

JANUARY 6, 2015

Celebrating 40 Years of the Village Church Preschool Program

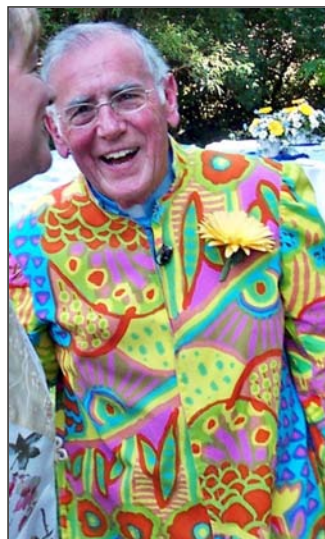
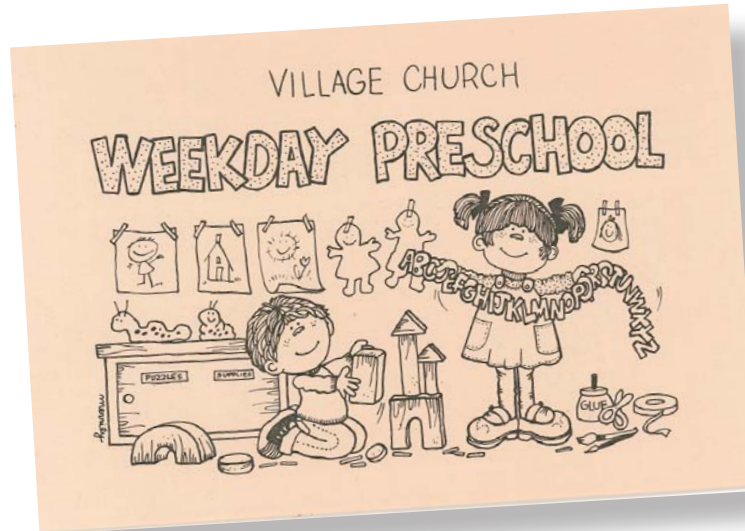
The Village Church Preschool program started back in January of 1975. It was administered through what was then called the Pre-communicant department. Rev. Bill Foster was the minister to pre-communicants and Jane Wilson was director of early childhood programs.

Village began with a weekday pilot program limited to Village Church members only. They started with two classes on Monday, Wednesday, Friday and two classes on Tuesday-Thursday. The curriculum would be consistent with the objectives of meeting the developmental needs of the child.

"We were so honored to have been chosen to be the initiators and founders of Village Church Weekday Preschool—such a wonderful part of so many fortunate children's lives," said Jane Wilson. "The guiding principles of a program based on High Scope Educational Research Foundation's Cognitively-Oriented Curriculum, a strong developmental, child-right theory base, was the perfect parallel to Village Presbyterian's doctrine and still holds true today and tomorrow. That's why you are enrolling the children of the children we served in those early years."

How the Program Has Evolved

According to Preschool Director Terri Gaeddert, "In 1975, Village had 26 children in the program. Today we have 110-112 children consistently every year.



Rev. Bill Foster was known for his gorgeous, kid friendly, robe of many colors. There were always children around him. He would tell the Christmas story to preschoolers acting out the parts in the Chapel.

Typically we are at maximum capacity. We now have a staff of 17. The extended day program has been added and the program has been nationally accredited through NAEYC (National Association for the Education of the Young Child) since 1999.

The program quickly grew beyond Village Church families. Today, about 30% of our preschool children are from Village Church families. We're broadening beyond our neighborhood.

Village Church Weekday Preschool Handbook illustrated by a Hallmark artist.

Last year we dedicated our new nature outdoor classroom. It's important to this program to connect the inside and outside as much as possible."

High Scope Curriculum

"We all follow the High Scope curriculum both at the preschool and the 4&5 year old program at the Village Church Child and Family Development Center," Terri Gaeddert said. "I think that's one of the hallmarks of the program. It was very new in the 70's and it was very intentional and very important to that original staff – that it be done in a way that is cognitively oriented curriculum that uses a developmental approach – and every time

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Bill Foster comes by, he wants to make sure that is still what we are using."

Rev. Bill Foster shared, "At those earlier years, we wished to start a preschool where we could bring together our children with our Christian faith. Therefore, we looked at the learning process, intellectual growth and spiritual discernment of these young people. We asked ourselves 'what could they handle and at what age could they handle it?' Then we looked at our faith as it is given expression in the scriptures. We looked for staff people; teachers who held college degrees in Early Childhood Education who at the same time were faithful Christians.

We put this together and made a fun place with a fun spirit where they could learn and live together. It was a scary time at first because the cost of the program was not included in the church budget and would not be included the church budget. Therefore, parents had to pay for the cost. What we discovered was the families wanted a program and supported it to the point where we had always had a waiting list for youngsters to get in. And here it is 40 years later. Wow!"

Celebrating 40th Anniversary Jan. 26

The Village Preschool is commemorating its 40th anniversary on Jan. 26 with age appropriate activities, cupcakes, games, etc. for the children. Staff, both present and past, have been invited to an Open House to take a walk down memory lane with a progressive party to see what's new in the preschool rooms.

Plans for the Future

"Village has always been a teaching church. The preschool program really follows that philosophy very nicely," said Terri, who is in her fourth year as preschool director. "When I first started, my goals were that we would continue to be a model in the Kansas City area for developmentally appropriate preschool practices. We've proven to be a model of high quality standards in early childhood education for which there is high demand. I hope that we can continue to uphold that standard."



**Rev. Bill Foster
with preschoolers.**

Preschool Enrollment Begins in January

Village Church Preschool begins accepting applications for the coming school year (2015-2016) in January. Several years ago a tiered schedule was implemented due to the high demand for limited spaces in our program. This allows for currently enrolled families and Village Church members to have priority. For more information, please check the preschool page on the Village Church website or contact Terri Gaeddert at 913-671-2338.

Enrollment Schedule for Fall 2015-2016



On Jan. 12, enrollment opens for:

Current Preschool Families & Village Church Members

On Jan. 15, enrollment opens for:

Current Village Church Kids Day Out Families

On Jan. 20, enrollment opens for:

Community Families