



**VILLAGE
CHURCH**

Presbyterian (USA)

GOOD NEWS

The Village Church Good News is published monthly (September-May) for all members and friends of the Village Presbyterian Church. Readers are encouraged to submit article ideas to The Department of Communications, 6641 Mission Road, Prairie Village, KS 66208, or call 913-671-2375 or email laura.davis@villagepres.org.

2022 Tidings of Joy Concerts to Feature the Kansas City Wind Symphony

The Kansas City Wind Symphony was founded in November of 1998 as a volunteer ensemble of professional and accomplished amateur musicians selected by competitive audition. It started at Village Presbyterian Church and has remained a member of the Village Church Arts

Alliance ever since. The ensemble is comprised of musicians from throughout the Kansas City metro area who are dedicated to the performance of modern and classic works for winds and percussion.

The group was founded by William Baker and Pam Smith Kelly, daughter of legendary Missouri composer Claude T. Smith. Dr. Phil Posey, conductor emeritus, became music director and conductor of the ensemble in 2001. Under Dr. Posey's baton, the Wind Symphony performed more than 100 concerts throughout the Kansas City region and across the state. In 2008, The ensemble went to New York for a performance in Carnegie Hall. In the fall of 2017, Dr. Langston Hemenway became conductor and music director of the Wind Symphony.

Will Breytspraak, director of music ministry at the Mission Campus, shares that the Kansas City Wind Symphony (KCWS) performed in Tidings of Joy many years ago, but it has not in recent years. Will said, "We've been interested in finding ways to help more of our Village Church community experience the delights of the Wind Symphony because this is a unique and special ensemble in Kansas City. These are some of the most fantastic musicians in Kansas City. They come to Village Church every week and practice in our Sanctuary on Sunday nights and give four concerts a year. Many times I've come to those



concerts and thought about how many of our people would really enjoy this music. It's so energetic, so beautiful, so colorful. They have had fantastic conductors in the past. Langston Hemenway brings a wonderful joy and knowledge of the repertoire and incredible conducting skill. He

also directs our Village Brass group. We've talked to Langston for two or three years that we'd like to some day do a Tidings of Joy together, and this is the year that it's finally happening," adds Will.

Langston Hemenway said, "We are most excited to be doing a Christmas concert! I have been the conductor of the KCWS for five years, and traditionally the ensemble has not done holiday concerts due to member conflicts, so I have never done a Christmas concert with the KC Wind Symphony. That, in addition to being able to collaborate with all the amazing choirs at Village, makes this an exciting opportunity for the Wind Symphony."



About the Tidings Program

The Kansas City Wind Symphony will perform with the choirs and a few pieces on its own. Langston notes, "The two pieces I have chosen for Tidings of Joy are 'Christmas Festival' by Leroy Anderson—the composer of 'Sleigh Ride' fame, and 'Russian Christmas Music' by Alfred Reed. This latter piece is an epic staple of the wind band repertoire. It is a treatment of traditional Russian folk music and celebrates the resilient spirit of a people who have had to endure hardship and tyrannical leadership for much of their history and continue to endure this hardship even now as their despotic leader plunges the country into a war that most Russian people abhor. This work serves as a prayer for peace in this troubled time."

Will shares, "Tidings of Joy also features the Tidings of Joy Chorus, which is the combined chorus of Village Choir, More Love Chorale members and Alegría Choir. The Alegría Choir will sing on its own, directed by Dr. Elisa Bickers. We also have a subgroup of the Village Choir that's called the Village Chamber Choir. Dr. Joshua Maize is conducting them. He's leading the chamber choir in a chant, which will be sung from the back of the Sanctuary with bells and chimes. He's also leading a playful and inventive 'The Holly and the Ivy' that everyone is going to love.

I'm extremely excited to sing Moses Hogan's 'This Little Light of Mine,' which was commissioned for the St. Olaf Christmas Festival at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota in 2003. Cassandra Leon, one of our music interns, is going to sing the solo. It begins with a Kings Singers-like acapella section with rhythmic and playful content accompanying the soloist. Then it turns into a more traditional feeling spiritual with the kind of soulfulness that only comes from pain in the human experience. It ends with one of the most imaginative choral settings I've ever encountered, where the choir sings 'Shine. Shine. Shine. Let it shine!' on eight-part chords.

