Dear Village Church Family,

I have been thinking during this time when on-site ministry at the church is suspended for an indefinite period of time, that there are rich gifts in this season. I don’t say that to belittle the suffering, the death, or the battle that so many are waging against this virus. I don’t say this to belittle the struggle that more and more are facing each day because of a job that has gone away. I don’t say this to overlook the demands that isolation places on the human spirit. I don’t say this to ignore the stress that comes with the uncertainty of knowing when life will return to whatever our new normal might be. None of these are gifts. No, these are hardships that are shared in unequal measure by the whole world.

But in the midst of hardship, there are always gifts. I find myself paying attention to things that I took for granted just a few weeks ago. How can I reduce the number of trips I take to the grocery store? How do I practice patience and take the long view? How do I maintain some structure in a season when every day looks a lot like every other day? Each day I find myself assessing, what is most important. That’s a good thing. It’s true with faith as well.

I know that many, recognizing we can’t see each other in person, are spending more time not just doing business but connecting with friends and family through video calls. Several of you have shared that you have begun reading the Bible on a daily basis, a practice that is new. Some are using this time to pray for those who are hit hardest in this season. I have talked with some of you who are making a “check in” phone call to a neighbor who lives alone. All of this is good and you may not think of it this way, but it is faithful ministry.

A joy in my life has been, with the loss of face-to-face meetings, I have made sure I make more phone calls and I have loved those conversations. In short, no matter the circumstance in which we find ourselves, faith can still be practiced, ministry can still occur. That’s a gift in this season.

Shalom,

Tom

Village Session Establishes COVID-19 Relief Fund

When our Village Session met online on Monday evening, April 6, they established a COVID-19 relief fund. Donations are already made to this fund. These donations will be used to assist any in our church family or beyond who are in need in this difficult health and economic time. If you have a need, email pastoral-care@villagepres.org.

Rev. Tom Are Continues Facebook Live Bible Study

Rev. Tom Are will continue to offer a Facebook Live Bible Study at 7 p.m. Wednesdays through the month of May. You will find this on our Village Church Facebook page. Because it happens in real time, you will find it as the latest post on www.facebook.com/villagepres at the scheduled time.
Join us for Online Worship
On-site worship is suspended until further notice. Join us at 8, 9:30 and 11 a.m. Sundays for online worship at www.villagepres.org/online. We eagerly await the time when we can be with each other again. We will notify you when it is deemed safe for us to return to in person worship.

Instructions for Accessing Online Worship
You can also link to the livestream of worship from www.villagepres.org. Click on the big purple box with our online worship times and you will go directly to the livestream page. When the online service time arrives, click within the big purple screen to view the livestream service.

A New Way to Stay Connected - Call In To Hear Sunday Morning Worship
We have set up a phone number to call to listen to worship. Call 913-203-1301 to hear the 9:30 a.m. Sunday service. Once you make your first phone call, you can opt-in to be called automatically each Sunday morning at 9:30 a.m. Note that Caller ID will show the call is coming from Atchison, Kansas. Don’t worry. It’s just how our phone number assignment came through on this new system.

Listen to Worship on 1660 AM
We are on a week-delayed radio broadcast of our worship service. It airs at 8 a.m. Sundays on 1660 AM.

The Gathering, Alternative Worship, Online
The Gathering is offering music and prayers at 5 p.m. Sundays at www.vpcthegathering.org/

Daily Video Devotionals
Your Village Church pastors continue to provide Daily Video Devotionals titled, “Speaking of God.” You will find these on our Village Church Facebook page, website and on our Village YouTube Channel.

Subscribe to Village Church Emails
You can sign up to receive Rev. Tom Are’s Weekly eNote, Speaking of God: Daily Video Devotionals from your Village Church pastors, and the Village on Mission and Village on Antioch Weekly eNews. Go to www.villagepres.org/subscribe to subscribe to any of these emails.

