

GOOD NEWS

VOL. 64, NO. 3

FALL 2026

September, October, November



Wednesdays @Village

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A fresh approach to faith formation
and community building at Mission



VILLAGE CHURCH
Presbyterian (USA)



Parade Positivity

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Helping Prairie Village
celebrate 75 Years



Harnessing the Sun

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New solar panels at Antioch
will add up to savings

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*The grass withers, and the flower fades,
but the Word of our God stands forever.*

The GOOD NEWS is a quarterly publication for all members, friends, and partners of Village Presbyterian Church.

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For questions about content or to report an error, email us at communications@villagepres.org.

If you no longer wish to receive the Good News, please let us know, so we can reduce our printing costs and environmental impact.

Suggestions for future topics and articles are always welcome.

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Wednesdays@VILLAGE



5:30-7 p.m., Sept. 16-Nov. 18 MISSION CAMPUS

We believe that a life of faith is well served by more than one touchpoint each week. And, we are listening to you: after reading hundreds of survey responses, and with great thought, care, and collaboration across ministries, we have completely re-tooled Wednesday evenings at the Mission Campus with families, singles, couples, children, youth—**everyone**—in mind.

“Wednesdays@Village” will begin on Sept. 16 and go through Nov. 18—ten weeks of dinners and faith programming for all. The evening will begin with dinner in Friendship Hall from 5:30-6:30 p.m. with fresh, build-your-own meals that will not require advance registration. Come share a meal with us when you can (suggested donation of \$8 for adults).

Programs begin for everyone at 6:10 p.m. Stay for an adult faith-formation class. No need to choose between 2-3 options; there will be one topical class offered by Village pastors and other talented teachers. Elementary-aged children and youth (teenagers in grades 7-12) will be engaged with dynamic programs planned by our Children's and Youth Ministry staff.

Child care for ages 0-5 will be available downstairs. All programming wraps up at 7 p.m.

All In on Third Wednesdays

On the third Wednesday of the month, everyone (children through adults) is invited to stay in Friendship Hall after dinner to participate in fun group activities, education, or service projects led by a Village Church pastor or staff person. Each third Wednesday will look a little different, but the evening will still conclude at 7 p.m.

Why the change?

- The build-your-own meal model gives people the flexibility to customize dinners according to their individual dietary needs, family practices, and health goals. Diners can adjust portion sizes, avoid particular ingredients, and choose foods that align with their personal preferences, making it easier for groups with diverse needs to share a meal. We also know that remembering to register might have been an obstacle to attending dinners in the past, so we are removing that hurdle.

- Part of our response to God's grace is intentionality in the life of faith. This new format will give us all time for friendship and faith-building. Families can bring their children and teens with them on Wednesdays for dinner (no cooking or clean up!) and education, both separately and as a group (on Third Wednesdays). Child care will be available so parents of younger children can also participate in classes.
- Rather than gathering in separate rooms and multiple faith-formation classes, we look forward to creating a common space for members to connect with one another mid-week. We are so excited to both simplify and consolidate Wednesday classes while nurturing intergenerational, community-building moments.

Mark your calendars for Wednesdays@Village beginning Sept. 16. Let's eat, learn, and grow in faith together this fall!

Learn about menus, classes, child care, and more at villagepres.org/wednesdays.



Carol's parting words for couples:

"At the end of this ceremony, legally you will be husband and wife, but you still must decide each and every day of your life together that you want to be married."

The Beginning

Carol and her husband, David, have been involved with Village Church for 62 years.

They began singing with the choir in 1964, married that same year, and officially became members in October. They served as leaders in the marriage enrichment program at Village for 30 years along with their friends Carole and Al Pugsley. David was treasurer for the international organization. Carol says this is where she learned about caring for the health and longevity of marriages. "My goal has always been to help couples understand that the wedding is just one day. A marriage is a lifetime."

In 2001, Carol was hired by Rev. Dwight Tawney and Carolyn Nussbeck to assist Pat Covington, who was the head wedding coordinator at that time. Carol then transitioned into the head coordinator role after Rev. Tom Are, Jr. became senior pastor in 2004. Ever the team, Carol's husband David began to operate the cameras and A/V equipment for Carol's weddings, and eventually memorial services as well. Carol planned three of

A Legacy of Care

Honoring Carol Groebe's 25 years of walking with couples down the aisle

For a quarter of a century, Carol Groebe has had a front-row seat to some of life's most sacred and joyful moments. As Village Church's wedding coordinator, she has done far more than manage details and help plan ceremonies—Carol has walked alongside hundreds of couples as they prepared to begin a new chapter together. With a steady presence, a caring heart, and an eye for detail, she helped transform wedding days into meaningful celebrations of love, faith, and commitment.