We're also singing 'In the Bleak Midwinter.' Jenny Hull, our director of children's music and assistant director at the Child & Family Development Center, is going to play the cello. The bass soloist will be Dr. Ron Witzke and intern bass soloist Evan Nelson. This arrangement evolves in ways that one might not expect as the composer fixates on certain words like 'kiss' and extends those words over measures and measures of episodic experiences for the listener and the singer.

Elisa Bickers is arranging the Ukrainian 'Carol of the Bells' for Alegría choir and the Wind Symphony."

Will adds, "There will also be our traditional congregational singing. This year the audience will get to sing 'God Rest You Merry Gentlemen,' which of course ends with 'Oh, Tidings of Comfort and Joy!'"

The 22nd annual Tidings of Joy concerts will be at 3 & 6 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 18, in the Mission Campus Sanctuary. Admission is free. The performances will also be livestreamed at villagepres.org/online.

About The Concert Offering Beneficiary

A love offering will be collected for Village's Signature Mission: Reconciliation Services Therapy and Case Management Expansion. Village Church will support the renovation of a new therapy office and case manager's space on the second floor of Reconciliation Services (RS) building at 31st and Troost in Kansas City, Missouri. Village Church's contribution will help RS double its capacity for providing therapy and social services to the community.

Honoring Mark Ball



Tidings of Joy was started in 2000 by Mark Ball, former director of music at Village Church, who passed away in 2019. Village will present a concert celebrating Mark's life at 3 p.m. Sunday, April 30, 2023, titled "Light Eternal." This concert was originally scheduled for the spring of 2020 but was postponed due to the start of the COVID pandemic. The Village Choir and More Love Chorale will perform a beautiful 'Requiem' by James Bingham and the healing 'Echorus' by Philip Glass.

Learn more about all upcoming concerts and recitals at Village Church at villagepres.org/music.

So Good to Be Back for Worship at Local Retirement Communities

Pastoral Care & Counseling held five offsite worship services with communion this fall at five area retirement communities: The Forum, Mission Chateau, Tallgrass Creek, Claridge Court and Lakeview Village. It's the first time in three years we've been able to do these services. Communion and the Share-a-Song choir were a part of the services. Fellowship time followed. Even Jean Francisco, a charter member of Village Church, came out for the Lakeview Village gathering on Nov. 16.

Barbara Misener attended the Tallgrass service. She's the sister-in-law of former Village pastor of Pastoral Care & Counseling, Gene Augustine. Barbara

has been watching services online every Sunday for quite some time. She is not a member but said she plans to join Village Church in December. Barbara said, "The service at Tallgrass was lovely and uplifting. The music was beautiful. It was so special to hear and see Dr. Rodger [Nishioka], Rev. Sally [Wright] and Bob Sperry in person and hug them.

A wonderful blessing—I so appreciated their time."

Linda Alley, coordinator for Pastoral Care & Counseling, said, "We had the best time. The pastors (Melanie, Sally, Tom and Rodger) were terrific. Village Church members—and several from other area churches who came—loved it and were so grateful. It was truly a touching experience."



Jean Francisco (R), charter member of Village Church



Nancy Gatewood with her dad, Ed Neufeld

Stephen Ministers Are Here to Offer Support this Season

Do the holidays seem extra challenging this year? Are you or someone you know struggling with loneliness, anxiety, grief, financial strain, job loss or other unexpected life challenges? If so, you don't have to face it alone. Village Church's trained, compassionate and caring Stephen Ministers are ready to listen, encourage and provide emotional and spiritual support. A Stephen Minister is available to meet confidentially with you (in person or by phone or video chat). For more information, contact Rev. Melanie Hardison at melanie.hardison@villagepres.org or 913-671-2367.

