8

Thanks to the generosity of our congregation, our youth ministry is able to provide students the opportunity to live out God's Word through mission and service opportunities. Our students serve in the community through activities such as cooking meals for troubled families at the Bill Wilson Center and preparing brunch for our congregation. Annual Caravan trips allow students to have transformational faith experiences while helping others in need. This year they worked together to paint a food pantry at a community center, take food and care packages to people living in a tent city, and pray with homeless people at a park in Las Vegas. In the midst of serving others, they discovered the power of prayer and how they can make a difference in this world.

***Lord, thank You for the energy and dedication of our youth, as they continue to make a difference to those less fortunate in our world. Amen.*** 🌿

# Good Stewardship of Money

**We give because . . . we trust in the stewardship of our church to use financial contributions to build effective ministries.**

We seek to be good stewards of the money entrusted to us and look for opportunities to use the money wisely.

The ministry resources budget covers many expenses for things around our campus that we take for granted. In the last year, our maintenance staff has found numerous ways to reduce the cost of various routine supplies that we purchase. We were also able to buy some much-needed equipment from a local retailer that went out of business — purchases that saved us hundreds

or thousands of dollars over what it would have cost us to buy new equipment. In these and many other ways we try to leverage the financial contributions of the members and friends of our congregation to build, sustain and grow the vibrant ministries of our church to serve Christ and reach out in love.



***God, we thank You for all that You provide us. Help us to appreciate all that You give and help us to be good stewards of everything You provide. Amen.*** 🌿

# Worship the Lord Always

We give because . . . we want our children to learn how to worship the Lord through music, theater, prayer, and art.



Children at Sunnyvale Presbyterian Church worship the Lord through words, music, art and movement. Throughout the school year in BLAST (Biblical Learning and Spiritual Training) Stages of Faith, they worship the Lord by acting out biblical stories, and in BLAST Creative Expressions they do it with arts and crafts. Our gifts provide computers for another way of learning about God in BLAST.com. Their classes all have basic elements of worship in them as well, including prayer, offering, and praise. In the summer, kids in all grades come together to worship with music, scripture, and prayer.

Music is an integral part of how our children worship. From 3 years old up to 6<sup>th</sup> grade, they have the opportunity to attend choir after church and praise God through song occasionally in the worship service in the sanctuary. Also, some students at LOGOS come early and learn to play the chimes — another way to praise God. The church is blessed

*So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind.*

— *I Corinthians 14:15*

with those who give their time and talents to teach kids that worship through music is fun and energizing.

**Lord we thank You for the enthusiastic joy with which our children worship You. Amen.**

# Developing and Strengthening Our Faith Through Adult Learning

We give because . . . we want Adult Learning to offer high quality classes that help us develop our Christian faith.



Contributions from our congregation enable us to purchase materials for adult learning and to pay guest speakers. The Thoughtful Christian curriculum, other books, and DVDs enhance the resources available for Adult Learning. Many of the Adult Learning teachers are volunteers or

staff members, but because of giving, we can offer an honorarium to attract excellent outside speakers. This enables us to bring variety to our classes. We are also able to buy coffee and snacks to create an environment where we can deepen the fellowship of the classes.

***Lord, thank You for providing opportunities for us to learn and grow in our faith. Please bless the teachers and members of the Adult Learning classes and help bring more people into the fellowship of learning together. Amen.*** 🌿

# Celebrating the Ministry of Music

We give because . . . we rejoice in ministry areas like the choir.



*Sing joyfully to the Lord, you righteous; it is fitting for the upright to praise Him. Praise the Lord with the harp; make music to Him on the ten-stringed lyre. Sing to Him a new song; play skillfully and shout for joy.*

— *Psalm 33:1-3*

As directed in Psalm 33, the choir does indeed sing joyfully as part of serving in worship. Participating in worship each week is no doubt the primary purpose of the choir, and for those of us who love music and enjoy singing, it is the best job one can have on a Sunday morning! Although all of our rehearsing and preparation takes dedication as well as time, it is not a burden, but an opportunity to serve God and each other.

Many of us give — and will continue to give — because the music in our worship service may be just what someone might need that Sunday. A word or phrase from a hymn or an anthem might become a prayer. A cheerful, lively melody might lift the spirits of someone who is feeling down. A beautiful, melodic piece may just give someone a glimpse of the holy.