From anxious rehearsals to triumphant processions down the aisle, Carol has been a trusted guide for more than 300 couples and their families, easing their worries and sharing in their excitement. Unwittingly, she has become a part of each couple's origin story, standing at the threshold of their new life together and helping create a foundation rooted in faith. After deciding that it was time to retire, Carol's last wedding at Village took place on Saturday, June 20.

her four sons' weddings at Village Church, which she acknowledged was tricky to pull off as both mother of the groom and the wedding coordinator! Carol has had several assistants work with her over the years.

Highlights and Learnings

Carol shares that it was her privilege to be part of each couple's experience. She also loved the organizational challenge of the job. Carol is very detail-oriented and is proud of the systems she put in place for scheduling, accounting, and more. "It is hard to say goodbye and pass the torch. It is bittersweet. This is an important part of my life. I have loved every single minute of it.

"I was concerned with the couple's attitude toward marriage and keeping it holy. I sometimes wonder why people do not want to use a church for their wedding, why they would want a destination wedding. God is part of the relationship. I grew up as a Baptist. I changed a lot from worshiping and working with Dr. Bob Meneilly (Village Church's founding pastor) and Rev. Tom Are. My love for this church just grew. And for God.



(L to R) David Groebe, daughter-in-law Trisha, son Andrew, and Carol Groebe in the Sanctuary in 1996.

"A refrain I hear over and over again from couples getting married at Village Presbyterian Church is a simple yet powerful one: 'Carol cares.'

She is a deeply committed person whose love for the wedding ministry has made us a better community of faith. She has shown hospitality, diligence, and love to every couple. Her 25 years of coordinating weddings has been a great gift to our church and to every couple married here. I am eternally grateful for her faithfulness, her attention to detail, and above all, her care. Village has been cared for so well by her."

—Rev. Maggie Johnson Phillips

"There were times when things were hard—when people were leaving or talking about leaving. I knew that I was here to stay, that we would stay. We would weather the storms together. That's what families do.

"I love learning from Pastors Rodger and Tom. I was on Session when we hired Rev. Dr. Rodger Nishioka. Pastor Tom told me, 'He needs a helper. Can you be around?' I said, 'I cannot help Rodger! And I have only three months left on Session.' Tom told

me, 'Carol, this is the easiest job you will ever have.' I told Pastor Rodger, 'I cannot help you. You already know everything. But I can feed you!' So, I would bring him treats."

Through her dedication, organization, and faithful ministry, Carol Groebe has helped generations of couples begin their married lives together. Her legacy is woven into the narratives of hundreds of people across our congregation.

MISSION IS OUR MISSION

2026-2027 Grant Recipients Announced

Village Church began with a remarkable vision: that a congregation's success could be measured by what it gives away. From the very beginning, members reached beyond our own community to support mission efforts and help grow new congregations within the denomination.

Our founding pastor, Dr. Bob Meneilly, originally planned to be a missionary but settled down in Prairie Village instead. In 1955, 20% of the church budget was set aside for mission. In 1961, Dr. Bob took a three-month trip to the island of Samar in the Philippines. Upon his return, 15,000 people attended his discussions on the importance of international mission.

These early acts established a legacy of service that remains central to our calling. Each year since 2011, the Mission Committee has selected one local organization for a special grant to fund a particular project or outreach (our "Signature Mission")—in addition to providing funds for almost 40 other nonprofits in three areas of interest: food insecurity, housing, and adult education. Let's learn more about some of them.

Hunger Highlight: Neighbor2Neighbor



Neighbor2Neighbor (N2N) serves its north-east Kansas City neighbors weekday breakfasts and lunches, and provides clothing and hygiene supplies along with a big dose of hope, hospitality, and compassion. Their guests often struggle with substance abuse and mental health issues. Drug treatment specialists personally engage with each neighbor who is looking for a way out and follow up with them throughout recovery.

Housed in St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, N2N (n2n4kc.com) celebrates its 30th anniversary this year. Executive director Greg Parr was a former recipient of N2N's services. Greg is in recovery and is now a counselor and Methodist minister.

