A New Approach to Strategic Planning for Village Church

As the very successful Now & Tomorrow, Village Church Campaign was coming to a conclusion, the Session said we need a plan, strategies and priorities for what’s next. Rev. Tom Are approached Tyler Nottberg about chairing the Strategic Planning Committee shortly before he joined the Village Church Session in 2016. Tyler has extensive experience in strategic planning at his construction firm and in the non-profit sector.

In the summer of 2016, Session authorized the creation of a Strategic Planning Team. Members of the team included Tyler Nottberg (chair), Michelle O’Neal, George Satterlee, Henry Sewing, Mike Stradinger, Abbey Thomas, Lucy Tidwell, Kenyon Vrooman, Rev. Are and Dr. Rodger Nishioka.

“A very good cross section of unbelievably hard working and dedicated individuals participated in this,” said Tyler. “Over a period of 18 months, we had meeting after meeting and did a lot of homework, research and conversations. It was truly a labor of love for the committee.”

The last strategic plan had produced the Now & Tomorrow campaign, which saw the construction of the new Village Church Child & Family Development Center, renovation of the Sanctuary, building of the new pipe organ, construction of the Welcome Center and the establishment of two new mission funds.

Tyler noted, “We put all of these incredible physical assets in place with Now & Tomorrow, so we started by talking about how we should leverage those assets. The committee determined that the focus needed to be on the future of Village’s culture. In our many conversations, everybody talked about how much Village means to them, how much they love the work the church does, and how excited they are about what the future of Village holds—both for them personally and for their friends, family and other congregants. Getting to hear that was truly inspiring for committee members.”

At the Annual Congregational Dinner/Meeting earlier this year, Rev. Tom Are announced, “The Strategic Planning Committee has produced for us a strategic framework, not a plan, a framework for mission and ministry. They’ve done so by asking three big questions: Why do we do what we do? How do we do it? What is it that we do?

The ‘why’ is answered by our Mission/Vision Statement: Village Presbyterian Church is a family of faith actively shaped by the life of Christ to love one another, provide leadership for the transformation of our communities and to serve the world.

The committee didn’t change the mission statement that led us to the Now & Tomorrow Campaign. It is guiding us and this is why we’re about what we’re about. The committee identified three theological values that influence or shape everything that we do in the future—being incarnational, relational and missional.

1. We want to be incarnational in our ministry. The incarnation is the Christmas story. It is the story where we remind ourselves that in extraordinary love, God chose to come live where we live—to dwell with us. And if that’s true, and I believe it is, then that means WHERE you live matters to God—your place, your circumstance, your work, your life. And so as a church, this challenges us to think about everybody we encounter, who they are and that where they are in life and circumstance matters to God. And if THEY matter, it influences how we do what we do.

2. We’re going to be relational. What has become increasingly important to me is the story in the ministry of Jesus where a scribe came to Jesus and said, ‘What’s the most important thing to pay attention to? What are we about?’ Jesus responded, ‘Love God with all that you are and love your neighbor as yourself.’ What he said was what you are for and what you are about is love. That’s a relational value.

Continued
We Presbyterians love thinking about things. That’s our sweet spot. And that’s a gift we give to the larger church. But if thinking is all that you’re paying attention to, then you’re missing something. We’re called to love. If our thinking doesn’t exist in the service of love, it’s not Christian. And so we’re trying to emphasize that we are relational in all of our mission and ministry.

3. And we are missional. Our ministry focus must be broader than ourselves. Being missional means that mission is not something we do, but the very essence of who we are. It means that we carry the Good News of Jesus Christ to the whole world and that we experience the grace of God in and through our engagement with others.

We have four expectations. We want to grow to be invitational, magnetic, formational and leaders.

1. We want to be invitational. It’s very common for churches to say they want to be welcoming. We actually do that really well. But welcoming is passive. If we’re going to welcome somebody to Village, they’ve got to come here first to be welcomed. It’s dawned on us that Jesus did NOT say to the fishermen, ‘You’re welcome.’ He said, ‘Come, follow me.’ So what would happen if we would explore ways that we could be invitational, NOT just welcoming? What would happen if we actually paid attention to people in our lives who might enjoy Village?

