



**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](mailto:laura.davis@villagepres.org).

## 2022 Meneilly Visiting Scholar Online Lectures with Kaitlin Curtice "Native Christianity: Rediscovering Our Story"

This year's Meneilly Visiting Scholar, Kaitlin Curtice, invites us to join her in exploring who we are as individuals, as Christians and as Americans. Born in an Indian hospital, raised in Oklahoma, and at one time, devoted to her Southern Baptist church, Kaitlin is the child of a mother of European ancestry and a father of the Potawatomi Nation.

For most of her early years, she felt embraced and loved by her church as long as she showed only her white part and left her Native part hidden. But as often happens, as Kaitlin matured, she realized there were more parts to her than the white Christian part. In time she discovered there was a wife part, mother part, writer part, and yes, especially a Native part. As she began exploring what it meant to be Native, she learned more of the Potawatomi language and culture, but she also learned of intergenerational trauma, the pain suffered by Indigenous people when the colonizers took Native land and attempted systematically to wipe out Indigenous culture and language. As she puts it, "I began the journey backward, which, for me, was the miraculous journey forward."

While learning more about her Potawatomi heritage, Kaitlin gained a richer way of looking at nature and new ways of experiencing her Christian faith—not simply as a white person, but also as a Native. When speaking in white churches, often she is asked how churches can be more inclusive and how to reconcile with Native persons, but she has no answer. As she sees it, reconciliation cannot occur without both recognition and an honest acknowledgement of the past. She readily admits that when we choose truthfulness, a lot of pain is uncovered, and life

becomes even more complicated. And yet, she believes God is all about relationship. It is not possible to have an individualistic faith, however contrary this sounds to the concept of "rugged individualism," that time-honored, American ideal. Until we understand that we belong to one another, there's no connection and thus no relationship.



Photo by Amy Paulson

**Kaitlin Curtice**

Kaitlin's writings remind us we're responsible for how we treat one another and the earth. We all began somewhere, and each of our stories affects how and with whom we relate. Acknowledging where we came from and who holds us causes us to remember that at one point, there was simply the reality of God. And then God breathed, and then God created. In God, we find a depth that holds us in a place and where we can seek connection.

This connection is one Kaitlin experiences with people and with nature; she believes we have a reciprocal relationship with the earth, one of mutual dependency. To recognize that a magnificent, mature tree might have a different way of knowing the earth is to be humbled. And once humbled, it's possible to love both creation and Creator more. She believes her role is to listen, observe, learn and be in relationship. She suggests this is exactly what the white church finds hard to sustain, for we've had the privilege of being able to look away when the looking, the listening, the relationship get too hard. But as she writes in her book, "Native," "What if the whole point is that growth comes when we least expect it, and we return to the same sacredness we are born from?"

**Continued on page 3**

## Reflections on the 2021 “Giving Thanks” Trip



With much anticipation, a delegation of 23 Village Church members, led by international mission director, Lora Garrison, departed for Dominican Republic on Nov. 19, 2021. This was the first time a Village group had returned to the sugarcane bateys since the pandemic. For Rev. Sally Wright, it was her first experience in the D.R. She shares, “What an honor to work alongside such amazing people and mission partners. Village Church members went above and beyond to radiate God’s love in such a tangible way.”

For Joyce Scammahorn—who also happened to celebrate a birthday that week—it was the experience of a lifetime, shared with her two grandchildren, Christian and Isabella Vaz.

“I was sitting in church reading the bulletin announcements waiting for the service to start and there it was: ‘You are invited to our inter-generational mission trip to the Dominican Republic. Teenagers must be 16 to travel alone.’ My two teenage grandchildren, Christian and Isabella, are 16 and 15. Their three older cousins had been on mission trips with our youth department in years past and experienced the benefits of serving and learning from others and their circumstances. This was the perfect opportunity for us to experience a mission trip and do it together.

Throughout the days of work, we rotated through medical stations, we learned, we sweated, hiking up the hills of the bateys to deliver food. We attended a church service in a batey where we felt and witnessed the faith, joy and love the people had for Jesus and for our group. All of this was the happiness we often search for in our lives... we received more from them than they received from us.”  
—Joyce Scammahorn



**Joyce Scammahorn with Kelly Horford of the Fundacion Enciende Una Luz.**

“My trip to the Dominican Republic changed not only my perspective on the world, but my approach to everyday life. From the first day, I saw the people in the bateys and I understood that God had brought me to that place not only to help our friends, but to help change me as a person through new experiences. I have a duty to be mindful of the resources I use after seeing people

who work 12-hour days get by with so little. I go forward with the mindset of not only being aware of my position in life, but utilizing that privilege to assist those in need, both in my community and elsewhere.”  
—Christian Vaz



