



**VILLAGE
CHURCH**

Presbyterian (USA)

GOOD NEWS

The Village Church Good News is published monthly (September-May) for all members and friends of the Village Presbyterian Church. Readers are encouraged to submit article ideas to The Department of Communications, 6641 Mission Road, Prairie Village, KS 66208, or call 913-671-2375 or email laura.davis@villagepres.org.

Lighting The Way In Children & Family Ministry

"We're with you. Wherever you are."

The new Village purpose statement rings true with our Children & Family Ministry (CFM) team: Brooke Brundige, Kate Ruecker, Kenyon Vrooman and Kevin Dolan. Hired in 2019, Brooke, the director of CFM, barely got her footing before the world succumbed to a pandemic. Needless to say, CFM (and every other ministry) was charged with re-inventing how they reached people during the church's 15-month shutdown. They created "Jammies & Jesus" daily online videos with bedtime stories for kids, outdoor Family Bingo Nights, Second Saturday Family Fun Drive-Thru's and a Bike Rodeo. Finding ways to be with kids and their families outside the church walls took intentionality and creativity. And walking with families—wherever they are, through life's highs and lows—remained a priority.

As they pivot again to navigate this in-between time and dream about the future, CFM has identified three 'lanes' to focus on: GATHER. CONNECT. GROW.

GATHER

The CFM team has discovered a need to create physical spaces that invite families to linger and build community. They have capitalized on this season to complete, update and enhance some of those areas. The All-Sing Room (Sunday morning worship & gathering space) has a new stage and cheerful beach-theme decor. Each Sunday morning, Kevin Dolan leads a fun and meaningful time of worship music in this space. They purchased and installed two new



TVs to display song lyrics and videos.

The team has also invested significant research into creating a special-needs

ministry and "sensory" classroom in Room 204.

They are hopeful this ministry will allow Village to widen its wingspan in order to meet the needs of more families. They worked with local nonprofit, S.O.A.R., who helps churches create thriving ministries for kids with special needs. The next step before opening the doors to this space will be educating and training staff.

They are also hard at work on the Family Lounge in Room 201, which will be an inviting spot for kids and adults to read, learn, create and play—stocked with games, creative projects, curated books and comfy seating. The Family Lounge will have a "prayer wall" to encourage kids and adults to explore, listen, dream, wrestle and learn about prayer and faith. (Make sure you check out the

cool prayer booth created by local artist Dylan Mortimer.)

Last but not least, the team is planning a Lighthouse Game Room—a dedicated place where kids can hang out and play after Sunday morning services with the goal of building and growing friendships. The hope is that parents will jump into the action, as well, so they can get to know one another.

CFM would like to thank the Village Church Endowment Trust, as well as the trustees who manage the Memorial Fund (and all who have so generously contributed), for



partnering with them on several of the recent design projects on the second and third floors (pictured right).

CONNECT

The team hopes creating these spaces will increase avenues for multi-generational relationships in addition to fostering connections. It will take time, but one goal is to establish routines, rhythms and annual events that allow the church family to spend time together. Remember good old Sunday potlucks? Metaphorically, this is what they hope to create: times to be together virtually agenda-free—just good, old-fashioned “hang time.”

CFM is also intent on providing mental-health resources for parents and caregivers as we walk through life. One of the mantras you will hear in the team’s presence is that “we are not meant to do life alone.” The monthly **Coffee & Conversation series** has been a purposeful way to connect local therapists and parents. Mental health professionals come in each month to equip parents with practical tools as well as to usher in some tangible hope. There is no question that we all need that right now!

They have also ramped up communication with parents and teachers with monthly newsletters created by Kenyon Vrooman. Brooke offers words of encouragement focused on current events and changing times. Activities, prayers and words of wisdom are used to equip families for the days ahead, while upcoming events are shared to encourage families to connect with one another. Monthly lesson plans and teacher schedules are also shared to help leaders prepare for Sunday mornings. Kenyon shares, “We wanted to give families an easy way to access important information. Providing quick links for registrations, as well as important information about Lighthouse Sundays has given parents a ‘click-and-go’ way of staying in touch.”



GROW

Even with these exciting offerings and enhancements within the building, we know that faith mostly happens outside our walls. Brooke reminds us that parents and guardians are the primary faith-shapers in a child’s life. “Parents will share 936 weeks with a child from birth to 18, while we, as Sunday-school teachers, are lucky to get 40 weeks,” she says. “We want to equip parents to nurture their children’s spiritual growth with things like bible studies, book clubs and mission opportunities. We want to offer catalysts for learning and spiritual growth for the whole family.