It’s got to be incarnational. We’re not doing it for us, we’re doing it for them, because THEY matter to God. What would happen if we paid attention and said, ‘You know, you love to sing. I bet you’d love to sing in our choir. Do you want to go try it for a night?’ We’ve got to figure out how that fits our culture. But we’re feeling compelled to be more invitational in our ministry.

2. We also want to be magnetic. We want people to join us here, but we’re not sure that anybody knows that. That might be our secret. And so we’re going to try to be not so secretive about it. And then if they come to participate in something, we’d like for it to be good, so they’re drawn to come back.

3. We realize our ultimate calling is to be formational—not informational. Again we’re Presbyterians. That’s our comfort zone. We take the life and call of Jesus and we think about it. We do this service to suggest that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is ultimately a thought experiment. But what we’re really trying to do is to shape how we navigate through life and how we do that together. And so what we’re really doing is forming faith in one another.

4. Lastly, we know this church is well. We know this church is going to be here a long time. And so we need to think about what are we doing as a people that’s making sure that we develop leadership for us and for this city beyond us?”

“None of this is foreign or completely new to us. It’s just brought into focus,” said Rev. Are.
“There are a lot of people here on the Session and in the congregation in general who are committed to making sure that Village becomes the absolute best version of itself,” said Tyler. “And when we asked people why we did the Now & Tomorrow Campaign, that’s what they said—they wanted to know what we were going to do to keep getting better. Then when we discussed getting together with Village on Antioch, the conversation was about becoming a more fully informed version of who we are as a church in the wider community. A lot of the themes in the Strategic Framework are about embracing what that future looks like.”

“As part of our research, we got a lot of external data on church membership and its declining state across the United States—not just in the Presbyterian Church certainly, but also in many other faith-based communities. As we talked with individuals inside and outside of Village, it became clear that nobody wanted to be reactive or make excuses about how all churches are experiencing less interest, declining membership, etc. Nobody said that we should just try to do the best with what we have and hope that it all turns out OK. Instead, we heard that we should take control of our own future and make it better. That sentiment was clear in a lot of the interviews we did with youth, Presbyterian Women, members of the congregation, new members, founding members and more.”

“The committee thinks that the Strategic Framework needs to be used whenever the church is making decisions about what to do. The framework is meant to help everybody connect their efforts to the three questions about why we are doing something, what we are doing, and how we should do it. The committee discussed how we could not possibly know what kinds of obstacles or opportunities we’re going to face five years from now, much less 10 years from now. So the framework isn’t a plan that tries to predict the future. It’s meant to provide the staff, Session and congregation with the tools to make good decisions. That means constantly coming back to first principles.”

A Living Framework

“I think the church is now committed to the idea that strategic planning is an ongoing process. So this plan’s not static. It’s a living framework,” said Tyler. “Success will come from consistently living our vision and values. The definitions of those three values (incarnational, relational and missional) are things that we are going to need to continue to discuss in Session. They’re also terms that are being defined and discussed intensively by the staff, who are already taking the lead in applying those concepts to the activities that we are undertaking as a church.”

“One of the things we were able to say when meeting with the pastoral and business staff was that they needed to have the chance to help set what the action items needed to be, provided they are consistent with the Strategic Framework. There needs to be self-determination in setting some of those goals in order for the entire Village team to be able to engage in more...
Some have said we are defined by our work. Some have said we are what we eat. At the deepest level, we are what we love. We can love all manner of things. We love our families and we love vacation. We love our country and we can love good coffee. It seems that love just happens, that love is something into which we fall. But love is also chosen. It is important to ask ourselves if we love the right things. In this sermon series, Rev. Tom Are will explore how following the life of Christ is a practice of training our hearts to want what God wants, to love the right things. If we are what we love, then curating our hearts is important work.
Food Pantry
Spring is here, and the Clothes Closet is now accepting spring and summer donations. The donation times are found on the back page of this "Good News."

