

**The Village Church – Rancho Santa Fe, California**  
**Annual Report for 2024**

**February 23, 2025**

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**Jack Baca – Senior Pastor**

How are things going? We often start casual conversations with folks by asking this question. Every year, our congregation asks this question of ourselves. How are things going in the life of our church family? Put another way, how are things going in the ministry of Jesus of which we are privileged to be a part?

In the pages that follow, you'll read our answers. We'll talk about our missions, our education, our worship, and a whole host of other things. You'll catch a sense of how vital, energetic, and committed our church is. You'll read names of people who deserve our appreciation, numbers about attendance and financial giving, and comment on what happens in The Village Church to nurture new disciples, encourage experienced disciples, and reach out to invite people to become disciples.

Almost all of what we have to report is positive, especially when it comes to our hopes and dreams, our family feel, and our dedication to being serious students of the way of life that Jesus taught. Some, however, is not as positive. We experience the same challenges and changes as those of our broader society. Fewer and fewer people believe in Christ, fewer still see active life in a church as necessary to following Christ and more see the church of Christ as a dinosaur and a drag on modern society.

I believe that the church is living through a stage of history in which Christian faith and the Christian church is being tested and even refined. I am thankful for you, by whose commitment and courage the message and ministry of Christ Jesus continues to flourish here in the church I love. I know that you love it, too.

Blessings, Jack

**Juan Acosta – Director of Worship**

2024 was a mixed year in the Worship Ministry of the Village Church. Attendance in Sunday worship was down slightly from the previous year, but attendance at special services like Easter and Christmas Eve was up slightly. The 2 pm family service on Christmas Eve in 2024 saw the highest attendance ever for that time and format and has become the second highest attended service on Christmas Eve. This year also saw a number of staff transitions, with the addition of Calieanne Grossheim and Emily Weinberg as section leaders in the Chancel Choir, and Grace Mora as a new Choral Scholar. In August Twyla Arant transitioned to Music Coordinator, and Calieanne became our new Assistant Director of Worship. Sadly, in May of 2024 our beloved pianist for Contemporary Worship, Rob Pickard, passed away.

The Village Community Chorale has returned to pre-pandemic numbers with nearly eighty singers participating in both the Spring and Christmas Concerts. In the Spring we performed the rarely heard Mozart *Missa Solemnis* in C major, along with a Handel Organ Concerto featuring our own Susie Shick. In December we did two performances of the Christmas portion of Handel's *Messiah*, to sell-out crowds. Additionally, Barbara Haran and members of both the Contemporary and Traditional music teams led "Carols in the Village" at the Inn in Rancho Santa Fe, with over two hundred in attendance.

Enthusiasm and participation in the Chancel Choir has continued to rebound post-Covid although our numbers remain about the same as the previous year. The Children's Choir continues to grow under the leadership of Calieanne, and we had strong participation in our Summer Choir and Christmas Choirs. In 2025 we are hoping to revitalize participation in worship through a number of initiatives and look towards the future and the role that our church can play in the community.

### **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 2024 continues to be the compass for our spiritual formation efforts as well as events that were meant to be connectional for our congregation.

We worked with a newly hired Adult Ministry Director who laid the groundwork for developing small groups and we were grateful. Circumstances changed and we had to say goodbye to Ali Tonneson but remain grateful for the work she began. We continue to search for the next Director and would appreciate the prayers of the congregation in this endeavor.

- Our annual Village Fest was held with a particular focus on connections and the opportunity to join a Gathering with Eight group. Delicious Mexican cuisine, wonderful fellowship and connections made were all part of the success of the day.
- Gatherings for Eight was a ministry revitalized and reintroduced to the congregation. Twelve new groups were set up and launched.
- In September we introduced a new Art Group to our campus facilitated by Victor Olley. People from our church and the community gather twice a month to paint (or other medium) and connect with one another.
- Our Pastors taught a weekly Bible Studies at La Costa Glen as well as the Women's group here on campus, and the Men's group who meet at the Lomas Santa Fe Country Club. In 2024 we concluded our study of Exodus and started 1 Corinthians. These are tough texts, but the participants have been phenomenal with their insights and discussion. and what a rich and wonderful dive it has been!
- 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.

