The second of four sons, Dr. Rodger Nishioka was born in Honolulu, living there until the age of 8. His father is a graduate of the American Baptist Seminary of the West. His first call was as an assistant minister at Makiki Christian Church in Honolulu. "I grew up an American Baptist, which is one of the reasons I know and love scripture so much," says Rodger. "Then Dad got a call to the Japanese Presbyterian Church in Seattle and that was where I spent the rest of my formative years."

Rodger received his bachelor’s degree in English and History, and a Teaching Certificate for Secondary Education from Seattle Pacific University. He got a job as a Junior High School teacher right away. "I had a great time teaching junior high for three years. My whole life I've known that teaching is my gift. I love to teach. I love being in the classroom. I love learning and watching others learn and being part of that learning process."

"Fresh out of college, I worked for a year as a youth ministry intern with the Presbyterian Church USA. When I returned home to the Pacific Northwest, I was asked to apply for one of the youth ministry positions with PC (USA). I said, 'No I'm teaching, having a great time. I'm engaged to a woman I love, and I know I'm going to stay here and teach and get married and have kids and be done.'

One of my spiritual gifts is that I've always been able to sleep, which is why I do well in youth ministry. I can sleep on floors, on buses and planes. After I was asked about this position at the national headquarters and said no, I'm not going to interview, for a number of days, I couldn't sleep. My mom said, 'Maybe you aren't listening. Maybe God is saying to you, you need to pay more attention.' So after a week and a half of this, I called this executive back and said, 'I think I'm supposed to interview with you but I'm not taking the job.' He said, 'That's okay. Just come and talk to us.' That night, I slept like a rock.

I went and had a great interview. On the way back to the airport, he offers me the job and I said to him, 'No thank you!' I came back to Seattle. My fiancé picks me up at the airport and says, 'How did it go?' I said, 'Great. I'm not going to take it.' Then, once again, I can't sleep.

Over the course of the next several weeks, several things happened. My engagement breaks up over a really significant issue about children – I wanted children,

Continued
she didn’t. We’ve remained friends. The irony is that she has gotten married and has had kids and I’m still single, never have gotten married or had kids.

Then, I got an award in my third year of teaching for one of the school district awards for Teacher of the Year, which is kind of weird because it was my third year. I thought you get that after teaching for 30 years. So I call the guy back in Atlanta and said, ‘I think I’m supposed to talk to you some more.’ He said, ‘If you want the job, it’s still yours.’ And so I said yes.

I moved to Atlanta, and began my work for PC (USA) right before they moved the national headquarters to Louisville, Ky. Eventually, I became coordinator of youth and young adult ministries for the denomination.

Pretty quickly in, I realized that if I was serious about this, I needed to get to seminary because I didn’t know enough about the Bible and theology. They had a seminary there in Louisville that I wasn’t really interested in. But I was interested in one in Chicago. So after about six years of working, I gave my resignation to my boss and he said, ‘No thank you!’ And I said, ‘Wait…WHAT?’ He said, ‘Rodger, you’re doing really good work. Why do you want to do this?’ ‘Well, I want to go to seminary in Chicago.’ And he said, ‘Let’s work this out.’

And so for three years, I commuted back and forth from Chicago to Louisville. I got my Master of Arts in Theological Studies from McCormick Seminary in 1998 and came back to work. Then by 2000, I realized I think I’m done doing this and started doctoral work in Chicago at Northwestern. At that point, I was starting to be known. When word got out I was doing Ph.D. work, I got calls from the presidents of three seminaries looking for Christian Education professors with experience in youth ministry. I interviewed at all three, was graciously offered a position at all three, and ended up choosing Columbia Seminary in Atlanta, mostly because of the students who are there. So I joined the faculty at Columbia Seminary in the fall of 2000 and was there for 15 years.”

“The epiphany for me is great students make us greater teachers. They call out the best in us. And that’s one of the reasons why I’m here at Village. I sat with the APNC at Village and remember thinking, ‘If these are the kinds of persons you’re calling me to work with, to be with, then this could be really fun.’

In the announcement of Rodger’s departure from Columbia Theological Seminary, the president, Dr. Leann Van Dyk, said, “Rodger Nishioka is one of the most energetic and animated speakers I have ever witnessed. His passion is infectious! He has truly been a gift to our community, and we know he will make a great impact in and through the work of Village Church.”