During April, the Food Pantry is requesting donations of creamy peanut butter. Each family gets one jar at every visit. We especially need the smaller, one-pound sized jars of your favorite peanut butter. Thank you also for recycling your clean plastic and paper grocery sacks for use by the Food Pantry clients. Donation drop boxes are at south and north main entrances, and near the crib room.

Village Blood Drive, Tuesday, April 17
Village Church on Mission will host a blood drive from 11 a.m.-6 p.m. on Tuesday, April 17, in Rooms 132 and 133. To make an appointment online, visit esavealifenow.org and use sponsor code “villagepres,” or stop by our registration table in Friendship Hall between 9 a.m. and noon April 8 or 15. For additional details, contact Ann Colston at 913-722-0165 or acolston1113@gmail.com.

Village Church Unites Front Porch Alliance & Thwake Village Partnership Through Robotics
Last December, Front Porch Alliance sponsored the FIRST LEGO League Robotics Program at Faxon Elementary in Kansas City, Mo. The theme of water gave Front Porch Alliance a golden opportunity to unite the kids with Rev. Dr. David Nzioka, former pastoral intern at Village and current pastor at Neema Community Church in Olathe. Dr. Nzioka was born and raised in the drought-ridden town of Thwake, Kenya.

Dr. Nzioka met with Faxon teams to discuss water-related issues in Thwake and brainstorm project ideas. He explained the Village Church’s participation in the Thwake Village Partnership (TVP) and their construction of Thwake’s first water well.

See the student’s hard work on the Thwake Village Partnership website: https://thwakevillagepartnership.com/faxon/.

Special Offering
There will be a special Sunday offering in April to raise funds for Thwake Village Partnership’s new church renovation project in Wote, Kenya. Look for announcements in the bulletin.

Village Church Meneilly Society
Legacy planning is more than just including Village Church in your will or trust. It is deciding what you can do now that will positively change your family and generations to come.

If you have included Village Church in your estate plan, please contact Molly at 913-671-2325 and become a member of the Meneilly Society.
Wednesday Night Dinner

Dine before or after your class. Salad bar opens at 5:15 p.m.; hot food buffet is open 5:30-6:30 p.m. These dinners offer an opportunity for everyone to enjoy a well-balanced, convenient meal. Full meal with salad bar and dessert is $7. Salad bar and dessert is $6. Children ages 4-10 are $3 and children age 3 and under are no charge. Contact Liz Middleton 913-671-2359 or liz.middleton@villagepres.org for reservations by noon Monday. NEW: Standing reservations are available on a pre-pay basis only. Contact Liz Middleton at liz.middleton@villagepres.org if you are interested in paying ahead for a month or more of your meals.

Menu:
April 11 — baked potato bar, hot wrap sandwiches (meat & vegetarian)
April 18 — Italian roast chicken, eggplant Parmesan, pasta w/tomatoes, vegetable
April 25 — Drive-in night! Burgers, hot dogs, onion rings, etc.
May 2 — Cinco de Mayo — nacho bar, chicken fajitas, veggies

Join us for

Art & Hors d’oeuvres

5:30-7 p.m. • Friday, April 13

VISITING SCHOLAR

More than 200 people came to Village on Mission March 9 and 10 for the 2018 Visiting Scholar, the Rev. Dr. Serene Jones, president of Union Theological Seminary. Dr. Jones talked about how American history and our theology shape our personal experiences. Using personal stories from her own family, she demonstrated how white supremacy, slavery and the Trail of Tears show up in our family histories many generations later. She stressed the importance of honestly facing sin and the resultant “dance” of sin and grace, leading to redemption.

Dr. Warren Carter will be our 2019 Visiting Scholar. He has a hometown connection. Dr. Carter taught at St. Paul’s School of Theology for 17 years and taught several Sunday school classes at Village. He is professor of New Testament at Brite Divinity School in Fort Worth. His focus has been on the gospels of Matthew and John and on how early Christians negotiated the Roman empire. Dr. Carter earned his Ph.D. from Princeton Theological Seminary, his Th.M. from Melbourne College of Divinity and his B.A. from Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.