2026-2027 SIGNATURE MISSION PARTNER:

Center of Grace

We are proud to select **Center of Grace** as Village Church's 2026-2027 Signature Mission partner. Founded in 1999, Center of Grace (centerofgrace.center) offers an impressive list of resources for those in need: a clothing closet and food pantry, community dinners, computer training, an English Language Learning preschool, a medical equipment program, hygiene products, a community garden, English classes through Johnson County Community College, a partnership with the Boys & Girls Club, as well as coordinating with a host of other organizations to provide additional support. As a result of their bevy of programs, they served more than 30,000 people this past year and anticipate further growth in the upcoming year.

The Mission Committee was impressed by what is accomplished at Center of Grace. The organization offers dignity and respect to the wide variety of individuals they serve, the majority of which are immigrants and minorities. All those involved, from staff to volunteers to participants, truly receive a love reflective of Christ's love.

Our Signature Mission receives our largest single grant (\$80,000), made possible through the Endowment Trust. Look for Village volunteer opportunities at Center of Grace (located at 520 S. Harrison, Olathe, Kansas) in the coming year.



FOOD INSECURITY: \$46,740

- Cultivate KC
- Giving the Basics
- Gordon Parks Elementary
- Hope Faith
- Hope Network of Raytown
- Immanuel Community Outreach Assn.
- Journey to New Life
- Kanbe's Markets
- Lazarus Ministries
- Neighbor2Neighbor
- Northland Clothing Center
- Pete's Garden
- Shawnee Mission Meals on Wheels
- The Single Mom KC
- Urban Produce Push

HOUSING: \$45,510

- Artists Helping the Homeless
- Be Free KC
- Community LINC
- Hillcrest Transitional Housing
- HopeBUILDERS
- Hope House
- Jewish Vocational Service
- NewhouseKC
- ReHope
- reStart Inc.
- River of Refuge
- SAVE, Inc.
- Shawnee Community Services
- Sheffield Place
- True Light Family Resource Center
- Veterans Community Project

EDUCATION: \$30,750

- Child Protection Center
- Cornerstones of Care
- KC Shepherd's Center
- Pawsperity
- Rose Brooks
- The Sewing Labs
- Sunflower House
- Wildwood Outdoor Education Center

Local nonprofits who received grants for 2026-2027

villagepres.org/community-grants

In 2025, N2N provided 27,867 meals, 1,536 hygiene items, and 2,313 changes of clothes, and 141 people were referred for treatment or housing. Grant funds from Village Church help pay for the 70-110 breakfasts and lunches served each day. If you are looking to help N2N through in-kind donations, paper products, milk, and fruit are always needed.



Housing Highlight: reStart, Inc.

reStart, Inc. has two facilities: the Central Lodge on East 9th Street (*pictured above*) and the Family Lodge on Main Street, both in Kansas City, Missouri. The Family Lodge is a former hotel converted to a 45-unit shelter for families.

reStart addresses the challenges of safe housing while empowering participants to achieve greater stability and health. They have wraparound services at these two temporary shelters to address mental and physical health, substance abuse, and domestic violence—at the same time providing financial and literacy referrals, workforce development, and food.

Through your contributions, we were able to fund approximately half the cost of new linens for both of their housing lodges.



Education Highlight: The Sewing Labs

The Sewing Labs was founded in 2016 in Kansas City's Columbus Park neighborhood. An important goal of the Sewing Labs is to equip individuals with limited income, housing insecurity, and/or unemployment with the in-demand skill of industrial sewing-machine operation.

The Sewing Salon Training Program lasts 30 weeks, followed by an apprenticeship program with a local business. During this period, there is follow-up between The Sewing Labs and the business to help achieve a successful outcome. In 2026, the program is expected serve 75 participants.

Community classes and workshops are also offered to the public. In 2025, The Sewing Labs provided more than 18,000 hours of classroom instruction and made donations to more than 1,800 community projects.

Decade after decade, the spirit of generosity and service present at our founding, and evident still, has connected us to neighbors near and far, reminding us that the church is at its best when it participates in God's work beyond its doors.



Parade Positivity

Prairie Village celebrates 75 years with a parade in May



The city of Prairie Village celebrated its 75th anniversary in May, and Village Church wanted to be a part of the fun. Founded in 1949, Village celebrated its own 75th anniversary in 2024 with guest preachers, a special organ concert, a historical timeline in the Welcome Center, and other events to commemorate the milestone.