The Road to Village
Rodger and Rev. Tom Are have been friends for 30 years. Rodger recalls the first time they met. “I was working for General Assembly and Tom was a pastor at Seven Oaks Presbyterian Church in Columbia, South Carolina. I think it was his first call. He and I met at a weekend retreat for the Presbytery. He was the preacher and music leader that weekend and I came in to be keynote speaker. Friday night was his first worship service and first sermon and I remember thinking, ‘This guy is good. He’s a great leader.’ The kids loved him, adults loved him. We roomed together and became friends. That was over 30 years ago. We’ve followed each other’s trajectory since then. Our paths have crossed over and over again.

Tom invited me to come to Village for this lecture series a few years ago and said, ‘We’re trying to get a handle on young adults.’ I had received a grant and was doing research on this. So I came to share that with Village and had a great time. Never thought I would end up here, but really enjoyed Village Church.

A few years later, I heard that my friend, Cynthia Holder Rich, who had been called as your director of Adult Educational Ministries, had left Village. Tom sent me an email with the job description and asked if I knew of anyone I might recommend.
Then, I was granted a year-long sabbatical. It gave me a chance to rethink. I thought, ‘Tom and I are the same age. Do I stay here at Columbia, which I can do and finish up my career teaching here, or, are you calling me, Lord, to something else?’

Along with this gift of sabbatical, I’ve got two books that I’m working on to finish. This is the time to figure it out. If you stay, you’re going to keep on teaching. If you go someplace else, you need that time to invest in that community and work in whatever that may be.

Also, I had just spent time with Meg and Jarrett McLaughlin over at Burke Presbyterian in Virginia. They invited me to come do a week of preaching and teaching during the summer. They were both talking about how much they miss Village and how much they love Village. And I thought, ‘Huh?’

So I remember calling Tom and saying, ‘Hey, about that position you talked about?’ And he said, ‘Yeah?’ I think he thought I was going to give him some new names. But I said, ‘This is something I’d like to explore.’ Tom gets excited and says, ‘Just come for a conversation.’ I said yes.

I wrote Tom a letter, which he gave to the APNC. I came to Kansas City in early December 2015, and we had a conversation together. That night, I couldn’t sleep. I was at the Raphael on the Plaza tossing and turning. My mind was racing, ‘Oh, we could do this, or THIS could be exciting. We could think about this. There are some definite possibilities here.’

Now I love Columbia Seminary and I love teaching. I was an endowed chair in a tenured position. But I thought this could be really fun to try a new way of being faithful in ministry.

Tom called a couple weeks later and said, ‘What are you thinking?’ And I said, ‘I’m thinking this is a possibility. And he got really excited. And I said, ‘Yeah, let’s talk some more. Let’s just pray and ponder over Christmas and see what the Holy Spirit is saying.’ Then in January, we talked some more and I said, ‘Okay!’

I asked my dean of faculty to be a reference for me. I told her this is as close as I’ve come to a possibility of doing something else. The APNC followed up on my references. Everything seemed to be OK. So, we all agreed, ‘Let’s do this!’

Rodger began as director of Adult Educational Ministries at Village Church on March 20. ‘Since then, I’ve been learning a lot about Village. Sometimes your first inclination is to make changes right away. But I want to spend maybe six months to a year learning what the organization is like, learning the people.’

What would Rodger like the people of Village to know about him? ‘That first and foremost, I love Jesus Christ. I’m doing my very best to follow him. There is so much apathy in young people today when it comes to church. All of my brothers and me are involved in churches. And I thought to myself, ‘What is it that Dad and Mom did?’ They hit upon this formula early on – that their first love is God. Then the second relationship is loving their families. And their third is loving their work, whatever their call is.

I also want the congregation to know that I LOVE teaching. I think I’m called to be a teacher because I think it helps us become more attuned to the Holy Spirit and how the Holy Spirit’s out working in the world.

I’m going to teach quite a bit at Village. For instance, this summer, we reduce down to one Adult Sunday Class and the class focuses on whatever the text is of the worship service that day. In past summers, we’ve sort of divvied that up among staff and our seminary students who are members of Village. I said to Tom, ‘I’d like to get to know people and the congregation to know me. I want to pick up the majority of those myself and teach those.’ And Tom said, ‘That would be great!’