Mark your calendar for March 1 and 2, 2019.
Alzheimer’s Support Group Meets Twice a Month
If you have a loved one or know someone who is living with Alzheimer’s, join us every first and third Wednesday for our support group. This group meets from 3:30-4:45 p.m. in Room 124. Contact Rev. Len Carrell at len.carrell@villagepres.org to find out more.

New Growing Through Grief Series Starts April 25
If you are grieving the loss of a loved one, consider coming to Growing Through Grief, a five-week class where you can learn more about the grieving process, meet others who understand your struggles, and be reminded that God is with us through even the hardest of moments. The next series is from 5:30-6:45 p.m. every Wednesday, April 25-May 23, in Room 124. You’ll receive your own copy of “Understanding Your Grief—Ten Essential Touchstones for Finding Hope and Healing Your Heart,” by Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D. This is optional reading, but many have found it to be incredibly helpful. There is no cost to attend, but registration is required. Contact Linda Alley at 913-671-2327 or linda.alley@villagepres.org for more information or to register.

Stephen Ministry Retreat Saturday, May 5
Guest Speaker Professor Allan Hugh Cole, Jr., Ph.D. presents "The Authentic Caregiver and The Power of Vulnerability"
Join us from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday, May 5, to listen to Allan Cole, Jr., Ph.D. as he draws from his personal experience to encourage caregivers to recognize any tendency within themselves to avoid offers of care and to replace it with what he calls “the practice of a more radical vulnerability and authenticity.” Diagnosed with young-onset Parkinson’s disease at the age of 48, he recounts how becoming more authentic, vulnerable and open, both to his own fears and needs and to the care and support of others, has helped him live with more joy, peace and hope. Professor Cole teaches and conducts research at the Steve Hicks School of Social Work at the University of Texas at Austin. The retreat will be in Friendship Hall at Village on Mission. Lunch will be provided. All members are welcome to attend. Contact Rev. Len Carrell at 913-671-2347 or len.carrell@villagepres.org for more information.

WOW Lunch at Tatsu’s
Women of Wisdom (WOW) is excited to return to one of our favorite restaurants, Tatsu’s, for a noon lunch on Tuesday, April 17. Tatsu’s, at 4603 West 90th, is an exquisite French restaurant, known for its consistently excellent food and gracious service, in a private and peaceful dining room. We welcome all women to dine together and enjoy fun conversation and fellowship. RSVP by April 16 to Marvie Sneegas, sneegi@kc.rr.com, 913-209-9608.

PW Spring Retreat April 27-28, Registration Deadline: April 11
The 2018 PW Spring Retreat will take place April 27-28 at the beautiful Heartland Presbyterian Camp in Parkville, Mo. Don’t miss this chance to spend time with the great women of Village Church in a lovely, natural setting. The retreat begins Friday evening and motel-like rooms are available for overnight guests. There is also the option of attending as a commuter.

Rev. Melissa Anne Rogers, associate pastor of Pastoral Care and Congregational Life at First Presbyterian Church of Ann Arbor, Mich., is our keynote speaker. There will be time for fellowship, prayer, reflection, singing and worship.

Registration is open until April 11 at www.villagepres.org/pw. Contact Lucy Tidwell at 913-486-7129 or lucytidwellco@gmail.com if you have any questions.
There is perhaps no greater composer to help us celebrate the joyful season of Eastertide than Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. The program will feature renowned violinist David Hays performing Mozart’s “4th Violin Concerto” and the Village Chamber Choir, with soprano soloist and Village intern, Jee Yeun Kim, singing the Mozart Vespers.

Dr. David Hays has performed with the Minnesota Orchestra, the Chicago Symphony and others. He is the concertmaster of the Springfield Symphony and serves on the faculty of the music department at Missouri State University. Jee Yeun Kim is a graduate student (D.M.A) in vocal and opera at the University of Kansas.

