The Associate Pastor Nominating Committee (APNC) has been hard at work for many months searching for the best candidates to serve as associate pastors in pastoral care at Village Church. APNC members include Erica Brune, chair, Kevin Hennessy, Linda Lee, Michelle O’Neal, Dan Robeson, Julie Sykes and Lisa Wright.

On Sept. 29, the APNC made the recommendation for the congregation to extend a call to Rev. Melanie Hardison to serve as associate pastor for pastoral care, which was unanimously approved by the congregation. Then on Nov. 3, the APNC presented their recommendation of Rev. Sally Wright, who has been serving the past eight months as interim pastor for pastoral care, to move into the permanent position. The congregation also voted unanimously to extend the call to Sally.

**About Rev. Melanie Hardison**

During the past five years, Rev. Melanie Hardison has served as a chaplain in three health care systems in Louisville, Kentucky, as well as a student pastor at Second Presbyterian Church in Louisville. At Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, she earned a dual degree (Master of Divinity and Master of Arts in Marriage and Family Therapy) in 2018. Prior to seminary, she served for 15 years on the national staff in the PC(USA). Her undergraduate work was at Agnes Scott College in Decatur, Georgia. She is also the first cousin of Rev. Zach Walker, associate pastor of youth ministries.

The APNC said in their message to the congregation, “Melanie exudes compassion and wisdom born of heart-wrenching experience as a chaplain at a children’s hospital, a trained therapist, and pulpit and pastoral care responsibilities at her home church.”

"Melanie is keenly aware of how we cannot care for others if we are depleted ourselves. She will help equip and inspire the legions of caregivers here at Village. We feel that Melanie’s own words best share the gifts she will bring, ‘my call to ordained ministry reflects my faith that God calls us to do courageous, beautiful, and difficult things to show God’s love in a broken and hurting world.’ We are thrilled to welcome Melanie to our Village family!'"

Melanie shared, “From the moment I read about Village’s need for a pastor for pastoral care, and from my first conversations with Tom Are and the APNC, I felt God calling us together. Reading the position description was like experiencing beautiful music—the words harmonized with me in such a way that I felt called to be here…I experience Village to be a place of warm hospitality, thoughtful engagement and hopeful authenticity. I can’t imagine a better fit for my interests, skills and background, in a congregation more aligned with my theology, faith and values. I am honored to join such an excellent team of staff and lay leaders and am excited for all the ways God will move in our work together!”

**Continued**
Then I spent a bit of time working for our denominational offices. Surely that would be my home, as I have been a Presbyterian all my life. And yet, when it came to the reality, the reality fell far short of my dream to feel at home.

So on a whim, I applied to work for our presbytery – Heartland Presbytery. I applied not because I thought I would work there a long time, it was intended to be a short term gig. My title even included the phrase ‘acting’ in it. Although interviewing with the presbytery, there was intention that the position would be for only nine months. Almost three years later, I was still working there and I was still ‘acting’ every day.

“Then last spring, Tom Are took me to lunch and asked me to apply to be your interim associate pastor for pastoral care along with Rev. Becky Chamberlain. Again this was a short-term gig – interim. Yet, something amazing has happened over the last seven months. You have invited me into some of your most touching, heart-warming moments. And you have shared some heart-wrenching, tears-falling times. You all have invited me into your family. Village Church is a family of people that really see God’s vision. You see the places where the world breaks God’s heart from the systematic injustices of racism and poverty to the individual heartbreaks of death of a loved one.”

“You know what it is to fight for justice. Part of your long-hard fight for LGBTQ inclusion in the PC(USA) has led to me being able to stand before you today. You all are generous with your time and your money. You tangibly show Jesus Christ through things like Front Port Alliance and you sit with people as they are dying. You work every day for God’s glorious day, when God will wipe away every tear.”

“God’s Holy Spirit is among you. So when the APNC called, I knew without hesitation that this short-term gig that Tom originally asked me to apply for was not at all short term in God’s eyes. This was God introducing me to my future home in ministry. It is with incredibly deep introspection and mutual affirmation that I have heard God say, ‘Sally, it is time to stop wandering. Welcome home!’”