I think part of the relationship that students and teachers have is a need for some consistency. We’ve got some wonderful adult classes where you get that. I also see myself consistently teaching Wednesday Nights or Tuesday nights and then Sunday mornings as well.

Continued
Village, You're Going to Flip!

Rodger is especially excited about the possibilities of engaging technology as a tool in our adult education classes. “There’s a lot of conversation right now in higher education about flipped classrooms. So the question is what is the point of gathering together physically in a room? Is it to listen to someone lecture to you for 40 minutes? Answer is: ‘No! Thank you for playing. You can watch that online.’

At Columbia, I’ve done a number of things where I’m flipping my classroom, where I’m posting lectures for instance, as you’re reading, think about this or think about that – then they do the reading. Then, when we’re in class, it’s a chance for students to talk about the reading, reflect upon the reading, to hear others’ reflections on the reading. There’s still value in coming together for those conversations. The cool thing about people watching the content on their own schedule is that they can watch for five minutes, stop, tend to the kids, and then come back and finish up late at night when they’re free for the last 12 minutes. But when we come together, then we can talk about what does this have to do with us. How does this make us more faithful? I’m wondering if there are ways for us to flip classrooms here.

In the research I’m reading right now, the generational divide, technology wise, is collapsing. Some of our older adults are as adept and doing just fine on the fundamentals - on emails, on Facebook, etc. Also, there’s a lot of conversation right now on how we have moved from an ‘information age’ to a ‘discernment age.’ There’s a ton of information out there. People aren’t so much asking for more information, but they are asking for discernment. How do I manage so much information? So much information out there is stupid information. So how do I decide what is worthy of my attention and what is not? That, I think, is the new crux of educational ministry – helping people discern the great questions of our lives. What is God calling us to in this day and age?

Presbyterians in particular believe that no one person has the corner on truth. Even yourself. So we believe we’ve got to be together as a community of faith to discern faithfully, what it is God is calling us to do and to be. That sounds like a classroom to me.

Where together we look at scripture and think, ‘Here are five different looks, different scholars, all valid, who talked about what this scripture is saying. I can put that out in 17 minutes in an online lecture. Then we come together for 45 minutes and say, ‘Choose one of the five. What aligns most closely with you and why? Then together as a group ask, ‘What do you think God is calling us to do together as a group?’ And the last part of the 30 minutes or so beyond the 40 minutes of conversation is ‘So if that is what we think God is calling us to do, then how do we enact that?’ I would do that here at Village Church — how to make a difference in this world for God’s glory. Those are the kinds of things I’m envisioning technology will allow us to be able to do.”

Rodger is one of the most sought-after preachers in the PC (USA). He speaks all over the world. “In December I was invited to come teach at Trinity College in Singapore. I was recently in South Korea, teaching and preaching in a seminary there. I’ll still be speaking, but on a much more limited basis because my responsibilities have shifted. When I do speak, it will now be as a staff member of Village Church. I think we’re called to seasons of our lives. And this is a different season.”

Speaking of different seasons, ordination may be in Rodger’s future. “I am ordained as a ruling elder but not a teaching elder. One of the things I’ve talked about with the APNC and the Presbytery is that now that I’m actually called to a congregation, I hope to pursue the possibility of being ordained as a teaching elder here at Village Church, which would be a different part of my life.”

You can often hear Rodger’s unmistakable laugh rolling out of the Adult Educational Ministry Office. Adult Ed Coordinator Marianne Weber observes, “Rodger laughs very easily. He’s also very gracious, genuine and conscientious. It’s a great atmosphere in which to work.”

Longtime friend, Rev. Tom Are, says Rodger stands alone as one of the church’s most gifted teachers. “His enthusiasm is unending. His intellect, winsome spirit and skill in communication have combined to make him sought after as a preacher and teacher across the globe. But even more than his gifts, I celebrate Rodger joining our team at Village because he holds an honest but deep love for the church, for all of God’s people. And besides all of that… he’s really funny!”
Food Pantry
For the month of May, the Food Pantry is collecting assorted canned vegetables: all varieties of beans, whole and creamed corn, asparagus, spinach, potatoes, peas, tomatoes, etc. Each family gets a minimum of six canned vegetables with each visit. They are often on sale. Please bring a few cans with you on your visits to church.