Tech Help from Computer Ministry
As we are relying more and more on technology for worship and connecting with others, if you are needing patient, caring, expert help, our computer ministry team is here for you. Email Dee Couch at deecouch@kc.rr.com or call Laura Hobbs at 913-671-2323 and they will put you in contact with a member of our Computer Ministry team to assist you.
NEW SERMON SERIES

There’s a Call For You
The Bible is full of stories where God calls individuals, and sometimes groups, to live in a certain way or perform certain tasks. God calls Abraham to a journey. Jesus calls fishermen to come and follow. Christ calls Saul to become the Apostle Paul. Does God still call people? More to the point, do you have a call — or maybe a collection of calls from God? Rev. Tom Are’s series will explore this question. We will ask, how does faith in the risen Christ influence every aspect of our lives? To what is God calling you?

- May 10  What is Yours To Do Today?
- May 17  Nine to Five
- May 24  You Gotta Be Kidding Me
- May 31  Looks Like God Wants a Church

ADULT EDUCATIONAL MINISTRIES

Discover Your Calling
Led by Rev. Dr. Rodger Nishioka, senior associate pastor
7-8 p.m. Thursdays, May 14, 21 and 28 via Zoom

One of the key ideas that Presbyterians believe is that all persons have a calling from God. The task of followers of Jesus, then, is to discover and live into that calling. This calling has both personal and corporate dimensions but it is lifelong. To complement Senior Pastor Tom Are’s May sermon series “There’s a Call For You,” participants in this class will explore how God calls and to what God calls. Together, we will discern what the Holy Spirit is calling us to do and be right now. For more information, contact Rodger Nishioka at rodger@villagepres.org.

Planning for Fall Village U
We are starting to add Village U classes to our Fall 2020 Course Catalog. If you are interested in offering a class for Village U in Fall 2020, contact Laura Hobbs at laura.hobbs@villagepres.org.

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION

An Update on Solar Panels for the Child & Family Development Center

The Village Church Child & Family Development Center building was designed to accommodate 270 solar panels. To date, 102 panels have been installed with funds raised by the Environmental Action Committee.

Fundraising for additional panels is well underway with a balance of $15,600. EAC’s goal is 36 panels costing $30,000. EAC invites you to help purchase more panels. To contribute, send a tax-deductible donation to Village Church (Bob Sperry, 6641 Mission Road, Prairie Village, KS 66208). For more information, visit EAC’s web page on the Village Church website.

As an investment projected to pay for itself in 12 years, solar panels will reduce the annual operating costs of the Child & Family Development Center during the 25-year life of the panels. By contributing, you can make an immediate tangible investment in clean, renewable, inexhaustible energy. “During the 50+ year life of the center building, these panels will constitute a legacy for the VCCFDC children and their children,” said Jerry Rees, chair of the Environmental Action Committee.
Activating the Power of Prayer

Our weekly Prayer List continues to grow. To calm your mind, connect with God, and make a difference for others, considering sitting with the Prayer List for a portion of each day and praying over the names on the list.

You might begin the day with prayer, such as pausing before breakfast or with your morning coffee. You can also end the day with prayer, such as making some quiet time before bed to get comfy in a cozy spot. Another idea is to pause in the middle of the day, taking a break from stress to connect with God and renew your mind and soul.

The Prayer List is updated and re-published each Friday. To pray through all the names on the list, you might divide it into seven sections so that each day you are praying over a portion of the names, completing the list by the end of the week. Or if you have extra time these days, you could pray through the whole list each day!

You can find the Prayer List at www.villagepres.org/pastoralcare. You can also sign up to receive an updated Prayer List to your email inbox each Friday by emailing Linda Alley at linda.alley@villagepres.org.

And if you would like to have someone added to the prayer list or if you have a prayer request, please email pastoral-care@villagepres.org.

Counseling Resources Available to You

Many people are feeling extra stress these days, and all of us can benefit from counseling in some way. Counseling services can help us manage stress, anxiety, relationship issues and more. Several possibilities may be right at your fingertips!

• EAP (Emergency Assistance Programs) – many employers offer EAP benefits, and six free sessions of counseling is often one of them. Contact your employer’s Human Resources department to learn more.

• Search for counselors and therapists near you at www.psychologytoday.com. Click on “Find a Therapist” to search by zip code and view profiles of clinicians who are available to support you, including those who conduct sessions remotely via Telehealth. This website also has excellent articles on mental health.