Director of engagement, Carol Solenberger, shares her appreciation for the team effort that made our 2026 Prairie Village Parade float and procession a reality. "I'm grateful to those who offered donations, shared ideas and excitement, posted on social media, ironed custom Village Church trucker hats, created beautiful signs, dressed in 1950s outfits, and offered their help and unwavering support. Every time I needed something—a listening ear, an idea, a plan, supplies, encouragement, anything—someone appeared! We worked together to make this float happen. It was a joy!"



It was a joy that included Joy Biard (*second photo from top*), Village Church member and the daughter of our beloved founding pastor, Dr. Bob Meneilly, who rode on the parade float wearing one of her father's robes. The float's theme was a miniature worship service and everyone pitched in. Our preschoolers helped decorate chicken-wire crosses with tissue paper. Staff members dreamed up a way to build a steeple and attach it to the church van which pulled the float. We borrowed pews from the chancel. Our Music Ministry friends let us borrow choir robes. Several octogenarians assumed the roles of worshipers. Priscilla Wilson, age 95, sat in one of the pews; she had never been in a parade and reported that it was tremendous fun!

About 60 volunteers of all ages—dressed in branded Village t-shirts or 1950s attire—sang along with a mobile speaker system (set up by Nathan Bliss) playing, "This Little Light of Mine." The group warmly greeted everyone along the route, handing out nostalgic treats like Cracker Jacks as well as Rice Krispie treats. It was a delight to see so many familiar Village Church faces cheering us on from Mission Road.



The parade float reflected more than our church history, it reflected the people who continue to bring its mission to life. By honoring our beginnings and showing up for our community, we celebrated not only where we've been, but who we aspire to be.

DOING THE GOOD:

Capital Campaign Provides Solar Panels at Antioch

Through the faithful dedication of so many and the generous gifts of the "Here for Good" capital campaign, the Antioch Campus spent the spring and summer installing solar panels. They are now connected for use.

In 2025, the cost of electricity at this location was \$35,000. In

eight years, the solar panels will have paid for themselves.

The benefits go beyond saving money. Solar power does not pollute the air or produce greenhouse gases, which can reduce carbon emissions and slow climate change. Renewable energy sources reduce our

dependence on coal, oil, and natural gas—conserving natural resources and protecting the environment. The Village Church Child & Family Development Center at 99th St. and Mission Road, built in 2017, also benefits from solar panels on its roof.

As people of faith, we strive to be good stewards of God's creation and funds given to the church. By using renewable energy, we can help protect our environment for future generations and lower our energy costs. Your generosity helps us make changes that demonstrate we are "Here for Good." Thank you!

The solar panels installed in July at the Antioch Campus will offset the building's electricity consumption by about 70%, or an estimated savings of \$26,000 annually.



villagepres.org/here-for-good



Voces8

villagepres.org/music

MUSIC

Fall is always an exciting time for the music ministries of Village Church. The adult and youth choral and instrumental ensembles swing back into action to prepare music for worship, rehearsing faithfully to bring their best to glorify God and inspire the community. While worship music is the core of our ministry, there are several other events to highlight:

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks on our country. We will hold a **9/11 Prayer Service** in the Mission Campus Sanctuary at 6:30 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 11 to reflect on that dark time through silence, prayer, and song.

For the woodwind lovers, on Friday, Sept. 25 at 7 p.m., the **Gold Line Saxophone Quartet** will present a free concert in the Mission Campus Sanctuary. Based in California, this ensemble's program includes pieces by Ravel, Love, and Dvorak as well as Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 3 with Dr. Bickers on the pipe organ. Arrive at 6:15 p.m. for a pre-concert lecture.

On Saturday, Oct. 3 at 7 p.m., Friends of Chamber Music present "**Voces8: Towards Paradise.**" Voces8 is one of the finest early-music a cappella choral ensembles in the world, and their stellar singing really shines in our resonant Mission Campus Sanctuary. Tickets are available at chambermusic.org/tickets-subscriptions. This concert is likely to sell out, so get tickets early!



Richard Gowers

Finally, come hear beautiful organ music on Monday, Oct. 26 at 7 p.m., when renowned British organist **Richard Gowers** will play a free concert on our phenomenal pipe organ. Gowers is familiar with the organs of Richards, Fowkes & Co., since his organ (at the Parish Church of St. George, Hanover Square in London) was built by the same firm, right before the Village organ was built. This concert is presented by the American Guild of Organists and underwritten by M. Wayne Alexander and John W. Braum.