Melanie and Sally invite you to share all of life’s joys and troubles. Please call, email or visit the Pastoral Care Offices at Village on Mission. They look forward to accompanying you on God’s journey.
I Won’t Be Home for Christmas

Advent is a season of waiting. The church is always in Advent because we are always waiting on what God will do next, although it is only this time of year that we mark that posture of expectation. Why are we always waiting? Because we aren’t home yet. We, nor the world itself, are as God intends us to be. So, as a people who are always “on the way,” we continue the journey toward home. This series will rehearse some of the expressions of waiting (which can be another word for hope) that is part of this long tradition.

Dec. 8 No One Escapes Disappointment
Dec. 15 The End of Trouble
Dec. 22 On the Road to Mary’s House
Dec. 24 Look Who’s Home!

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP TIMES

Village on Mission – All services will be in the Sanctuary.

  3 & 5 p.m.  Children & Family Worship with The Gathering Band
  7 & 9 p.m.  Traditional Candlelight Worship
  11 p.m.    Traditional Candlelight Worship with Communion

All Village on Mission Christmas Eve services will be livestreamed at www.villagepres.org/online

Village on Antioch – Both services will be in the Sanctuary.

  4 p.m.   Children & Family Worship
  7:30 p.m. Traditional Candlelight Worship with Communion

MISSION

Food Pantry

During December, thinking of all the baking and cooking that is done, the Food Pantry is requesting donations of sugar, flour, cake mixes, spices, salt & pepper, vegetable oil, etc. We must discard any items that have been opened and partially used. The Clothes Closet is now accepting Christmas decorations (small items – no trees please), bibles, devotionals and, of course, warm winter coats. Your gifts and donations are so appreciated by the clients - which makes at least three people happy - the client, the donor and the volunteer who sees the joy.

Decorate the Village Trees with Diapers and Hats and Mittens

From Dec. 6 to 24, come put hats and mittens on our trees and diapers (all sizes welcome including adult large and XL) under our trees to give to families served by the Village Clothes Closet/Food Pantry. You will find the trees located at the south entrance to the church and in the Welcome Center. Contact Deborah White at 913-671-2369 or deborah.white@villagepres.org for more information.
Worship, Eat, Serve: Be the Church Service Day at Village Celebrates Connectedness and Community

The fourth annual Be the Church Service Day at Village on Mission and Antioch on Sunday, Oct. 27, 2019, offered more service opportunities than ever for the 260 Village volunteers who took part. At Antioch after worship at 9:30 a.m. and after the Gathering Service at Mission at 5 p.m., participants enjoyed a meal, fellowship and took part in a variety of projects benefiting programs locally and abroad. Regarding the impact, the numbers speak for themselves:

- 450 hygiene kits assembled
- 428 sack lunches packed for City Union Mission
- 370 socks stuffed with snacks for homeless clients with UpLift
- 320 Thanksgiving cards created for Village Food Pantry clients
- 275 packages of adult and children's vitamins packed for the Dominican Republic Medical Partnership
- 80 peanut pillows stuffed for hospital patients (sponsored by Mission Sewing)
- 50 bags of Frontera de Cristo border ministry coffee packed
- 22 sets of material prepared for shoes for Ugandans to prevent jiggers
- 22 friendship bracelets created for those going on the Thanksgiving DRMP trip
- 20 blankets made for Avenue of Life's new Unaccompanied Homeless Youth House (sponsored by Circle 4)

“This is the fourth year of ‘Be the Church Service Week’ and the program continues to grow serving more organizations and involving 13 churches across the Kansas City area,” said Deborah White, director of mission at Village Church. “Parents, children, multiple generations all came together to make a difference. In an hour’s time, volunteers can touch hundreds of lives.”

If you are inspired to seek further opportunities to serve, contact Deborah in the Mission Office at 913-671-2369 or deborah.white@villagepres.org.
Third Grade Bibles Presentation

Rev. Tom Are and Brooke Latas, director of children & family ministry, presented Bibles to 16 third graders during worship on Sunday, Nov. 3, at Village on Mission. The Bible presentation was followed by a reception for kids and their parents in Friendship Hall.

Cookies with Santa
6 p.m. Friday, Dec. 13

The Village Church Child & Family Development Center will host “Cookies with Santa” at 6 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 13, in Friendship Hall at Village on Mission. Contact Linda Harmon at 913-671-2310 or linda.harmon@villagepres.org to make a reservation. Donations are welcome to feed Santa’s reindeer!