- In January we held a pastor led 6-week session on “How to Follow Jesus for Life” course. Wonderful discussion and good connections were made.
- Kingdom Academy continued with two groups meeting on campus and the in-depth study bringing lively and thought-provoking discussions.
- In April the Kingdom Academy presented a 9-session small group study based on the book “The Good and Beautiful God”
- 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.
- June brought a 6-week in-depth class on women in the Bible based on a book titled “Take Heart Daughter.” The study was led by Ali Tonneson and drew a very solid core of participants
- Adult Ministry once more sponsored the Family Summer BBQ, traditionally held on the weekend before July 4. Our hope was to provide opportunities for the congregation to make connections with one another and to provide a venue for fellowship.
- We held two New Members classes in 2024 with. What a blessing to welcome these wonderful new friends and fellow servants of Christ.
- 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.
- 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 us for prayer, comfort and many practical needs to be met.
- We have a robust prayer chain of 75 participants who are ready to pray for any needs that come in. Ruth Grendell continues to be our prayer chain contact person.
- We serve meals for those among us in need, some transportation issues are met, and we are always on the lookout for other areas where we can be helpful.
- 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. They also provide educational opportunities regularly throughout the year. Divorce Recovery and Spiritual Direction were among some of the topics from 2024
- 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. Wendy McClave Elliott, LCSW, facilitates.
- Deacons added an additional component to their prayer ministry as they are available to pray with anyone in need following the worship services.
- The Deacons serve the worshipping community by preparing the elements of the Lord’s Supper on the first Sunday of each month.
- The Deacons send out greetings and gifts during seasonal times of the year. You can expect a card and note at Thanksgiving, Christmas and Valentine’s Day.

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**

In 2024, our Youth Ministry continued to thrive in the areas of intergenerational ministry

collaboration as well as serving through local mission initiatives. In addition, we took a team of youth on a global mission trip to the Dominican Republic for the first time in more than a decade. Our students and parents also participated in the Amor 1-day house-build for the first time in over two years.

These trips are vital to the ministry and have allowed our students to develop in the following areas: 1) engagement and interaction with other cultures; 2) a heart for missions which included a rigorous 4-month training course; 3) spiritual growth; 4) 'being' the church in our local and global communities outside of the church walls, and 5) building strong connections with leadership and each other.

Also, noteworthy was a shift in August which led to the recruitment and development of a robust team of youth volunteers. This team has been vital in matching the energy of our youth director and has led to a rebound in increased attendance, engagement in outside activities, and a stronger focus on biblical training during Sunday youth programs.

At the end of 2024, our youth director developed a committee of 8 members to help support the youth ministry and the family ministry commission. Our youth committee members represent a healthy and varied cross-section of the church and include the family commission elders, our youth director, a married couple/parents that reside in Rancho Santa Fe, a single mom, a newly married young adult, and a deacon (who is also a grandmother of youth). We have garnered valuable feedback from our youth committee members which will help shape our goals and initiatives as part of the VC Strategic Plan.

Cross-commission collaboration with the other ministries and directors of Village Church continues to be one of the pivotal strengths of our Youth Ministry. Our Youth Band led worship twice in 2024 and we have increased the number of youths trained to be lay readers. Our family Christmas Eve service at 2PM was a culmination of our next generation ministries stepping forward in worship roles and included both the children's and youth choirs, as well as youth students in roles as greeters and lay readers.

Youth Ministry also supported many of our KidsVillage events and served with local mission partners which included Plant with Purpose, Ladle Fellowship, Interfaith, New Day Urban Ministries, Amor, and UrbanLife.

We also had 4 middle school students engage in the confirmation process and become new members of the church, 2 students were baptized, and a group of 14 went to Summer Camp in August.