The Clothes Closet, besides accepting spring and summer clothing, is asking for household items - like pots, pans, dishes, glasses and miscellaneous kitchen items. Thank you for your continuing support of this important mission.

Cross-Lines Cooks a Meal
On Friday, May 13, Village will cook and serve a meal at the Cross-Lines kitchen in Kansas City, Kan. We need four to five volunteers to help cook from 9:30-11:30 a.m., and three to four more to help serve from 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m. We also need cookie donations. They can be dropped off at the church reception desk from 8 a.m.-4 p.m. on Thursday, May 12. If you can help, contact Marianne Weber at 913-671-2333 or marianne.weber@villagepres.org.

Witness Offering Pentecost Sunday, May 15
This offering is divided among Village Church (40%), Heartland Presbytery and General Assembly for children at risk, ministries with youth and ministries with young adults. Yellow envelopes for this offering are available in the hymnal slot in each pew.

Village Golf Classic, May 16
Time is running out to register for the 12th Annual Village Golf Classic on Monday, May 16. We have some incredible prizes lined up this year, in addition to excellent silent auction items that are ripe for the taking! Like last year, the golf tournament will take place at Country Club of Leawood. Your registration fee includes lunch, golf cart, prizes and awards, and the “tee party” at the end of the day. This tournament not only benefits the great work of the DRMP, but it’s also great fun! We hope you’ll join us—you can register online at www.villagepres.org or you can fill out the registration form (found in various places around the church) and return it to VPC. For questions, contact Andrea Huffman, director of international mission, at andrea.huffman@villagepres.org.

Celebration Dominicana—Join the party!
This event at 6:30 p.m. Friday, May 13, at the Vox Theatre in KCK, will truly be a celebration of our work in the DR—with live Merengue music by Pablo San Hueza and dancing, a silent auction, fund-a-need, and a raffle, great barbecue from Fiorella’s Jack Stack and beverages, and some special guest appearances by our friends from the Dominican Republic. Bring a bottle of multi-vitamins or ibuprofen and your first beverage is free. Child care is available at the church with advance registration by Friday, May 6. For more information or to register, go to http://www.villagepres.org/celebration-dominicana.html

Front Porch Alliance Names New Executive Director
New Executive Director Roxana Shaffé comes to Front Porch Alliance from The Whole Person agency where she has been a public policy specialist. She graduated from UMKC with a Bachelor of Liberal Arts and received an Executive Master of Public Administration from the UMKC Bloch School of Management. She has extensive experience and leadership in both nonprofit and business organizations. We welcome Roxana and look forward to realizing our vision of preparing Eastside kids for their future with Roxana at the helm.

We invite you to meet Roxana and to tour the newly renovated Linwood Place including the Front Porch Alliance offices during an Open House from 2-4 p.m. Sunday, May 22, at 3210 Michigan Avenue at the corner of Linwood and Bruce R. Watkins Drive.
**Weekly Wednesday Dinners**

Dine before or after your Wednesday class. Salad bar opens at 5:15 p.m.; hot food buffet is open from 5:30-6:30 p.m. These dinners offer an opportunity for people of all ages to enjoy a well-balanced meal that is convenient. A full meal with salad bar & dessert is $7. Salad bar & dessert is $6. Cost for children ages 3-10 is $3 and children age 2 and under-no charge. Contact Liz Middleton at 913-671-2359 or liz.middleton@villagepres.org for reservations.

**Last WND Menu:**

May 11—Pasta bar w/meatballs, vegetarian sauce, cheese-stuffed breadsticks

Our Village Church Morning Stars children will perform at the May 11 dinner!

Please note that May 11 is the last Wednesday Night Dinner for the 2015-16 school year. Dinners will resume Sept. 7, 2016.

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**MUSIC MINISTRY**

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**Second Thursday Recital**

12:15 p.m. Thursday, May 12

Guest Artist: Tenor Jeff Howe

Jeff Howe is our Village Church tenor intern. He also sings with the Grammy-winning Kansas City Chorale and is an undergrad at William Jewel College. Jeff will perform songs accompanied by Mark Ball on piano.

