



# THE VILLAGE CHURCH

~ A Different Way of Doing Church! ~

November 2017

## THE VILLAGE IS MULTIPLYING

"Why should I bother going to Church?" I asked. I felt disengaged and bored. I remember sharing with one of my youth leaders, "When I graduate high school, you won't see me here again!" "Be patient with the Church," my youth leader responded. Looking back, I am very thankful for my youth leader's gentleness with me, because buried beneath my immature frustration was a maturing and hopeful vision of what the Church could be. I did not want to "go to" Church, I wanted to **BE** the Church, a movement of people on a mission. I had a practical mindedness and an idealistic sensibility, wanting to simply see the church serving as the hands and feet of Jesus in my community.

Why do I share all of this? There is a lot that has happened since I was 16, but I suppose this idealistic sensibility remains in me and is part of what attracted me to The Village Church. In the picture on page 3, the three of us new staff are wearing our shirts announcing that we are "Here to Serve". The staff team at The Village has multiplied. We have a lot to learn, as we likely still don't yet know what we don't know, but here we are - here to serve. If you show up on a RAKE (Random Acts of Kindness Everywhere) Sunday, you get a shirt, too! "I was not taught mission, I was brought on mission," said Terence Schilstra to me recently, now a Missional Community leader at The Village. In this act of giving out a free shirt we are saying, in essence: you belong and you can make a difference here. Our vision was and is: know Christ, serve others and make Him known - I am excited to serve this vision at The Village in diverse ways. Implicit in this vision is that we will multiply ministries; in fact, kingdom multiplication is one of our core values. On page 2 you can read about a second missional community that we have started.

Continuing with our RAKE Sundays, hiring three new staff, launching a new missional community, seeing new people come into our community and baptizing new babies - we have been busy! Please continue to partner with us in prayer. We cannot do this frontline work in isolation. You have supported us from day one, so you need to know what we are up to and why. The reality is that there would be no Village Church without Classis Niagara. So, as one of my first acts of ministry, I simply want to say thank you.

Thank you for taking the time to read this, and I look forward to meeting you.

Sincerely,  
Pastor Mark

### Our Vision Statement

*"To be a community of faith that is dedicated to knowing Jesus Christ, serving others in His name and making Him known throughout our home community."*

Check out our website!

[myvillagechurch.ca](http://myvillagechurch.ca)



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## HOW YOU CAN HELP

Some of us folk are particularly practical, and want to know what can be done. Here is your invitation:

1. If you have not been to a RAKE Sunday, consider checking out our next RAKE on Sun. February 11, 2018 at 10:30 a.m. at Richmond St. Public School - you will get a red shirt and be put to work - totally worth the drive!
2. Consider setting aside money above your tithe to your church to go towards a maturing and hopeful vision of what the Church could be in Merritton. You may do so by mail (P.O. Box 47, Thorold, ON, L2V 3Y7) or check into online giving through our website, [www.myvillagechurch.ca](http://www.myvillagechurch.ca)

# GIVING THANKS TO GOD!

## A Transition Team Update

As a transition team, we began the work to seek a pastor in October, 2015. We heard from the Pastor Church Resources office that it typically takes 18-24 months to find a pastor. But, we heard from people who knew us well that it would probably be 6-8 months. So, our hopes were high.

During the search, our team and the congregation prayed that God would provide the right person at the right time. We began our work with the firm belief that this is God's church and His work we are doing and in due time it will all come together. In the end we looked at 95 pastor profiles, most of them from within the Christian Reformed Church. We had 14 "first" interviews. We had follow up interviews with 4 people. The process was bathed in prayer. The transition team members cared for each other, became a small group, shared, prayed, and when people saw candidates differently we worked to understand each other, all the time praying, often several times within a meeting.

Through the profiles and interviews we heard many great stories about how God is working with pastors in their churches, but there were also some tough stories from pastors who had difficulties in churches. Discernment was needed by us and each pastor we contacted.

In the end, after having spent several months considering a number of pastors and discerning that none were the right fit, God pleasantly surprised us. Just as our church board had given us permission to seek an interim pastor, two people from outside our congregation, who know our church well recommended Mark DeVos to us. He also applied. When the team and a board member interviewed him we were all in agreement that Mark had what we needed to be our interim pastor. He accepted the position! We are working with him so he can also be considered for the permanent senior pastor position.

It has been quite a journey for all of us as part of this team; there were exciting times and also tough times when we wondered what God was doing and why this was taking so long. We have all expressed how this has been a growing spiritual journey for us; for some it led to a deeper faith, for all of us it led to a greater dependence and trust in God. It once again is a reminder that God not only works through us but also, at the same time, works in us. Thank you God for leading us and walking with us these last two years.

Steve Collins, Hilda Vander Klippe



Over the last six months, The Village Church was blessed to witness the baptisms of baby JJ and baby Zoey. We also said good bye to Pastor Lesli (pictured above), our interim pastor. We were so thankful to have her leading.

## A New Missional Community

In September we decided to launch a missional community beyond Thorold. Hilda Vander Klippe notes the discernment process that went into this venture. She says "The Prince of Wales Missional Community was well on its way and I felt God prompting us to multiply another Missional Community somewhere else. This was one of the dreams that came out of our Visioning Sunday in Oct 2016. After much prayer and conversation, we discerned that God was leading us into Merritton".