Honor Your Loved One Through the Poinsettia Ministry

When you purchase a poinsettia, you also honor a loved one and make a donation to this ministry. Your loved one(s)' name(s) will be printed in the February Good News. Each \$15 donation helps bring a poinsettia to a homebound member. Visit shop.villagepres.org/poinsettia or send the printed name(s) with a check for \$15 per person to Janice Gill, Village Presbyterian Church, 6641 Mission Rd., Prairie Village, KS 66208.

Child & Family Development Center Children Parade to the Food Pantry with a Bounty of Donations

The Village Church Child & Family Development Center calls it "Feathering the Turkey." The Center's food drive for the Village Food Pantry started in 2013. VCCFDC Assistant Director Jenny Hull said, "We didn't get to hold a food drive in 2020 or 2021, so we were excited to get back at it. In the past we had been collecting specific items for the Thanksgiving dinners that the Pantry distributes each year. This year we opened it up to all food items, plus personal hygiene items. We brought in a lot of soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, shampoo, toilet paper and tissues—in addition to food donations.

Each classroom had a construction-paper turkey hanging in the lobby. Each day of the two-week food drive, we would count the items in the donation box for each room and add that number of feathers to the class's turkey. At the end of the drive, we brought in 1,475 items—or as the Food Pantry figures it, 1,038 pounds of donations. This was our highest donation to date. Our previous record had been 1070 items in 2017. We had to stop feathering the turkeys one day early as we ran out of feathers!"

On Nov. 18, the two Pre-K classes, the Sunflowers and Willows, loaded up carts, wheelbarrows and a baby crib to get all the items across the parking lot. We delivered them, got to see how the giant scale worked by weighing one of our carts of food, and then got to go back to the store to see where people shop for their food. On our way out the door, there were cars lined up, and we explained to the children that these were people coming to get the food that they donated. It was such a great experience to have them see what happens to their gifts beyond dropping them in the donation box. And even more so, to see what's happening in the building across the lot from them every day. Between the two Pre-K rooms, they contributed 1,029 of the 1,475 items.

Jenny adds, "The next day a late donation showed up for another classroom adding another 100 items to the total, pushing us up to 1,575. All in all, it was a very successful event."

Dennis Cobb, director of the Food Pantry, said, "When one of the kids came in the front door of the Pantry, she saw the large Village Church logo on the wall and said 'That's my church!' She repeated it several times as we toured the Pantry. It's wonderful to know that we're not only making a connection with our clients, we're also helping Village kids learn, at a young age, the kinds of things that mean 'church.'"



MISSION



On Nov. 10, Mission Sewing's donation of 190 handmade dream bags was given to Project Warm Embrace with the Kansas Department of Children and Families (DCF)—destined for foster children in five counties in northeast Kansas. The bags can be used as a duffel to store a child's belongings as well as a pillowcase. Thank you, ladies; you show us what it means to care for "the least of these."

Decorate the Village Trees with Diapers, Hats and Mittens

From now through Dec. 24, come put hats, mittens and diapers (all sizes welcome including adult large and XL) on or under our trees so that we can offer them to families served by the Village Food Pantry and Clothes Closet. You will find the trees located in the Welcome Center and the south entrance of the Mission Campus. Contact Rev. Dr. Dionne Boyice or Sarah Dunne Pickrell at 913-671-2369 or missions@villagepres.org for more information.

Get Your 2023 Star Word

Star Words for 2023 are available in worship on Jan. 1. Star Words have become a modern-day ritual related to Epiphany (Jan. 6), when the wise ones are believed to have reached the Christ child by following the star. Like the wise ones, we seek Jesus, too, trusting that God uses many paths to bring us closer to the Divine. Star Words are paper or wooden stars featuring one word related to our spiritual life in Christ. You are encouraged to simply draw a star out of the basket (rather than hunt through the basket for a word you like) and thus let the word choose you. The idea is to journey with your word through the coming year—to notice where it shows up, how it moves your heart and the ways it brings you closer to God.

Baskets of Star Words will be available on Sunday, Jan. 8, in the Narthex, Welcome Center and Friendship Hall. After next Sunday, Star Words will be available at the south reception desk. Anyone unable to come to the church in person is welcome to email Rev. Melanie Hardison and she will draw a Star Word for you: melanie.hardison@villagepres.org.

