

VILLAGE CHAPEL IN THE 2010s

In 2010, the number of active members at Village Chapel was 250 and the average attendance at worship services was 112. The ethnic distribution was:

Asian	1
Black	2
Hispanic	0
White	247

Those serving on the Session were Class of 2010 – Melanie Bland, Dianne Ellis, Curtis Hardman, Sharon King, Sandra Wilkerson; Class of 2011 – Rick Cook, Kathryn McCrary, Heather Parks, Howard Salisbury, Charles Stebbins; and Class of 2012 – Phil Harich, Julia King, Kathy Kruk, Sara Slamick, Todd Zubick.

The Session met for a Session Retreat on Saturday, **January 23, 2010**, at the Knotty Pine Lodge. The 2010 budget was reviewed in light of efforts to increase congregational giving through the Faith Line (Invitation to members to give an additional 15%). These efforts were successful, and a motion was approved to adopt the 2010 budget. The agenda for the Retreat included discussion of 60th Anniversary plans. Sandy Bowles and Sara Slamick were appointed to develop a task force to organize the celebration.

Traveling communion was celebrated in 2009 with two teams delivering communion. This first attempt was described as being a “little awkward for the first time (in many years) but folks were pleased with the response”. For 2010, five Traveling Communion Teams have been assigned to include: John Calvin to Group A – Lou Maxson, Kathryn McCrary, and Phil Harich; John Knox to Group B – David Dawson, Julie King and Amy Parker; Francis Makemie to Group C – Sandy Bowles, Charlie Stebbins, and Kathy Kruk; Rachel Henderlite to Group D – Dianne Ellis, Howard Salisbury, and Sara Slamick; and William Benfield to Group E – Sandra Wilkerson, Tom Wilkerson, Todd Zubick and Todd Wright.

Six groups of individuals to receive communion in their home (if desired) include Group A – Jean Blair, Sherry Russell, Ted and Becky Lippitt; Group B – Mary Jackson, Gary and Millie Holstein, Jimmy and Sally Clark; Group C – Nancy Gunnoe and “Joni” Haynes; Group D – Ron and Dot Moore, Ruby Davis, Shirley and Jack Schwarz; Group E – Jim and Betty Arthur, Bob Peden, and John and Mary Knight; Group F – Polly Morgan.

In February, the members of the **2010** Confirmation Class were introduced to the Session by their adult mentors. The partners included: Katie Parks and her mentor Cindy Hanna; Tori Parker and Sara Slamick; Maddie Smith and Beth Chiparo; Elaine Barry and Sara Sears; and Morgan Pack and Patti Salisbury. The class will be working throughout January, February and March and will be examined about their faith journey on March 21st. On March 28th they served communion. Following their confirmation, members of the Session and Todd Wright made very favorable comments regarding their comfort levels and what they achieved with the confirmation process.

Mention is made in the **February 10** Session Meeting of the Health Support Fund as Howard Salisbury shared that this fund is designed to help Church members financially when they have illness, surgery, etc. He asked to make the congregation aware of this fund and that donations are always accepted.

It is noted that the Session is very involved in Worship Services as three members are stationed at the doorways leading from the sanctuary (main entrance, Fellowship Hall and Chancel) after worship; nine members serve communion in the pews; and a Session member does the Opening Devotions and Prayer two times during each month.

Howard Salisbury, representing the Stewardship Ministry Team presented the **2010** budget of \$254,600 which was approved by the Session in their January Retreat.

In the **March 2010** Session Meeting, Rick Cook reported on the RHINO trip which he and John Bowles participated in New Orleans. They were two of 21 in a group from West Virginia that worked under the leadership of Frank Mansell. Their mission was to work at Fairy Place Development which included building new or repairing hurricane damage to several houses. He stated that this was a “truly humbling and rewarding experience that changed the lives of many people involved. The commitment of Charles Avenue Presbyterian Church with Habitat for Humanity is through 2011.

An Easter Vigil was held and members of the community of faith kept watch, prayed, sang, read scripture and meditated during the hours between Christ’s crucifixion and his resurrection. The vigil started just before his death at 3 p.m. on Good Friday afternoon and continued until the Sunrise service at 6:30 a.m. on Easter morning – a total of 40 hours.

In the April 21st The Villager, Todd Wright posed the question, “Why Go to the Bluestone Retreat? Village Chapel has a long tradition of planning a Church retreat at Bluestone as a time of fellowship and laughter, a time spent in God’s creation, and a way of nurturing faith. Here are the top ten reasons to go this year:

Canoeing on the Bluestone River

Worship at “the point”

The curvy road-you’ll feel closer to your Maker

“Dam Joe” stories-who needs to sleep?

Stopping at Tamarack and Dairy Queen on the way there and back – YUM!

Be the first to meet the new donkeys!

Rocking chairs next to the fire

Help create a piece of artwork to be used in Worship

Getting to get to know others (of all ages) from the Church

Seeking and finding God

In **June 2010**, Dr. Wright expressed heartfelt thanks to the congregation via the Session for a good first year at Village Chapel and for the celebration of the completion of his doctorate and the gift of a new robe from the church.

On **June 12th** seven youth and three adults traveled to Montreat Conference Center for the Montreat Youth Conference. The conference was filled with keynote presentations, small group gatherings, worship, energizers, music and engaging in service projects with the Veterans Restoration Quarters in Ashville and the Black Mountain Home for Children. The youth attending were Lauren Bare, Beth Haddock, Samatha Istfan, Tory Parker, Katie Parks, Maddy Smith and Emily Wright. The adults included Amy Parker, Maureen Wright and Todd Wright.

In the **summer of 2010**, in lieu of Sunday School classes, a program of “Coffee and Conversation” was initiated. During the week proceeding each session the congregation would receive via email a series of articles to read. On Sunday morning during the Sunday School time, those interested in doing so would gather and discuss these articles identifying the pros, cons, and “take away” content of each.

The Session in its August meeting approved the following slate of teachers for the **year 2010-2011**:

Preschool	Heather Parks and Keri Blank
K – 1	Sharon Richardson, Demetrice Hardman, and Linda Jarrett
2 – 4	Patti Salisbury and Lindsay Wurts
Tweens	Warren Danzer and Kara Duncan
High School	Maureen Wright, Cindy Hanna, and Sarah Sears
Substitutes	Susan Bays, Jennifer Williams
Adult Bible Study	John Wolfe, Dianne Ellis, Todd Zubick and Dot Caldwell
Adult Discussion	Sara Slamick, Vikki Cunningham and Martha Foster

A new Sunday school class for young adults called “The Class Next Door” was approved to be held in the vacant house next door. A “Kick Off” dinner was held at the Wright’s home on **September 11th** to see how many were interested in attending the new class.

Worship in the Park was held on **September 5th** at Coonskin Park in the Columbia Shelter – the highlight of the lunch which followed the service, was barbecue.

Todd Wright completed his doctoral degree in **2010** and wore his new doctoral robe for the worship service on September 12th. Congratulations Dr. Wright!

At the **September 15th** Session meeting, proposals from a Sacrament Study Group were presented and approved. These stipulated that on days when there is to be a baptism or baptism is highlighted in worship (Baptism of the Lord Sunday) that the font be moved to the center of the chancel and that water be poured into the font on ALL Sundays. Also, it

was approved that when promises are made in worship (members received, installations, ordinations, commissioning) the font be moved to the center.

A member of the Church, Chick Maddox, utilized the Fellowship Hall on **September 20th** for two presentations: a 5:30 – 7:00 discussion of “Drug and Alcohol Usage by Today’s Youth” and from 8:00 to 9:00 a presentation on “Chemical Addition, Treatment and Recovery.”

On **September 23, 2010**, a SIX-MONTH INTERVIEW--SESSION was held regarding the pastor, Dr. Todd Wright. The questions are included as well as the response:

1. What were your perceptions from the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) and the pastor to the call?

The Session felt that the process was a success, as they believed that Todd was a good match for the Church.

2. After 6 months, what are your observations?

Todd has done what they had hoped, by helping guide the congregation in doing some of the work/goals they wanted to do.

3. So far, what do you feel best/worst about?

The congregation was pleasantly surprised with Todd’s efforts to reach out to people and remember them by name. They also were impressed with the significance of the participation of the pastor’s wife (although they understood that she would be involved). They also were pleasantly surprised that Todd would occasionally leave the pulpit as part of the service.

4. So far, what do you feel best/worst about?

Best: The session felt best about Todd’s ability to connect with the congregation. They also have been impressed with his involvement in the community.

Worst: Occasionally the services are a bit too lengthy.

5. What exciting changes are happening?

The session was excited about the size of the Vacation Bible School, about the participation of children in liturgy, about the reintroduction of children to communion. They were also excited with the “traveling communion” program, allowing them to reach out to persons who no longer attend services. They were excited about Todd’s visitations to the hospital and to homebound members. They were also excited about a new Sunday school class, and about the possible use of media in worship services.

6. What do you see in the immediate future of the church's ministry?

A long-range planning committee has been formed. The committee includes representatives of the congregation.

7. Describe the strong points of your regular meetings with the pastor.

The session believed that the meetings have provided a needed support group for the pastor.

8. How could these meetings be more helpful?

The session indicated the need for the group to meet again with Todd.