A retiring offering will be taken for the Veterans Community Project – an organization dedicated to providing homes for Kansas City’s homeless heroes. VCP aspires to use Kansas City as the blueprint for achieving similar successes in cities across the United States. In contrast to traditional homeless services, a tiny-home provides the Veteran with privacy, a sense of security and the ability to reintegrate at a comfortable pace. Veteran services are facilitated through an onsite community center that provides the Veterans with mentoring, case management, counseling and linkage to other programs and services.

**Second Thursday Recital April 12**

Please join us at 12:15 p.m. Thursday, April 12, in the Village on Mission Chapel, for Second Thursday with soprano Kayleigh Aytes. Ms. Aytes is enchanting audiences with her graceful voice and elegant musicianship. Her recent engagements include collaborations with the Te Deum Chamber Choir and the Kansas City Baroque Consortium as a guest soloist.

**KC Wind Symphony Concert May 6**

The Kansas City Wind Symphony will present their final concert of the season, “Top Of The Pops,” at 7 p.m. Sunday, May 6, in the Village Church on Mission Sanctuary. Admission is free. This performance will feature music by: John Phillip Sousa, Roger Cichy and more. This concert will also feature guest soloists Dr. Chris White on trombone, and Dr. Zach Shemon on alto saxophone.
AARP 55 Alive Driving Class – 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Thursday, April 12, in Room 232. Class will be taught by veteran instructor, Terry Barker. The cost is $20 ($15 if you are an AARP member) per person payable to AARP. To enroll, please call Marianne, 913-671-2333.

Understanding Housing Options Available to Seniors – Most of us love our houses, and want to stay there, even as we age. However, we never know what the future may bring, and remaining in our house may become unsafe or even unaffordable. You owe it to yourself to create a “plan B”, so that when an unforeseen event occurs, you and your family members will know exactly what to do. Presented by The Education Group, an organization of knowledgeable volunteers with the goal of providing information that aids people in making decisions on issues that come with Aging. 6:30-8:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 17, in Rooms 228 and 229. Contact Marianne to register at 913-671-2333 or marianne.weber@villagepres.org.

Upcoming Village U classes:

Daily Practice of Yoga – In each session, participants will be guided through breathing exercises, movement, and meditation. Jack Whitaker has years of experience as a yoga instructor and is glad to offer this at Village Church. There is no charge but donations to the church are encouraged. 10-11:30 a.m. Tuesdays, April 10, 17, 24 and May 1, 8, 15, Room 15.

Beginner Google Sheets – Learn to create spreadsheets in a web-based environment that can be accessed from any Windows or Apple device. The class will explore the components of a spreadsheet, entering data into a spreadsheet, formatting information, sorting data, and inserting and deleting rows and columns. Students will create a simple spreadsheet during the class to reinforce learning. 1-2:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 10, OR 6:30-8 p.m. Thursday, April 12, in Room 316.

Infant, Child & Adult CPR Basics-Evening – Join us for this instructor-led course that will teach students critical skills needed to respond and to manage a first aid, choking or sudden cardiac emergency in the first few minutes until emergency services arrive. Additional class fee: $12. Taught by Peggy Tingle. 6:30-8 p.m. Tuesday, April 10, in the Multi-Purpose Room (99th & Mission Rd.).

Day Trip - Johnson County Museum – The Johnson County Museum offers innovative, engaging, and challenging programs that will inspire all learners to discover a sense of place and spark excitement about history. The Museum offers long-term and changing exhibits, children’s history exhibitions, online resources, school, youth and Scout programming, lectures and walking tours, and special events. The historic collections include more than one million photographs, 18,000 3-D artifacts, and 300 cubic feet of archival material. Cost for the tour is $30 per person. Georgia Klein, Facilitator. 9:30 a.m.-2 p.m. Thursday, April 12.

Flower Arranging – Come enjoy this instructor-led course. Learn how to create your own fresh floral arrangement to display in your home this spring! Additional class fee: $35. Taught by Katherine Taylor. 9:30-11:30 a.m. Tuesday, April 24, in Room 133.

Game Night – Looking for a fun night out? Come the first Thursday of the month to learn a new board game or play an old favorite. No previous experience needed! Come laugh and meet new friends. Games provided but feel free to bring your own, too! Facilitated by Kyle and Sandra Stephens. 6:30-8 p.m. Thursday, April 26, in Room 233.