FOR YOUR CALENDAR

See the full calendar and sign up for all events at villagepres.churchcenter.com

• Mission Campus

• Antioch Campus

• At Both Locations

• Offsite

SEPTEMBER

- 3 Tallgrass Creek Social, 1 p.m.
Blood Drive, 3-6 p.m.
- 4 Young Adults: KC Monarchs game, 6:30 p.m.
- 7 **Labor Day: Campuses Closed**
- 9 Lunch with the Pastor, noon
- 10 2nd Thursday Recital: Victoria Botero, soprano
& Lamar Sims, piano, 12:15 p.m.
- 11 9/11 Prayer Service (25th anniversary), 6:30 p.m.
- 13 **Fall Kickoff Sunday**
Worship times return to 9, 11 a.m. and 4 p.m.
Fall Kickoff Potluck, 11:15 a.m.
- 14-15 **Presbyterian Women Horizons Bible studies begin**
- 15 Young Adults: Picnic in the Park, 5:30 p.m.
- 16 Wednesdays@Village begin, 5:30 p.m.
- 20 New Faces Brunch, 11:15 a.m.
- 25 Gold Line Saxophone Quartet, 7 p.m. (6:15 p.m. lecture)
- 27 New Member Class, 11:15 a.m.
- 26 Celebration Dominicana Fundraiser, 6 p.m.

OCTOBER

- 3 Friends of Chamber Music presents VOCES8, 7 p.m.
- 4 **World Communion Sunday**
Rev. Dr. Rodger Nishioka preaches in worship
New Member Luncheon, noon
- 6 Te Deum and Kansas City Chorale, 7:30 p.m.
- 8 2nd Thursday Recital: Acer Sonorous Bassoon
Ensemble, 12:15 p.m.
- 9 Cross-Lines Kitchen Volunteer Day (Antioch Team),
11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.
- 11 **Be the Church Service Activities, 11 a.m. (Antioch),
5 p.m. (Mission)**
Kansas City Wind Symphony, 7 p.m.
- 13 Young Adults: Picnic in the Park, 5:30 p.m.
- 14 Lunch with the Pastor, noon
- 17 Presbyterian Women: Barbie & Me Workshop, 9 a.m.
- 20 Blood Drive, 1-6 p.m.

- 21 Wednesdays@Village "Festi-Fall," 5:30 p.m.
- 25 Trunk or Treat, 1-3 p.m.
- 26 Richard Gowers Organ Concert, 7 p.m.

NOVEMBER

- 1 **All Saints' Day Services**
- 3 **Election Day Vigils, 8 a.m. & 5 p.m (Mission),
noon (Antioch)**
- 8 **3rd Grade Bible Presentations in worship**
- 10 Young Adults: Picnic in the Park, 5:30 p.m.
- 11 Lunch with the Pastor, noon
- 12 2nd Thursday Recital: Liberty High School Choirs,
12:15 p.m.
- 18 Wednesdays@Village "Friendsgiving," 5:30 p.m.
- 19-24 Givingthanks Mission Trip to Dominican Republic
- 22 Kansas City Wind Symphony, 7 p.m.
- 26-27 **Thanksgiving Holiday: Campuses Closed**
- 29 **First Sunday of Advent**
New Member Class, 11:15 a.m.



NEW! CONNECT BIBLE STUDY *Grounded in Grace: Celebrating the Presbyterian Tradition*

All the things you want to know about the Presbyterian faith but were too embarrassed to ask! Curriculum designed and presented by Village pastors. Connect Groups will begin meeting in September. Contact carol.solenberger@villagepres.org.



VILLAGE CHURCH
Presbyterian (USA)

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MISSION CAMPUS

6641 Mission Rd., Prairie Village, KS 66208

Worship: 9, 11 a.m., and 4 p.m. Sundays

ANTIOCH CAMPUS

14895 Antioch Rd., Overland Park, KS 66221

Worship: 10 a.m. Sundays

MENEILLY CENTER FOR MISSION

Food Pantry & Clothes Closet - 9960 Mission Rd.

Child & Family Development Center - 9900 Mission Rd.

Overland Park, KS 66207

Worship online at villagepres.org/online