Trumpet

Photo: John Miller.

Maranatha Village Trumpet
Summer 2025

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Not Your Grandparents' Maranatha

Jonita Barram

My grandparents lived at Maranatha in the 1970s and '80s. There wasn't much to do here back then. As Judy Meyers's Spring 2025 article on Jan Burgess points out, a lot has changed during Jan's 40 years in the village. And my grandparents' lived here longer ago than that.

With all the changes in mind, this issue of the *Trumpet* showcases some of the amenities that residents and visitors enjoy now—amenities that didn't exist in my grandparents' day.

Three generations of this family have lived in the village. Can you identify the family? How about those living in the village now? Answers are in the anniversaries insert.

Please enjoy reading "A Day in the Life" (p. 4), a brief history of Hamman Hall (p. 12), an update on the pool expansion and infrastructure fundraising (insert), and a look at **two aspects of village life that have not changed**: volunteering (p. 6) and fellowship (p. 8).

You will discover in these pages that, truly, this is not your grandparents' (or possibly even your parents') Maranatha!

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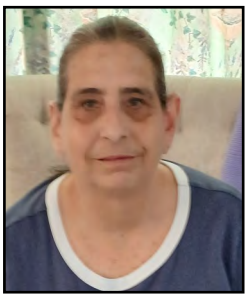
Welcome a New Resident



We welcome Andrea Webb from Hialeah in South Florida. She learned about the village online.

Andrea lived off and on with her parents, a Southern Baptist pastor and wife, who passed away last year only 2.5 months apart. In addition to service as a pastor, her father founded a mission named Ministry to Haiti.

Andrea, mother of two and grandmother of three, has worked for Ministry to Haiti since 1994. The ministry sends missions teams to Haiti and raises money for Haitian children to attend Christian schools, where they receive meals and health care. The ministry is represented at conferences, in churches, and the like. Andrea contacts companies to ask for items such as gift cards, gift certificates, ticket passes, hotel packages, gift baskets, paintings, autographed photos of athletes, and autographed footballs, basketballs, baseballs and hockey pucks—to name a few. These are given away in raffles and used in silent auctions and a Ministry-to-Haiti one-day-only store to raise money for the schools.

Andrea is a full-time village resident. She asks that we keep her in prayer as she settles into village life and continues working with Ministry to Haiti.

Andrea, we hope you'll be happy and blessed here.

Welcomed Home

We remember those with whom we served and fellowshipped here but who are now celebrating and worshiping in the Lord's presence. They left us between February 1 and May 7, 2025.

Richard Robinson	April 10
Alan Anger	May 2

"Just think of stepping on shore and finding it heaven, of touching a hand and finding it God's, of breathing new air and finding it celestial, of waking up in glory and finding it home." —Don Wyrtzen

Legacy Stroll

Linda Pyche

Village residents purchased, decorated, and filled bags with cans of food to donate to a local charity in honor of a military veteran or a current service member. Others did the same as a way to communicate thanks, make a prayer request, or donate in memory of or in honor of nonmilitary people.

Participants traded their can of food for a battery-operated candle at the legacy booth. Bags honoring military personnel lined the path to the right of the booth and the others to the left.

The money raised through the legacy stroll goes toward the flag memorial at the front of the village.

Honoring Gerald Carlson, former director of marketing here. Photo: Kaye Halstead.

Meet Board Member Deb Kershaw

Judy Meyers

For over 25 years, Deb Kershaw worked in medical transcription in Rochester, N.Y. She never dreamed of living in Florida, but her husband, Hock, wanted to be a snowbird. So in 2015 they headed their RV toward Christmas, Fla. Geoff and Donna Bondi had urged them to stop for a visit at Maranatha. The Kershaws stopped and stayed at Maranatha that year and the next. When they saw a for sale sign on a single-wide mobile home, they bought it, later upgrading to a double-wide.

In 2022, Deb's husband of 40 years was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and passed away five weeks later. Deb experienced the love and support of Maranatha friends through the difficult days of adjustment. With a servant's heart, she passes that love on to others as she looks for opportunities to serve.

Deb enjoys the two or more times a week that she serves meals at Maranatha Manor, because she loves the residents and the loving care each resident receives from the staff. She looks for other opportunities to serve in the village as well, by pet sitting, checking on resident friends, sharing goodies that she has cooked or baked, and meeting other individual needs.

A former children's Sunday School teacher and Awana leader, Deb also enjoys leading and teaching a team of children at Sun 'N Lake Elementary one afternoon a week.

