

# The Maranatha Village Trumpet



*"The Lord Cometh!"*

July – September 2022

Volume XXXVI 3

## ~ Maranatha's New CEO ~

*Mr. Brian Halstead*



*Brian & Kaye Halstead*

I (Brian) am the oldest son of Wes and Bonnie Halstead. I was born on the farm and learned my work ethic from my dad and grandfather Ilert Eilders. I have known about the Village since my grandparents moved here in 1982. I fell in love with the people and the ministry when dad was the manager here.

I attended Hyles-Anderson College and graduated with my BS in Secondary Education. After graduation, I taught for one year at Berean Christian in West Palm Beach and then worked as a manager at an Oldsmobile dealership for 2 years. The Lord directed me to move back home to Rochester, Minnesota, where I taught at another Christian school for 10 years. During the first year of my Minnesota experience, one of my student's parents set me up on a blind date. I agreed, because nothing would happen since I already had a girlfriend. Little did I know what God would do! The Lord knew exactly what He was doing because I have been married to that girl, the love of my life, for 34 years now.

I have dreamed of having a ministry at Maranatha Village for more than 20 years. There is nothing quite like this place! I have been praying for the Lord to lead me and now He has. In January, I had just finished 25 years at Mayo Clinic Labs as a Client Support Specialist. My wife and I came to Florida in February for a week of Southern Gospel music. We weren't expecting anything like this; it wasn't on our radar. The Executive Board asked to meet with Kaye and me. They talked to us about my interest in a position as the new Village administrator. Praise the Lord! God is in control. His plan and timing are evident, and his

leading, guiding, and directing are perfect and true.

After formally meeting with the Village Board, in March, I accepted this incredible opportunity to serve Him at Maranatha Village. I am looking forward to ministering among our Village family and developing lifelong friendships. We need to continue to be a light in our larger community, and I want to cultivate and build relationships with contacts in Sebring, Avon Park, and Highlands County. Our charge from God is to make a difference in this lost and dying world. We are to live our lives as examples to others in word and deed. We cannot lose, the victory is ours! God will help us to be light and salt here in the Village and in our larger community. The rewards of such light-bearing is a treasure untold.

I (Kaye) am the second daughter of Norman and Lois Witte of Warsaw, Minnesota. Both of my parents have passed to Glory and are united once again. Growing up, we faithfully attended the Morristown Baptist Church, and in the summer, went to Bass Lake Camp in Winnebago, Minnesota. I was a camper for many years and later worked on summer staff in the kitchen every year. As I got older, I felt God leading me into the secretarial field. I desired to be a medical secretary at the Mayo Clinic. I attended Faith Baptist Bible College and worked during the summers at Mayo. Now I have been there for 41 years, and the Lord has richly blessed me in innumerable ways. I have hosted many patients and their families going through the Mayo Clinic during this time. I worked in the Cardiology Department for 35 years and in the Department of Development for the past 6 years. I enjoy serving and helping others every single day in the hopes of making a difference.

We have two children; both are nurses at the Clinic.

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## The Good Life!

Jerry Johnson, Administrator



Jerry

### **What you are about to read never happened!**

An American investment banker was at the pier of a small coastal Mexican village when a small boat with just one fisherman docked. Inside the small boat were several large yellow fin tunas. The American complimented the Mexican on the

quality of the fish and asked how long it took to catch them. The Mexican replied, "Only a little while."

The American then asked, "Why didn't you stay out longer and catch more fish?" The Mexican said he had enough to support his family's immediate needs. The American then asked, "But what do you do with the rest of your time?"

The Mexican fisherman replied, "I sleep late, fish a little, play with my children, take a siesta with my wife, Maria, stroll in the village each evening where I sip wine and play guitar with my amigos. I have a full and busy life."

The American scoffed, "I am a Harvard MBA, and I could help you. You should spend more time fishing and sell the extra fish, with the proceeds, buy a bigger boat; with the proceeds from the bigger boat, you could buy several boats; eventually you would have a fleet of fishing boats, and instead of selling your catch to a middleman, you would sell directly to the processor, eventually opening your own cannery. You would control the product, processing, and distribution. You would need to leave this small village and move to Mexico City, then to LA and eventually New York City where you would manage your expanding enterprise."