Intermediate Google Sheets – This class is recommended for those who have a basic understanding of Excel OR Google Sheets. Topics include filtering and sorting data, creating charts and graphs, and utilizing functions to easily perform mathematical and statistical calculations. 1-2:30 p.m., Tuesday, May 8, OR 6:30-8 p.m. Thursday, May 10, in Room 316.

From Eve to Gomer: Women of the Old Testament – Some of their names are recorded in the Old Testament and some of their names are not. Some of them have leading roles in the story of the Hebrew people and some of them are mentioned only in passing. Yet all these women play a part in our history. Participants in this course will explore these women and together, we will learn more about each of them and how together, they have influenced our life and witness as followers of Jesus Christ. Taught by Dr. Rodger Nishioka. 6:30-8 p.m. Wednesdays, May 9 and 16, in Rooms 232 & 233.
ADULT EDUCATIONAL MINISTRY

Adult Sunday Morning Classes:

The Faith Journey class is studying Marcus Borg’s book, “The Heart of Christianity- Rediscovering a Life of Faith,” in which he explores what he calls two paradigms for looking at our faith and how those can work together. Led by Kathy Ray in Room 230.

Foundations of Faith – This class is studying the significance of Jerusalem, the holiest city for the three Abrahamic faiths of Islam, Judaism and Christianity. Taught by the Rev. Dwight Tawney, the class enjoys thoughtful discussions and conversation prompted by this beloved teacher who served as one of the pastors here at Village Church. Room 15.

Growing Together – If you are interested in biblically-based lessons that help you increase your impact on others in your life, then you should drop into Room 124 at 9:30 am. You will find a small group exploring the Acts of the Apostles. Facilitated by Lawrence Andre, the group is asking where we are called as apostles and what that even means. Room 124.

Village Forum – April 8-May 20 (except April 22) Rev. Dr. John Borden will conduct “Early Christianity and the Beginning of the Church,” a six-week exploration for those who seek to understand the impact on the eventual shape of Scripture of the early years before and after Christ. On Earth Day, April 22, join us for “From Couch to Earth Care in Five Steps,” presented by Rev. Chad Cooper, executive director of the Sustainable Sanctuary Coalition. With concerns about the state of the environment growing, encouraging people of faith to become more involved in protecting the earth is more important than ever. Room 126 and 127.

The New Tax Reform– How Will It Affect Your Charitable Giving?

By Judy Frame Wiseman

6-7 p.m. Tuesday, April 24, in Room 132

Major changes to our tax rules were enacted in late 2017 and may have an impact on your charitable gift income tax deduction for 2018 and beyond. If you are 70 ½ and have retirement distributions, we’ll talk about why making your charitable contribution directly to the charity from your IRA may be even more advantageous for you after tax reform. We will also talk about why tax reform may affect your tax deduction from your gift and ways to maximize the tax benefit of your gift. If you have other questions about the new tax laws, bring those too!

Village Elder Judy Frame Wiseman is a CPA, tax lawyer and teaching professor at UMKC School of Law.

APNC Elected for Searches in Pastoral Care and Children & Family Ministry

At a Congregational Meeting on Sunday, March 18, the congregation elected the Associate Pastor Nominating Committee that will conduct the search for an associate pastor in Pastoral Care and the director of Children & Family Ministry. The APNC members include Erica Brune, Kevin Hennessy, Linda Lee, Michelle O’Neal, Dan Robeson, Julie Sykes and Lisa Wright.
March 18 Baptisms
Please welcome these newest members into our church family: Joseph Madden Fisher (Taryn and Craig Fisher, parents); Silas Boyd Walker Holladay (Meredith Holladay and Zach Walker, parents); Carson Dean Cross (Sara and Chase Cross, parents); Ava Elizabeth Herwig (Emma and Andrew Herwig, parents); and Everett Wesley Nower (Alissa and Kevin Nower, parents).