9. Message to COM or Presbytery staff?

They expressed some concern about the ability of people to attend presbytery meetings which are held on weekdays. They also suggested that the presbytery should keep in mind that not every person, who may want to remain connected, has a computer and is online.

Also, based on what one member of the session had heard from others (at other churches), the COM needs to move quicker to appoint liaisons. However, in Village Chapel's case, the session was very impressed with the work which Jim Robinson had done as their liaison.

While there is no mention of it in Session Minutes or The Villager, apparently the Church underwent another lightning strike as in the **October 20, 2010** minutes under "Continuing Business" that insurance claims have been submitted for lightening repairs related to the sound system, roof, and computers, phones and faxing. The sound system was repaired on October 19th and John Wolfe helped prepare the claim submitted to the insurance company for building repairs. A motion was approved to repair shingles, add insulation, and add lightening arrestors. In the November meeting of the Session, Todd reported on the insurance settlements after the lightning strike. We have received two checks; one for \$65,149.09 for repairs to the roof and sound system and another for \$2,098.64 to replace the computer and telephone systems. The money has been given to John Wolfe for his crew to begin the repairs soon. Todd felt the insurance company was easy to work with.

The **November 17th** meeting under membership included discussion regarding columbariums at local churches. A team composed of Sharon King, Mike Jarrett and Phil Harich were charged to explore this as a possible project.

An update of the situation with the sale of the house located at 3813 Venable. It is listed at \$169,90.00 and the church has an offer for \$127,000. The church countered with an offer of \$150,000 and the interested party countered at \$133,000. The house is still on the market.

The number of active members at the beginning of **2011** was 250. Members of the session during this year were: Class of 2013 – Peggy Armstrong, Kate Dobson, Kara Duncan, Jack Grimm and Tish Hodovan; Class of 2012 – Phil Harich, Julia King, Kathy Kruk, Sara Slamick, and Todd Zubick; Class of 2011 – Rick Cook, Kathryn McCrary, Heather Parks, Howard Salisbury, Charles Stebbins, and Tori Parker (Youth Elder).

The Session met in a meeting called to determine how to sell the house at 3813 Venable. This house has been on the market without success in selling and at this time there appears to be three possibilities for action:

1. The family currently occupying the house has offered to buy it for \$135,000 – it was noted that this amount would not cover the mortgage cost that the church must pay in July.
2. A realtor, representing a client, has contacted the church about a lease to buy; however, all the data for this offer has not been presented.
3. Members of the congregation have proposed that they form a group (LLC) that would buy the property and the 39th Street house. This offer is tentative; details of who would be involved are not firm.

After much discussion as to how the Church would find the additional money needed in July if the offer by the family renting the house is accepted. There may also be additional costs for repairs after inspections are made. This is a concern because the Church is already in a budget deficit. Three suggestions were made: use memorial funds; go to the congregation for additional funds; obtain a bank loan. After much more discussion, it was moved that the first option, selling the house to the bidders be accepted. The motion passed 7 to 6. Further discussions on how the financial implications can be resolved will be on the agenda for the upcoming retreat. Following the retreat, the Presbytery and the congregation will be informed of these actions. The resolution of this was achieved in the January 14-15 retreat with identification of how financing of the balance the church will owe on its loan will be determined after the money is received from the sale and reasonable monthly payments established with the bank until the loan is fully paid.

In the **February 2011** meeting, the Session received a request from the University of Charleston to do a “brown bag” event on April 10, after church, asking the congregation to bring their medications with them for review and teaching purposes. The students would also perform blood pressure checks and glucometer screenings.

On **April 20th**, Howard Salisbury reported that financially things were going well, better than expenses reflect. The Stewardship Team recommended that \$500 be donated, as requested by Hallie Berry, to the Global Soccer Ministry Trip to Jamaica and that these funds come from the RHINO account. The motion to accept passed.

It was noted in the minutes of the **May 2011** Session meeting that a request from a church in Alaska for 50 of the red hymnals was received. Also, a new baptismal bowl and pitcher ordered from Blenko should be ready by Pentecost.

The slate of officers identified for **2012** included:

Ruling Elders: Lynn Gunnoe, Rick Hanna, Alan Johnson, Alatheia Stickler, Maureen Wright, Class of 2014

Youth Elder: Katie Parks, Class of 2012

Trustee: David Dawson, Class of 2014

In **September 2011** Village Chapel received “Thank You” notes from both Kanawha City and Chamberlain Elementary Schools for the bookbags donated to them by the Church.

A picnic hosted by St. Agnes was provided for the volunteers at Common Grounds to thank them for their continued service.

Tory Parker submitted a request to be considered by the Presbytery to be a 2012 Young Adult Delegate to General Assembly. The first step in the process for consideration by the Presbytery is to be endorsed by the Session. A motion was passed by the Village Session and forwarded to the Presbytery that Tory be selected to serve as a young adult delegate to the General Assembly meeting in Pittsburgh in 2012.

In the fall of **2011**, Village Chapel continued its involvement in and support of community outreach with the donation of \$350 to Common Grounds. In addition to the monetary support, the Church donated 434 pounds of food from a Halloween Collection. For Thanksgiving, food baskets were prepared for Common Grounds and in December the congregation donated children’s books to this community agency. On Saturday, **November 19th** the now annual “Pay It Forward” event was held.

Erin Chiparo, a young member of the Church, offered to provide piano lessons on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings between 4:00 and 8:00 with lessons scheduled for 15 to 60 minutes depending upon the age of the student. Lessons were to be held in the parlor and limited to 10 students. It was agreed that student recitals would take place at the Church and Erin would work with Carolyn Perrine to schedule soloists for Worship Services so that the congregation could hear the fruit of what they were supporting. Erin will write an article for The Villager to let the congregation know about this endeavor.

In the **November 16th** meeting of the Session, it was announced that the tenants in the 505 39th Street house have expressed a desire to purchase the property. In response to this request, a task force of four elders was charged with determining the market value for the property, determine the cost of expected repairs and other issues that might require professional repairs, and begin negotiations with the individuals seeking to purchase the property. Rick Cook, Howard Salisbury, Phil Harich, and Jack Grimm were asked to serve on

the task force. As a follow-up, in the December Session meeting it was announced that the selling price was set at \$115,000 and that the home inspection went well.

Rich Cook presented information about the Kanawha County Board of Health (KCBOH) Clean Air Regulations and the need for Village Chapel to come into compliance. The Church adopted the regulations for inclusion in Church policy, inclusive of all the Church's occupied properties.

Donations were requested to be made to the Service Ministry Team for Mason Lilly, Troop 161, who, for his Eagle Scout project, is preparing personal hygiene kits for distribution to disaster victims and others in need through Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) which is a nonprofit disaster assistance organization run by Presbytery USA.

An invitation was received from the Interim Associate for Older Adult Ministries to nominate an "Outstanding Older Adult" for an award. As a result, the long-serving ushers including Jack Schwarz, Jule Sockman, Bill McCrary, George Singleton, and Bill Ellis were all nominated and submitted to the Presbytery and in December, all of these individuals received a certificate in recognition of their service.

Sandy and John Bowles have been preparing the communion elements at Village Chapel for the last 25 years and were recognized for this effort in the November issue of The Villager. Their last time to prepare the elements will be Christmas Eve of 2011. They have commissioned Blenko Glass to make a unique amethyst glass communion set for Village Chapel, which will be used for the first time in this service. Dr. Wright expressed thanks to them as an "Example of Stewardship" saying, "Sandy and John have never expected recognition, they have just done what they felt God was calling them to do cheerfully and generously. Still, they have earned our appreciation, and I hope you will thank them directly as you enjoy Sandy's homemade bread one more time on the 27th of December.

In the **December 2011** Session meeting, it was announced that a family that wishes to remain anonymous has made an offer to pay for the projection system for the sanctuary that the Worship Ministry Team has discussed the need for over the past year. A motion to accept the gift was approved and installation of the projection system will be done in early 2012.

Kathy Kruk provided a report on her attendance at the **December 3, 2011**, Presbytery meeting. She reported that Tory Parker was elected as the youth representative to the General Assembly. Also, it was made known at this meeting that the Presbytery of West Virginia is one of the top ten in the country in mission giving and Village Chapel is in the top four (4) in mission giving in West Virginia. Another great example of Village's continued giving to improve the welfare of the community.

The roles of an elder were reviewed in the Session Retreat held on **January 13, 2012**. These were identified as:

- Being looked up to as an example
- Involved to energize others in the Church
- Participating and setting a good example – the enthusiasm of elders will enhance enthusiasm in the congregation
- Attend funerals
- Being familiar with the contents of the Church newsletter in order to serve as a resource to the congregation
- Greeting visitors. Make a good impression. Elders represent the Church to them. Let them know how excited you are that they chose Village Chapel to worship.
- Engaging folks you do not recognize in conversation. Invite them to the Fellowship Hall to meet others. Ask their name and something about them. Follow up with a note and invite them to return to worship.

In this Retreat, the Session conducted an evaluation of the Church in the past year using the Presbytery Committee on Ministry review questions. Good things that have occurred in the past year include: getting out of the burden of the house at 3813 Venable, greater use of our Church building, Advent, a great Bible school, traveling communion, a new roof, new folks in worship, more children, and a great Christmas program.