The Mexican asked, "But how long will this all take?" To which the American replied, "15-20 years."

"But then what?" the fisherman asked.

The American laughed and said, "That's the best part!

When the time is right, you would announce an IPO and sell your company stock to the public and become very rich. You would make millions!"

"Millions... Then what?"

The American said, "Then you would retire, move to a small coastal fishing village where you would sleep late, fish a little, play with your kids, take siesta with your wife, stroll around to the village in the evenings where you could sip wine and play your guitar with your amigos."

### **What you are about to read does happen!**

You've worked all your life. You've served the Lord faithfully in your local church or on the mission field. Now you're ready to retire from the work, but you still want to serve the Lord for as long as you are able.

The wise ones move to a small Village in central Florida, where they sleep late, or go to chapel, fish a little, play Mexican Train with their friends, take a siesta with their wife (or husband), drive (or walk) around the Village in the evening, greeting many friends, visit with them enjoying stories of yesteryear with a little iced tea or coffee and some cookies, talk some more and laugh a lot. Then they enjoy a restful night's sleep surrounded with a quiet peace. The following day, they get up in the morning, go to chapel and start a blessed day all over again. Only this time they go to Dee's for a light breakfast and sweet fellowship with friends, return to the Village to serve lunch at the Manor, or join the paint crew painting a villa for another wise soul who can move into a refurbished villa, enjoy a nap, then help with our public school Bible clubs in the afternoon, visit a widow in the Village who's a little lonely and melancholy, maybe taking her supper, spend a happy evening with other friends playing Hands & Feet, laugh a lot, then enjoy a restful night's sleep surrounded with a quiet peace, knowing you're continuing to serve the Lord and bless His people. And so, it goes on...

**Welcome to Maranatha Village!**

# Maranatha Cares!

*Dr. Daryl S. Jeffers*



*Pastor Daryl*

The late Methodist pastor Frank E. Graeff was known as the “*Sunshine Minister*.” In spite of this cheerfully descriptive moniker, Graeff faced seasons of tortuous testing in his life. Experiencing severe despondency and doubt during one such test, he turned to the Scriptures for consolation. The text from 1 Peter 5:7, “*Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you,*” brought solace to his broken heart, leading him to compose the well-known hymn *Does Jesus Care?* One stanza, with its accompanying refrain, is particularly encouraging to those who have faced grief and loss in their lives. It reads, “*Does Jesus care when I’ve said ‘good-bye’ to the dearest on earth to me, and my sad heart aches till it nearly breaks – is it aught to Him, does He see? O*

*yes, He cares; I know He cares; His heart is touched with my grief. When the days are weary, the long nights dreary, I know my Savior cares.”*

On January 13, 2022, I had the privilege of meeting together with those who are single or who have experienced the loss of a spouse. Those who have never married or those who have lost a spouse often find themselves as add-ons in the church without a sense of truly belonging. Their concerns are wide ranging:

- “*Where do I fit in socially in the church*”
- “*How do I communicate with the opposite gender without arousing suspicions of romantic intentions*”
- “*Am I a fifth wheel when around couples*”
- “*How do I keep from becoming invisible*”

and in the future, we will continue to map out how to implement and develop ministry and social opportunities, a real sense of belonging, and a better understanding of the needs these wonderful Christian servants have. Whenever they ask themselves, “*Does Maranatha care?*” *I want the refrain to be, “O yes, we care!”*



## ~ Maranatha's New CEO ~

Adam is now working in the Neuro ICU, and Ashlee is a House Supervisor, overseeing the charge nurses at both hospitals. We do not get to see them often, even though we live in the same town, as they regularly work 12-hour shifts, rotating weekends, day/night, etc. (Some of you may totally understand these crazy schedules!). They are busy, and we are proud of their dedication to this noble profession. And, yes, they are both single.

We are very much looking forward to this next chapter in our lives and trust that God will allow us to be a blessing to each of you. Friends and family are a little jealous that we will be relocating from cold Minnesota to warm Florida, but they know that the door is always open for fellowship when they want to visit!

