

**The Village Church – Rancho Santa Fe, California  
Annual Report for 2023**

**February 25, 2024**

---

**Jack Baca – Senior Pastor**

Here is the Annual Report of The Village Church for 2023. I hope you find it interesting, informative, and inspiring.

In these pages, you'll discover a great deal about what goes on throughout the life of our church. We are a large and very active congregation, led by a stellar group of both lay and professional (staff) leaders. I'm proud of and thankful for all of them. And I'm also grateful for you! I believe that a local congregation is where the primary work of Christians is expressed. Here, each of us finds education and encouragement in our walk with Jesus. Here, all of us are bonded together into a family that exists not just to nourish us, but to serve others, and we do that all around the world.

I believe that, more than any other single person in our church, I am privileged to see, to experience, and to be fed by what happens within our diverse and faithful church. In my role as pastor, preacher, teacher, and number one cheerleader for all else that goes on under the rubric "The Village Church," I have the joy of thinking deeply and then conversing widely with just about all of you. I often wish that each of you could experience with me the generosity, courage, creativity, commitment, and faithfulness of our church.

Our world today—starting in our own hearts, homes, and neighborhoods—needs more than ever to have places where the mandate of Christ is made real. Our church is just such a place. Of course, we can always grow, and I believe that we will. Please, as you read, also pray: pray for each other, for our leaders, for the power of our witness, for the wisdom and energy to face the many challenges that lie ahead. And then say a word of thanks to our Lord, to whom we belong and for whose sake we live and serve.

Blessings, Jack

**Juan Acosta – Director of Worship**

2023 was another year of growth for the worship ministry of the Village Church. Across the two worship services attendance was up 20% over the previous year, and we lifted the remaining restrictions related to the pandemic. All of the musical groups added members to their groups, with fifty singers actively participating in the Chancel Choir, and seventy singers in the Village Community Chorale. The Contemporary Worship Team has added a number of musicians to the roster of capable worship leaders. In September we welcomed Calieanne Grossheim as our Children's Choir Director, and in December we bid farewell to Katie Hickey after eleven years as soprano section leader of the chancel choir. The concert series included performances by the San Diego Symphony, the St. Olaf Choir, the San Diego Master Chorale, the La Jolla Symphony

Chorus, and two concerts of the Village Community Chorale including a capacity audience for the Christmas Choral Concert. In the Spring forty members of the Village Church and greater community traveled to Ireland to help lead worship services and perform concerts throughout the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

## **Jan Cook – Interim Associate Pastor**

### ***Adult Ministry***

*Make me to know **your ways**, O LORD; teach me **your paths**. Psalm 25:4*

Following Jesus for life in 2023 has been an exciting, sometimes surprising, always interesting journey here at the Village church. We launched a search for a new Director of Adult Ministries and have been hard at work praying, seeking, and interviewing, over the past year, for this significant ministry. Our search committee consisted of Adult Ministry Elders Michael Dyer and Gerry Taylor as well as past Adult Ministry Elder Peggy Stackle. Bill Burch rounded out the team with Pastor Jan Cook serving as staff liaison and resource for the team.

- Our Pastors taught Bible Studies every week to La Costa Glen as well as the Women's, and Men's groups. This has been a very meaningful study in which we committed ourselves to a full year to dive into Exodus and what a rich and wonderful dive it has been!
- The Annual Women's Christmas and Spring Luncheons, organized by Robin Singer & friends, allowed us to roll out the red carpet for members and guests, with beautifully appointed tables, an incredible menu and most significantly shared fellowship and connections around the tables.
- Kingdom Academy continued with two groups meeting on campus and the in-depth study brings lively and thought-provoking discussions.
- Laura Metzger reprised her Chronological Study of the Bible on Monday evening and tested out a "hybrid" study using OWL technology, with people attending in person and by zoom at the same time.
- Bill Hoehn's Sunday Morning Bible Study once again gathered in the Fellowship Center, staying strong in attendance and deep in subject matter. Brenda Meredith brought her own special gift as she led the group when Bill was away.
- Wendy McClave-Elliott blessed many by facilitating the Journey Through Grief group, reaching out to those who are grieving and need to feel and know the love of Jesus in the dark times.
- We held two New Members classes in 2023 with 34 people making the decision to join. What a blessing to welcome these wonderful new friends and fellow servants of Christ.
- The Village Church Christmas Season was alive with children's activities, choir concerts, beautiful services, and a deep spiritual connection with the Advent season. Advent and Lent devotionals were prepared (by Laura Metzger) and distributed to our congregation.