Strengths of our congregation include good meetings, many generations, the communion preparation service and gifts by the Bowles, the new projection system that will enhance our worship life, our friendly and welcoming presence, and our openness to creativity, good leaders, and openness to work with others (Common Grounds). Our staff is creative, willing to lead in new ways, hard-working, sets the right tone for leadership, has faith-based actions, works well together and has diverse talents that complement each other. The Pastor gives sermons that are relevant to today; he is focused, knowledgeable, and precise. He is a good teacher, well educated, approachable, and conducts good funerals.

Some of the disappointments in the life of the Church included significant deaths, lack of Christmas carols, lack of participation of youth and children in Sunday school, no swell of new members, and loss of members through divorce. Challenges or obstacles to ministry include our declining numbers and remembering to seek the guidance of God. Lastly, three areas in which the pastor and Session need to focus their energy and attention in **2012** include growth in membership, getting more of our present members involved, and providing ministry to shut-ins.

The focus of the Ministry Team for **2012** will be to:

- Close on the sale of the 505 39th Street rental house on **February 24th**
- Install replacement windows for the upstairs in the 3810 Venable Avenue house
- Have at least two Clean up/Fix-up Saturdays
- Install key locks on several building doors and re-key all other Church building locks to improve security
- Repair or replace the north heating and A/C unit in the parlor
- Repair and paint the south stained-glass window frames in the sanctuary
- Continue to plan for sanctuary A/C repair/replacement
- Analyze utilities usage and focus on reducing costs
- Begin working on elements of the Long-Term Plan

The Younger Youth Retreat (for grades 6 to 8) was held **March 2-4** at Cedar Lakes, West Virginia. Village Chapel representatives serving on the Youth Council were Tory and Amy Parker and Emily Wright.

The Confirmands for **2012** were Jake Jacobs, Lilly Jacobs, Peyton Panger, Samuel Stickler, Nate Wright and Tyler Zubick. This group has engaged in several service projects including Manna Meal, cookies for kids at the Ronald McDonald House and playing games with the children in the nursery. The group is working on a communion set for the church which will be used for serving communion on Easter Sunday.

In the Spring of **2012**, Doug Minnerly, pastor of McKinnon Presbyterian Church requested to use space in the basement of the house adjacent to the church for his growing pottery hobby/business/ministry, 10% Pottery. He is interested in working with Village Chapel to develop an art studio and program in return for use of the basement space for creating his pottery. He is also willing to make a contribution to cover the cost of increased utility fees for the house. The Session approved Doug's request to use the basement for his creative work.

The minutes of the Session meeting on **March 21st** indicate that the house on 39th Street has been sold. It was also reported that with the new insulation in the sanctuary, there was a savings of \$600 in the electric bill from April to October.

Village Chapel continues to contribute to community outreach. In **2012**, the Church donated \$1000 to the Regional Coalition for Community Renewal (RCCR). It also continues to support Project Graduations with \$100 gifts to George Washington, Capital and South Charleston high schools where Village Chapel has students graduating this year.

Linda Meadows, a long-serving secretary for Village Chapel retired in the summer of **2012** and a retirement party was held on **August 18th** after the worship service.

In **August 2012**, it was noted by Jack Grimm, Moderator of the Stewardship Team, that half of the giving in the Church is coming from members over the age of 62. It was also noted that Village will host a capital campaign to pay for new hymnals. The new hymnal includes more international and more contemporary hymns, but many old favorites are also included. As the congregation responded favorably to moving to the new hymnals, purchase of these has moved along. In the event that the congregation does not meet the goal of 200 books, an anonymous donor has agreed to cover the cost of any remaining hymnals that need to be purchased.

Over **2012**, the Personnel Ministry Team and later, the Session, reviewed and discussed the Prevention of Sexual Misconduct Policy now being made available through the larger church, and in the October Session meeting, it was approved to accept the policy as written. A program for “Training on the Prevention of Sexual Misconduct” may be presented at the next elder retreat or in a separate venue.

It was suggested that the Church purchase an Automated External Defibrillator (AED). Kate Dobson and Todd Zubick were assigned to research appropriate information and to provide feedback at the November Session meeting. In the **September 18, 2013** meeting a motion was approved to use funds from the Singleton Memorial Fund to purchase an automated defibrillator with placement of a plaque recognizing the Singleton’s contribution displayed near the device.

Session members in **2013** were the Class of 2013 – Peggy Armstrong, Kate Dobson, Kara Duncan, Tish Hodovan and Peyton Panger (youth elder); Class of 2014 – Lynn Gunnoe, Rick Hanna, Alan Johnston, Alatheia Stickler, and Maureen Wright; Class of 2015 – Heather Barry, Pat Jacobs, Sarah Sears, David Shields, and John Willis. Candy Hawley was elected to serve as Treasurer and Evelyn McClure as Assistant Treasurer. Rose Ann Walker continues as Clerk of the Session.

In the **January 2013** Session Retreat, David Dawson led the group through Sexual Misconduct Prevention Training. During this portion of the retreat, the staff including Terry Asseff (secretary), Dionne Canterbury (Close Encounters Director), Linwood “BJ” Chaney (custodian), and Carolyn Perrine (organist) joined in the training session.

During this retreat, Session members responded to the following questions as they evaluated the past year (2012)

1. What are some of the good things that have happened in our church in the last year?

Pay it Forward, Summer Block Party, Vacation Bible School. Close Encounters, Hosted Presbytery Meeting on September 11th, Young Adults and Youth contributing to music for Worship Services, Sports League Teams, Baptisms/Weddings, New

Members/Visitors, Creative Worship (Baptism of the Lord Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Pentecost), Confirmation Class, Traveling Communion. Common Grounds, Presbyterian Woman Functions

2. What are the strengths of our Congregation?

Diversity, Friendly and Welcoming, Talents (music and art), Generous, Hospitality, Caring – Deeper than Friendly

What are the strengths of our Session?

Outstanding individuals, Sense of Humor, Representative of the Congregation (varied ages), Open to Creative Activities, able to Work Through Issues, Hard Working, Talented, Committed

What are the Strengths of our Staff?

Commitment to Serve, Work well together, Follow through on ideas
Lucky to have Amy (brings the best out in us)
Carolyn and Sharon provide wonderful music program
Terry Working out Well
BJ – Willing to do Anything and is a pleasure to work with
Dionne – Excellent Christmas Pageant

What are the strengths of our Paston?

Young, On point/on task, Creative, Sermons, Approachable/Friendly, Outgoing, Organized

3. What are some of the disappointments about the life of the Church during the past year?

Sometimes only a few children at Sunday School and/or worship, Attendance, Graying of the congregation, Not always open to change (some sacred cows), No Bluestone retreat, Trolley not available at Christmas, No major increase in membership, Concern about are we doing enough reaching out to our community, vs. too comfortable with what we are doing

4. What Challenges or Obstacles to Effective Ministry Do We Face As a Congregation?

Competing with so many outside activities (Church is lower priority), Mega churches growing, Village has no gym, Not enough energy to do all the things we want to do, As a Session discerning our mission (our passion, not just good things) and making it happen, How to incorporate young folks, Challenging needs of some members, the budget

5. In what three areas do the pastor and Session need to focus their energy and attention in 2013?

Membership (new/care of current): Increase worship attendance by 10% (25 additional members), Stewardship (trends going up/more pledges than expected), Survey: responses dealt with, One different discipleship/educational/faith opportunity
“Marketing”/communication, People would know who we are and what is available

6. How can the pastor and Session be most helpful to each other in dealing with these 3 areas?

Open to ideas
Provide resources
Do our job
Pray and be supportive

In **January 2013**, Dr. John Willis, “Village Chapel’s own Dr. Oz” donated bottles of hand sanitizer for each of the pews so that the congregation might stay as healthy as possible during the cold and flu season. It was suggested in The Villager that “You’ll find the bottles on the hymn racks on the center aisle of each pew. You might want to take advantage of them after the passing of the peace or before taking part in communion.”

On **January 16, 2013**, Creating Art-- a two hour Spiritual Experience was offered to members and friends of Village Chapel. Under Amy Parker’s supervision and a guest artist, Janet Ripper Chambers, a group of ladies created their personal rendition of a painting of pine trees in the snow. A fun and relaxing evening that ended with each person taking home their own artwork!

In the March Session meeting, Tish Hodovan reported on her attendance at the March 9th Presbytery meeting, attending as the Elder Commissioner. She reported that Maureen Wright was elected as the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery and received a standing ovation after the election.

Amy Parker provided an overview of the Church Website including statistics on how often certain items have been accessed on the site. Following a discussion of the pros and cons of the site, Kate Dobson volunteered, along with her brother, Cory, to help update the Website.

On Maundy Thursday of **2013**, the service included communion and special music by Carolyn Perrine and the choir. Twelve members of the church reenacted the foot-washing from John 13; the group included Heather Barry, Jeff Chiparo, Matt Duncan, Bradley Duncan, Rick Hanna, Tish Hodovan, Kathy Kruk, Kathryn McCrary, Kay Shamblin, David Shields, Rose Ann Walker and John Willis.

On Easter Sunday, **March 31st**, the East End, Kanawha City and West Side churches sponsored an Easter Sunrise Service at 6:30 a.m. at Appalachian Power Park. Rev. Sharletta Green, Preacher at Simpson United Methodist Church, was the minister and the offering was divided among the Ecumenical Ministry Fund, Common Grounds, and Manna Meal.