# “The Path That Led Us to Maranatha Village”

*Henry & Grace Tsuei*



*Grace & Henry*

About six years ago, after two weeks of visiting various churches and believers in Taiwan, Grace and I traveled to China. China had started to use new surveillance equipment and based on some very clear indications at the Shanghai airport

entrance security station, we sensed that the authorities were starting to become suspicious of our activities within the country. Our 40 plus years of activities in China, both for family visits and business meetings had caught the government’s eyes as unusual and frequent. Of course, for a while we made monthly trips to various cities and inland for missionary activities. Nearly 11 years of undetected missionary work around the country had left some marks such as an occasional hotel stay where they copied my passport. The nearly hostile, delayed action of the security agent caused us to pray for God’s direction concerning our future activities. We chose to temporarily make a decision to retire in order not to cause problems for those underground churches which we had been serving.

From China, we flew back to the US and conferred with the pastor of our sending church, Fourth Baptist Church, Minnesota, and the president and director of Continental Baptist Missions. We retired officially in 2017. The Lord had called us to serve in a full-time capacity rather late in our lives. However, it was a blessed journey of 25 years after preceding years of tent-making in the USA Fortune 500 corporate business world. We worshiped and learned from local Baptist churches during that time, while serving as leaders in planting a Chinese church on the side. One of our assemblies in Louisiana grew into 75 plus attendees which heard my preaching twice a month for nearly 6 years, before it became a registered, local, independent Chinese church.

After spending time in South Carolina, we spent two years living in Greensboro, North Carolina, close to our son, Matthew Tsuei, an MD. Unexpectedly, we could not find a local church in which to worship and serve. Gradually, we discovered that we were not walking closely with the LORD, due to our independently choosing where we wanted to retire. We repented and asked the LORD’s forgiveness. My blindness in making this mistake was caused by poor assumptions and

my adherence to Chinese traditional ideas.

In early 2019, the LORD prompted us to look into Maranatha Village as a place for a possible home. Forty-two years ago, we had visited Maranatha for the first time as the guests of John and Vera Craig, who were surrogate grandparents of our sons at Parsippany Baptist Church, New Jersey (1972-1976). We made a second visit to the Village in March 2019 and prayerfully submitted an application. Finally, on October 10, 2019, the LORD allowed us to have a home in Maranatha Village, where a new chapter of our lives began, full of blessing and peace of mind.

How did the Lord lead us all the way from Shanghai, China, to America in the previous decades? We can remember our de-facto status as refugees, escaping from the Communist evil occupation of China. We grew up in Taiwan, 1949 - 1963. Grace was saved in high school, but I was saved 6 years later, in 1962. As college classmates and sweethearts, Grace gave me a Chinese Bible. I read it and thought through it deeply, struggling concerning my own life philosophy. I studied day and night just wanting to fulfill my promise to Grace that I would “read it from cover to cover.” In six months, I was gloriously saved, and my new life in Christ freed me from the bondage of human philosophy and tradition.

Thank the LORD, both Grace and I were saved before our marriage in 1964. God’s calling for me to seriously study and teach a campus Chinese student Bible study at Syracuse University was very personal and special. It began in 1965, and the LORD gave me an increase of new believers before I graduated and left campus in 1969. The first job I held was in Morristown, New Jersey. After serving in a local Chinese church about two years, we sought a more biblical and “fundamental” church in which to worship. At that time, the LORD led us to Parsippany Baptist church, and we studied under the teaching of Pastor Keep. The Word of God blessed us so deeply and widely, we loved our life in Parsippany! It was during those years, God called our first son, Gaylord, to serve Him at the age of nine, the age when I providentially and narrowly escaped to Taiwan many years earlier. In all these ways, God has ordered our steps and made possible our life in this wonderful Village. We praise the Lord for His kindness and mercy towards us, a pair of unworthy servants. Blessed be the name of our LORD.