The 30-minute recital in the Village Chapel is free and open to the community.
Come to the Career Center

Are you searching for a new job? Consider attending the next Career Center to learn ways to find job openings, how to approach these employers, and conduct a planned, step-by-step job search. The next series begins at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, May 16, in Room 232. Contact Linda Alley at 913-671-2327 or linda.alley@villagepres.org to register.

Families For Mental Heath to Discuss Suicide Prevention

At 7 p.m. on Thursday, May 19, you’re invited to hear Tanya Hessong from Johnson County Mental Health speak about “Suicide Prevention.” This is such an important topic, one that affects so many. Sharing and caring follows the presentation. Families for Mental Health meets the third Thursday of every month in Room 126.

Nurses Needed

If you are a nurse and are interested in helping both members and others in our community, consider joining Village Nurses. Village Nurses help out at both the church and the Food Pantry, offering health education, nutritional advice, blood pressure checks, support and so much more. If you are interested, contact either Betty Crooker at 913-432-2649 or bcrooker@ecckc.com (for helping at the church) or Betty Parker at 913-362-6773 or olliebehr@gmail.com (for the Food Pantry).

Women with Spirit Book Brunch

Laugh, Chat, Chew, Share . . . Read! It’s that time ladies! Come one, Come all to our annual Women with Spirit Book Brunch from 9:30-11:30 a.m. on Monday, May 16, in Village Church’s Small Dining Room. Simply wrap one of your favorite books (new or used) to swap for another’s good read. It’s fabulous fun and child care is provided! Your check for $7 made out to “PW of Village Church” will serve as your official RSVP. Mail to Julia Scammahorn, 15705 Dearborn St., Overland Park, KS 66223. For food preparation, checks must be received no later than May 9. To reserve child care, contact Pam Southerland at 913-671-2352 by May 9. Contact Julia Scammahorn at juliescammahorn@hotmail.com with questions.

WOW Visits Briarcliff Village May 17

Is your interest piqued by a transportation-provided spring outing to Briarcliff Village in the KC Northland for lunch and shopping? Women of Wisdom (WOW) certainly hope so as we invite all women to join us on Tuesday, May 17, for lunch at Trezo Mare, probably best known for its diverse Italian-American cuisine, but with a menu that includes all styles of food. Among the shopping options are the upscale Nell Hills furniture store, and boutiques that feature clothing, jewelry, accessories and more. Or, if shopping isn’t your thing, there are pleasant, comfortable areas to just relax and people watch. Complimentary transportation will be via commercial van that Diane Quaintance has graciously agreed to drive. The van can accommodate a maximum of 14, but others can car pool and follow the van. We will leave from the south parking lot promptly at 11:30 a.m. and will return by approximately 3 p.m. RSVP by Monday, May 16, to Diane Lee at 913-432-4321, or dianelee@att.net or to Marvie Sneegas at 913-209-9608, or sneegi@kc.rr.com.

Endowment Trust - Meneilly Society

I met my wife Elizabeth through the singles ministry over twenty years ago while volunteering for Habitat for Humanity and since that time Village Church has become like our second family. We love that Village is all about cultivating relationships and loving one another despite our differences. Village’s strong ministries allow us to do God’s work through mission work and for us, Village has been there during trying times through the Care and Counseling Ministry. We love Village Church because ingrained in all of its works is love - the greatest commandment of all. This is why we have included Village Church in our estate plan. We want our last gift to Village to be a legacy that helps continue God’s love for all mankind long after we are gone.

—Terry Dahl
ADULT EDUCATIONAL MINISTRY

Mass Incarceration Symposium
The Village Church Social Witness and Advocacy Task Force will host a symposium on Mass Incarceration in America at 7 p.m. Wednesday, May 18, in Friendship Hall. Mass Incarceration refers to the high numbers of young men from poor, disadvantaged neighborhoods sentenced to long terms in America’s prisons. The U.S. makes up 5% of the world’s population and holds nearly 25% of the world’s prisoners. Excessive, disproportionate sentencing practices, particularly mandatory minimum sentencing for drug offenses, have resulted in an overcrowded prison system. Black and Hispanic defendants constitute the majority of people subject to these mandatory minimums.