- We are grateful for the beauty and service of our event decorating team coordinated by Terri Dickson and Becky Jessen. Their sense of style and hospitality makes all of us look good!

Those are highlights of some of the activities, classes, and services we worked so hard on this past year. But the most important thing to pay attention to is how the Holy Spirit has touched and transformed your life. We all work hard to supply the tools, but it is always God's spirit moving in our lives that provides the fuel for our best lives.

### **Board of Deacons**

*“Will you be a faithful deacon, teaching charity, urging concern, and directing people’s help to the friendless and those in need? In your ministry will you try and show the love and justice of Jesus Christ?” (Ordination Question for the Office of Deacon)*

Twenty-four people have responded to Christ's call to “care for the least of these” and become the face of care and compassion here at Village Church. If you attend a Deacon's meeting, you will leave inspired and energized by the spirit of fun and “can do” that permeates the conversation.

- Our congregation of about 900 members is divided into flocks of 25-30 people. Each Deacon cares for their assigned flock through a ministry of visitation, phone calls, and cards. Our goal is to be a part of the support system for our flock members. We want them to count on for us for prayer, comfort and many practical needs to be met.
- We serve meals for those among us in need, some transportation issues are met, and we are always on the lookout for other areas we can be helpful. All the members of our Deacon Board are members of the Village Church Prayer Chain, and we are deeply committed to the ministry of prayer.
- Our Stephen Ministers serve our congregation with the gift of one-on-one counsel and caring for those experiencing an emotional crisis, loss, or hardship.
- Our “Journey Through Grief” workshop is a meaningful time for the bereaved to find companions experiencing their own journey and gain tools for coping as well.
- The Deacons serve the worshipping community by preparing the elements of the Lord's Supper on the first Sunday of each month.

The friendly faces that you see on Sunday mornings at the Welcome Table are the faces of our Deacons. It is our pleasure and joy to serve the Lord by serving this congregation and our prayer is that the Village Church continues to grow in love, service, and joy!

### **Chris Hecker – Director of Youth**

Over the last 17 months, Youth Ministry at the Village Church has become a place of connection and community for both students and their families. It has been an absolute joy to see the incredible spiritual growth in our students along with the friendships that have developed

within the Youth Ministry community. We currently have 53 students on our roster that call Village Church their home.

Our vision of cross-commission collaboration has strengthened through partnerships with KidsVillage, Missions, and Worship. Our Youth have had the privilege of participating in worship as musicians, lay-readers and ushers. They have supported and served KidsVillage events including Trunk or Treat, Breakfast in Bethlehem, Eggstravaganza, and VBS.

Our youth also consistently serve in the community with several of our mission partners which include Ladle Fellowship, Interfaith, New Day Urban Ministries, and UrbanLife to name a few.

In 2023, Youth Ministry flourished with 17 students engaged in the confirmation process, 4 students baptized, as well as 15 participants in Summer Camp at Thousand Pines Christian Camp. It was an especially rewarding experience in relationship-building and spiritual development.

We are looking forward to our youth living out their faith in 2024 through continued engagement in the community with our mission partners, cross-commission efforts, youth summer camp, and our first international mission trip in more than a decade. We covet your prayers!

### **Michelle Yuen – Director of Children**

In 2023, Children's Ministry was blessed by devoted teachers, dedicated volunteers, and engaged and involved children. We have witnessed so much growth and learning this year, partly due to the new curriculum we adopted, but mostly because of the efforts of our wonderful teachers. Throughout the year, we have welcomed many new families into our program, both in Sunday School and at special events. As we look forward to the upcoming year, we invite prayers for God to bless each child with understanding and to expand the reach of this ministry.

Missions plays a vital role in our ministry, and we actively partnered with the Missions Ministry to engage children in a number of service projects. These initiatives ranged from church-wide endeavors, like the Souper Bowl collection, to projects led by Children's Ministry, such as creating Valentine's Day cards for children in Brazil. Notably, during Vacation Bible School, our campers donated a vanload of pet food to stock the pet food pantry at Rancho Coastal Humane Society. The children also spent time during camp making pet toys for the animals housed at Rancho Coastal.