“One of the ways we are leaning into that faith-shaping mission is with ‘Family VBS’ this summer. We are meeting three Wednesday evenings in June from 6-7:30 p.m. Dinner will be provided for the whole family and we will plan opportunities for fun, connection and growth,” Brooke shares. “We love the kids dearly. Now we’re excited to get to know their parents, older siblings, even grandparents. All are welcome!” (Register at villagepres.org/kids-summer.)

CFM also has new Parent Resource boards on the first and third floors. They are filled with book ideas, helpful articles and details regarding upcoming events. Kate Ruecker has also been working on a “sharing library” for our families. The library will utilize QR codes to check out everything from picture books to parenting resources. Kate says, “I hope families take advantage of our new updates. We’ve created spaces to enjoy each other and we have some really relevant resources that are important to share.”

The CFM team is thrilled to see so many kids back in person. “It has been such a blessing to get to high-five kids again and jump around and sing and play and learn on Sunday mornings together,” Brooke shares. “The palm parade a few weeks ago was filled with smiling kids, joyfully waving palms and singing again in the Sanctuary. We never thought we’d be so thankful for a bustling, chaotic morning. We’re looking forward to many more of these moments with kids and their families in the future.”

NEW SERMON SERIES



Life raises questions. Sometimes it raises questions that require a response from our faith. The teaching of the faith raises questions as well. Sometimes it requires that we ponder how the faith relates to the demands of ordinary life. Every Sunday, we bring such questions to worship. For the next 10 weeks, the sermons will speak to many of the questions you have raised. Does prayer work? Can we love our enemies? Why do bad things happen to good people? How do we deal with all the divisions in our world?

It is hoped that these messages will spur your own thinking about how you respond to questions such as these.

- May 8 What are the Four Things? (What Do We Tell Our Children?)
- May 15 Should We Be Talking About This In Church? (The Politics of Jesus)
- May 22 Innocent Suffering: I Have No Answers, But I Do Have Responses
- May 29 Love Will Win
- June 5 Teach Us To Pray
- June 12 Can Prayer Change God's Mind?
- June 19 Forgive Us As We Forgive
- June 26 Forgive and Forget?
- July 3 A Patriotism Informed by Citizenship
- July 10 Love Your Enemies? What Good Will That Do?

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS



On March 22, Will & Jess Uffmann with their children Liam and Bailey, Pat Warner, Sydney & Melody Shaw, with their children Melana and Sydney, Jr. joined us as new members of Village Church at the Antioch Campus.



On April 4, Session welcomed 12 new members to the Village Church family at Mission Campus: Brooke Brundige, Susan & Rob Herwig, Annie Machen, Sydney & Kevin Mahler, Michelle McFarlane, Amy & Paul Person, Nick Power and Laurel & Daniel Short.

Deborah White, Director of Mission & Emergency Assistance, Announces Retirement

In April, Deborah White, who has served on the Village Church staff for nine years (eight as director of mission), announced her plans to retire at the end of July.

Deborah and her husband, Wayne White, were married by Dr. Bob Meneilly at Village Church in 1989. Deborah says, "I have numerous family connections to Village including parents who were married here and family who helped obtain land for the church."

Deborah and Wayne have twins who turn 30 this year. "Kathleen works as an emergency-room physician at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center in Hanover, New Hampshire. David is an architect in Boston. He just finished his masters at MIT and is working for a small architectural firm there. Retirement will give me more opportunities to visit them."

Deborah's husband has been retired for six years. "I want to spend more time with him and have more flexibility to travel. For more than a year, we've been renovating a maintenance-provided home which has been all-consuming during COVID and more challenging than normal. We finally moved in last month. It will be lovely having more flexibility to travel at times of the year that I couldn't because of work schedules."

Deborah is considering part-time and seasonal work post-retirement. "I am thinking about working in a garden center or teaching at a university level. I will be exploring a variety of options."

EDUCATION & PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND

Deborah has bachelor's degrees in theater and economics from Northwestern University, an MBA from Webster University and a master's in education from Avila University. Much of her work background has been in communications and community outreach.

"My first job out of college was as the public service director and a promotion producer for WDAF-TV. I left briefly and sold real estate for J.C. Nichols Company until WDAF asked me to return



as their manager of public relations and special projects.

Then the opportunity arose at St. Joseph Medical Center to work as their assistant manager of the marketing and public-relations department. My job responsibilities expanded during an era in which health care facilities were merging and growing—ultimately promoting me to regional director of marketing and public relations for the whole Carondelet Health System. I worked for the system for a total of 21 years until it was sold and moved from not-for-profit to for-profit status."