"I boarded the plane with anticipation. I am used to traveling abroad because half my family is in Brazil, but this was a new destination; one in which I was not familiar and eager to experience. I've seen poverty from a distance my entire life, being that humble communities are visible throughout Rio de Janeiro where my grandparents and cousins live. This, sadly, was a reality I knew existed from a young age. The Dominican Republic was different and the same. Different in that we experienced this poverty in the most personal of ways: eating, volunteering and sharing connections with the people in the bateys. There was little to no separation between us, allowing me to realize the extent of the poverty I had only observed from afar. What was the same? The joy, the love and the spirit of the people. Regardless of their



**Isabella Vaz helping distribute groceries in the batey.**

challenging lives, they smiled, sang and loved deeply. Their hearts were open.

I flew to the Dominican Republic to give back. I did. But I also received much more in return: once-in-a-lifetime experiences, time serving with my brother and grandmother, and countless new friendships. In the short time I spent there, I grew more confident in my Spanish and was able to form deep connections with the Dominican kids we were

volunteering alongside. I still talk to my friends that I met there every week and I am so thankful for all they teach me about what it means to appreciate life." –Isabella Vaz

The next Giving Thanks mission trip to the Dominican is already in the works, so save the dates for Nov. 18-23, 2022.

## VISITING SCHOLAR continued

The point is that while we are here, Mystery asks us to set aside what disrupts our humanity and belonging for the change to see what is good and to fix the things that have been broken by hate. As we go, let's pray into the world what we believe is possible."

The program titles for Kaitlin Curtice's 2022 Meneilly Visiting Scholar Online lectures are:

### **Native Christianity: Rediscovering Our Story**

1. **Rediscovering Discovery: Decolonizing our Roots** – 7-9 p.m. Friday, March 4
2. **To Tell the Truth: Being Honest with Ourselves** – 9-10:30 a.m. Saturday, March 5
3. **Living into the Future: How We Move Forward** – 10:30-11:45 a.m. Saturday, March 5

The Visiting Scholar Committee is working to offer two viewing options for Kaitlin Curtice's presentations: online and on a big screen at the Mission Campus for those who prefer to watch with others. Check for updates on the Visiting Scholar web page.

**Register for lectures at [www.villagepres.org/visiting-scholar](http://www.villagepres.org/visiting-scholar).**

## George Darrington

### The Super "Super" of Village Church

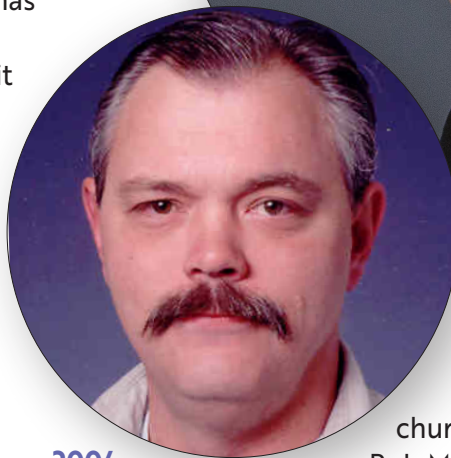
George Darrington celebrates a huge milestone this month: 40 years working for Village Church. He began in February 1982, during the recession of the eighties, with a young son (Matthew) on the way. He says, "I never thought this job would become a career, maybe just a few years." George has been buildings & grounds superintendent for 37 of the 40 years he has worked at Village Church. He currently manages a team of eight custodians, but it has been as high as 15. Many of George's crew have been here for decades. That's almost unheard of for custodial staff and a testament to George's leadership. "I remember going to meetings with the buildings & grounds supervisors at larger churches in the area, Church of the Resurrection, Colonial Presbyterian, and they couldn't believe how long my team had been at Village. We have been fortunate."

George is also father to twin girls, Lily and Emily. He and his wife, Pam, celebrate 33 years of marriage this month. His son, Matt, is now married with children: Miles, Grayson and Maliyah.

George is a Village Church institution; he is the holder of decades' worth of memories. George and his fellow team member, Tim Eidson, are the two remaining staff members who worked with Dr. Bob Meneilly, founding pastor of Village Church. He has been part of five major additions to our buildings. You know George is in the area by the sound of his booming baritone voice echoing in the hallways. Not long after, you'll hear laughter thanks to his sharp wit and knack for storytelling. George is quick to lend a hand and looks out for his flock, even serving as a security guard when the situation has called for it.