• Village Church makes a professional counselor available to the community one day a week at affordable rates. To learn more, visit www.villagepres.org/pastoralcare.

Stephen Ministers: Receiving Much More Than They Put In

“I have received much more than I ever put in,” says Mary Porto when asked what she’s gained from being a Stephen Minister. “My faith has deepened and my awareness of life’s trials has increased.”

Mary became a Stephen Minister 11 years ago after the death of her husband and attending grief classes at the church. “I have learned what a kind word and listening ear can do to help someone dealing with tribulations,” she says.

Mary, Jim Bolton and Pastor Becky Chamberlain recently completed the week-long Stephen Ministry Leadership Training Course. Mary will become the moderator of the Village Church Stephen Ministry Leadership team next year.

If you know a friend or family member who would consider becoming or utilizing a Stephen Minister, please encourage them to contact Rev. Becky Chamberlain at 913-449-0713 or becky.chamberlain@villagepres.org.
“What do you think will happen next?” I hear this question ring in the air as my children watch “If You Give a Mouse a Cookie” on Amazon Prime. It is the last phrase of the opening jingle. In the context of this children’s show, this question is playful, inviting curiosity and play into the learning of the “if… then…” consequences of the world. If you give a mouse a cookie, what do YOU think will happen next?

Yet, this question rings loudly in our current time. Each national, state, local government is studying this question hard to discern ways to navigate through the COVID-19 pandemic. Hospitals are trying to peer into the future to estimate how much medicine, equipment and staff they will need to care for the sick. And doctors and nurses are looking in the eyes of each patient weighing each option of care in conjunction with this question: What do you think will happen next?

For all of human history, including today, we have no way of knowing what really will happen next, we have predictions, we have models, we have anecdotes and we have hunches. But there is a basic human fear of the unknown. In hunter-gatherer times, there was a real concern over where the next protein source was coming from. In medieval Europe, there was a real fear over if there would be enough food. Even today we still have a fear of food scarcity… and toilet paper scarcity.

As a pastor of pastoral care, I swim within these waters regularly in the pre-pandemic world. I sit with families as they wonder if a loved one will make it through this heart-episode, or if the need for hospice will arise. I hold in prayer couples as they wonder if they will be able to make a relationship work or if their marriage is heading for divorce court. I talk with people who are wondering where their next paycheck will come from and if they will be able to pay the bills this month.

Now, I sit, we all sit, with a world who is saying, even yelling, “We don’t know what will happen next!” I can hear the fear within the news headlines, I hear trepidation behind leaders’ words.

Yet, I wonder as Christians if we our experience of fear of the unknown is different. Last month we celebrated Easter Sunday, the day on which we celebrate Jesus showing us God’s power beyond the grave. Jesus’ experience at the very least shows us that there is hope, even where we see no hope. The witness of the Biblical Narrative shows us that God will keep God’s promises.

You and I know that our God is bigger than the concerns of today (which are immense). You and I believe in a God who will deliver Noah from the flood, who will deliver a nation of slaves into the freedom in the wilderness, and will breathe the breath of life into the dry bones. Our God delivered Jonah from the whale, Daniel from the fiery furnace and Isaac from certain death. Our God will go to the ends of the earth to find us when we are lost. Our God will go to the grave to show love for us.

So, when we ask, “What do you think will happen next,” we ask it from the foundation of God’s faithfulness throughout generations. When we look into the future our understanding is always founded upon the promises that we find in God.
Couples Corner: Questions to Connect with your Spouse

Many weeks of togetherness has been a gift, in some ways. And togetherness has also brought about struggle within our primary relationships. There are things that you cannot sidestep when you are with your partner, in the same house. Dr. Sue Johnson’s book, “Created for Connection,” based in Emotionally Focused Therapy, connects our need for connection to both our relationship with God and our relationship with our spouse. I invite you to take some moments and read through these two simple yet deep questions with your partner or spouse. If you feel comfortable, please share any insights with me (sally.wright@villagepres.org):

- Can you think of times when your grounding in your faith helps you keep your emotional balance and be more open, responsive, and engaged with your partner and with others? If you can, please share these with this person or these people.