***Gracious God, let us serve You with glad and generous hearts, faithfully giving back a portion of what You have so abundantly given to us. Amen.*** 🌿

# Building the Body of Christ

We give because . . . we are called to build up the body of Christ here on Earth.

With great joy, our church tithes 12% of our income to mission and service activities. While the needs of our community and the world are seemingly endless, with God's grace, we strive to use each dollar in a way that makes a positive difference in the lives of others.

The mission operating budget is divided into several broad categories. As the largest contributor to our presbytery, our church provides vital support to our denomination's mission and service efforts. The Presbyterian Church, USA is active around our

country and the world where there is suffering and need. This includes an ongoing presence to help rebuild after hurricanes and tsunamis, and disaster assistance after the recent ice storms in Kentucky.

Our financial support in world and local mission efforts is directed to many agencies and

activities and most often reflects the passion and energy of our church members. The significant funds directed towards poverty and hunger relief, refugee resettlement, youth and inter-generational mission and service, and other areas are leveraged by many thousands of hours of donated time.



***Great and gracious God, we pray that You will use the portion of our tithes and offerings devoted to mission and service in ways that will best serve Your mission in the world. We pray for all who suffer in the world and ask for Your blessings upon them. Amen.***

# Good Stewardship of Energy

We give because . . . we want to help respect and love God's creation by being good stewards of His creation.



Our church has met the basic requirements in four major areas for conducting our ministries in best green practices (as set by Santa Clara County's Green Business Program) for:

- (1) water conservation/pollution control,
- (2) energy conservation,
- (3) waste management, and
- (4) air pollution.

The ministry resources team has been doing several things to further these efforts recently. For example, we have been replacing the ballasts in the lighting all around our campus — something that represents an investment of up-front money and the time of our staff to do the installation, but that promises to make us even better stewards of God's creation and to save money that can be used for other ministries. We have also been studying some larger projects that have promise but are currently not feasible. For those who want to know more about what you can do to love and restore God's creation, you can go to our church's website ([www.svpc.us](http://www.svpc.us)) and look under the "Making a Difference" heading and then click on "Going Green."

***Almighty God, creator of all things seen and unseen, we love all that You have created on this Earth. We pray that You will help all of us to be good stewards of Your creation. Amen.*** 🌱

# Look Around You


We give because . . . we have been given so much.

One of our ushers, Charlie Brown, believes we all give because we ourselves have at some time or other been given so much. Several years ago after learning that he had cancer, Charlie Brown says that he received tremendous blessings from so many in this church. Those blessings were in the form of prayers, cards, and encouragement. Many others of us have received blessings like those experienced by Charlie.



Charlie says, “So, look up, He is there. Look around, see Him in the

lives of His faithful followers. Look at His many expressions in nature, music, and art. Then be like a ‘Zaccheus’ person and open your doors, and let Him come into your life.”

***Lord, help and direct us as to how and when to open our “doors” and ask You into our lives. In so doing we may continually experience the rich blessings You have in store for each one of us. Amen.*** 

# Because We Give...



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by Rev. Steve Harrington



Because we give life is changed and we are changed and change becomes possible in the world. Because we give possibilities are opened up and hope comes down and love is made real. Because we give others can receive.

Because we give and because we do so within the community of our church, my perhaps seemingly small portion is joined with yours until they become a large and significant offering. Because we give together we are made partners with one another and with God and our lives are caught up in a greater purpose and point than any we could find alone. When we give together we are able to do far more than our individual efforts or our singular donations could accomplish. There is a synergy, not just of joy, but of effective work in the world that happens when we give together.

Because we give though we may have fewer resources in our bank account, we are freer in our spirits since through our giving we release our grip and open our hand and practice a life whose greatest commodity is compassion not cash.

Because we give this church exists and the ministry continues and our work goes forward and God is praised . . . all because we give. Thank you! 🌱

*Steve Harrington*

# All of our resources, material or immaterial, belong to God.

Because we give . . . God can work through us.

***God, although we sometimes forget, we recognize that everything we have comes from You and belongs to You. You ask only for us to return a portion of what we have and that giving allows You to work through us to allow us to serve in Your name. Amen. 🌿***

God is not dependent on our giving, but He has chosen to work through us. If we follow His call we will experience His redeeming power and blessing in our own and our neighbor's lives.