New Babies
We celebrate and welcome the birth of Gabrielle Leilani Bessem Agbor (Valentine Agbor and Jennifer Moyer-Agbor, parents) and Noah Christopher Langford (Andrew and Michelle Langford, parents).

Join Us for our Village on Mission Preschool Open House
During Art and Hors d’oeuvres
During Art & Hors D’oeuvres from 5:30-7 p.m. on Friday, April 13, we hope you will ooh and ahh over our art in the Children’s Hallway and on the playground. As artistic inspiration, the Village on Mission Preschool students will be reading ”Only One You” by Linda Kranz to create our Village Rock Garden, which will celebrate the uniqueness in us all. Artist of all ages are invited to our playgrounds where you can design an inspirational rock to be added to our garden. We always look forward to this evening where we can showcase the children’s creative spirit for all to see!
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VILLAGE COMMITMENT

Awe Moment

"On Christmas Eve, I was moved by what I experienced at Village on Antioch. For the first time since becoming one church, the pews were full and, more than ever, hearts were open. Children and music filled the Sanctuary, candles were lit and tears were shed. As I looked out on a Sanctuary that was full of life, love and hope, I saw more than one very special moment, I saw the future of Village Presbyterian Church on Antioch."

—Ryan Main

Your generosity brings our mission to life and we are grateful!

WORSHIP SCHEDULE
SUNDAYS

VILLAGE ON MISSION
Traditional – 8, 9:30 and 11 a.m.
In the Sanctuary
The Gathering – 5 p.m.
In Friendship Hall

VILLAGE ON ANTIOCH
Traditional - 9:30 a.m.
In the Sanctuary
14895 Antioch Rd.
Overland Park, KS 66221

Food Pantry & Clothes Closet Drop-Off Hours
10 a.m.–2:30 p.m. Monday-Friday
9:30–11:30 a.m. Saturday

www.villagepres.org

IN MEMORY
Joan Beaver
Sara Krueger
Betty MacNaughton
Robert “Bob” Mealman
William “Bill” Nulton
Carolyn Stauffer
Sally Porter
Retiring as Music Coordinator

Sally Porter has served as music coordinator for Village Church for the past 17 ½ years. She has announced that she will be retiring at the end of April. Sally is one of the unsung heroes of Village Church, doing countless daily tasks to ensure the Music Ministry Department runs smoothly and stays on track.

A Passion for Music Since Childhood

Sally grew up as a Presbyterian in Clay Center, Kan. She was the middle child with an older sister and younger brother. “We had a piano that was also a player piano. Dad would pump the pedals; and I could sit next to him and the rolls would roll. The piano would dazzle me as a little child, and we would sing. I played drums in elementary school because all the cute boys in the band played drums. Then my sister encouraged me to play string bass in the 7th grade because I could play in the orchestra and the band and I was tall. That started a very fun time because I got to play in the jazz band, in the orchestra and in the concert bands. I also took piano lessons all through high school.”

Sally went to K-State on a music scholarship to be a music education major. She transferred to Indiana University after two years to complete her music education degree. “I did my student teaching in South Bend, Ind. and had my first teaching job as a Catholic high school vocal music teacher, which I had no business doing, but I was hungry. I came back to Kansas in 1980 when I was hired by the Lawrence School District as an elementary/junior high orchestra director. In 1982, the Olathe School District hired me as an orchestra teacher at Olathe South High School and several elementary schools in Olathe. I was there for five years. I worked a total of 17 years as a public school orchestra teacher.”

Joining Village Church

Sally was a single teacher. She also played string bass in the Overland Park Symphony and Kansas City Civic Orchestra. “An orchestra friend of mine sang in the Village Choir and encouraged me to come to Village. I came and heard Bob Meneilly’s sermon and heard that wonderful choir and organ. I transferred my membership from my hometown church to Village Church in 1984.”