- Can you think of times when your sense of connection to your partner moves you into a sense of closeness with God and the infinite? If you can, please share these with your partner.

Johnson, Dr. Sue. Created for Connection (p. 268). Little, Brown and Company.

REV. MELANIE HARDISON’S SERVICE OF INSTALLATION FEB. 29, 2020

It’s hard to believe Rev. Melanie Hardison’s Service of Installation was over two months ago, when Village pastors and staff were first starting to talk about the coronavirus. Within two weeks we would suspend on-site worship and offer online services only. What a season this has been. We share a joyous occasion in the 2020 history of Village Presbyterian Church.
Join us on Instagram @villagepreskids or Facebook @villagechurchkids

Jammies & Jesus – daily hang-time…every morning, we have a little devotional time together and every night, we read a children's book and say a bedtime prayer.

Sunday Mornings – TOGETHER in spirit! Each Sunday we have a video just for our Lighthouse kiddos and we will do that every Sunday morning while we’re worshipping from home. They are abbreviated, but typical, Sunday mornings. Although we can’t be TOGETHER in person, we can sing and dance TOGETHER (with Dino leading us), read scripture TOGETHER, pray TOGETHER and learn about how Jesus loves us TOGETHER. We will also continue to send out various printed resources from our usual curriculum every Sunday.

We also have Zoom connection times for various ages of kiddos on Sundays. We sent out emails to all our families outlining each age of kiddos’ timing so they can jump on for a little virtual hang-time. Please email Brooke at brooke.latas@villagepres.org if you have any questions.

Adult Swim – weekly video on social media just for our parents as we continue to wade through uncharted territory…just “keeping it real”…and trying to laugh a little!

Parent Zoom connection times are also on our radar. More info coming soon!

No On-Site Kids Summer Programs at Village on Mission

We are so sad to report that we are not going to hold our summer programs (camps and Kids Day Out) this summer. We postponed sign-ups twice in hopes of being able to spend time with your sweet kids this summer, but that just isn’t in the cards. We will miss you, but we will look forward to an EPIC SUMMER 2021!

*We will have a virtual VBS this summer. Please stay tuned for more information.

Look for updates on www.villagepres.org/summercamps

Our virtual art & hors d’oeuvres gallery and appetizer recipes will remain on our website through May 18. Find it online at www.villagepres.org/art-apps.
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VILLAGE COMMITMENT

Give Online, By Mail or By Text

Our stewardship is a way to relate to God, a very
tangible expression of our total trust in God. Even
though an offering plate can't be passed, the Church
can accept your financial gifts in the mail, online or
by text. Get the details at www.villagepres.org.

If you have any questions, contact Bob Sperry at
913-671-2325.

Your church very much appreciates your
continued support.

ONLINE WORSHIP SCHEDULE

8, 9:30 and 11 a.m. Sundays
villagepres.org/online

The Gathering Music and Prayers
5 p.m. Sundays
vpcthegathering.org

Listen to Worship on 1660 AM
8 a.m. Sundays - a week-delayed
radio broadcast of the
morning worship service

IN MEMORY

Susan Cox
Louise and Carlos Crain
Dorothy Hicks
Bill Hodges
Barbara Irish
Norman Martin
Lillie May
Clarabeth Moore
Richard "Dick" Morrison
Barbara "Barb" Nichols
Rachel Page
Margaret "Peggy" Roush
Patricia "Patty" Schneider
Evelyn Suggs
Ara Zakaryan
Blood Drive

Village Church partners with the Community Blood Center (CBC) four times a year to host blood drives at the church. Village Church had planned to have another drive on April 21 before all activities were suspended at the church. In addition, during the pandemic, the Community Blood Center is unable to use their buses and mobile units.

The Community Blood Center is in need of donations now more than ever. There is no data or evidence that this coronavirus can be transmitted by blood transfusion. In fact, there have been no reported cases of transfusion-transmission for any respiratory virus, including this coronavirus. Donors can still give at CBC centers in Overland Park at 105th and Metcalf or in Kansas City, Missouri at 4040 Main. Donors must have a prior appointment to donate. No walk-ins are permitted at this time.