## Cook's Korner

### Slow Cooker 15-Bean Soup (Gluten free)



- 1 pkg 15-bean soup with ham flavor
- 1 lb gluten free ham steak, diced
- 1 can (14.5 oz) gluten free diced tomato
- 1 med. onion, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- Juice from 1 lemon
- 7-8 c water (depending on how thick or brothy you like)

Rinse beans and pour into slow cooker. Then layer the onion, garlic and ham on top. Add 7 c water. Cover and cook on high for 5-7 hours. When beans are tender, add tomato, lemon juice and Hurst's ham flavor seasoning included in the beans. Cook on low for additional 30 minutes. Then keep warm until ready to serve.

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### Taco Soup

- 2 lbs lean ground beef
- ½ onion finely chopped
- 1 can black beans
- 1 can pinto beans
- 1 can light kidney beans
- 1 (14 ½ oz) diced tomatoes
- 2 cans Rotel tomatoes (I usually use 1 Rotel and 1 petite diced tomatoes instead of the 2 Rotels. I have the Rotel seasoned as hot as I want it.)
- 2 cans Mexicorn
- 2 pkg Hidden Valley Ranch dressing mix
- 2 pkg Taco seasoning mix
- 2 c water



Brown the ground beef and onions together and then drain off the fat/grease. Do not add salt or pepper. Add all the other ingredients into a large pot/Dutch oven, along with the meat and onions. Heat thoroughly and serve with corn chips and toppings (I usually use sour cream, grated cheddar cheese and finely cut green onions).

Selma Barton

### Cream of Broccoli Soup

- 2 c chopped broccoli
- 2 c boiling water
- 3 T butter
- ¼ c flour
- 2 tsp instant chicken bouillon or 2-3 cubes
- Dash pepper
- 2 c half and half or milk
- ½ c chopped onion

Cook broccoli in water 8-10 minutes and drain saving 1 ½ c liquid. Blend broccoli and water until smooth. Set aside. In same pot, melt butter and bouillon, pepper and flour. Add cream/milk all at once and cook until thickened. Add broccoli. Blend well and serve.

Sharon Hoopes

*"The earliest known written recipes date to 1730 BC and were recorded on cuneiform tablets found in Mesopotamia."*

*These three recipes are from the Maranatha Village Cookbook.*





# The March Minnesota Picnic!

Mrs. Colene Price



Though well prepared, our Minnesota picnic at the Fogle Pavilion got off to a bumpy start this year since our dedicated leader, Rosalie

Anger, took a fall during our setup time! After the ambulance came and checked her out, Al took her home, and we were assured she would be okay. When the food arrived, her dedicated husband Al filled up plates to take home for their enjoyment. Perhaps it was best we didn't know she was suffering with broken ribs and eventually ended up in the emergency room!

Our usual Minnesotans came with delicious food and happy hearts for fellowship and singing. We all enjoyed some of the old choruses from our teen years in Minnesota! When asked what they liked most about the picnic, there was a good range of responses. Peo-

ple enjoyed the testimonies and stories of living or growing up in the land of 10,000 lakes. One of our new residents, Priscilla Robinson, entertained us with a delightful "Lutherin' Airlines" reading including the appropriate Norwegian accent that sounds quite humorous by itself!

We normally have Minnesota visitors drop by to visit, and this year was no exception as Dennis and Mary Campbell joined us all the way from St. Cloud, Minnesota. We appreciated his greetings as he also shared his burden for the growing population of Muslims in the St. Cloud area. Once again we were challenged to pray for ministries and share the gospel!

One especially popular dessert was *Mar-a-Lago key lime pie/dessert*. We're not sure if it is associated with some famous people, but it really hit the spot!

## The Northeast Picnic Gala



The second annual Northeast Picnic Gala was held on February 26, 2022. There were 49 people in attendance, representing Pennsylvania, New York, Vermont, and New Hampshire. As at any respectful Baptist event, there was a great variety of tasty food to eat and sweet fellowship to share. Our cheerful photographer, Annie Waldron, had her hands full getting everyone together for the group picture. She makes everything fun!

The White Elephant Gift Exchange was such a fun way to get to know one another and have some great laughs! Shout out to Jim Russo for MC'ing the event.