THE ROAD TO VILLAGE

In 2013, Deborah came to work at Village part-time as coordinator of local mission/emergency assistance supporting Rev. Jarrett McLaughlin. "Jarrett and his wife Rev. Meg McLaughlin left Village shortly after I started here, and I took on more responsibility because I loved working in faith-based mission work. By the following year, I was on board as the full-time director. These past nine years have flown by so rapidly."

VILLAGE HIGHLIGHTS

Deborah's work with the Mission Committee has resulted in a more formal grant-application process with refined criteria and timelines. "Before I was here, we were responding to a rolling grant-application process, so grant requests were arriving throughout the entire year. The Mission Committee would receive grant applications after we had already exhausted the budget, and nonprofits would have to wait until the next fiscal year for an answer on their request. Therefore, the

Mission Committee decided to narrow down the application window to Jan. 1 through Feb. 28. We now look at all the applications at one time with the funds that we have budgeted. Then we make our decisions and distribute funds by June at the latest. We felt this change was the best way to serve those nonprofits and be responsive to their immediate needs."

Deborah says she has been delighted to be a part of the Village Church Signature Missions. "We worked hard to develop that program," said Deborah. "It was an idea from Tom Are that the Mission Committee embraced, and it has blossomed into a significant gift each year to a nonprofit to help them start new programs, grow services and reach more clients. Our Hillcrest Transitional Housing fourplex, the first transitional housing in Johnson County, was the first formal signature mission for the church. We helped Hillcrest buy that fourplex over a two-year period. Then we continue to sponsor one of the apartments."

"Sometimes it's one small success at a time. It's not the numbers that matter. It's the quality of the interaction and what you're doing that creates sustainable long-term change and stabilization for those we serve."

Other Signature Mission programs have included Operation Breakthrough's STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) Lab, Literacy KC's GED program expansion, Community Linc's Trauma Informed Care Program and Reconciliation Services Thelma's Kitchen just to name a few.

"We've selected some very strong Signature Missions over the past nine years," Deborah said. "They've all been vibrant and thriving and such a great use of the dollars that have been entrusted to us by the members of the church. It really allows us to step into the community and make a bigger difference."

David Enslow, chair of the Mission Committee, said, "Deborah has been the heart of the Mission Committee at Village Church. She has run a very well-organized committee which shows respect for all the wonderful volunteers that have served under her leadership. She has been a fantastic example of what it looks like to share God's love with others. I will miss working alongside her."



Julie Foster and Deborah White helping shingle the roof at Habitat for Humanity's Women's Build



(Above) Mission Committee visits a Hillcrest Transitional Housing Apartment (Deborah White far right)

(Right) Thanksgiving Basket promotion



TO THE VILLAGE CONGREGATION & STAFF

Deborah says, "From the moment I started here, I was overwhelmed by the generosity and involvement of this congregation in serving the community. And it continues today. I'm going to miss the members of the congregation whom I've worked with so closely and their commitment to the mission at Village Church. I'm also going to miss my colleagues. I have good friends here. I'm going to miss that day-to-day interaction, the conversation and the daily structure. So that's why I think I will need to find something part-time. Who knows... maybe I'll come back as a volunteer. The door is wide open."

Rev. Tom Are said, "Deborah has served Village Church with a spirit of joy and deep compassion. She has brought amazing gifts of organization to our mission efforts. She could organize a moon landing if she were called upon to do so. She has served us faithfully and well. Village is a stronger church because of the ministry of Deborah White."

Village Says Farewell to Susan Webb, Director of the Village Food Pantry

On March 24, we celebrated a beloved, faithful servant of Village Church and the community, Susan Webb, director the Food Pantry & Clothes Closet. She served as director for nine years and was a Food Pantry volunteer for nine years before that. Each month, Susan managed a crew of more than 200 staff & volunteers and helped more than 500 clients onsite and up to 1,000 (if you include those in senior facilities) get access to food and clothing. In her tenure at the pantry, Susan weathered many storms with composure, grace and determination—always with a focus on love for neighbor—and we are forever grateful. Happy retirement, Susan!



CHILDREN & FAMILY MINISTRY

Still a Few Openings in Kids Summer Camps & Programs

Join us for Family VBS this summer at our Mission Campus. We are meeting from 6-7:30 p.m. three Wednesdays in June (8, 15 and 22). Dinner will be provided for the whole family each Wednesday and we will provide opportunities for fun, connection and growth with music, crafts, games and hang-time for all ages and stages. We love the kids dearly... now we're excited to get to know their parents, older siblings, even grandparents! All are welcome.