Village Church on Mission Preschool Information Coffee

Are you looking for a preschool for the 2020-2021 school year? Join us from 10-11:15 a.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 10, in Room 133 for our Village Church on Mission Preschool Information Coffee. Child care is available during the program. Contact Pam Southerland at pam@villagepres.org to make reservations. Contact Preschool Director Sarah McKee with questions at sarah.mckee@villagepres.org.

Village Church on Mission Preschool Enrollment

Enrollment for the 2020-2021 school year at Village on Mission Preschool begins in January. See the enrollment schedule below. Contact Preschool Director Sarah McKee with questions at 913-671-2338 or sarah.mckee@villagepres.org.

Enrollment Schedule for Fall 2020-2021

• Current Village Church on Mission Preschool families may enroll beginning Tuesday, Jan. 21, 2020
• Current Kids Day Out families and Village Church members may enroll beginning Thursday, Jan. 23, 2020
• Former Village Church on Mission Preschool families may enroll beginning Friday, Jan. 24, 2020
• Enrollment opens to the community on Monday, Jan. 27, 2020
MARY CASHIN
A Woman of Many Hats Prepares for New Adventures

Mary Cashin is often the first person people meet at Village Church on Mission. She has served as receptionist and facilities coordinator for the past 20 years. Mary was working as a salesperson/receptionist at Brighton Gardens, the assisted living/skilled nursing facility at 71st and Mission, when she saw a want ad in the newspaper about an opening at Village Church. “I heard that Village was a fabulous place to work,” recalls Mary. “I needed to work 30 hours because my daughter got out of school at 3 p.m. at St. Ann’s Catholic Church. I worked from 8 a.m.-2:30 p.m., which was perfect. I went full time a year later.”

For many years, Mary ran the switchboard seven days a week. She is the queen of multitasking. “I schedule 250-400 events a week at the church. We open the doors at 6 a.m. and we close at 9:30 p.m. We’re busy that whole time.”

While Mary is answering the phones, she is also listening in the hallways for any information that may affect event setup or how she responds to caller questions. “You might hear a meeting has been cancelled. You’ve got to pick up on everything. I try to have the ‘walkie talkie’ ear, and the phone, and then somebody at the window, and then somebody comes to deliver packages. Multitasking is huge. I try not to miss anything. I try to keep it all running smoothly.”

Mary announced in September that she is retiring on Dec. 10. “I had just gotten back from the mountains. I went to the Dakotas and then Wyoming and then Colorado. I was home a couple of days and thought ‘I’m not accountable to anybody anymore here’. My aunt who was 97 was due to pass away, and she did a few weeks ago. She was really the last older adult or anybody who I would really be accountable for helping. I’ve been working for 50 years. I’ve been at the church 20 years. I think I’m ready for new adventures.”

Mary has gotten rid of all her furniture. Her apartment lease was up Nov. 30, and she’s spending a few days with friends. “Catherine, my youngest daughter, and her friend are taking off to move south. Then, at noon on Tuesday, Dec. 10, I’ll be taking off from Village. My Highlander will be gassed up and ready to go, packed with my clothes, my passport and a TV. Then, I’ll see where my car takes me.”

“I’ll eventually get a job. Nothing with alligators, snakes or crocodiles, but anything else. Medicare is not for two more years. Social security is not for three more years. I’m heading east. Asheville, North Carolina would be a great place to land because I don’t like to sweat, so I’m trying to go where it’s cooler.”

Her Background

Mary was left at an orphanage in Kansas City, Missouri when she was six weeks old. She was in foster care until nine months old when she and her 2½-year-old half brother were adopted by the Cashins. Mary grew up in Kansas City, going to Catholic grade schools and then to high school at Mount Saint Scholastica Academy in Atchison, Kansas. “I lived in Grand Junction, Colorado for six years in the 80s, then moved back. I’ve been back 33 years. My daughter Catherine is single, no children. My older daughter Erin is married and lives in Illinois. I have two grandsons ages 16 and 18.”