Special events continued to be at the heart of our community outreach efforts. Our perennial favorites, Breakfast in Bethlehem and Eggstravaganza, brought hundreds of people together in celebration of Christmas and Easter. We also held our Trunk or Treat event, which was well-attended by church, preschool, and community families. Our largest endeavor of the year was Vacation Bible School. Our week-long camp featured an animal theme and was attended by over 60 elementary and preschool students. We are so grateful for all of the staff and

volunteers who made these events possible, and we excitedly anticipate another year of wonderful events that give our community a glimpse of the love of God.

### **Nancy Betts – Director of Preschool**

The Village Church Preschool enjoyed a very busy year in 2023! We served approximately 100 children, a staff of 17, including 7 teachers, an outdoor environment team, Spanish enrichment teacher, Yoga enrichment teacher, a Music Enrichment teacher an on-site sub and 2 administrators. We were able to maintain a waitlist of over 60 families from the last school year to the current year.

We began our school year by inviting parents into the classroom for an opportunity to meet the teacher and spend some time in the classroom. These all-school activities continued with a Fall Picnic where we had over 85 families join us in the evening for pizza, face painting and a jumper. We also enjoyed a visit from a famous author of children's yoga books. She founded International Kids Yoga Day and came to the school to read her newest book and do a few poses with them. We celebrated both Mother and Father's Day by inviting all the parents to celebrate a day with their preschoolers as they built, created, and played together. We also welcomed Eco Vivarium, a nonprofit mobile education service featuring rescued and donated reptiles, amphibians, and arthropods to our Spring Celebration so that our preschoolers could have an opportunity to learn about these often-misunderstood creatures in our world.

This year we reintroduced a Music enrichment program offered from October to December where the children were introduced to a variety of thematic songs, chants, fingerplays and dances that were used in our Halloween Parade and Sing-Along as well as our our Christmas Program. The Christmas Program was held in our Main Sanctuary with all our classes together as the children performed a variety of Christmas carols while the Nativity story was read. The school year has also included an all-school Chapel Time where multiple classrooms join in the chapel to act-out bible stories, play group activities, sing, and dance. We invite our families to join us each month for this celebration of fellowship and worship and have had days where our attendance exceeds 60 parents. The preschool staff also participated in more family-related church events such as Eggstravaganza, Breakfast in Bethlehem and special events like movie nights. The preschool takes an active role in advertising and assisting by volunteering and providing a visual presence to those families that may be participating in both the preschool and church.

The preschool team has done an extraordinary job of keeping health and safety at the forefront of our program while still being able to guide the children to become independent thinkers, develop a strong sense of responsibility and encourage a love for learning.

### **Gretchen Scruggs – Director of Missions**

In 2023, through its Mission Commission, The Village Church continued to engage with both our local and global mission partners.

This past year, we were able to support our mission partners with \$485,050. The church budget allocated \$211,000 to the Mission Commission. Special offerings and congregational appeals provided \$154,139 to support our core and validated missions. In addition, \$119,911 in funding was disbursed in support of our mission partners and events.

The following activities were completed through the direction of the Mission Commission:

- We supported our 18 core missions with guaranteed financial support and provided supplemental support to several core and validated missions.
- We had another successful Souper Bowl Sunday collecting just under 900 cans of soup for New Day Urban Ministries and Grace Presbyterian Church in Vista. In addition to the cans of soup donated, \$2,750 was contributed.
- Christmas in July and Homeless Veteran Initiative engaged many church members and the community. We filled one and a half trucks with furniture and clothing for Alliance for African Assistance as well as members arranging for home pick-ups. In addition, over \$15,000 was raised to provide housing items for our homeless veterans.
- Our annual Alternative Christmas Market raised over \$34,000 in gifts to our mission partners.
- Twice this past year our youth and adult volunteers made sack lunches at Interfaith Community Services. During each visit, over 300 sack lunches were made.
- The congregation and community came together to donate over 200 backpacks and \$1,240 to Care House.
- We worked alongside Urban Youth Collaborative for a Service Day at a local high school as it prepared to welcome back students in the fall.
- We provided funds to support Thanksgiving dinners for 30 Marine families at Camp Pendleton.
- We helped Branch BBQ serve the homeless in Mission Bay.

In 2024, we will continue with the same activities noted above along with planned trips to Amor Ministries in Mexico, Hope Unlimited in Brazil, and a collaborative trip with our youth to Dominican Republic to visit areas where Plant with Purpose is serving.