On **April 18 – 25, 2013**, Todd Wright was commissioned as a representative of Village Chapel to go to Nicaragua on a Mission Trip. He and the rest of the team visited CEPAD which is the ecumenical organization of all the Christian denominations working in Nicaragua. The purpose of the trip was to lay the foundation for a partnership between Nicaragua and West Virginia which will then lead to future trips and projects and links between churches and communities. Nellie Howard, daughter of Polly Dodson, who is serving as the Educator of First Williamstown Church filled the pulpit while Todd was out of the country. She also shared information regarding the May 3-5 Bluestone Retreat “Deep Roots/New Leaves”.

To replace the heating and air conditioning system in the church parlor and Education Building, the church needed to raise \$10,000 in **2013**. To facilitate this effort, Kathryn McCrary requested that all memorial gifts for her late husband, Bill, be designated for the HVAC fund. Another development was that a family in the church offered to match all gifts to the fund up to \$5,000! This project was announced on the first of May, and by May 29th, the congregation had given \$5,825 making the total \$10,825.00!

Graduates in **2013** were Emily Wright who graduated from George Washington High School with highest honors; Anna Johnston graduated in December from the University of Colorado at Boulder in International Affairs and Political Science; Meredith France graduated from Alderson Broaddus as a Physician Assistant (PA); Jared Hawley completed two masters degrees – the MBA and a second degree in Sports Management from Barry University in Miami; and Hallie Barry graduated from Mars Hill College in North Carolina with a degree in Health and Wellness.

Five new members were received into the church on **May 19th**:
Joseph M. “Mike” Bonham
Rebecca L. “Becky” Bonham
Bonita “Beth” Hartman
Janice Hartman
Angele M. “Angie” Price

The theme for Vacation Bible School in the summer of **2013** was “Everywhere Fun Fair Where God’s World Comes Together”. The work done by Amy Parker and her band of merry elves to create the decorations for this event – backdrops, signs, and props were subsequently used by at least three other churches across West Virginia that were also using the “Everywhere Fun Fair” curriculum. This is what stewardship looks like!!

Village Chapel Activities in **2013**

June 23 – Lemonade on the Lawn

August 3 – Block Party for our neighbors!! On this day, the church threw a block party for its neighbors. There were hotdogs hot off the grill and cold lemonade, an inflatable water side for the kids, corn hole and chalk art. Our neighbors came and the street was filled with laughter. It was clearly an event of joyful hospitality – the kind of event Jesus would have attended! And perhaps, some will join with us in the future.

August 19 – Village Chapel Night at Power Park

August 25 – Worship in the Park at the Columbia Gas Shelter – Coonskin Park

September 8th was Rally Day: Cereal Fun! Everyone was invited for a cereal breakfast and to ponder questions like: What cereal would Peter eat? Sunday school can do for your week what breakfast does for your day. All our classes are 100% kid tested and mother approved for children and adults! And --- Bring a box of your favorite cereal to donate to Common Grounds! This effort collected 43 boxes of cereal for Common Grounds.

On **September 22nd**, Abigail Faith Rorrer was baptized as part of the morning Worship Service. Infant baptism: it's Biblical, traditional, and downright adorable! Abigail is the daughter of Janet and Jay Rorrer and the sister of Kelsey and Samantha.

In early **October of 2013**, new hymnals entitled, Glory to God, were placed in the pews. A note in the October 9th The Villager stated: "Many thanks to everyone who purchased copies of the new hymnal in honor or in memory of loved ones." As you look through a copy, please note:

- A variety of hymns (both old favorites and new options; including some from other cultures
- A suggested liturgy in the front
- Notes at the bottom of every page about the hymn, the tune, or the author – a mini history on every page and
- An index of suggested hymns for each Sunday based on the lectionary texts.

In a subsequent issue of The Villager, those who had donated the previous blue hymnals were invited to claim them.

November 25th – Pay It Forward – the November 6th The Villager reminded people to start cleaning out their closets and attics. We need gently used clothing - especially larger sizes, children's clothes, housewares, sheets, towels and toys. This year we are challenging each family in Village Chapel to buy a new blanket and donate it since there was such a need for them last year.

A joint Thanksgiving Service with Morris Memorial and St. Agnes held at Village Chapel resulted in an offering of \$1,178.35! That money and all the donated canned goods went to Common Grounds!

In October, the Presbytery of West Virginia asked Village Chapel to bring a display of at least one (1) mission activity to the **November 16, 2013**, Presbytery Meeting. The Session Ministry Team prepared a display that included information regarding Pay It Forward, Common Grounds, and Book Bags for Book Worms.

In the **November 20** Session Minutes, the following events were reported: An Alzheimer's Walk was held on October 26th at Power Park and \$555 was collected. Pay It Forward was a success. Three hundred and six (306) Thanksgiving baskets were provided to the needy through Common Grounds – Village Chapel youth assisted with filling the baskets. Eighty-seven (87) gift bags were filled and distributed at the Veteran's Home in Barboursville.

Suggestions for healthy Donations for Common Grounds to serve low-income families and provide foods to improve the health quality of the food distributed were published in The Villager and included:

- Low sodium, canned vegetables
- No sugar added applesauce
- Canned salmon/Tuna in water
- Turkey or vegetarian chili
- Brown rice & whole wheat pasta
- Low fat cream soups
- Powdered milk
- 100% juice

They also need toothpaste, bath soap and laundry detergent. Please donate!

December 22, 2013, marked the eleventh year the Village Chapel congregation met at Vikki and Ira's home to fill gift bags for veterans residing at the state's only domiciliary for Veterans located at Barboursville. Everyone was invited to come for breakfast followed by the "stuffing" of the bags. The congregation was asked to provide socks, T-shirts, candy, books, personal toiletries, puzzles, game books and anything else deemed appropriate.

The **2013** Presbyterian Women report indicated that in this year the women engaged in a number of service projects including: they sent exam-time cards and gifts to 16 college students, volunteered weekly at Common Grounds food pantry, collected and delivered toilet paper and peanut butter to Common Grounds, volunteered as receptionists and patient companions at Hospice House, filled 100 Blizzard Boxes with food for Kanawha Valley Senior Services and volunteered at Live Light Tree for Hospice. In addition, activities at the Church included: replenishing kitchen supplies, administering the Prayer Chain, hosting funeral receptions and the group purchased new pew cushions for the sanctuary.

Those serving on the Session in **2014** were: Heather Barry, Vicki Cunningham, Sheila Danzer, John France, Lunn Gunnoe, Rick Hanna, Jake Jacobs, Par Jacobs, Alan Johnston, Sarah Sears Gottlieb, David Shields, Dreama White, John Willis, and Maureen Wright. Rose Ann Walker continued as the Clerk of Session and Candy Hawley served as Treasurer and Evelyn McClure as Assistant Treasurer.

On **January 24, 2014**, Demetrice Ann Hardman died, and a memorial service was held for her on **February 1st**. She was buried in Grandview Memorial Park in Dunbar. Demetrice was a teacher in Kanawha County Schools for 35 years, in recent years served at Kanawha City Elementary School. She and her husband, Curtis, and their son, Johathan, were the only black members of Village Chapel in the years that this data was recorded. Sadly, Curtis Hardman died on **May 16th** and following a service by Dr. Wright, he joined Demetrice in the Grandview Cemetery. Curtis was the Executive Director of Workforce Region 3 for forty-nine years.

The **February 9th** communion was celebrated with a bit of a “twist”! In Matthew 5:13 Jesus says his disciples are the “salt of the earth!” The Worship Ministry Team was so inspired by this image that communion on this day was served using salty, hot, soft pretzels in place of bread. It was also pointed out in The Villager that pretzels were originally created by monks as a reward for children who had learned to say their prayers as the distinctive loop of a pretzel looks like a person with their arms crossed—a traditional position for prayer.

At the **March 19th** Session meeting, Rev. Amy Parker provided an update on her planned sabbatical. She has received a grant of \$50,000 of which up to \$15,000 of that amount can be allocated to church expenses. She has been meeting with a support group to develop a plan for her sabbatical which will occur September through December of 2015. Amy is planning to enter a Doctor of Ministry program focusing on the arts. The Church is looking to hire a seminary intern for one semester to assist Dr. Wright during Amy’s absence but if that does not occur, the plan is to ask members of the congregation to assist with worship and other duties.

On **March 28, 2014**, a contemporary Christian concert by Lights of Day was held. The lead singer, Chris Lawson, is a pastor at the Vineyard Grace Fellowship in Newark, Ohio. His mission is to proclaim the gospel “using music fit for a dance club but with lyrics fit for the sanctuary.” This event was described as “presented really well and enjoyed by all in attendance”.

Dr. Wright attended a continuing education event **March 31st** through **April 2nd** at the Austin Seminary in Texas. The class was titled, “Learning Through Liturgy” and focused on how the patterns and rhythms of Sunday worship and the church year form us and give us an abundance of riches for faith formation in the community. The class explored ways that the patterns of worship throughout the church year provide purpose and growth even in times of change.