Moderated by Rev. Brian Ellison, panelists will discuss the history, causes, consequences and possible remedies to the problem of mass incarceration, with particular focus on the response of the faith community. Panelists are Sean O’Brien, attorney and professor of law, UMKC; Rev. Dr. Wallace Hartsfield, II, pastor, Metropolitan Missionary Baptist Church; Lora McDonald, executive director, MORE Squared; Darryl Burton, former inmate and current seminarian, St. Paul’s School of Theology; and Arlin Buyert, Village Church member and teacher of poetry to inmates at Lansing Correctional Facility.

Finding the Face of God in Art - What artists work so hard to do is convey something real and truthful about life and the world we live in, much like the stories of our faith attempt to do. How would our interpretations about art, music and drama change if we viewed them through a theological lens? For example, how is God viewed differently in the musical Les Miserables, or where do we see the face of God in the artwork of Picasso or Van Gogh? Come, and together let’s try to explore art through a theological lens, and perhaps we might just “taste and see that the Lord is good.” Taught by Rev. Len Carrell from 6:30-8 p.m. Wednesdays, May 18 & 25, in the Chapel.

School of Theology - The Mysterious Member of the Trinity - The Holy Spirit, the third member of the Trinity, is called by many names and is vital to our personal growth and journeys in many ways and, at times, through mysterious roles and relationships. The class is an exploration of this mysterious and least understood member of the Trinity. Underneath the veil of mystery you will find an aspect of God essential to life and an intimate relationship with God. Taught by Dr. John Borden from 6:30-8 p.m. Wednesdays, May 18 & 25, in Room 132.

Adult Sunday Morning Classes
9:30 a.m.

The Faith Journey class continues to look at faith’s role in various aspects of today’s world. Cherie Brown, Mary Snyder and Kathy Ray will each be exploring this question using three books: Jesus, Pope Francis, and a Protestant Walk into a Bar: Lessons for the Christian Church by Bill Tammeus; An Other Kingdom by Walter Brueggemann; and Who Speaks for God? by Jim Wallis. Room 230.

In Cloud of Witnesses, Dr. David May will teach about “The Biblical Concepts of . . . Dreams, Laughter and Money.” We will explore the understandings of dreams, humor, and money from the biblical perspective of our ancestors in faith. The sessions will be now - May 15: “To Sleep Perchance to Dream”: The Biblical Understanding of Dreams; May 22: “God Laughed”: The Biblical Understanding and Use of Humor; and May 29: “Money, Money, Money”: The Economics of Jesus.

The Growing Together classroom is watching and discussing a PBS documentary that illuminates the writing of the four gospels and the western history that influenced the Christian religion. The Growing Together Sunday School class is a group of parents who explore continued...
Christian lessons that connect the times of Jesus to our modern day. Room 132.

9:30 a.m.

On May 8, the Village Forum class welcomes Rev. Len Carrell who will discuss “Finding the Face of God in Art.” 9:30 a.m. in Rooms 126/127. The class will join with the Cloud of Witnesses class on May 15, 22 and 29 to hear Dr. David May.

10:45 a.m.

The Inquirers class is viewing and discussing The Ten Commandments. Facilitated by Don and Barbara Wilson. Associate facilitators are Diann Markley, Glen Meredith and Richard Lumpkin. All are invited to join this welcoming study group. Room 124.

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1 - 3 p.m. Saturday, May 28

Start your Memorial Day Weekend with cool people in a cool place! No golf experience required to eat food and enjoy new friends. $10 per person. RSVP to hallie.hottle@villagepres.org by May 20.

YOUNG ADULTS @ TOPGOLF

Topgolf, 10611 Nall Ave. Overland Park, KS
Church-Wide Pancake Breakfast with Chris Cakes
9 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Sunday, May 15, Cost is $5 at the door.

6th Grade Move-Up and Family Brunch
Sunday, May 22, will be our 6th graders last day with us as they are officially welcomed into Middle School youth. To celebrate, parents and 6th graders are invited for Sunday Brunch to meet the Youth Staff and get to know what Middle School Youth is all about. Watch your mailbox for more news.