A Life Filled with Surprises

“I found my birth family when I was 50 (13 years ago). I learned I have 12 brothers and sisters. We’ve found nine, we still haven’t found four. I’m the oldest girl and a lot of them live around here close. There’s only one who lives farther, in Arizona. We’ve all gotten together so far for two funerals. The first was when our birth mom passed away...
in 2013. She had Alzheimer’s and thought we were just neighbor kids when we went to visit her. The second time was when our cousin Cliff died. It was good that Cliff and I found each other. He lived with me the last five years of his life after he was diagnosed with ALS. He died two years ago. His funeral was here at Village.

**How the Birth Family Story Unfolded**

“My adoptive mother was having a lot of health issues and told me, ‘You were born in Missouri,’ she said. ‘If you live in Kansas, you have to have my signature to see if you have any brothers and sisters.’ She signed the paperwork, which was a great gift. We’re all half brothers and sisters and have the same mother, but all different fathers. There is one set of twins. Last Jan. 1, the state of Missouri opened adoption records. So, we all went to Jefferson City and we got our real birth certificates and got to find out our real names. Now I know why I talk a lot and why I am not shy. There are five girls, all of us are the same. All the boys are the same. They’re loners, they’re intelligent, they’re musical. My birth mother played the piano and several other instruments. She also spoke several languages fluently.

You look at the pictures of all of us and you can see the nose is the same. Even though we all had different dads, it was still great. I’m glad I got to see my birth mom for a few years. We were all there when she passed away.”

**What Mary Does for Fun**

“I love to watch the Hallmark Channel. I love to dress up on Halloween. It’s fun to be somebody else for a day. I love to travel. I don’t care if it’s a day trip, just an hour, just to get away and see the earth. There’s so much I haven’t seen, you know, there’s just a lot to be thankful for.”

**To the Village Congregation and Volunteers**

“For 20 years, Mary Cashin has been the voice and face of Village Church,” said Rev. Dr. Rodger Nishioka, senior associate pastor. “She has greeted persons on the phone and in person with a warm and gracious welcome. She is a fount of information about everything from services to events to classes to life in general. While no one is truly irreplaceable, Mary comes pretty close. We will miss her wit and wisdom and sense of humor. Most of all, we will miss her kind spirit that proclaims to each person, ‘Village Church is so glad you called, Village Church is so glad you came to visit.’ I am grateful to God that Mary Cashin found her way to us.

To Mary, for your faithfulness. You have made Village Church a better place.”

If you happen to be at Village Church at noon on Tuesday, Dec. 10, you may hear Mary exclaim as she drives out of sight, “Thank you, Village. It’s been a great ride!”
At the Nov. 4 meeting of the Session, the elders of the church...

- Approved the recommendation from the trustees to sell the residential property located at 3913 West 67th Street in Prairie Village, Kansas.

- Voted to call a congregational meeting at the earliest possible time to seek approval for the sale of the property. According to Presbyterian polity, the congregation must approve all selling and purchasing of property. Further, the congregation will then seek permission from the Heartland Presbytery because all church properties are held in trust by the Presbyterian Church (USA).

- Approved designating the funds from the sale of the property for the completion of the space beneath the Welcome Center primarily for use by the young adult ministry and youth ministry.

The Session heard reports about...

- Annually, Village Church giving nearly $1.3 million to fund local community outreach, international mission, regional and national Presbyterian Church (USA) ministries and community partner ministries. In any given year, several hundred Village Church members are involved in a myriad of mission experiences.

- 100 percent of Session members have pledged financial support for the church for 2020.

- “The Lighthouse” as the new “branding” for Children & Family Ministry. A theme song has been composed by Kevin Dolan.

- 23 Village Connect groups underway meeting monthly and exploring the latest Bible study titled “Teachers Along the Way” by Senior Pastor Tom Are, Jr.

- Wednesday Night Family Dinner attendance increased significantly thanks to a new initiative with Children & Family Ministry. Young adult parents are grateful for Children & Family Ministry Director Brooke Latas leading time with children and allowing parents to eat together with other parents.

- Senior Pastor Tom Are, Jr. reflected with the Session on the significance of the unanimous congregational vote to call the Rev. Sally Wright as associate pastor for pastoral care. He celebrated with the Session the journey of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and Village Church in taking one more step toward “God’s promised day.”

- Worship attendance in October was up compared with a year ago. There were six weddings and six services were held for members who have joined the saints in heaven.