Because we give . . . hospitality is a strength of our community. God's presence is where His people enjoy fellowship. A fresh cup of coffee on Sunday mornings makes it easy to stay and share our joys and burdens with one another.

Because we give . . . scholarships to further the study or development of people answering God's call become possible. We need places to nurture our faith and develop the gifts God has entrusted us with. This strengthens our relationship with God and keeps us rooted in Christ so we can reach out in love.

Because we give . . . deacons and Stephen ministers can continue their work and bring God's presence to those in need in our community and beyond.



# Teaching our Children About the Bible

Because we give . . . children are learning the stories of the New and Old Testament and learning how God's word is important in their lives.




At Sunnyvale Presbyterian, our giving provides materials for biblical teaching for children of all ages in many different settings. During Stars and BLAST (which stands for Biblical Learning and Spiritual Training), our Sunday educational programs, young children are read to from the Bible while older children read the Bible and learn to use a Bible concordance. Each month they are all challenged to learn a memory verse. Children also learn about the Bible for one week at the start of summer during Vacation Bible School and also at LOGOS (our mid-week miracle for 2<sup>nd</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> graders that runs throughout the school year). Children whose families don't regularly attend the church on Sundays participate in both of these programs, helping to spread the love of God's Word out into the community.

Our giving also provides Bibles to all of our 3<sup>rd</sup> graders. It is incredibly moving to see the reverence they have for the book when they receive it and as they use it in their classes.

*“Do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.”*

— *Ephesians 6:4*

***We pray that we will continue to teach children, not just what is in the Bible but the comfort and joy those words can be in our lives. Amen.*** 

# Fulfilling Baptismal Promises

Because we give . . . we express love for our children and we all fulfill our baptismal promises.



In keeping with the covenant of baptism, we all have committed ourselves and our resources to the nurturing of our children. At Sunnyvale Presbyterian our specific goal is to ensure children feel the welcome and love of Jesus Christ and develop a lifelong relationship with Christ in a safe and secure environment.



The Safe Church Program was launched this year in order to ensure a safe environment for children to learn, grow, and experience God's love. We believe that effective ministry for children and youth requires relationships with caring, loving, and mature adults and youth leaders who can demonstrate God's love to them. The Safe Church Program is intended to keep these relationships and all aspects of ministries with children and youth safe.

Currently we've trained over 200 people using the Safeguarding God's Children curriculum. We continue to train and screen volunteers, parents and congregational members to ensure together, we grow in our love, understanding and relationship with God.

*“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these.”*

— *Mark 10:14*

***Lord, we pray a prayer of thanksgiving for all of our volunteers and staff who give of their time and love so that the children and youth of our church can grow to know you better. Amen.*** 🌿

# Celebrating our Library

Because we give . . . we are able to provide books and other teaching materials to support church programs and life enrichment.



Our church library is home to more than 4,000 books, 300 DVDs and 60 CDs. During the last year we have been able to purchase 230 additional items. These materials are used by members and visitors of all ages, including staff, Bible study leaders and teachers.

Part of our mission is to promote children's literacy. When children read, it has benefits for them as individuals and for us as a society. When children grow up with the church library, they are more likely to continue using it to supplement their spiritual growth as they mature.

***Almighty God, we thank You for a safe environment where we can learn more about Your Word. We thank You for our volunteer library staff and their dedicated work. We pray that You will continue to guide our spiritual growth. Amen.*** 🌿

# Disciples of Christ

Because we give . . . the young people of our church are following the teachings of Jesus.



Through our giving and support, Junior High and High School students regularly come together to worship, pray, study the Bible, share meals and enjoy fellowship with one another. In weekly FLASH and CLUE programs, students experience what it means to apply Christ's teachings to life in today's world. We are thankful for this congregation that supports youth and for the adult advisors who give so willingly of their time to help guide our students as they establish the faith that will carry them through their lives.

*May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus.*

*— Romans 15:4-6*

***We pray, God, for our young people who come together as a community to serve You while they travel along their individual journeys of faith. Amen. 🌿***

# Reaching Out in Love to Uganda

Because we give . . . we can answer God's call for ministry around the world.