The confirmation class of **2014** began with a retreat on February 1st and ended on Palm Sunday. The confirmands, Noell Bland, Jacob and Payne Smith and their mentors, Warren and Sheila Danzer and Kathy Kruk met with the Session on **March 19th**. They shared service activities including serving food at a meal distribution event and serving meals to Alzheimer patients at a local nursing home. When the group was examined by Rick Hanna, Pat Jacobs, and Alatheia Stickler, the examiners reported that they were “very impressed by their faith” (the confirmands). An activity the group engaged in was writing a statement of faith – these are shared below:

Jacob Smith: I was baptized about three years ago here at Village Chapel. I feel God’s presence the strongest when I am surrounded by people I love and care about. I think God wants me to help people whenever I am able.

Payne Smith: I have learned my faith attending Village Chapel. The Bible talks about people putting others’ needs before their own. For example, Noah built the ark to make sure that all God’s creatures big and small were rescued and taken care of. I will continue to volunteer with Pay It Forward as I have done since this project began.

Noell Bland: I learned my faith at church and home. God expects me to spread His word and lead by example. My favorite part of church is the church picnic because I like being able to worship outside.

The church held a Blood Drive on **April 10th** and One Day of Service on **April 26th** and a “very successful” Weekend of Service was held on **April 27th** and **28th**. It was also noted that over 3000 families are helped through the Common Grounds Program.

In May, the Church honored the youth graduating from high school in **2014** – Beth Haddock, Jake Jacobs, and Maddy Smith. “All three have grown up before our eyes, having participated in Vacation Bible School and Sunday School, youth group and worship. We have been blessed by them and hope they will take our prayers with them into the next stages of their lives.”

Also in **May**, Village Chapel had three college graduates:

Julia France graduated from West Virginia University through the honor college with a Bachelor’s Degree in Science. Julia plans to attend Virginia Tech for veterinary school and work with large animals.

Sarah Hawley graduated from Queens University with a Bachelor of Science in biology and will be leaving for Tanzania to serve two years in the Peace Corp.

Matthew Scott Walker graduate from Marshall University with a Bachelor of Arts in history and a Bachelor of Arts in Japanese with a minor in political science. He has

been accepted into the Japanese Exchange and Teaching (JET) Program and will be teaching in Tokushima City in Shikoku.

Amy Parker, in the **July 16th** issue of The Villager reported on the 221st General Assembly and one of the items was that the GA voted to allow pastors serving in states that have legalized same gender marriage to officiate the weddings of gay couples. As the number of states legalizing same gender marriages has increased, more and more pastors face the dilemma of violating the denomination's policy prohibiting their officiating at such weddings (for which charges could be brought against them) or being unable to perform full pastoral duties and obligations for some of the members of their congregations. Under the new "authoritative interpretation", pastors in states where same generation marriage has been legalized may now perform weddings without fear of ecclesiastical prosecution.

Village Chapel continues to serve the community. In **August**, 46 Backpacks for Bookworms were delivered to Chamberlain and Kanawha City Elementary Schools with both schools receiving 23 book bags. A picnic was held for the Veteran's facility in Barboursville with 12 members of the Church attending. A Blood Drive was held on **October 6th**

On **August 9, 2014**, the Fellowship Ministry Team organized a Block Party and an evening at the ballpark. Worship in the park was held on **August 24th** at the Columbia Gas Shelter at Coonskin Park. Also, on this day, the congregation participated in an "Ice Bucket Challenge" to raise awareness and \$1000 to fight Amyotrophic Lateral Stenosis (ALS) in honor of Linda Jarrett, a member of the congregation struggling with this disease.

In the **September** Session minutes, it was reported that our long-serving custodian, B. J. Chaney has developed health issues and will not be continuing as the custodian. The church took steps to assist him with his living expenses.

On **September 17th** the Session adopted a new Funeral Policy that begins, "Death is real; death is inevitable, death causes grief, death does not have the last word!" Because we believe in the importance of providing hospitality, the policy includes new details about receptions. As a result, the church will provide funeral meals to assist the family. This initiative also includes a worksheet, "Planning for the Time of Death" that the Session encourages individuals to complete and discuss with their family as a way of recording important decisions about their final wishes. "It is hoped that the individual will keep one copy with their important papers, and the other will be kept in a confidential file at the Church. (This worksheet can be accessed on the Church's website or can be obtained from the Church office).

The South Park and Westminster Churches joined with Village Chapel to celebrate World Communion on **October 8th**.

On **November 8th** the congregation was invited to a Baby Shower for Maddy Smith who was expecting a baby girl!!

On **November 15th** the now annual Pay It Forward event was held with “increased attendance and great success”.

On **Sunday, November 23rd** Jim and Barb Smith joined the Church, transferring from the Kanawha United Presbyterian Church.

In **December 2014**, the youth of the Church were given permission to build snowmen at the homes of older members, weather permitting. Other December events included a Blue Christmas Service on December 21st and the Christmas Eve Service held at 9:00 p.m.

Members of the Session for **2015** were Heather Barry, Vikki Cunningham, Sheila Danzer, Martha Foster, John France, Debbie Hanna, Bruce Lawson, Pat Jacobs, Sarah Gottlieb, Patti Salisbury, David Shields, Rick Skaff, Rona Smith, Dreama White, John Willis, and Tyler Zubick. Candy Hawley served as Treasurer and Rosa Ann Walker continued as Clerk of the Session.

The Villager of **January 7, 2015**, shared information from the Stewardship Ministry that the “Total income in **December, 2014** was \$34,830 ‘almost twice as much as an average month’ which allowed Village Chapel to close a gap that had been plaguing the Church for the latter half of the year. The congregation’s generosity, combined with careful stewardship that kept expenses \$10,000 below budgeted projections, allowing the Church to close the year in the black after meeting all our obligations!”

The **February 11, 2015**, Fellowship Ministry minutes indicated a number of activities planned for the year including: Vacation Bible School for **June 15 – 18**; a Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper on **February 17th**; and a Block Party on Sunday evening, **August 16th**. A Red Cross Blood Drive is scheduled for April 25th and Pay It Forward will be held on Saturday, November 22nd. The Membership Ministry recommended that Village strengthen or revise the Shepherd program, reinstate baking and delivering cookies to visitors; invite visitors to fellowship time after worship; and update the membership directory with current phone and email addresses.

The Fellowship Ministry Team was requested to write an article for The Villager regarding the Per Capital Apportionment amount paid per member listed on the active roll that this information might prompt families to consider family members/individuals who no longer live in the area to be placed on the inactive list. Individuals on the inactive roll may still receive The Villager and be placed back on the active roll at any time in the future should they desire.

In the **February** meeting of the Session, the decision was made to replace the dishwasher in the kitchen with a commercial one that will cost \$3,500. A drive to raise money to do this was communicated to the congregation; however, in mid-March this goal had not been reached – the Session began looking at how additional funding might be achieved. In April it was reported that the Dishwasher Fund raised \$1990 and was matched

by an anonymous donor. The new dishwasher has been purchased and installed. “Once again you have proven what good stewards you are of all that God has given you! Understand that this dishwasher will do more than wash dishes – it will enable us to be good environmental stewards by using the church’s plates and cups rather than paper products.”

Dr. Wright and his son, Nate, went on a mission trip to work on a home that had been destroyed by Hurricane Sandy. They assisted with installing sheet rock, framing, and painting. Four members from the Marlinton Presbyterian Church also participated.

In the July Session meeting, Amy Parker provided an update on her upcoming sabbatical which begins **September 1, 2015**. During her absence, Barbara Hopta and Barbara Palmer will be working with Village Chapel. Amy provided an update in the January 2015 The Villager indicating that she is “excited to be starting a Doctor of Ministry program in Theology and the Arts at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C. She will be participating in two classes, “Arts and Arts Ministries” and “Drama and Ministry”. Amy, and her husband, Don, traveled to Vienna, Austria to meet up with their daughter, Tori, and the three of them traveled across Europe ending up in London to get Tori settled in for her spring semester there.

On Wednesday, **January 14th**, the men of Village Chapel were invited to a men’s dinner hosted by South Park Presbyterian Church. The speaker was Janet Briscoe, Director of Epidemiology and Threat Preparedness for the Kanawha-Charleston Health Department. These dinners and programs occur monthly and South Park extends an invitation to Village Chapel men each month.

Other announcements in the **January 7th** The Villager included:

- Close Encounters Children’s Program will meet bi-weekly for recreation, snacks, choir and puppets for grades K through 5 on Thursdays 3:45-5:15 under the direction of Amy Parker and Dionne Canterbury.
- The Village Chapel Prayer Chain continues under Betsy White by e-mail or Mary Lee Jung by phone or by contacting the Secretary, Terry Asseff, in the Church office.
- The Souper Bowl of Caring will take place on **February 1st** and will pit the NE Patriots against last year’s champs, the Seattle Seahawks and fans all over the country will throw parties with lots of good food. It is easy to forget that many Americans will spend that day (and every day) hungry. That’s why Village Chapel will be taking part in The Souper Bowl of Caring – an opportunity to back your favorite team by putting money or canned goods in their soup pot. During the fellowship time the results will be determined, and a winner will be announced and the money and canned goods will be donated to Common Grounds. In **2015**, the congregation gave a total of \$441.77 in cash and 30 cans of food.