Deb is enthusiastic in her appreciation of all that the village offers: close friendships, a "wonderful" church, many ways to care for others, and a beautiful setting. She spends time gardening and loves the colorful flowers that surround her home.

Last year, Deb was invited to join the village board of directors and accepted the position of secretary. She appreciates that with the intent of maintaining the integrity that characterizes the village, the board is a voice for residents.

Meet Longtime Resident Wanda Gough

Judy Meyers

Through the 90 years of her life, Wanda Gough has lived Hebrews 13:5 and has experienced God's guidance and protection.

Upon her husband Evan's graduation from Piedmont Bible College, where the couple met, they joined Baptist Mid-Missions and served eight years (two terms) each in the West Indies and Australia. Then Evan became BMM's administrator for Africa and Europe.

After retiring from Baptist Mid-Missions, the Goughs made their home in Berea, Ohio, for three years until Carl Barton, a former coworker in Australia, told them that a duplex apartment (a.k.a. villa) in Maranatha was available.

(Continued on p. 9.)

A Day in the Life

Earl Barton, retired supervisor at North Star Steel, says that in his employed days, he had a regular schedule, and days/nights were much alike. But since he and Sue Ellen moved here, no two days are alike. Sure, both have regularly scheduled activities, but they never know what unexpected opportunities or problems will arise, so no day is predictable. This issue of the *Trumpet* features the Bartons as typical village residents. While the title is "A Day in the Life," the photos were taken on different days and in different weeks by Colene Price and John Miller.

The Bartons live in the "pet section" (the mobile homes).

Earl usually lets Pretzel walk alongside. When they meet their neighbors, Earl says, they talk more to Pretzel than to him!

Earl roasts meat with Calvin Duvall, left, and Art Witham at one of the hot dog lunches to raise money for the Make a Splash project (see insert).

Sue Ellen, left, a retired oncology nurse, accompanies Rosalie Anger, center, to a medical appointment, not only to provide transportation but also to provide clarity to whatever Rosalie is told.

The Bartons add to the fun of village celebrations and social events by dressing up. Yes, that's Sue Ellen painted green to represent the Statue of Liberty one Fourth of July.

Sue Ellen leads a craft workshop in the Craft Cottage.

Sue Ellen walks with Maureen Micka, left, and Sandy Cornell.

The Bartons, like most Maranatha Village residents, keep active through church activities, volunteer work, athletic activities, hobbies, fellowship, and so much more. Those who want to get involved can talk to John or Linda Pyche about coordinated volunteer work (p. 6), read "Odds & Ends" & email alerts, attend village meetings, and keep an eye out for neighbors' needs.

Volunteerism: The Modus Operandi (M.O.) of Village Life

An Interview with Linda Pyche

Trumpet: In 2022 John was hired as the volunteer coordinator. You help him with just about everything. What has been your favorite part of this job/ministry?

John Pyche serves as volunteer coordinator, a job he has had since 2022. He is ably and enthusiastically assisted by Linda.

Linda: Meeting so many people. We start with the welcome basket that we deliver to everyone who buys/leases a permanent residency—whether in the mobiles or the villas. The baskets contain items made by hand by someone in the village, such as bread, jewelry, soap, potholders, painted rocks, or jars of shells, and the like. We have received donations above and beyond what was asked and had to find a storage area to contain everything.

Trumpet: Do the new residents volunteer right away?

Linda: Most who move here are overwhelmed by the changes: new home, new friends, new doctors, new places to navigate, and the largest adjustment, downsizing. So we developed a form with a list of ways people can volunteer. They receive it in their welcome packet from the village office. It is a long list with many different ways residents can help others. Eventually everyone finds something on the list.

Trumpet: You have developed many programs since you started this job. What are some of them?

Linda: My favorite is Donation Day, when we take the items left on the tables in the laundromats (a.k.a. The Boutiques) and donate them to local charities. We have had many helpers, and each month the tables are so overloaded that we now use the village van to transport them.

I also love Tom Sawyer Paint Day. This project was started in order to paint the white fence along Arbuckle Creek Road, a job formerly done by summer teen volunteers. It has now developed into an annual paint/work day. This year I was blown away by the response. We chose five projects and put a team in charge of each. But as we talked with each set of team leaders, they began to take responsibility—ownership you might say—to go above and beyond what was expected. For example, we wanted to paint the pool bathrooms, and the leaders painted inside and out, *and* the railings, *and* the fascia. The Conway Park sign also got a total facelift, including new landscaping. The shuffleboard area, too, was cleaned and painted, broken pieces were replaced, though it's still not done. Then there was the project not even on the original list—the golf/frisbee disc course. It was completely cleaned, trees were trimmed, new stones were put down, and more.