The Session closed the meeting with prayer including all persons on the prayer list. The next meeting will take place at 7 p.m. on Monday, Dec. 2, in Room 132.

What is the Session? The Session is the governing board of the congregation. The 29 elders are elected by the congregation. Each one serves for a three-year term. Currently the Session is comprised of 13 women and 16 men. Two of the elders are young people. The Session meets monthly except for July. The Rev. Tom Are, Jr. is moderator of the Session. Pastors and ministry directors also attend the meetings.

Spring Village U Catalog Coming Later this Month!

Look for the Spring 2020 Village U Catalog online by the end of this month. Registration for church members opens at 9 a.m. on Monday, Jan. 6, and at 9 a.m. on Monday, Jan. 13, for the community.
Good News, Dec. 4, 2019

Caring for the Stranger

“For you shall also love the stranger for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.” Deuteronomy 10:19

Maria was brought to the United States from Kenya when she was 10 years old. Now an undocumented 25-year-old mother of three, she was arrested and moved to the Caldwell County Jail, 65 miles from Kansas City. Village Church member Tedrick Housh is one of a number of attorneys who provide free legal representation at bond hearings. He helped Maria gain the lowest bond possible, $1,500, but Maria still needed help. If Maria could not pay the bond, she would risk losing her children. Village Church’s Immigration Support Initiative (ISI) stepped in to help and paid the bond so Maria could be with her family.

The Immigration Support Initiative (ISI) was started by Village Church members Jim Ensz, Dr. John Hall and Dr. Jim Galliher to help undocumented persons who are in Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention provide bond so they may be released and be with their families and continue to work while their case makes its way through the court system (a process that often takes years).

The initiative has been endorsed by the Village Session and has assisted 15 persons with support so they may pay their bond fees. The initiative has also provided help with other emergency living expenses. All the bond money will be repaid to the fund eventually.

Rev. Rick Behrens, pastor of the Grandview Park Presbyterian Church, said, “For families in our neighborhood and community, the Immigration Support Initiative has made it possible to get help in the most desperate of situations. When a family member, often the breadwinner, is caught up by ICE, we need to respond to keep our families together. ISI helps us do that.”

Church members have been generous in providing support for the Immigration Support Initiative. The account balance is currently $9,256.74 and more funds are needed. To support ISI, send your contribution to Village Presbyterian Church and write “Immigration Support Initiative” in the memo line. The initiative is one of the ministries of the church’s Social Witness & Advocacy Task Force. Contact Rev. Dr. Rodger Nishioka at rodger.nishioka@villagepres.org for more info.

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION COMMITTEE

Climate Change: A Global Crisis in Human Security
7 p.m. Monday, Dec. 16

Dr. Chris King, retired brigadier general, and Dr. Rick Randolph, chief medical officer of Heart to Heart, will lead a presentation on climate change as a global crisis that threatens the world peace and human health. The class is 7-9 p.m. Monday, Dec. 16, in Rooms 126 & 127 at Village Church on Mission.

WEDNESDAY FAMILY DINNERS

Christmas Dinner Dec. 11

Join us for Christmas Diner from 5:30-6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 11, in Friendship Hall at Village on Mission. Chef Emily’s menu is ham, chicken drumsticks, roasted new potatoes, toasted cheese ravioli and assorted cheesecakes and Christmas cookies. RSVP by noon Monday, Dec. 9, to liz.middleton@villagepres.org or call 913-671-2359. Please note that Wednesday Family Dinners will be on Christmas Break Dec. 18, 25 and Jan. 1. We look forward to having you back on Jan. 8, 2020!
The Snow Globes with Barnaby Bright
7:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 20

Join us once again for an evening with The Snow Globes and our very own Barnaby Bright (Becky and Nathan Bliss) at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 20, in Friendship Hall at Village on Mission. The Snow Globes, made up of Barclay Martin, Lindsey Jones and Rick Willoughby, started making music together in 2011 for the purpose of spreading holiday cheer and love around the world. Doors open at 7 p.m. Admission is free! A retiring offering will be taken for The Wash Project, a non-profit organization in Mali, West Africa that educates children on the importance of hand washing to prevent the spread of disease, and Avenue of Life.