Merritton is a small community bordering Thorold; it is also the location of Youth For Christ (YFC), a ministry we as a church have been partnering with for 7 years. Merritton has also had a number of churches close in recent years, and the buildings sold to local businesses. St. Andrews Presbyterian Church, has closed after 136 years of holding worship services; earlier this year, St. James Anglican was also sold after 146 years! It's sad and it's a sign of the times. What happened exactly in these churches, we don't know. One thing we do know at the Village is that God is not done in Merritton. Where *is* God at work in Merritton? Jesus said, "As the Father sent me, so I am sending you". The church was meant to be a movement of sent people, so this is why we are multiplying into Merritton - we sense that we have been sent.

When we launch a missional community there are more questions than answers about what our involvement will look like, but a group of us have begun to learn, grow, and pray together; whatever it looks like, we are "here to serve" and we are praying that the kindness and mercy of God would flow through us into this community.

## MEET PASTOR MARK DEVOS

I grew up in Cambridge and owned a seasonal lawn care and landscaping business in Cambridge for 15 years, while completing a BA at Redeemer University and then an Mdiv at Covenant Theological Seminary. After 8 consecutive years of formal education I chose to work at Redeemer University College for 3 years as a part-time chaplain. I guess I am a fan of the academy! I concluded my work at Redeemer, taking on a very unique leadership development project at Cardus, a Christian think tank, for about 2 years and then did a one year Residency in the chaplaincy department at the St. Catharines Hospital. I subsequently completed a five month pastoral internship in the Tobermory area and Calvin's EPMC program before taking on my current position here at The Village. Over the past month of working at The Village I have learned many things, one of the biggest lessons being - I have so much to learn! There is something special about The Village - the people and the vision inspire me. I love my job. I also love learning, good food, good wine, people and Jesus.

## MEET JOY BUCHKOWSKI

I grew up in Niagara and began attending The Village Church in 2014, joining my sister and her future husband. I have attended many different Church denominations over the years, and immediately felt welcomed and comfortable at The Village. I recognized many of the worship songs, and connected with the messages that were delivered.

I took part in a small group my first year and enjoyed getting to know some of the people at The Village, as well as getting to grow. With such a great first experience, I continued to sign up for more small groups, and also began taking part in our various RAKE activities, both as outreach and getting to know more people. Since then, I have served on the RAKE Committee, and with Brock FOCUS, and currently co-lead a women's small group.

Besides an enjoyment of the outdoors, and geeky things like comics and sci-fi, I also love serving and encouraging others. As The Village Church's Administrative Assistant, I look forward to continuing to serve, love, and grow in The Village!



(From l to r) Joel Galenkamp, Mark DeVos, Joy Buchkowski

## MEET JOEL GALENKAMP

I have been attending the Village Church for about 10 years - since the very beginning! As I was raised in this church, I was always actively invited to serve in some capacity. It started out with me helping set up for church on Sundays, and then I started doing slides and some of the other A/V things as well.

I began taking guitar lessons and soon enough, was serving on the worship team, which became a more consistent commitment over the course of the last 5 years. Throughout those years, I was encouraged and poured into by many people in our Church, and also given many opportunities to try new things and to lead in different capacities.

This past summer, I had the opportunity to lead worship for the first time and I really enjoyed it! When the opportunity arose to work for my church doing something that I love, it was a no brainer to at least go for it. I am excited to enhance our services and to bring my own creativity to what we do at our church! I'm also very excited to work alongside Pastor Mark, and to dream and to carry out plans together.



The Village Church has begun a new season of small groups. This is the Hiking small group which is well attended and brings a lot of communal sharing as God's creation is explored and enjoyed.

# WHY I ATTEND THE VILLAGE CHURCH?

I had the privilege of sitting down with Kelly Ewtuchovich and listen to his story; as you read it I hope you will enjoy it too.

"I always had something inside of me that kind of needed a spiritual bond with my community; I went to a United church as a kid with my parents; then my parents stopped going; my sister and I kept it up a while longer before we stopped too. I probably was around 10 then, so before coming to the Village church I had not been to church for more than four decades. During that time I did a lot of research about different religions, cultures, philosophies, etc. Is there a common thread that connects in all this?

After my parents died, the housing crisis happened. I restore hardwood floors for a living and there was no work; I was at a real low point in my life. Then I was asked by a Christian contractor to work for him under 2 conditions - no swearing on the job and I couldn't work on Sundays; something began to change inside of me. Then I met Darren Roorda when I did the floors in his home. We became friends; I like to chat with my customers about all sorts of subjects; but when my customer is a pastor I like to debate/discuss religion with them.

**Darren mentioned The Village Church in my home town of Thorold; it was close and convenient and they met in a school, the same school I attended as a kid. So eventually I took him up on the invitation. God had his sights on me long before I met Darren but it took an invitation for me to follow through.**



Once I got to The Village I found the people to be friendly and polite; and it was so casual, no one dressed up; you have to be casual as a church if you want to reach people in Thorold.

The band is kind of different but I did start to like it especially some songs like "Lord I Need You".

Pastor Mike left shortly after I came to The Village so my whole life with the Village has been without a pastor; that was good because we all worked together and it made me feel part of the church and I got to contribute; it wasn't long before I got involved setting up for the services.

Some of the people I have met have become like family to me.

My relationship with God has changed; church has amplified what I have always known about God. I am happier and I have a new family; I say 'thank you' to God all the time now. I am sure that the common thread is love and respect!"

Written by Hilda Vander Klippe

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