- As part of Village Chapel's Ministry to Common Grounds, the Church has again agreed to donate toilet paper for those less fortunate. The Presbyterian Women designated the second Sunday of every month as the official donation Sunday for toilet paper. The congregation was requested to bring their donations and place these in the allocated area in the back of the Sanctuary.

The **January 21st** The Villager indicated these activities:

- New members Barb and Jim Smith will offer a Tai Chi class for our Church. Classes will begin on **March 9th** from 6:00 to 7:30. Tai chi is a graceful, slow form of exercise that increases balance and flexibility and can be used to reduce stress. It puts minimal stress on muscles and joints. Older adults may find this a suitable exercise. Each class is \$10.00
- The Palliative Care Center will offer a series of classes for caregivers at Village offering six classes beginning on Thursday, **February 19th**. The instructor, Carol Matheny, provided care notes on grief and contact information for making medical and end of life decisions.
- In honor of Evelyn McClure, the Presbyterian Women group will be exploring how Church members might be protected from falls – this could involve life-alert devices, balance exercises, and the possibility of installing railings.

In **2015**, the Session Built a Library – a “little free library” using re-purposed materials from the Habitat Resale Store. The free library offers a box full of books where anyone can stop by and pick up a book or two and bring back a book to share.

Alan and Alma Gordon and their six daughters were members of Village Chapel in the 1960s when Alan was a resident in surgery at CAMC. After completing his residency, they went to Brazil as medical missionaries where they served until retirement. Alma published a family history, *Joy Along the Way*, in which she traces the family history back to Ireland on her father's side of the family and to the Confederates who migrated to Brazil after the Civil War on her mother's side. She describes growing up as a “mish kid” (child of missionaries), marrying another mish kid (Alan) she had first met when she was just a few years old. A copy will be in the library or if you desire to purchase a copy, contact Chuck Daugherty, Alma's brother, who along with his late wife, Mary Lee and their two children, were also members of Village Chapel at that time.

On Ash Wednesday, **February 18th**, the Church offered “Ashes to Go” at the Town Center Mall. “God does not exist only in sanctuaries or only meet us in church. God comes to us in the midst of life, anywhere and everywhere.” Ashes To Go provides opportunity to offer an experience of the mysterious presence of God to those who will not or cannot attend a worship service on Ash Wednesday. Last year ashes were imposed on about 30 people at the Town Center during lunch hour.

The **March 4th** The Villager announced: Spend one hour . . . praying, singing, and meditating on scripture. The Easter Vigil starts on Good Friday and continues for 40 hours until the Sunrise Service on Easter Sunday.

On Mother's Day, **May 13th**, the Men's Ecumenical Fellowship invited the women of all participating churches for a gathering at Village Chapel at 6:15. The evening included a gospel music program by Rose Fisher followed by a time of food and fellowship. Rose is an accomplished pianist and gospel singer. She entertained the group with How Great Thou Art, In the Garden, Leaning on the Everlasting Arms, and The Old Rugged Cross.

New members welcomed into membership at Village this summer included Carol Gunter, Brendan, Chuck, and Sara Stump in May and Beverly, John and Ray Boggs joined in **July 2015**. In September, Wendy Franke joined the Church.

Soup! In the Freezer – On Warrior Weekend a “soup making team” stocked the basement freezer with about 25 containers of homemade soup to be available for anyone in need. If you have or know of anyone who would like to share in this, please help yourself and if you are interested in helping to make future soup contributions, please contact Sarah Gottlieb or Kay Shamblin.

The **May 20th** issue of The Villager contained the announcement – If you are in the habit of attending Sunday School, what will you do for Fellowship, Theological Reflection, and Bible Study during the summer months while your class is in recess? Come to Coffee and Conversation on Sundays at 10:00 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall beginning on June 7th. We will discuss a news article or an issue of the day over a steaming cup of coffee.

May 2015 – Sunday Morning Cards for Members. “We now have a display in the Fellowship Hall with cards, pens and information so that members of the church can sign cards for those members and friends who are currently dealing with illness, grieving, homebound, celebrations, thank you, or other issues. The Membership Ministry will start cards to be signed, but feel free to start one yourself and encourage others to sign the card. We will take care of addressing and mailing the card.”

Village Arts Camp **June 15 – 18** will focus on Celebrating Creation and the Creative Arts--a week including a variety of activities opening with dinner and a program to follow with an “Artist of the Day” doing demonstrations of pottery, weaving, photography, painting, mosaics, dance, drama, bookmaking, jewelry, etc. Intergenerational groups and all ages participate in all activities!!

The Visiting Artist Series is part of the Season of Sabbatical, September through December during the sabbatical of Rev. Amy Parker, Educator/Pastoral Assistant. During the season, the congregation will engage in its own renewal activities, particularly the Visiting Artist Series. These events are designed to engage the congregation in considering the role art can play in enhancing faith and church life.

Each Visiting Artist will begin in Worship where the artist will introduce the theme of the day, exploring how art empowers different aspects of our faith and the life of the church. Following worship and a luncheon, the artist will lead a hands-on, experiential workshop for all ages, further exploring the theme. The artist for September is Deborah Sokolove looking at “Art and Mission”; the October artist is Lynn Miller looking at “Art and Worship” and the November artist is Lisa Cole Smith looking at “Building and Outreach”. The Visiting Artist Series is part of Amy Parker’s Lily Endowment funded sabbatical and presents opportunity for engaging the congregation in considering the role art can play in enhancing faith and church life.

Deborah Sokolove, the first visiting artist, led worship and a workshop on the theme of Art and Mission. She is the Director of the Henry Luce III Center for the Arts and Religion at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C. and teaches courses in art and worship. Most of her courses focus on the intersection of the arts with theology, liturgy and culture. She also maintains an active studio practice as a painter and her paintings have been shown locally and nationally. She is a published author of numerous books, two of which will be available for purchase in the Fellowship Hall. She is a Steward of Seekers Church, an intentional Christing congregation in the tradition of the Church of the Savior, where she serves on the worship planning group and frequently preaches and leads worship. She is also one of Amy’s professors! “We are blessed to have her with us – come and enjoy!”

Lynn Miller has been a practicing artist for more than 25 years. She holds degrees in studio art, graphic design and art history. An ordained Teaching Elder in the PCUSA, she received a Master of Divinity degree from Union Presbyterian Seminary in Richmond, Virginia and the Doctor of Ministry degree from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary in conjunction with the University of Aberdeen in Scotland. Her work is in private/church collections throughout the country, and she has served as workshop leader, graphic designer and keynote speaker for conferences on theology, worship, education and the arts. She is a painter, a designer of textiles and stained glass, a curriculum writer, and an art historian. She loves church architecture!

Lisa Cole Smith is an actor, director, pastor, and creative entrepreneur in the Washington, D. C. area. She received her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Drama from Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh and worked as a professional actor for years before attending seminary and seeking a way to merge her calling as an artist and a person of faith. While in school, she founded Shadows of Light Productions, a theater company devoted to exploring the intersections of art, faith, and the human experience. In 2006 she received her Master of Theological Studies degree and founded Convergence, a Creative Community of Faith. She teaches classes at both the John Leland Seminary and Wesley Theological Seminary on the subjects of worship, theology, and arts. She is never happier than when she is staring up at the sky from her backyard hammock or deeply engrossed in some new creative project.

The following announcement/invitations were included in The Villager over **2015**:

On Saturday, **July 18th**, Brickstreet Insurance graciously allowed Village to use their box at Power Park and Church members were encouraged to “come, enjoy, and cheer the West Virginia Power on to victory. The game starts at 7:05!”

A blood drive was held on **August 3rd** and another was held on **October 3rd**. Both of these drives were successful, and it was decided to hold four blood drives in 2016.

On **August 16th**, using the new hymnals, the congregation enjoyed a Hymn Sing. “We have been enjoying the new Glory to God hymnals for about a year and a half. Submit one new hymn and one old to the church office and a variety of hymns will be selected for use in future services.”

August 23rd – “The Columbia Gas shelter at Coonskin Park will be the site of our annual Worship in the Park followed by a picnic. A blessing of pets will also be included. The Church will provide hotdogs, burgers and cold drinks if you will bring sides and desserts.”

Ten volunteers helped serve the evening meal at Trinity’s Table on **August 30th** and volunteers also served breakfast at Manna Meal on **September 12th**. Ten baked turkeys were donated to Trinity’s Table for Thanksgiving.

Sky Kershner of the Pastoral Counseling Center presented a proposal regarding possible use of the house next door for office space for two to three therapists. Any necessary renovations would be financed by the Counseling Center. Other churches partnering with the Center will assume responsibility for the utilities.

A Hope Village gift market was held at Village Chapel on Sunday, **November 22nd**. Hope Village is an alternative market that includes nativity sets, clothing, and jewelry to name a few items, that are made by artisans from Guatemala, Peru, Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, Pakistan, Zambia, and Brazil. All profits go to the artisans creating the products.

November 13 – 15 will be the 2015 Older Youth Retreat at Bluestone “Let Us Be Our Selfies” with Katherine Blankenship was the featured program. It focused on how we, in an age of selfies, accept ourselves and others, and relate to them as those who are created in the image of God, just as we are. Ms. Blankenship is the Mission Immersion Director of Raleigh Youth Mission in Raleigh, NC. She is a native of North Carolina and a graduate of Appalachian State University and Columbia Theological Seminary. Through her ministry with youth, she works to name creative gifts and profound truths in their lives, most often through music, art, prayer, and laughter.