UPCOMING SERMON SERIES

Who Does Jesus Say He Is? The Seven "I am" Statements of Jesus Christ.

Jan. 8-Feb. 19

We make the bold claim that we are the "Church of Jesus Christ" and that "Jesus is the cornerstone upon which the Church is built." But who is Jesus really? In the Gospel of John, there are seven times when Jesus tells us who he is; seven times Jesus says, "I am..." In this sermon series, Rev. Dr. Rodger Nishioka will explore each of these seven "I am" statements, and together we will discover what it says about Jesus Christ and what it says about us.

Meet the New Assistant Director of the Village Church Food Pantry & Clothes Closet



The Village Church Food Pantry & Clothes Closet welcomed a new assistant director on Oct. 31. Chantaye Hamilton comes to Village from a private medical clinic where she worked as an administrative assistant and lab specialist. She has training from Concorde College as a medical assistant and Saint Luke’s College of Nursing and Health Sciences in nursing. Food Pantry & Clothes Closet Director Dennis Cobb says he’s excited about the energy and new ideas that Chantaye will bring to the mission of the Pantry.

When asked about what excited her about this new position, Chantaye said, “Learning about the mission of the Food Pantry & Clothes Closet sealed the deal. I am eager to connect with our clients, helping them become more self-sufficient so they can have more of a sense of pride about their life and transfer that feeling to their children.”

Blessings Abound for the Bliss Family



Photo: Allison Carezza

Our Gathering music directors, Becky and Nathan Bliss, welcomed daughter Everly Sophia Bliss on Oct. 24. Everly arrived weighing 7 lbs. 15 oz. and 20.5 inches long. Becky says, “Everly has completely changed our lives and our hearts! She’s an amazing eater and sleeper, and she keeps us laughing all the time with her adorable facial expressions and funny grunts and gurgles. Though the lack of sleep was a shock, we’ve settled into a great rhythm; and we are loving watching her grow and change and become more aware and alert every day.” Congratulations to Becky and Nathan!

MLK EVENT RETURNS

**I Have a Dream (Home) Action and Celebration Event
Honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Returns to Village Church on Jan. 14**

As part of our city’s campaign to better know and welcome our diverse neighbors, STAND Up for Black Lives+ Prairie Village, the city of Prairie Village Diversity Committee, the Johnson County NAACP, and Village Church are sponsoring the Second Annual Prairie Village “I Have a Dream [Home]” Action & Celebration event honoring the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The event is from 4-5:30 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 14, at the Village Church Mission Campus. The 60-minute program will occur in the Sanctuary. A 30-minute reception will follow in the Welcome Center. Refreshments will be provided, and live jazz music will be performed. The program will also be livestreamed at villagepres.org/online.



This family-friendly event will feature Erin Royals (Center for Neighborhoods KC), Dr. Jameelah Lang (assistant professor, Rockhurst University), Ian Graves, Ph.D. (Prairie Village City Councilman Ward 6), Lynda Randle (singer/songwriter), Troy Sanders (youth singer), Shannon Benton-Dance Collective, the James Ward Jazz Trio and others.

Join us for this joyful celebration! Admission is free. Learn more and register at bit.ly/pvmlkcelebration.

DECEMBER CALENDAR

Dec. 11 – 3 p.m. **Service of Remembrance**, Mission Campus Sanctuary. At this service, share gratitude for loved ones who have died. If your loved one passed away during 2022 and Village Church was informed, his or her name will be included in the program.

Dec. 14 – 5-6 p.m. **Christmas Dinner**, Friendship Hall-Mission Campus. Our menu is honey baked ham, potato gratin, green beans, rolls and dessert. The cost is \$9 for adults and \$4 for children. Purchase dinners by noon Dec. 12, at villagepres.org/wednesday-family-dinners. Our next Wednesday Family Dinner will be Jan. 11.