Remembrance Service Dec. 8

The annual Remembrance Service honors those loved ones we lost. It will be held at 4 p.m. this Sunday, Dec. 8, in the Village on Mission Sanctuary. A reception will follow. Join us for this moving, beautiful service that includes lighting candles, prayers, music and the proclamation of God's holy Christmas promise that there's a light in this world the darkness will never overcome.

Growing Through Grief Provides Comfort

So many thoughts and emotions accompany grief. The Pastoral Care & Counseling Department offers a five-week series called Growing through Grief, to support those who are grieving the loss of a loved one. It will be offered at 4:45 p.m. every Wednesday Jan. 15-Feb. 12, in Room 124 at Village on Mission. This The series is offered at no cost and includes your own copy of the book, "Understanding Your Grief – Ten Essential Touchstones for Finding Hope and Healing Your Heart," by Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D. Registration is required; contact Linda Alley at 913-671-2327 or linda.alley@villagepres.org.
Te Deum Presents “Peace and Joy”
7 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 8 – Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church
7:30 p.m. Monday, Dec. 9 – Village Church on Mission

Te Deum’s annual Christmas concert will focus on music of peace and joy. We will also give special attention to local Kansas City composers and feature world premieres by composers Ed Frazier Davis and Geoff Wilcken. Te Deum will perform one of the most virtuosic and grand choral pieces ever composed, Schoenberg’s “Friede Auf Erden” (Peace on Earth). Tickets are $15 online at www.te-deum.org or $20 at the door. Te Deum is a proud member of the Village Church Arts Alliance.

Second Thursday Recital with Jazz Pianist Mark Lowrey
12:15-12:45 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 12

A staple in the Kansas City jazz music scene, Mark Lowrey has made a name for himself with his versatility, command of the piano and sound that transcends genres. Though primarily known as a jazz musician, the Kansas City-born, Kansas City-bred artist’s résumé includes various local and national trios and ensembles, including Argentine tango ensemble Tango Lorca, renowned jazz outfit the Lonnie McFadden Quartet, folk/world group the Barclay Martin Ensemble and Afro-Cuban ensemble the La Fonda Allstars. His live albums include “Live at Jardine’s” and the Kickstarter-funded love songs to KC, “18th Street Tangos.” Admission is free.

Our 19th Annual Tidings of Joy concerts will bring together many great choirs, including our third annual Tidings of Joy Children’s Chorus. There is truly something for everyone in this eclectic, but seamless Christmas concert experience.

“What we've tried to create is a concert where people can feel like they’re ‘coming home,’” said Will Breytspraak, director of music. “Concert goers will feel the anticipation of Advent, the excitement of Christmas and the peaceful slumber of Epiphany. They will feel hope and community and Christian love in the coming together of so many musicians and audience members alike.”

This year's concert includes Gerald Finzi’s “In Terra Pax” featuring soloists Ron Witzke, baritone, and Karli Cabrera, soprano, along with the combined choirs and orchestra. The Tidings Children's Chorus will again be intertwined in the program - making appearances on songs both sublime and songs that benefit from the children's effervescent exuberance that audiences have come to love. The Tidings of Joy Orchestra will be featured on the frigid movement of "Winter" from Vivaldi’s “The Seasons,” as well as many other pieces where they play a supporting, yet exciting, role.

Admission is free. A love offering will be taken for Grace United Community Ministries, helping underserved children.
VILLAGE COMMITMENT

Village Commitment 2020
I Believe. Help My Unbelief.

Your annual gifts provide the foundation for all the impactful and inspirational missions and ministries we covet as well as providing funding for the existence of everything within the walls of Village Church. We are grateful for this faithful generosity and commitment to Village Church as we enhance and sustain our community of faith.

If you have made your 2020 commitment – thank you. If you have not submitted your commitment card, please do so now. You can mail your card to Village Church or go online to villagepres.org/giving and then click on Continue to Commitment Form, complete and click send.

Gratefully yours,
The Village Commitment Committee

SUNDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

VILLAGE ON MISSION
Traditional – 8, 9:30 & 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.
in Overland Park

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
Sam McCaffree
Alberta McGrath
Wayne Morris
Robert “Bob” Owen
Wava Mae Pippert
Phyllis Pottker
Gale Stelting
Arthur ‘Art’ Stevens
Morie Thies
Clare Stern Settles In as Head of Children & Youth at Village on Antioch

Clare Stern officially began working as director of children & youth at Village on Antioch on Oct. 28. She came with her then fiancé Andres Burbano to our first Village on Antioch Fall Festival on Oct. 26. Clare and Andres were married on Nov. 30. We spoke to her on Nov. 7 for this interview.