A Village Love Connection

“I never had time to do the Singles’ program at Village on Tuesday night because I had orchestra rehearsal. But when summer came, I wanted to have a vacation. So I slipped into a meeting to see what the Singles’ group was going to do for the summer. That night was the last night to sign up for a canoe trip in southwest Missouri, so I signed up. Jim [Porter] had heard about the Singles’ program and had never really attended either. He had wanted to do canoeing and he signed up. Jim had heard that I didn’t have a canoe partner. He came through the breakfast line when I was serving and said, ‘Why don’t you canoe with me?’ I said, ‘Great!’ We had a lot of fun.”

“That was the summer of ‘84, he proposed to me in May of ‘85 and Dr. Bob married us in the Chapel in October of ‘85. Our son John was born in 1988. Two years later, we had Emily. I’m very proud of my kids. They were raised here at Village. Emily is a physician’s assistant in Indianapolis and John is a
mechanical engineer at Honeywell. He plays trombone in the Village Brass.”

Sally stopped teaching in 1991 to stay home with her kids and taught piano lessons. “When Emily was in first grade, I was hired as an orchestra teacher for Shawnee Mission School District where I worked for five years at Mission Valley Middle School. At 49 and with a son in middle school, I was ready to do something different.”

**A New Career at Village**

On Nov. 10, 2000, Sally’s husband, Jim, left his jacket at Village Church. “So on Monday, I came through the church to pick up his jacket; and I went through the business office. Nancy Butcher was Dwight Tawney’s secretary and she said, ‘We need you! We're looking for a music coordinator.’ By the time I got home, Bill Baker called me and asked me to come in for an interview. He offered me the job and I accepted and started work Nov. 11, 2000. Mark Ball was hired in June 2001 and Matthew Shepard (a junior at William Jewell at the time) was right on the heels of Mark’s first day.”

“Mark really didn’t know what to do with me because he hadn’t had a music coordinator before. So, he told me, ‘Just keep the numbers straight. Keep us on track. Do that organization stuff that you do really well.’ And he entrusted it to me. It’s wonderful to have a boss who says, ‘I’m going to rely on you to keep our budget numbers straight, the music library straight, to keep the rosters straight.’”

Most all of Sally’s hard work takes place behind the scenes. “I do a lot of crossing the t’s and dotting the i’s. We have 44 five-drawer file cabinets of music under the Sanctuary. I keep that all straight. Any new music that comes in, I get volunteers to stamp the music with Village Church and number it for the library. I get ushers for our music events and act as house manager of those concerts.” Those are just a few of the countless details Sally sees to for Village Church Music Ministry.

**A Cancer Survivor**

Sally was diagnosed with T-cell lymphoma 10 years ago. “Thankfully, we caught it early at Stage 1. I did six separate chemo treatments and three months of radiation. I was able to keep working all the way through that health challenge, which was a blessing. I received great support from Village Presbyterian Church and lots of prayers. Like our wonderful Kathy Lueckert [a two-time cancer survivor] says, ‘We’ve been given another day we weren’t promised.’”

**The Decision to Retire Now**

Sally just turned 66. “My husband’s been retired for four years. He’s been saying, ‘So when you retire, look where we can go camping. When you retire, look where we can go visit.’ It’s a great time to retire when you’re healthy. You’re at a point you know how quickly health can change as the years go forward. Also, my daughter is getting married in September. This allows me a lot of freedom to go see her more. We started becoming bird people when our kids were in college because it was a cheap hobby. We’ll also be able to do a lot more birding. I also want to join a little ukulele group at Grace Covenant.”

April 30 is her official retirement date, but you’ll still see Sally around Village. “I’m in Circle 1, have handbells on Thursday mornings and Bible Study with Judy Cooper on Wednesday mornings. Jim will continue as coordinator of the Community Garden, which supports the Village Food Pantry. We’ll still be here on Sunday morning in the balcony. We’re balcony people.”

“Eighteen years has gone by fast. Eighteen years has a lot of stories. I’ve gotten to know a lot of great staff members. It’s been a pleasure to work with a great team - Will, Matthew, Elisa, Jenny and Mark.”

To the congregation, Sally says, “Thank you for your generosity of providing such fine pastors, music directors and staff members. I’ve had the blessing of working alongside them, which I will always treasure. I love this church!”