If you want to hear George grumble, ask him about his days serving as animal handler when a local farmer would drop off a donkey at the

2004



church on Saturday night so that Dr. Bob Meneilly could parade the animal through the Sanctuary Palm Sunday. George remembers pointing out to the farmer delivering the donkey that its coat was muddy and filled with burrs. "The farmer simply handed me a horse comb for me to clean it up. We would keep the donkey in the children's courtyard overnight," George recalled. "Sometimes it would rain, and I'd come in Palm Sunday morning to discover that the donkey had rolled in the mud. I'd have to hose him off before he went into the Sanctuary."

Now how does one get a donkey from the courtyard on the ground floor up to the Sanctuary? George would load it in the small, narrow elevator on the northeast side of the church. The donkey was less than cooperative. George had to wrangle him a bit—praying he wouldn't get kicked on the ride up. George would then stand outside the Chancel ready to hand the reins to Dr. Bob at the appropriate moment in the service. To George's astonishment, the donkey would mosey nice as you please into the Chancel led by Dr. Bob.



"The donkey did that every time. It was as if Dr. Bob was a donkey whisperer. I would be waiting in the Narthex for the handoff to get it out of the building," George says. "The donkey would notoriously lock its legs. I'd be pulling him, trying to get him to move, while the children with their palm leaves watched in horror wondering why I was being mean to the donkey." George laughs and adds, "When I hired a new young custodian, they were assigned donkey duty. One of the many things I like about Rev. Tom Are is that he doesn't have animals in the Sanctuary."

George and his team do countless behind-the-scenes tasks, from keeping our buildings clean, making the temperature comfortable, and doing hundreds of room set-ups every year. George's favorite thing to do at Village is opening the doors of the church on Sunday morning. "It's a peaceful time working on my own, preparing for the arrival of people. I really enjoy that." George arrives at the church at 4:45 a.m. Sunday mornings. "I make sure the building is ready for the service, from AC to heat, and setups are correct for the meetings. I check all the details to make sure it goes off without pastors and teachers needing to worry about that part."

Another thing George does on a regular basis is swap out the outdoor banners at both campuses. Laura Davis, director of marketing & communications, shares, "George is convinced we wait until the coldest or rainiest days of the year to swap those out. He says with a hint of sarcasm, 'Changing out banners is my favorite thing to do.' Visits with George are always a highlight of the day and filled with laughter. He'll do anything to help you. George is the best!"

When asked what has given the job staying power all these years, George says, "It's the people—the staff and congregation. And I get



**George and Dan Goodloe assist Jim Tilden disassemble the Village Church Mission Campus star.**

to do something different every single day; it is never the same thing twice. Just today I dismantled a giant star and now I am going to investigate a stinky smell at the daycare at 99th Street! It has gone by really fast."

"George Darrington is a gem—a big man with an even bigger heart," says Rev. Tom Are. "He is joyful, faithful and dedicated. He's cleaned candle wax off pew cushions, flood waters out of the first floor of the Sanctuary and put up and taken down Christmas decorations more times than I can count. He takes care of Village like it is his ministry, and it is."

### Welcome Cameron Rolling, Director of Music-Antioch Campus



Cameron Rolling joined the Village Church Antioch Campus choir in August 2021 as bass section-leader. He transitioned to the role of director of music in December 2021. He is currently attending the Conservatory at the University of Missouri-Kansas City in pursuit of two Master of Music degrees in choral conducting and vocal performance with a concentration in vocal pedagogy.

Prior to joining the Antioch Campus music department, Cameron served as the director of music at Centerville United Methodist Church in Centerville, Georgia for two and a half years while completing his Bachelor of Music in music education with concentrations in voice and conducting from Mercer University in Macon, Georgia. Please welcome, Cameron!

### Farewell to Karen Cox



We will miss seeing Karen Cox every Tuesday and Thursday at the south reception desk at our Mission Campus. Karen announced her retirement in January. She wants to have more flexibility to take care of her seven grandchildren ranging in age from five months old to 10 years old. Karen's husband, Glendon, is retiring in a few months, giving them more time to travel.

Karen started as a volunteer at the reception desk around 2013, then moved to a volunteer position in The Village Cup, and later to an employee position in The Cup. When Mary Cashin retired in December of 2019, Karen moved to her current position as facilities coordinator/receptionist, a position she shares with Karen Reimer.

As a youth, her family belonged to Village Church. Karen shares, "Like many, I was married in this church by Dr. Bob Meneilly. I have found Village Church to be a warm inviting place to work." Thank you, Karen, for being a warm face and a voice of welcome for Village Church.

## PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

### Mark Your Calendars for PW Spring Retreat "Walking in the Light" April 22-23



Please plan to join us April 22-23 at Heartland Presbyterian Center in Parkville, Missouri for a time to connect with God, old friends, new friends and the beauty of nature.