The SVPC community contributed thousands of dollars for the material, labor, admin and management required to build a high school classroom in Watoto's Bbira Orphan Village in Uganda in the summer of 2009. We felt surrounded by God's people in Watoto and learned, shared and worked together to add a high school classroom to the Watoto Village. This way the kids can stay in the village until they are ready to move on to university level or other education.

Village family-style living and quality education are critical steps in providing appropriate nurture and education to the many orphans in Uganda to help them grow into the positive

leaders who will shape Uganda's future.

With significant contributions from the SVPC mission budget, sixteen people from our church, including four families and a college student, prepared for a year to make our trip in June 2009. With contributions from personal supporters, our own commitments and the SVPC mission budget, we traveled to Uganda.



We were hosted by staff from Watoto Church in a local guesthouse, and experienced the great work in progress by Watoto Church to make a nurturing space for these orphans.

Their hospitality and stories showed God's presence in this challenging and critical work, now celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> year. It started with the pastor couple taking in a few orphans in need, and grew to a ministry serving thousands of orphans. They are cared for in a home up to age two, and then

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## Watoto Ministry ... *continued from previous page*

in a village supported by family-style living with their “siblings” in homes with their “mom,” usually a widow or divorced mother. God’s presence is clear when you see the village in action, with the kids going to elementary or vocational school. We received smiles and words of gratitude from everyone we met at the building site, the villages, the church service and the guest house. It takes hard work, focus, prayers, ongoing commitment and support money to help construct and maintain the vil-

lages, and the orphans have or need sponsors to pay for their schooling from elementary school through college.

We were fortunate to meet with the nannies in the orphans’ home for kids under two, hold and feed the children, and eat a wonderful meal provided by village moms and kids. We felt that we were the ones who were blessed as we shared in conversations about their blessings, hopes and dreams. The physical work was hard and rewarding, and we felt proud that we could



share from our blessings to put the thousands of bricks, mortar, windows and support structures in place for the new high school classroom. We could have not done it without your support, God’s presence, and the expert leadership of the Watoto staff and the local building team, including Ronny, who had grown up in the village himself.

***God, continue to bless us and the work of Watoto Church to make Your Kingdom real in our community and in Uganda, a country challenged with many orphans from wars and AIDS who would be hopeless without Watoto’s work. Thanks for allowing us to be partners in Your work, and to be a small supporting force and light in this amazing ministry that transformed all of us as well. Amen.*** 🌿

# Rooted Then Reaching

Because we give . . . the Kingdom is expanded.




*“I am the vine, you  
are the branches.  
Those who abide in  
me and I in them  
bear much fruit,  
because apart from  
me you can do  
nothing.”*

*— John 15:5*

The women came to The Alpha Course — a course that teaches the basics of the Christian faith — because they wanted to be more rooted in Christ. Out of the roots of this original Alpha small group sprouted leaders and volunteers who reach out in love around the world as well as here in the Silicon Valley as part of SVPC’s growing refugee ministry.

“Alpha was the intersection at which we began, and several years later, we continue to learn, explore our gifts, serve and share God’s love,” says Elsa Amboy, one group member who is now one of the leaders of the refugee ministry movement at SVPC.

More than 250 people have taken The Alpha Course through SVPC over the last seven years. In 2010 we’re planning to expand the church’s reach into the community by offering Multicultural Alpha for our neighbors who have immigrated to this country, along with traditional Alpha.

***We thank You, God, for The Alpha Course and its many volunteers who have helped guests be more rooted in Jesus so they may in turn reach out to others in love. We are thankful that through this reaching out, Your Kingdom is expanded. Amen.*** 

# Reaching Out in Love Through Mission

Because we give . . . members of our church community can pursue their passion for service.

Our mission resources support the passions of many within our church family. During the past year, we have supported mission trips to Mississippi to provide storm relief and to Africa to build a school and another to train teachers. We have provided support for individuals who have chosen to dedicate up to a year in service around our country. We provide ongoing support to missionaries in Central Asia and on college campuses. We also give to local agencies that



supplement the work of many in our congregation. The power of this financial support is that it is amplified by the thousands of volunteer hours of the recipients. Our energy and passion are a display of God's work in our world.

***Almighty God, we thank You for the opportunity to join in Your mission in the world. We pray that You would continue to open the hearts of our congregation to support Your mission both in Sunnyvale and around the world. Amen.***