The centers’ extended hours are 7 a.m.-7 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 7 a.m.-4 p.m. Friday through Sunday. Schedule an appointment online at https://donate.savealifenow.org/donor/schedules/centers.

Emergency Assistance During the Time of Coronavirus

Emergency Assistance Services at Village Church is still taking requests for utility and rent support. All assistance is provided over the phone, and applicants must be able to provide a copy of their utility shut off notice or eviction notice either by fax or email. In addition to the Village Church grant, applicants must also be able to identify how the balance of the bill will be paid in order to prevent shut off or eviction. For more information, call the Village Church Emergency Assistance office at 913-671-2340 and leave a message. Calls are returned within 24 to 48 hours.

Food Pantry Distributes Over 10,230 Pounds of Food Over the Past Month

Over the past month, the Village Church Food Pantry has responded to the growing food needs in our community and the ever-changing food delivery landscape during the pandemic. As a result, the pantry has completed the following distributions between March 17 and April 14:

- The pantry delivered 216 bags of nonperishable food to three low-income senior high-rise apartments that we regularly serve. Residents in these buildings received 3,780 pounds of food.
- The pantry also delivered 1,905 pounds of nonperishable food to our pantry partner, Shawnee Community Services, who has been struggling to source steady supplies of food for their clients.
- The pantry has also delivered 1,078 pounds of canned food to another partner, the Renewed Hope Pantry in Overland Park.
- 2,692 pounds have been delivered to Covenant Presbyterian Church in Kansas City, Missouri.
- In addition, Village on Antioch received 775 pounds of Village pantry food for low income students in the Olathe School district.

The pantry will continue to distribute food to these and other locations around the area while protecting the health of pantry staff, clients and volunteers and maintaining safe social distancing.

Personal Protective Equipment Drive

A group of Kansas City medical students, doctors, health care providers and volunteers have organized a drive to collect personal protective equipment for local hospitals. If you have any of the following that you can donate, please fill out the online form at www.kcppedrive.org: gloves (includes nitrile, latex, rubber), masks (includes N-95 and surgical), PAPR (powered air-purifying respirators), goggles, face shields, head covers, gowns, hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes. The group has organized drop off sites, or if you are unable to get out, you can arrange for them to pick up your donations and get them to local hospitals. Email kcppedrive@gmail.com if you have any questions.
Village Church Mission Sewing Makes 1,500 Masks Over the Past Month

Since our communities started following stay at home orders during the coronavirus outbreak, sewers from across the city including our Tuesday and Thursday Village Church Mission Sewing have been busy making cloth faces masks for clinicians and essential workers with their home sewing machines. At Village Church alone, 30 sewers putting in more than 750 volunteer hours have produced more than 1,500 masks. Examples of agencies that have received masks include Advent Health, the Forum of Overland Park, John Knox Village, Kansas City Hospice, KU Cancer Center, KVC Health Systems, Lakeview Village retirement community, Lee’s Summit Hospice, Olathe Medical Center, Saint Luke’s Health System, the Veterans Administration Hospital and three physician clinics.

If you wish to join the effort to make masks, check out the Kansas City fiber artists website at https://sandlotgoods.com for more information. If you want a face masks for yourself, check out www.sewkc.com. They are selling cloth washable face masks for $15 plus shipping. When you purchase a mask, one will be donated to someone in the community.

Introducing Our New Village Chef

We are very pleased to announce that Andrea Bradley is our new director of food service. Chef Andrea comes to us from United Healthcare (UHG) in Overland Park (Compass Group). She was also the dietary supervisor at the Healthcare Resort of Olathe. Chef Andrea has held various chef positions in the Kansas City area, including chef manager, executive chef and sous chef for the past 15 years. Chef Andrea got her love for cooking and hospitality from her grandmother. "My passion for cooking runs deep within the fabric of my family," said Chef Andrea. "My grandmother was a great influence to me toward being of service to others. I am looking forward to embracing this opportunity with a mutual collaboration."

Larry Wilcox will remain with the Village kitchen team, working with Chef Andrea as sous chef.