A big thanks to all who attended and for everyone who helped to get Hamman Hall put neatly back together. Proverbs 17:22 "A joyful heart is good medicine...."

Submitted by Mrs. Deb Kershaw

# New Village Residents

## Steve & Linda DeGroft



*Linda & Steve*

I (Steve) was born in California at Fort Ord Military Base where my dad was stationed after his return from the Korean War. He was offered a place in Officers Candidate School but felt that the military life was not for his family. My parents moved back to Elizabethtown,

Pennsylvania, where I was raised in a Christian home with my two younger brothers.

My mother led me to Christ on a snowy day when I was in second grade after I saw my dog get run over. It was the first time death became real to me. My pastor taught about hell, and I was afraid of dying. I was raised in a church that was legalistic, and I never had the assurance of my salvation.

In my senior year, I received a first alternate appointment to West Point. As that year progressed, it became clear that the primary appointee was going to go so I started thinking about what I was going to do. A missionary who lived on my dad's mail route stopped him and told him that he was praying for me. He felt led to tell my dad about a new school that Jack Wyrzten was starting called the Word of Life Bible Institute. My dad came home all excited and announced that he felt that I should go there and, better yet, that he would pay for one year at this Bible Institute. The whole time I was at Word of Life I struggled concerning the security of my salvation. I came under intense conviction my first quarter there and surrendered myself to whatever God had for me. That summer I counseled on Word of Life Island and had the best summer of my life; I was leading kids to Christ. I was one of the team leaders, but I was still not confident about my own salvation. As my time at Word of Life came to an end, I decided to go to Liberty Baptist College.

In October of my sophomore year (my first year at Liberty), Thomas Road Baptist had a revival with Life Action Ministries. I saw for the first time a real revival. One of those nights I saw my boss, Vernon Brewer, the Senior High pastor going forward. When the invitation was over there was a testimony time, and he stepped to the mic and announced to the jammed packed auditorium that he had been a phony and had been struggling with his salvation. Of course, his words clicked with me. Another invitation was immediately offered, and I went forward and nailed down

my salvation. It was a major turning point in my spiritual life.

The summer between my Junior and Senior year in college, I was accepted as a missionary with Word of Life to southern California. That same summer I met Linda.

Linda was raised in a Christian home and attended Immanuel Baptist Church in Traverse City, Michigan. She trusted Christ at an early age. She spent several summers at Lake Ann Baptist Camp, received the assurance of her salvation at the age of ten, and was baptized that summer.

Upon graduation from high school, Linda attended Grand Rapids Baptist Bible College and received her secretarial degree. While a student, she interned for Ebba Swanson who recommended Linda to her son-in-law, Paul Bubar, the director of Word of Life Clubs. In 1973, Linda left Michigan and moved to Schroon Lake, New York, where she typed all the Bible studies and materials for the Club ministry. This was a gigantic step of faith, but she had placed her complete confidence in God.

While working for Word of Life Clubs God brought our paths together, and we were married in June of 1976. We left for southern California as Word of Life Club missionaries that fall with everything we owned in a 5-foot U-Haul. Two years after we arrived, because of my health issues, the state of California was threatening to take my driver's license. So, I left the ministry of Word of Life and became a youth pastor in two churches in southern California. We left California in 1988, and I went to graduate school. We had our only son, Matthew, in 1989. I also accepted my first pastorate in Maine the same year. I had a real burden for New England from my days at Word of Life. I enjoyed my 7-year ministry in Corinth at United Baptist Church, and, interestingly, Linda Peacock's mother was in that church!

The opportunity arose for me to go back to WOL as the Director of Admissions at the Bible Institute, and we served there for 5 ½ years, after which God called us back to Maine where I pastored two churches from 2001 to 2015.

During that time, Linda's mother developed Alzheimers, and we thought it was time to move to Michigan to help her family. God led us to a wonderful church in Decatur, Michigan. One of the top-rated Alzheimer residential homes was just a few miles from us so Rose was moved there, and Linda's father, Frank, came to live with us. Some of you may remember Frank and Rose Smith who wintered on Timothy Road here around 2003 to 2008. Their residence was how we were introduced to Maranatha Village. We retired and moved here in November 2021.