In 2025, we will continue to focus on our students' spiritual development, engagement in the community with our mission partners, cross-commission efforts, and youth summer camp. Currently, we are investigating the possibility of sending a delegate of high school students to participate in this summer's Presbyterian Youth Triennium in Louisville, KY, alongside other PCUSA students across the country.

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

In 2024, Children's Ministry was fortunate to have committed teachers, supportive volunteers, and enthusiastic, engaged children. Our program has grown with the addition of quite a few regular attenders and visitors at Sunday School. Through the efforts of our wonderful teachers, we have been blessed to witness increasing maturity and knowledge among our students. After a hiatus of several years, we reintroduced our communion class for 4th and 5th graders, taught by a dedicated volunteer with the assistance of the Family Ministry elders. Since then, we have been pleased to have those students partake in Communion with the rest of the congregation on Communion Sundays.

Missions is a vital part of our ministry, and we actively collaborated with the Missions Ministry to involve children in various service projects. Some of these were church-wide endeavors, such as the Souper Bowl collection and creating Valentines for children in Brazil. During Vacation Bible School, we implemented a new Missions rotation, involving the children in a different service project each day that encouraged them to focus on how they could help others. We also debuted a new event: Family Serve Day. Dozens of children and their families came together to participate in several service projects that ranged from making cards to putting together snack bags. The enthusiasm we saw for Family Serve Day guarantees that this event will be a regular one!

We continued to reach out to the local community through our seasonal events. Our beloved annual events, Breakfast in Bethlehem and Eggstravaganza, brought together hundreds of people to celebrate Christmas and Easter. We also hosted our Trunk or Treat event, which was attended by families from the church, preschool, and the local community. Vacation Bible School was once again one of the highlights of the year. Campers from preschool to 6th grade enjoyed a week of crafts, science experiments, missions projects, and outdoor games while learning about how we can trust God. We also brought back our family lunchtime after VBS. Families, volunteers, and staff members enjoyed lunch together after the children were picked up, allowing everyone to connect and socialize.

We are deeply grateful to the over 75 staff and volunteers who made everything in Children's Ministry possible. As we excitedly anticipate the year ahead, we ask for prayers that God will bless our leaders with wisdom and understanding, that He will broaden the impact of this ministry, and that families continue to receive glimpses of God's love through our efforts.

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

The Village Church Preschool enjoyed a very busy year in 2024! We served approximately 100 children, a staff of 18, including 9 teachers, an outdoor environment team, Spanish enrichment teacher, Yoga enrichment teacher, an Art Studio enrichment teacher, a Music enrichment teacher, an on-site sub and 2 administrators. During registration we increased tuition and were able to open an additional 2-year-old program for those needing a Monday thru Friday option. We were able to maintain a waitlist of over 130 families from the last school year up to the

2026 school year, without having to utilize any money into advertising for enrollment in our preschool program.

The preschool utilized the summer as an opportunity to enhance our playground by adding and improving current surfacing for safety and accessibility with new turf and landscaping as well as adding more diverse play equipment and materials, additional umbrellas for shade and the new balance beams and steppingstones to our designated toddler play area.

We began our school year by inviting parents and children 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 participated in a Halloween Ice Cream Parade proving an opportunity for families to decorate their cars and selves and drive through our school parking lot after hours for a parade that concludes with a special ice cream treat for all. 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 Hullabaloo, a two-man band that has been incorporating banjos, fiddles, guitars and more to young children in San Diego for over 20 years for our Spring Celebration so that our preschoolers could have an opportunity to dance and make music. Our End of the Year Celebration was a huge success with over 300 people attending a picnic where the children and families were able to participate in fun prize-winning carnival games and food, face painting, and a jumper.

This year we reintroduced a Music enrichment program offered from October to December where the children learned a variety of thematic songs, chants, fingerplays and dances that were used in 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.