Moose on the Loose - Creations by Kids
The following camps have a few more spots available:
- June 6-10 morning sessions:
  - Science Sampler (Grades K & 1)
  - Literacy Camp! (Grades 2, 3, 4)
- June 6-10 afternoon session:
  - Penguins on Parade (Grades K & 1)
- June 13-17 morning session:
  - Sewing with Mary (Grades 1 & 2)
- June 13-17 afternoon session:
  - Moose Math and Lemonade (Grades 3, 4, 5)
- June 20-24 morning session:
  - Sewing with Mary (Grades 3, 4, 5)
- June 20-24 afternoon session: Kindness Starts with Me (Grades 3, 4, 5)
- June 27-July 1 morning session: Art Exploration (Grades 3, 4, 5)
- July 5-8 morning session: Tournament of Games (Grades 3, 4, 5 & 6)

May 29 – Memorial Day Weekend
Kids’ Kingdom classes will combine for a Broadly Graded class in Room 307.
This year, take on a new tradition. You and your family can work together cleaning up a neglected area of a cemetery. Use the opportunity to teach kids the importance and history of Memorial Day.
Find more ideas, crafts and activities at http://www.apples4theteacher.com/holidays/memorial-day/

Farewell to Mich Phillips, Associate Director of Youth Ministry
Mich Phillips came to the Village community 2½ years ago, impressing us with her enthusiasm, creativity and compassion for students. In that time, students who have met Mich also know how much she is interested in their lives, cares for their well-being, and has a passion for developing their connection with God.
On every trip she took with students, it was not long before she was known as “Mom.” It was the best expression students gave to the feeling they had in Mich’s presence: she took care of them, looked out for them at all times, and was there for them when they needed her. In doing so, she taught all of us what it looks like to love as Jesus loved. It is a lesson we would do well to hang onto, and in doing so, a lesson that honors Mich and what she taught us.
Mich departs Village in order to spend more time with her twin boys, both of whom have autism, once again teaching us what it means to love well. You will be missed, Mich!
—Rev. Zach Walker
Pastor of Youth Ministry
Please join us at 12:15 p.m. on Sunday, May 15, as we gather near the northeast entrance of Village Church to dedicate a wind sculpture in memory of Brady Stratton. Brady was the daughter of Kim and Brad Stratton, and the older sister of Corinne Stratton. Born with a rare condition called Trisomy 18 (Edward’s Syndrome) and not expected to live more than a year, Brady lived to be 23-years-old. She passed away on Feb. 19, 2014. Although Brady was never able to walk or talk, she was able to spread her unconditional love through her radiant eyes, gleaming smile and wonderful bear hugs.

Brady spent many Sunday mornings in the Village Church nursery. That is why the wind sculpture in Brady’s memory will be placed near the Child Care wing.

Rosemary Marshall, who works in the nursery on Sunday mornings, recalls, “Every Sunday, the family would bring Brady into the nursery. When her sister Corinne was old enough, Corinne picked out Brady’s hair bows and the outfits she would wear on Sunday. Brady always looked so stylish with Corinne’s help. Brady was so patient with the infants that would crawl around her and sometimes crawl over her. There came a time when Corinne wanted to spend time with her sister in the nursery; I could see the special sister connection they had. When Corinne would come in the nursery and play with Brady, she would show enjoyment with her smile and brushing Corinne’s hair in her fingers. Brady would grab on hugging and kissing on the cheeks of her parents and her sister Corinne when they came to pick her up. Brad, Kim, Brady and Corinne were a perfect example of a loving family. I have benefited as a person from knowing this lovely family. Brady was my Sunday buddy and I miss her a lot.”

After her passing, Corinne Stratton wrote this about her sister: “My special sister, Brady, joined the angels in Heaven a little after midnight on Wednesday morning as she left this life on earth to go give Jesus the biggest hug. We are so blessed to have had Brady with our family for 23 years and we are thankful for every single hug she gave. From the very first days of being sisters, to the last night in the hospital with her, she kept reaching her arms out to hold on tight. Now I have complete joy in knowing that she is holding on tight to her Savior and doing everything in Heaven that she couldn’t do on earth. She is free from her Trisomy 18 and can run and walk and talk and sing with the angels.”

Brad, Kim and Corinne knew that Brady was that precious angel in their lives, that “messenger from God” to strengthen their faith. Kim stated, “Brady filled our lives with abundant joy while teaching us compassion, empathy and unconditional love.”