Our guest speaker, Rev. Dr. Suzan Hawkinson, is pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Deerfield, Illinois. Suzan earned her Master of Divinity at Princeton Theological Seminary and her Doctorate in spirituality at Columbia Theological Seminary. She has a certificate in Marriage and Family Therapy from the Menninger Clinic in Topeka.

She is passionate about helping people grow in faith and working in the world toward God's hopeful purposes.

Online registration opens March 4 at [www.villagepres.org/pw](http://www.villagepres.org/pw).

## FEBRUARY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### Feb. 9 – Village U Classes

**The Old Testament for a Complex World**, taught by Prof. Cameron B. R. Howard from 6:30-8 p.m. Wednesdays, Feb. 9-23, via Zoom only

**Outside of Ourselves: A Crash Course on Comparative Religions**, taught by Trenton Smith, Ph.D., 6:30-8 p.m. Wednesdays, Feb. 9-March 2, Room 126 and via Zoom

Feb. 10 – 12:15-12:45 p.m. **2nd Thursday Recital** with soprano Stacey Stofferahn, Mission Campus Sanctuary

**Village U Class: The Works of George Saunders: “CivilWarLand in Bad Decline,” “Tenth of December” and “Lincoln in the Bardo,”** taught by Kelly Fast from 6-7:30 p.m. Thursdays, Feb. 10-March 3, Room 233

Feb. 13 – **Souper Bowl Sunday** for the Village Church Food Pantry. Please bring cans of soup to the church.

Feb. 16 – **Village U Class: Abortion and the Church: Where Do Christians Stand in the Life and Death Debate?**, taught by Rev. Dr. Rodger Nishioka, 6:30-8 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 16, Rooms 132 & 133 and via Zoom

Feb. 19 – 9 a.m. **Telecare Volunteer Training** in Friendship Hall at our Mission Campus. Telecare volunteers spend a bit of time each month connecting with church members via caring phone calls and card writing. To sign up or for questions, contact Michelle Dicus by Monday, Feb. 14, at [michelle.dicus@villagepres.org](mailto:michelle.dicus@villagepres.org) or 913-671-2380.

Feb. 20 – 3 p.m. **Kansas City Wind Symphony Concert** in the Mission Campus Sanctuary.

Feb. 26 – 4-5:30 p.m. **I Have a Dream (Home) Action and Celebration Event Honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.** in the Mission Campus Sanctuary and livestreamed at [www.villagepres.org/online](http://www.villagepres.org/online). Village Church is hosting this event with Stand Up for Black Lives+ PV, the Johnson County NAACP, the City of Prairie Village Diversity Committee and Race Project KC. The event will focus on civil rights issues and making Prairie Village more welcoming to diverse people groups. Guest speakers include Dr. Jacob A. Wagner, a UMKC professor, director of urban studies and co-founder of the Center for Neighborhoods. We'll also hear from Rev. Dr. Rodger Nishioka, Prairie Village Mayor Eric Mikkelsen, Race Project KC Students and the Shawnee Mission East Jazz Band Combo.

### COMING UP IN MARCH

March 2 – 7 p.m. **Ash Wednesday Services** at both campuses.

8 a.m. service in Friendship Hall-Mission Campus. 30 minutes or less, with grab-and-go coffee.

**Ash-N-Dash** is from 7-8 a.m. and from noon-1 p.m. in the Antioch Campus parking lot.

March 8 & 10 – **Annual Meeting of the Congregation** - The Mission Campus meeting is Tuesday, March 8. Dinner is tentatively planned for 6 p.m. with the meeting to follow. If no dinner, the meeting will convene at 7 p.m. The meeting at the Antioch Campus is Thursday, March 10, beginning with dinner (if possible) at 6 p.m. Both meetings will include a review of 2021, end-of-year financials and the presentation of the 2022 budget. There will be a report from the Nominating Committee, as well as sharing of plans for 2022.

Look for updates on our website at [www.villagepres.org/upcoming-events](http://www.villagepres.org/upcoming-events), in the bulletin announcements and on social media.





## GOOD NEWS

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Vol. 60, No. 2

### VILLAGE GIVING

#### **Love, Joy, Justice, Sustainability, Peace...**

These words describe God's intentions for humankind and Village's hope for the world.

As loving generous people of God, we give our time, talent and treasure to bring these ideals into reality through outreach, programs for all ages, stirring worship and music and a sincere welcome to all.

—Village Giving Committee



### SUNDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

#### **MISSION CAMPUS**

**6641 Mission Rd.**

Traditional – 8, 9:30 & 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 9:30 a.m. Sanctuary worship service on our worship service phone line **913-203-1301**.

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Ann Closser

Nancy Cooper

Orpha Cox

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