Heartland's Traveling Day Camp at the Antioch Campus – 9 a.m.-3 p.m. June 20-24 for completed grades K-6. Day campers get to participate in

outdoor activities such as water games, archery, campfires and more. They also get to grow in their relationship with God through these activities and a daily Bible study, worship, crafts and skits.

This year at Music & Drama Camp, we are telling the story of Noah and the great flood—a rainbow of hope, promise and lots of animals thrown in for good measure. After a fun-filled week of singing, acting and arts and crafts, we will conclude on Thursday evening with dinner and a performance. This camp is open to those who have completed Kindergarten through 5th grade and is from 1-4:30 p.m. June 26-30.

Visit villagepres.org/kids-summer for more information and to sign up.

May

May 6

5-7 p.m. Art & Hors d'oeuvres at Mission Campus. Come stroll through displays by artists of all ages, sample tasty hors d'oeuvres and enjoy live music.

May 7

7:30 p.m. Student & Professional Side-by-Side Season Finale: Vivaldi's Four Seasons, from Venice to Buenos Aires in the Mission Campus Sanctuary. Featuring Destiny Ann Mermagen, Michael Mermagen and Dr. Elisa Bickers in a concert showcasing local Village Players youth.

May 8 Mother's Day

7 p.m. "Hold Fast to Dreams" Nebraska Wesleyan University Choir, Mission Campus Sanctuary

May 10

Village U Class: Connecting a Smart Device to a Smart TV. Taught by Dee Couch, 1-2:30 p.m. & 6:30-8 p.m. in Room 316.

May 12

12:15 p.m. Second Thursday Recital with Village Music Team All Stars, Mission Campus Sanctuary

May 15 Confirmation Sunday

May 18 Last Curbside Pickup Wednesday Family Meal

May 22 Commissioning of New Stephen Ministers

May 30 Memorial Day Holiday Observed

June

June 5

Summer Lighthouse Sunday Funday begins. Join us for a broadly-graded morning as we explore mission opportunities and how to spread kindness. Sunday Funday continues through July 24.

3 p.m. Concert with Piano Virtuoso Frederick Hodges, Mission Campus Sanctuary

June 7

7 p.m. Village Church goes to the Royals vs. the Toronto Blue Jays game. For more information, email nancy.gatewood@villagepres.org.

June 12

3 p.m. Te Deum Divine Concert in the Mission Campus Sanctuary

June 17

7:30 p.m. Mozart, Beethoven, & Barn Burners in the Mission Campus Sanctuary. Join violinist Destiny Ann Mermagen for a concert with prize-winning pianist Tatiana Tessman. Pre-concert discussion & class with Destiny at 10:15 a.m. Sunday, June 12, in the Mission Campus Chapel.

June 19 Father's Day

June 20 Juneteenth Holiday Observed

June 24

5-7 p.m. Ice Cream Social at the Mission Campus

Kids' Summer Camp Dates

June 6-July 1 – Creations By Kids Summer Camps (Mission Campus)

June 8, 15 & 22 – 6-7:30 p.m. Wednesdays, Family VBS (Mission Campus)

June 8-29 – Summer Kids Day Out (Mission Campus)

June 20-24 – Heartland "Traveling Day Camp" (Antioch Campus)

June 26-30 – Music & Drama Camp (Mission Campus)

villagepres.org/upcoming-events

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Lark Anderson
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Melissa Bilyeu
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Jeanne & Charles Bleakley
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Matthew Brimble
Phillip Brimble
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Phyllis Brownlee
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GOOD NEWS

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A FEW WORDS FROM VILLAGE GIVING

Giving of our time, talent and treasures helps us to better reflect the character of God.

Offering financial support is one way for us to invest tangibly in what God is doing at Village, in Kansas City, and beyond.

As Jesus tells us, "Our heart follows our treasure."

We hope that as you worship, study, serve and build friendships at Village, you will be called to give. Generosity is a trademark of God's people.

SUNDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

MISSION CAMPUS

6641 Mission Rd.

Traditional - 9 & 11 a.m.

In the Sanctuary

The Gathering - 5 p.m.

In Friendship Hall

ANTIOCH CAMPUS

14895 Antioch Rd.

Traditional - 9:30 a.m.

In the Sanctuary

Call in to hear the previous Sunday's 9 a.m. Sanctuary worship service on our phone line **913-203-1301**.

IN MEMORY

Lorraine Anderson

Ron Dumay

Carol Harrington

Gary Moyer

Audrey Pollard