The family is so grateful for the gift of Brady’s life and the ability to share it with so many in the Village Church family. They cherished all the support and prayers over Brady’s lifetime and witnessed how Brady gave and received so much love.

Corinne, Kim and Brad and their families invite all who knew and loved Brady to join them for the dedication of the memorial wind sculpture. Rev. Jenny McDevitt will lead the service. Through a generous gift made in memory of Brady and funds from the Children & Family Ministry department of Village Church, the wind sculpture was purchased from the Leopold Art Gallery in Brookside.
Village Commitment

At the Heart of Giving…

“Sometimes the heart sees what’s invisible to the eye.”

~Alfred Lord Tennyson

This favorite quote reflects exactly what altruistic giving is all about here at Village Church. Many times we don’t physically see what our generosity yields, but we know we have given and volunteered for the least of these many times over. We are humbly and abundantly grateful for your actions that are driven by what God has placed in your heart.

~Village Commitment Committee
VIVALDI & FRIENDS IN THE VILLAGE
PRESENTED BY THE VILLAGE CHOIR, CHAMBER CHOIR & ORCHESTRA
3 P.M. SUNDAY MAY 15, 2016
VILLAGE SANCTUARY
VILLAGE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
6641 MISSION RD. PRAIRIE VILLAGE, KS 66208
FREE ADMISSION
A RETIRING OFFERING WILL BENEFIT THE OUTREACH EFFORTS OF THE VILLAGE ARTS ALLIANCE

The program for “Vivaldi & Friends in the Village” will include Vivaldi’s “Spring” and “Summer” from The Four Seasons, Schubert’s Mass in G, Vaughan Williams’ Five Mystical Songs and Gjeilo’s Evening Prayer. Soloists for the concert are Devin Burton, baritone, and violinist Sarah Titterington Ibbett.
The retiring offering of the May 15 “Vivaldi & Friends in the Village” concert will go to the Village Arts Alliance Outreach Ministry, sponsoring music teaching efforts at three urban-core schools: Faxon Elementary School, Nowlin Middle School and Van Horn High School.

This is a fairly new ministry of Village Church. Music Ministry Director Mark Ball shares the background of how it came into existence:

In April of 2015, we performed a concert at the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts called “Village in the City.” The concert featured our own Village Choir and a professional orchestra, and choirs from Baker University and Benedictine College.

Several months earlier I had told a church musician colleague about the concert. He is one of the teachers at Van Horn High School in Independence. The day of our performance, he and his teaching partner brought 40 of their students to our performance. Many of these students had never attended such an event, and they enjoyed it very much.

Conversations with these teachers after this event led me (and us) to begin imagining a partnership with music teachers in urban core schools. We wondered if there were people and resources at Village Church which might contribute to the teaching efforts of these deeply committed teachers who work in challenging settings with few obvious advantages.

So far – our creative collaborations have included the following:

Nowlin Middle School Choir – “Black and Gold” was chosen to perform at the regional convention of the American Choral Directors Association in March. We helped them prepare for this by hosting an evening concert here in our Sanctuary on Feb. 23. In addition, we helped fund a string quartet (players) who accompanied their performance for the convention, and helped with other expenses related to that event for which they had no funding.

On Feb. 20, I was able to spend a Saturday with “Black and Gold” – providing piano accompaniment for a day-long workshop event that helped them prepare for their upcoming performances.

In conversations with the music teacher at Faxon Elementary School (where many Village Church volunteers connect with students every week – Faxon is in the Ivanhoe neighborhood), we learned that the school was in need of percussion equipment for its music program. We are raising funds to secure for them the equipment they need to more fully engage all of their students in the joy of learning music.

After many years as a public school music teacher (before I came to Village in 2001), I have learned to notice extraordinary teaching. The music teachers in these three schools are doing amazing work, and with very few resources. Their students are enthusiastic and hard-working, and eager to excel in musical performance. Our efforts have been a significant source of encouragement to all of these good people, and have provided connections between our diverse communities. We are now more aware of the tremendous efforts these teachers and administrators make to provide the best musical experiences for their students. We are happy to be a small part of that effort.

—Mark Ball, director of Music Ministry