## ~ Investing In Maranatha ~

*Dr. Gerry Carlson*



*Gerry*

Many faithful servants of the Lord have invested in Maranatha Village over the 50 years of its existence. They did not buy bonds or expect a financial return on their investment. They simply gave their time, talent, and treasure to this blessed

place. They lived and served the Lord during the years He allowed them to be residents, or winter guests, and we are richly blessed by their investment. They poured themselves into this piece of property and its community of saints, and we are their blessed beneficiaries.

They have left for us an inheritance that includes infrastructure in the ground and improved structures built on the land. This is the property that the Lord gave to all of us half a century ago. Now we have the opportunity – yea, the privilege – to build further on that foundational investment of the first fifty years. That is why we are launching a financial campaign called “50 & Forward” to honor the Lord, and those early Maranatha investors who poured themselves into this place that we appreciate today.

Those of us who have the privilege of living here and enjoying Maranatha Village owe much to those who have gone before us. They took spartan cement block dwellings and added carports, driveways, plus various amenities to improve and enlarge the homes that we now inhabit. They’ve also beautified the landscaping of the villas, the common grounds of the Village, and added many benefits which we now enjoy at this 50-year anniversary mark. So much has been done, but there is more to do. Further improvements,

additional buildings, and long-range strategic planning rise before us at the beginning of the next 50 years.

Some have been asking recently, “Are there plans for building more villas, or adding lots for new mobiles?” I usually reply to those queries by saying, “Well, if you know someone with a million or two extra dollars...let us know.” The cost of building new infrastructure in the ground for water and sewer would be formidable. All those costs would have to be borne by the Village before we could begin to plan additional duplex structures. Is that impossible? Not for our great God...but there are initial steps that need to be taken.

The current “50 & Forward” campaign is being planned to help our community – and Maranatha Village friends around the country – realize how the Lord can provide financially for future improvements and possible expansion. This project is the first step toward God’s intended purpose for the next 50 years.

Will you pray with us about what part God would have you play in the “50 & Forward” campaign?



*New roof for 15 and 17 Gabriel*

# Maranatha Village Trumpet

RG Watterson, Editor

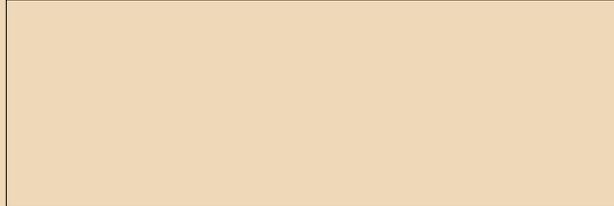
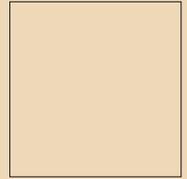
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*“Believe on the  
Lord Jesus Christ  
and you will be saved.”*



## Let's Go Fishing!



**Y**es! .... We did on March eighth. We left Maranatha Village at 4 AM in order to arrive at the **Dolphin Deep Sea Fishing Dock**, Tarpon Spring at 8 AM for an all-day fishing trip in the Gulf of Mexico.

It was a perfect day with temperatures in the mid-70s, a full sun, and very little wind. Fifteen of us enjoyed the trip with a total catch of **130 Grunts** (They grunt when you remove the hook.) We divided up the fish so each got 16 fillets.

The following is the list of fishermen and women: Patrick Blasdel, Terry Dale, Calvin Duvall, Bruce Hendsbee, Bill Katka, Don Laven, Walt Lawton,

Tom Maynard, Tom Moen, Jan Moen, Tim Moen, Carolyn Murray, Dan Wickam, Kris Wilson, and Wendy Schittone.

**Hey!!!** If your name is not in the list, be sure to attend the 2023 fishing trip.

Besides our time on the water, the other plus about the trip was a great meal at the Hellas Greek Restaurant and Bakery, located directly across the street from the boat dock. They have the **“best gyros!”** (An item of food made with slices of spiced meat cooked on a spit, served with salad in pita bread.)

Join us next year for a great time of fishing and Christian fellowship.

*Don Laven*