There were several In-service training opportunities that took place during 2024. The staff participated in an in-service day where they were split into groups and assigned 4 local preschools to visit for inspiration, information and continued education, then returned to present their findings to one another. We also furthered our development by attending several local workshops and conferences and welcoming an occupational therapist to a staff meeting to learn more about detecting developmental delays and how to refer families to receiving further resources within the community. We have found that these training opportunities benefit the

teachers by providing professional growth, better student management and equipping them with modern pedagogy strategies.

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 2024, 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 \$1,056,444. The church budget allocated \$246,383 to the Mission Commission. Special offerings and congregational appeals provided \$740,814 to support our core and validated missions. In addition, \$69,247 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 more than 1,100 cans of soup for New Day Urban Ministries and Grace Presbyterian Church in Vista. In addition to the cans of soup donated, \$465 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, \$27,605 was raised to provide housing items for our homeless veterans.
- Our annual Alternative Christmas Market raised \$53,335 in gifts for our mission partners.
- Volunteers made sack lunches at Interfaith Community Services in January, April, July, and October. Each visit, we had 10 – 15 volunteers who made over 300 sack lunches.
- The congregation and community came together to donate over 300 books and \$450 to Care House.
- We helped Branch BBQ serve the homeless in Mission Bay.

In 2025, we will continue with the same activities noted above along with planned trips to UrbanLife Farms and Amor Ministries in Mexico. Three mission trips are planned to Hope Unlimited in Brazil, Kenya and Egypt.



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

The Village Church Media Ministry focused on communication and engagement in 2024, furthering our mission of "Following Jesus for Life." We facilitated worship and spiritual growth by providing avenues for prayer, scripture, preaching, love, community, grace, forgiveness, and hope, impacting both our congregation and the wider community.

Our online worship continues to connect with a broad audience. Each Sunday, our online services reach over 200 households globally, with an average of 175 views on our dedicated worship page. The contemporary service livestream continues to grow, averaging 30 views each Sunday and the traditional service livestream also maintains strong engagement, averaging 50 views each Sunday.

Our online presence continues to grow, with an additional 109 YouTube subscribers added this year bringing our total now to 431. We currently have 755 followers on Facebook (+32), and 514 followers on Instagram (+60). The Village Church website experienced steady traffic, with 130K sessions recorded (+26%), indicating sustained interest and engagement with our online content. We saw significant growth in our online marketing efforts this year, leveraging both Google and social media advertising. Our Christmas Eve Google ad during Advent generated an impressive 1.3 million impressions and over 12,000 clicks. Additionally, the Handel's Messiah social media ad reached over 12,000 individuals and received 1,000 clicks. We plan to continue these strategies to further grow our online community.

The Media Ministry experienced both growth and transition this year. We welcomed David Outzs to our expanding Audio/Visual Tech Team, joining Drew Middleton and Nic Thibodeau in providing seamless support for worship and special events, both in-person and online. Amanda Thompson, our Creative Design Assistant, continued to deliver innovative designs for our outreach efforts in her final year with us, as she embarks on a new chapter in Washington State. We are also thankful for Elders Jason Karches and Francie Murphy for their guidance and support with the Media Commission.

I'm grateful for our team's dedication as we continue our mission to spread Christ's love and foster spiritual growth through innovative media. We're excited for the future and the opportunity to serve God.

## **Mary Thibodeau – Executive Administrator**

The Support Commission and its ministries of Administration, Finance, Facilities, Hospitality Services, Human Resources, Information Technology, Safety, and Strategic Planning were again very busy in 2024.

**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 redesigned the southwest section of the church property for an extension of the Biblical Garden and Prayer Walk while continued to assist with the campus landscape architecture and maintenance plans for the church.

**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 2024, including: *Following Jesus For Life Series, Eggstravaganza, Youth Hosted Breakfast, Kingdom Academy Mixer, Vacation Bible School, Breakfast in Bethlehem, Women's Bible Study Spring and Winter Luncheons, New Member Luncheons, Church BBQ, Village Fest, Blue Christmas, Breakfast in Bethlehem, Leadership Gathering, Luminaria Prep Party*, as well as receptions for 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 backup and redundancy efforts, 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.