### **Adrian Narlock – Director of Media**

In 2023, the Media Ministry at The Village Church continued its mission, “Following Jesus for Life” by connecting and engaging our community in worship and spiritual growth. We remained dedicated to providing avenues for prayer, scripture, preaching, love, community, grace, forgiveness, and hope to our congregation and beyond.

Major strides were made to enhance our Audio/Visual systems across our campus to facilitate worship and enable a hybrid style of engagement with our community. This significantly improved our ability to deliver high-quality worship experiences both in person and through

live streams. The enhancements also fostered collaborative creativity during worship, enriching the experience and guiding our congregation in their spiritual journey.

Our online worship initiatives continued to thrive. Sunday online worship consistently reached over 200 households worldwide, with an average of 215 views on our dedicated worship URL. Traditional worship live stream attendance averaged 50 views each Sunday, reflecting the continued engagement of our community in virtual worship experiences.

Our online presence continues to grow, with 322 YouTube subscribers, 755 followers on Facebook, and 454 followers on Instagram. The Village Church website experienced steady traffic, with 37,000 sessions recorded, indicating sustained interest and engagement with our online content. The demographic distribution of our online audience remained diverse, with viewership spanning across 38 countries and 465 cities.

In terms of staffing, Amanda Thompson our Creative Design Assistant, continued to create innovative design and enrich the Media Ministry's outreach efforts. Our Audio/Visual Technicians, Drew Middleton and Nic Thibodeau, continued to provide support in ensuring the seamless production of worship services and special events. Additionally, Elders Tom Bowman and Francie Murphy remained instrumental in providing guidance and support to our newly formed Media Commission.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to fulfilling our mission of spreading the love of Christ and fostering spiritual growth through innovative and inclusive media initiatives. I am grateful for the dedication and collaboration of our team and I'm excited about the possibilities that lie ahead as we continue to serve as disciples of God, bringing glory to His name.

### **Mary Thibodeau – Executive Administrator**

The Support Commission and its ministries of Administration, Finance, Facilities Management, The Village Christian Foundation, Hospitality Services, Human Resources, Information Technology, Safety, and Strategic Planning, were again very busy in 2023.

**Administration and Finance** received an unqualified independent financial audit report, managed the generosity/stewardship campaign, facilitated the budget planning operations, coordinated, and directed estate bequests, developed, and implemented an investment strategy, as well as managed the continuous administration of day-to-day accounting, finance, and office operations.

**Facilities Management** continued to provide custodial and sanitation support for our church. In addition, the team professionally built a Facilities Office and Storage on the southwest section of the church property and continued to assist with the campus landscape architecture and maintenance plans for the church.

**The Village Christian Foundation** hosted a *Wills and Trust Seminar* and continues to develop Legacy Planning and Support opportunities for our congregation and the community.

**Hospitality Services** manages and maintains the food and beverage facility operations at the church. The ministry is charged with the responsibility to ensure proper safety, sanitation and supervision for all food, beverages, equipment, and food service workers in order to comply with the regulations of the San Diego Food and Housing Division of the Department of Environmental Health. The ministry provided Sunday patio beverages and donut holes as well as food and/or beverages for several church events in 2023, including: *Presbytery Leadership Day, Eggstravaganza, Irish Festival, Strategic Planning Leadership Luncheon, Vacation Bible School, Breakfast in Bethlehem, Senior Pastor 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration, Women's Bible Study Spring and Winter Luncheons, The Village Christian Foundation Wills and Trust Luncheon, New Member Luncheons, Church BBQ, Village Fest, Christmas Sing-Along, Blue Christmas, Breakfast in Bethlehem*, as well as receptions for church concerts, weddings, and memorials.

**Human Resources** and **Safety** developed policies, procedures, and trainings to respond to new laws and regulations while managing day-to-day payroll, benefits, personnel management responsibilities as well as general safety programs and protocols.

**Information Technology** included the continued expansion of campus WIFI coverage, the vetting of Church Management Software, as well as the enhancement of security protocols and user education and training on cyber security measures.

**Strategic Planning** continued to secure, study, and assess data on church demographics, congregational dynamics, and spiritual and organizational trends of the church locally and worldwide. The resulting data analysis guided the development of recommendations to assist the Session in discerning plans for the future of the church.