Cardboard City – Youth from Presbyterian Churches in the Charleston and St. Albans area and their adult advisors experienced a taste of what the homeless experience each night as they gathered to spend the night outside at Rock Lake Presbyterian Church. Cardboard boxes served as their “shelters” on Saturday night. Canned soup and water provided sustenance. Devotions, communion, and discussion took on a new significance as the youth focused on those whose presence is often hidden.

On **November 22nd** members of Morris Memorial, St. Agnes Catholic Church, and Village Chapel gathered to give thanks for God’s blessings. This marks the third year these churches have joined together to benefit Common Grounds with a special offering, and a celebration of how this agency serves the needy! St. Agnes will host this celebration, and Village will provide refreshments to follow the service.

On **December 17th** the Presbyterian Women held their annual Christmas Luncheon followed by a concert with Carolyn Perrine and Sharon Curnutte playing songs of the season.

On **December 21st** the congregation was again invited to go to Vikki and Ira’s home to prepare gift bags for residents of the Veteran’s Home in Barboursville. Brunch was served at 9:00 a.m. with the “work of the Christmas elves shortly afterward”. Those not attending were invited to make donations of men’s t-shirts, socks, personal toiletry items, books, puzzles, sudoku books, candy, DVDs and anything else that might be a good gift for the residents. The group prepared 98 bags for this, the twelfth year of this project – one very much appreciated by the veterans and a really good time for everyone who participates.

The **2016** February Session minutes indicate the steeple is leaking and that it will cost \$2500 to repair the leak. The use of undesignated money and an appeal to the congregation for matching funds were proposed to deal with the issue.

On **March 12, 2016**, Katie Parks will leave for Nicaragua with the WVU Global Dental/Medical Brigades. She will spend nine (9) days working with over 1000 people to provide basic dental and medical clinics, train community leaders, and give immunizations. She needs to raise \$1600 to pay her travel expenses and her share of the cost for medical supplies. The congregation was asked to donate – make a check payable to the church marked as “Katie’s Trip.”

In **2016**, there were three participants in the Confirmation Class – Jack Bland, Max Bland and Noah Lawson. The Session met with the group to discuss their service project experience.

Village Chapel received a Certificate of Appreciation in recognition of being a FOUR for FOUR congregation supporting Special Offerings around the corner and around the globe.

The Maundy Thursday service on **March 24th** will include three stations – one for having your hands washed, one for being anointed with oil, and one for receiving communion.

A Weekend Warriors (Service Weekend) was held in **April 2016**. Church members participated in organized service projects or were asked to choose their own service project. Organized projects included: Ronald McDonald House breakfast preparation, Read-A-Loud magazines labeling, Venable Avenue Church house clean-up, volunteering at the Animal Shelter, serving lunch at Manna Meal and/or dinner at Trinity's Table, making/freezing 28 containers of soup, and/or participating in a worship/prayers/letters writing event. Village Chapel members were also encouraged to perform Random Acts of Kindness throughout the weekend.

The Church purchased new accounting software to allow for better tracking of income and expenses with improved reporting features and the ability to issue quarterly statements to those who pledge.

College graduates in **2016** included Katie Parks graduating from WVU with a Doctor of Pharmacy degree; Tory Parker graduated magna cum laude from Centre College with a History major and minors in theater and art history. She was inducted into Phi Beta Kappa Honorary Society.

Village Chapel continues to engage in community outreach participating in: Common Grounds, blood drives, Trinity's Table, Manna Meal, programs for veterans, book bags for book worms, weekend of service, Pay It Forward, and the Alzheimer's Walk.

In **May**, the Session received a letter from Kathryn McCrary, a long-standing member of the church, indicating that she will be relocating to River Landing, a Presbyterian Continuing Care Retirement Community in High Point, North Carolina. Upon her resignation from the Session, Ray Boggs was elected to fill her unexpired term. In November, 50 chairs were purchased for the Fellowship Hall in honor of Kathryn.

In the summer of **2016**, Barb Smith wove and donated paraments for the communion table, pulpit and baptismal font that pick up the colors from our stained-glass windows. Also, a new blue/green baptismal bowl and pitcher from Blenko glass were added to further beautify the sanctuary.

An announcement in the **May 18, 2016**, The Villager indicated that Village Chapel was approached by St. Mark's United Methodist Church to "adopt" international students at the University of Charleston. Families interested in participating would be matched with a student and offer a quiet place to study, an occasional home-cooked meal, or rides to go shopping, etc. A bit later in 2016 it was announced that Village helped 13 students by filling laundry baskets with basic supplies.

On **May 22nd**, Jule Sockman was honored for his service to Village Chapel as a charter member. Over seven decades he served as an usher, elder, deacon, trustee, worked with the youth, played on the softball team and much more. He was given a certificate designed by Terry Hickernell, a gift from Meals on Wheels, and tickets to a day at the ballpark where he would throw out the first pitch!

High school graduates in **2016** were Lillie Jacobs, Sam Stickler, Brendan Stump, Nate Wright and Tyler Zubick.

Audio or virtual presentations of Worship Services were made available on the Church website. During COVID, these were very helpful as the congregation could remain at home, avoid exposure and yet, engage in the services. These virtual services can be accessed at: vcpresby.com/audio-of-worship-service.

In **June 2016**, Barb Smith, the Elder Commissioner to the **May 19th** Presbytery meeting, reported that a Child Protection Policy is needed as the Book of Order mandates that every church have a Child Protection Policy. While Village has a policy, the current concern is that the church is “ultimately responsible for the safety and wellbeing of children involved in any group using the church facility.” A revised Policy was approved by the Session on December 20, 2017. A copy of the Village Chapel Presbyterian Church Policy for the Protection of Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults was published in the May 30, 2019th The Villager. Village Chapel will host Becky Davis to Speak on Child Protection Policies.

Terri Underhill and Greg Rader requested to be married on **October 14, 2016** at the Church.

In November it was announced that Jeff Chiparo will be installing handrails in front of the sanctuary. Jeff completed designing and building the bannisters by **January 2017** using many of Jim Arthur’s tools in creating them. Jim Arthur was a charter member of Village Chapel, a skilled artisan, and over the years created beautiful furniture for the Church.

Session action approved the disposal of old folding chairs by making these available for Pay It Forward to be donated to flood victims, or made available to the congregation.

Women of the Church submitted recipes for another Village Chapel Cookbook that became available in **December 2016**, costing \$15.00 with 100% of the sales going to Common Grounds as Rick and Debbie Hanna covered the cost of printing.

The Presbyterian Women held their annual Christmas Luncheon/Concert on **December 15th** with Carolyn Perrine and Sharon Curnutte providing musical entertainment. The congregation was invited to join in the festivities.

Terry Asseff began working at the Church Secretary in 2012 and retired on December 29th. Over the years she served the Church well. Terry was replaced by Mary Howard, a granddaughter of Charter member, Polly Dodson.

The Session in **2017** elected Rose Ann Walker to continue to serve as Clerk of Session; Candy Hawley as Treasurer; and the new Church Secretary, Mary Howard, to serve as Assistant Treasurer.

Amy Parker has completed the courses required for the Doctor of Ministry degree.

In the **March 16, 2017** edition of The Villager it was announced that Worship Ministry team is collecting donations to purchase a glider rocker to be placed in the sanctuary for parents with infants. The necessary funds were donated, and the chair was placed in the sanctuary in the summer of **2017**.

On Palm Sunday, the congregation was requested to bring clean, gently worn clothing, particularly coats, to be used as part of the “Path into Jerusalem” service and donated to a clothing closet after the service.

On Good Friday, at noon, members of the congregation, along with members of other congregations in Kanawha City, gathered in front of the Church for a Procession of the Cross. Carrying the Cross for nearly two miles, the group made seven stops, with the group reflecting on the last words of Christ at each stop.

Worship in the Park was held on **June 4th** at the Riverside Shelter at Coonskin Park. Another summer activity brought back again this year was the series of “Coffee and Conversation” described as Fellowship, Theological Reflection and Bible Study as those gathered discussed an article or issue of the day over a cup of coffee.

John Bowles, a member of the Church since 1985 and active as a Youth Group Leader for many years and Chair of the Property Team for a number of years, died on **July 4th**. His service was held at Village Chapel with Rev. Todd Wright and Rev. Frank Mansell conducting the service.

Kanawha Pastoral Counseling Center (KPCC) is now occupying the “house next door” and providing counseling services.

On **July 8th**, the Church celebrated Helen Singleton’s 90th birthday after worship. Also, in the summer of **2017**, Rick Hanna converted an old window frame from the house next door into a mirror in memory of John Bowles – it was hung in the Fellowship Hall.

In **November of 2017** the Reverse Advent Calendar was issued. This “calendar” identified on each day of the month of December appropriate items to be made available for

inclusion in the Veteran's Bags or donated to services such as Common Grounds, Manna Meal, Lily's Place and the Village Chapel Pantry.

In **2017**, Village Chapel was added to the Kroger "Community Rewards" program. Any member of the church who signed up for the program will have a certain amount donated by Kroger to the Church whenever they use their Kroger card. During one quarter it was reported that the Church received a check for \$83.21.