One of the first things she did upon her arrival at VOA was paint her office walls green. “I chose to paint my office green because I really wanted it to symbolize life— to be somewhat youthful and inviting,” explained Clare. “I always feel like green is welcoming.”

Clare on occasion will assist Rev. Dr. Brandon Frick with the Children’s Message in worship. Brandon shared that at her first worship at VOA on Nov. 3, “Clare already knew every kid’s name. That’s how amazing she is. I’m going to have to step it up to be that good.” How did she manage to know all the children’s name on her first Sunday? “I remember their names because that’s part of who they are,” said Clare. “Each one of us is special; our talents, gifts, skills and even our name plays a role in informing others of who we are as people.”

Her Journey to Getting Married

Clare and Andres are originally from Florida. “We wanted to get married in Florida where all of our friends and family are and in my childhood parish. And so we decided that we’re going to go visit the church and meet and vendors and whatnot. One year out from our original wedding date a hurricane came through and did some major damage. So we looked at each other and said, ‘We could stay engaged for a total of three years, or we could get married as soon as Thanksgiving when everyone will already be here.’ We’ve known each other since high school. My fiancé likes to say that we were ‘almost’ high school sweethearts. We’ve been best friends the past 10 years, but we didn’t date the entire decade. We are thrilled to be entering this new phase of our life and doing it as husband and wife.”

All Roads Lead to Village

Clare and Andres were married last weekend at St. John’s Episcopal Cathedral in Jacksonville, Florida. “Oddly enough, Brandon told me that’s the same church where he and his wife Aaryn got married.”

“I first heard about Village from a mentor of mine back in Jacksonville, Florida. Matt Hartley was a member of Tom Are’s former congregation in Jacksonville. He knew that I wanted to get plugged into a faith-based community in Kansas City immediately, and he told me I should really check out Village Church because they had a vibrant young adult ministry program. When I walked through Village’s doors for the first time 2½ years ago, it was magical. I went into The Gathering and Rev. Dr. Nishioka was preaching about salvation and how it’s always a transforming experience for the individual. It’s not always a one-time thing. And I thought, ‘I can get down with that!’ Then I came back for a second Sunday and saw all these families and the intergeneration mingling happening. These little leaders, who are the children in the church, were dancing. This is the way church should be. I just kept coming back. My fiancé and I joined Village last April.”

Clare with Andres, Jennifer Hart and Aaryn Frick enjoying Village on Antioch’s Fall Festival Oct. 26.
On Building the VOA Children & Youth Program

“I love working with high schoolers. Their energy, curiosity and ways they build community are perhaps one of the best untapped resources for positive change in the world. A big cornerstone for me as a mentor of young people is that it’s all relational. I’m still getting to know the children, youth and their families, and gearing up for the Christmas pageant. In time we will start building out the calendar year with lessons and activities.”

“I have discovered in my short time at VOA that I have a wonderful team of former school teachers and exceptional parents that have been dedicated to the children’s ministry. I could not be more grateful for them. Working with children is a new area for me. I’ve had more experience with middle school and high school youth than I have had with children. I’m excited to collaborate and learn from them and their experience. I am also excited to journey with the middle school and high school youth to Urban Air for some social time.”

“My biggest hope for the youth and children in this church is that they know this church is a place where they can be their most authentic self and know they will be met with love and grace.”

Village on Antioch Hosts Heartland Presbytery Stated Meeting

The Heartland Presbytery gathered at Village on Antioch for its Stated Meeting on Nov. 19. It was a great day for Village Church. Rev. Dr. Brandon Frick officially welcomed the presbytery. Rev. Hallie Hottle celebrated the Lord’s Supper. Revs. Melanie Hardison and Sally Wright were both elected as members of the presbytery and approved to serve as pastors at Village on Mission. Caroline Barnett, who grew up at Village, was approved for ordination. Caroline has received a call to serve as associate pastor at the First Presbyterian Church of Auburn, Alabama. Congrats to all!