Village U Class: **Who Was Jesus Really?:** Keeping the Christ in Christmas, 6:30-8 p.m. in Rooms 132 & 133

Village U Class: **Christmas in Bethlehem: The Palestinian Struggle for Justice**, 6:30-8 p.m. in Room 126

Register for Village U classes at villagepres.org/village-u-community-classes.

Dec. 16 – 7:30 p.m. **Community Messiah Sing-Along**, Antioch Campus Sanctuary. Join us for Handel's "Messiah." Audience participation welcome but not required. Admission is free.

Dec. 17 – 6:30 p.m. **Young Adult Christmas Party** at Boulevard Brewhouse Bar (2534 Madison Avenue, Kansas City, Missouri). Cost is \$15 per person plus at least one children's book to donate to Kansas City International Academy. Dinner and drinks are provided with your cost of admission. Find more information and RSVP at villagepresya.org/christmas.

Dec. 18 – 9:30 a.m. **Children's Christmas Pageant**, Antioch Campus Sanctuary. Get your cameras ready for some extra special cuteness as our children perform a short and sweet pageant during our regular worship service.

10:10 a.m. **Morning Stars Children's Music presents "Room for Christmas,"** Mission Campus Sanctuary. A group of children are presenting the annual nativity play but are tired of the same old story and want to give it a new twist. Can they do it and encourage everyone to "make room for Christmas" in their busy lives? A component of this musical is the inclusion of a toy drive; the congregation is invited to participate by donating new or gently used toys.

3 & 6 p.m. **Tidings of Joy** featuring Village Choirs & the Kansas City Wind Symphony, Mission Campus Sanctuary. Admission is free.

Dec. 19 – 7 p.m. **Christmas Concert "O Magnum Mysterium" with Te Deum Chamber Choir**, Mission Campus Sanctuary. Spanning more than 10 centuries, the music expresses the meaning of Christmas from generations past and present. Get tickets at te-deum.org.

Dec. 24 – Christmas Eve Services

Mission Campus – 3 & 5 p.m. Children & Families Worship Services; 7 & 9 p.m. Traditional Candlelight Services in the Mission Campus Sanctuary, 11 p.m. Traditional Candlelight Service with Communion. Child care will be available for the 5 & 7 p.m. services only. Christmas Eve services will be livestreamed at villagepres.org/online.

Antioch Campus - 5 p.m. Family Worship Service; 7 p.m. Traditional Candlelight Worship Service with Communion

Dec. 25 – **Christmas Day** – 10 a.m. service in the Mission Campus Sanctuary. Rev. Tom Are is preaching; 9:30 a.m. service at the Antioch Campus Sanctuary. Rev. Tim Soule is preaching.

Jan. 1 – **New Year's Day Services** - 10 a.m. service in the Mission Campus Sanctuary. Rev. Melanie Hardison is preaching; 9:30 a.m. service at the Antioch Campus Sanctuary. Rev. Dr. Rodger Nishioka is preaching.

Details at villagepres.org/Christmas

GOOD NEWS

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VILLAGE GIVING

Our 2023 pledges directly determine what is possible for us to do through mission and service, education and worship and music. Pledging enables Village to determine what commitments to make for the year ahead; it provides church leadership with an understanding of the resources available for those commitments.

At the same time, pledging is about more than what we can do. It is also about who we are. Making a commitment and giving annually to the church is one of the ways we express what it means to be believers and part of this faith community. Through generous giving, we express our gratitude for what God is doing in our own lives and in the world.



SUNDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

MISSION CAMPUS

6641 Mission Rd.

Traditional - 9 & 11 a.m.

In the Sanctuary

The Gathering - 5 p.m.

In Friendship Hall

ANTIOCH CAMPUS

14895 Antioch Rd.

Overland Park, Kansas

Traditional - 9:30 a.m.

In the Sanctuary

Call in to hear the previous Sunday's 9 a.m. Sanctuary worship service on our phone line **913-203-1301**.

IN MEMORY

John "Dale" Apel

Cal Engelmann

Janet Holman

Kathy Jackson

Jinx Johnson

Ruth Majors

Jerry Neill

Jack Scammahorn