In **December 2017**, the son of Betty Skaggs donated \$25,000 to set up an endowment fund in honor of his mother to be known as the Betty M. Skaggs Legacy Fund. There were no restrictions set in regards to the use of the endowment.

The Village Chapel Manual of Operations for Mission and Ministry, dated **December 2017**, indicates that the number of Elders serving on the Session shall be 12, with the possibility of a 13th member who is a youth. Twelve elders, in classes of 4, are elected for three-year terms (adopted upon a recommendation by the Nominating Committee to the Session 09/21/2016). A youth member of the congregation (up to age 22) may be elected to serve a one-year term. The one-year position on the Session will be filled or not filled depending on the availability of a youth nominee. The youth serving in this position will be an ordained Elder and expected to fulfill all the responsibilities of any person in this office. (adopted 08/29/04).

On **December 22, 2017**, Frank Mansell, the longest serving minister at Village Chapel from 1983 to his retirement in 2006, died in Charleston. During his tenure of service here in the Kanawha Valley, Rev. Mansell, in addition to his service to Village Chapel, was very active in the Presbytery of West Virginia. A service of witness to the resurrection was held here at Village Chapel on January 3, 2018.

On **January 28, 2018**, the Church celebrated Carolyn Perrine's 40 years of music ministry at Village Chapel. Former choir members were invited to sing with the choir during worship.

On **February 14th**, Ashes to Go were provided at both the Town Center Mall and Hubbard Hospice House from 11:30 – 1:00.

On **February 21, 2018**, Ric Hardison from the KPCC provided an overview of how to handle workplace violence. His comments included, "We should attempt to prevent, deter, and minimize. Options include: 1. Get out, 2. Hide out and 3. Take out. We should pray for God's help for discernment and the health of our congregation."

On a working weekend in April a group consisting of Jim and Barb Smith, Heather Barry, Alatheia Stickler, John France, Sheila Grimm, Chuck Stump, Sarah and Richard Gottlieb, Joan Mansell, Kathy Kruk and Maureen and Todd Wright volunteered to work at a

Habitat House Build cleaning and laying flooring. In addition to the time volunteered, the church raised and donated \$10,000 to Habitat for Humanity building projects.

On Monday, **May 7, 2018**, Amy Parker completed requirements for the Doctor of Ministry degree from the Wesley Theological Seminary, and attended, along with her family, graduation ceremonies at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. In honor of her achievement, the Church presented Amy with a Doctor's robe.

On **May 13th**, the church celebrated Mother's Day, Children and Youth Sunday with the children providing music for the service, and the recognition of Robert Noell Bland as he graduated from high school.

On **May 17th** Village Chapel hosted a meeting of the Presbytery, welcoming about 130 elders, ministers, and guests from Presbyterian congregations across the state for a full day meeting.

Worship in the Park was celebrated on **June 3rd** at the Riverside Shelter in Coonskin Park. The menu was BBQ and coleslaw provided by the Church and side dishes and desserts contributed by the congregation.

In the summer of **2018**, the Service Ministry Team put together 100 Blessing Bags containing basic necessities such as toothbrushes, toothpaste, combs, socks, wipes, deodorant, and snacks – each costing about \$7.00. These were then available to anyone who was willing to participate by carrying a bag(s) in their car to give out to those deemed in need.

The Session on **August 25th**, changed the job title of the Rev. Dr. Amy Parker from Church Educator/Pastoral Assistant to Minister of Education and the Arts.

Lou Maxson's estate donated \$10,000 to Village Chapel. Due to her love for working with Common Grounds, \$1000 of this fund was donated to Common Grounds to prepare Thanksgiving baskets. In fall of **2018**, windows in the Fellowship Hall and Education Building were replaced. These were financed by individuals "purchasing a window". Funding from the Maxson donation was used to facilitate the process. The price to donate an individual window was \$350.

A letter from the Christian Theological Seminary stating that Village Chapel's program and financial reports for the Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Program have been received and reviewed and that the Church's file on this grant would be closed and considered fulfilled.

Sunday School Officers and Teachers for **2018-2019** were: Superintendent – Patti Salisbury; Preschool – Kathy Kruk and Sharon Richardson; Elementary/Youth – Janet Rorrer and Rona Smith; Substitutes – Patti Salisbury and Jessica Gentry; Adult Polly Dodson Class

– Barbara Tabaretti and Vicki Cunningham; The Present Word Class – Barb Smith, David Dodson, Sheila Danzer and Chuck Stump.

On Sunday, **November 18th** St. Agnes Catholic Church hosted a joint Community Thanksgiving service. Worship was led by Father Escalante, Rev. Mark Flynn of Morris Memorial UMC, and Dr. Todd Wright of Village Chapel. The group gathered to praise God for all our many blessings, heard a bit about some of the joys and challenges facing Common Grounds, and took up an offering of over \$1200 to further their ministry.

In December the Village Cares Library at the corner of 39th Street was restocked by Mary Howard. The library was built in **2015** by Jim Smith, a member of the Church. The structure is open to the public and offers books that may be borrowed or exchanged as well as seasonal items such as scarves, gloves, personal toiletries, or whatever items members of the congregation or community choose to place in it.

On **December 6th** an Advent Arts Project was initiated when three local artists, Ian Bode, Staci M. Leech-Cornell, and David Pushkin were each commissioned to produce an original artwork to be placed on display throughout Advent in the Fellowship Hall. On Epiphany Sunday, January 6th, these pieces were auctioned with the proceeds donated to a charity that benefits children. The auction generated \$2030 which was divided between Lily's Place in Huntington and the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Work at the US/Mexico Border.

On **March 17, 2019**, a celebration of 200 years of Presbyterianism in the Kanawha Valley was held at the Civic Center Little Theater. First Presbyterian and Kanawha United are also celebrating 200 years, and St. Albans First celebrated its 150th year of service. Village Chapel donated \$300 for use in the celebration. Todd, Amy, Don Parker, and members of the choir participated in the program.

On **April 17-20** Village Chapel celebrated Holy Week with an Art Project bringing the works of local artists and their work to create a powerful journey through the Stations of the Cross—the stories of Jesus's last day from the Last Supper to the entombment of his body. Opportunity was provided for Church members and friends to visit and view the artwork symbolizing this special time. The exhibit attracted about 100 visitors. The artists sharing their art were David Pushkin, Ian Bode, Amy Parker, Terry Hickenell, Steve Lippitt, Michael Taylor, Chris Dutch, Bernice Deakins, Jeff Pierson, Tara Cantrell, and Mark Wolfe.

April 26-28 a Guys Weekend was held at Bluestone Conference Center—the 11th Annual Men's Retreat, a weekend “packed with great teaching, worship, work projects to improve Bluestone and plenty of laughs.”

In June 2019 Jim and Barb Smith “rejuvenated” the parking area in front of the church by painting lines to designate parking spaces.

Rally Day on **September 8th**, included the celebration of communion using a particular kind of bread: Lunch Lady Rolls—the kind they used to serve at school, back in the days when each school made their own food on site, back when you could smell them baking all morning, back when the roll was the best part of the lunch, no matter what else was being served. Those rolls tasted like a labor of love and as that is what will be served for Communion! “It is hoped you will remember the rolls that remind us of lunchroom ladies and of our Lord!”

Mary Nelle Howard resigned as the Church Secretary, and Village welcomed Leslie Bremar in **September of 2019**. Leslie was formerly employed as the Office Administrator for the Presbytery of West Virginia. Leslie has a bachelor’s degree in political science and a master’s degree in public administration and nonprofit management.

In the fall of **2019**, a Peace Rose, a gift from the Baha’is of Charleston, was planted near the entrance to the Education Building. The sign with the rose is captioned, “Sow love, grow peace”!

In **2019**, Village Chapel hosted five (5) Red Cross Blood drives. Since the inception of doing these in 2014, the church has hosted 22 drives and collected a total of 581 units of blood, which has the potential to assist over 1,743 individuals.

Over this year, **2019**, the Church provided assistance to the Roald McDonald House residents, West Virginia Read-A-Loud, Habitat for Humanity, and the Heart and Hand Closet. Members also participated in the annual Walk to End Alzheimer’s, provided forty (40) backpacks filled with school supplies to Mary Ingles Elementary School, filled about fifty (50) Christmas bags to Charleston veterans and sponsored the “Pay it Forward” event. New service projects in this year included food delivery assistance during the Remote Area Medical (RAM), a major nonprofit provider of free mobile clinic providing free dental, vision, and medical services to underserved and uninsured individuals. Another new endeavor included making and distributing 200 “blessing bags” filled with toiletries and necessities for those in need. The Church also contributed over 100 pairs of socks to assist the United Way’s efforts to provide socks to area homeless shelters.

On **December 29th**, Worship included time around tables filling Ziplock bags with beans and spices to be sent to Common Grounds food pantry and Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD). The group assembled 300 bags which equals 1200 meals of soup!! This effort was funded by the sale of one of the Advent Art Exhibit paintings donated to the church by artist Cindy Walton. The painting was purchased by Harriet and Gerry Nottingham. When the artist was informed of the bean soup project, she gasped saying that she had felt her mother’s presence and inspiration as she painted--her mother had been a dedicated worker at a food pantry! “This is what we Presbyterians call providence—God working around and through us in ways we don’t see and never imagine!!”