(Continued p. 7.)

Paul Churchill, left, and Earl Barton are one of many volunteers who help keep the village safe.

Earl Barton, center, heads the volunteer crew that deals with the village's trash on Tuesdays and Fridays.

Trumpet: What has been the hardest part?

Linda: Trying to find people who can work outside. We are an aging, physically limited group who still need to maintain the landscaping and keep our facilities neat and clean. A few continue to work, sometimes beyond their limits, to keep the village a beautiful place to live.

Trumpet: If we asked John, what would he say was his favorite part?

Linda: Besides the flexible work hours, great staff, and his own golf cart/trailer? I think he would say the paint crew. Each winter when the RV park residents come, a group of them work with our year-round residents to prepare a villa so the outside can be painted. These workers include landscapers, ditch diggers, paint tapers, spray painters, and several who climb ladders to work on the trim. John gets to meet with the owners to choose colors, and he sees them increase their friendships with their "roofmates." In addition, regularly going into Sebring / Avon Park to purchase supplies gives John an opportunity to meet people in those communities and build relationships with them.

Helping Others through Prayer

Jonita Barram

Prayer is a blessing of living at Maranatha Village: praying for others and being the ones prayed for. Those who choose to do so may share their prayer requests via email alerts.

The late broadcaster Paul Harvey used to tell his audiences "the rest of the story." In the village we often learn the rest of the story on the requests we've prayed for. Many who share their requests also communicate ongoing answers and additional prayer needs. What a blessing to pray for a request and then learn how God has answered or is answering! All of this communication is made possible by Marie Moore, who sends out the emails.

There are always ways to volunteer and serve here in the village. Just ask.

Available in the Village

Interested in moving to the village? Here are the available homes as of May 2025:

Villas

Four 1 bed / 1 bath
Three 2 bed / 1.5 bath
Seven 2 bed / 1 bath villas
Three 2 bed / 2 bath villas

Mobile Homes

Six of various sizes and numbers of rooms

To learn more, contact Kaye Halstead at 863-385-7897 or email office@maranathavillge.org.

Background photo: John Miller.

Two generations of this family have lived in the village. Can you identify the family? How about the members living in the village now? Answers are in the anniversaries insert.

Koinonia: The Apex of Village Life

Minnesotans gather for the 2025 Great Minnesota Picnic. PHOTO: Colene Price.

Athletic activities are a great way to meet and fellowship with others. Pickleball anyone? Maureen Micka, left, partners with Mary Ruth Lowe. PHOTO: John Miller.

Ladies gather at Evelyne Metzler's home for Thursday game night. Evelyne (below, seated in white shirt) has since moved to Maranatha Manor. PHOTOS: Colene Price.

Koinonia = "fellowship, sharing in common, communication"

Family and friends fellowship with veterans and their wives/widows on Veterans Appreciation Day 2025.
PHOTO: Colene Price.

When the scheduled hosts of a small group meal were unable to host it after all, Earl and Sue Ellen held the meal in their home. PHOTO: Sue Ellen Barton.

Winter and year-round residents enjoy golf for fellowship, competition, and personal challenge. Photo: John Miller.

Winter residents from the RV park perform a skit at the annual talent show. Photo: Colene Price.

(continued from p. 3)

Sight unseen, the Goughs leased the villa and moved here in 2003. Having raised five children in houses with only one bathroom, they were thrilled to have two bathrooms and even a dishwasher. They never regretted their decision to move to the village.

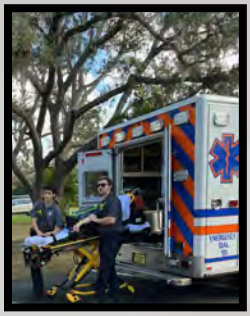
Their home changed when, in 2017, Evan's dementia required extra care and they moved to Maranatha Manor. A year later, he died of a heart attack, and Wanda moved back to their former villa. She has experienced the truth that Christians can be happy anywhere, anytime if they are where God wants them.

The Goughs were active in many aspects of village and church life. Together they provided night security. And Evan was a deacon, while Wanda helped manage the church's missionary closet. She found varied ways to help other residents, including raking leaves in neighboring lawns. She urges current friends to "find ways to help others. The time will come when you need the help," she says.

For Wanda, that time came this past March, when she needed help beyond her 2-bed/2-bath villa, daily meal preparation, and other tasks. She took residence in Maranatha Manor and is happy with the excellent service and love shown by the manor staff.

Health Fair 2025 Honors Nurses

Brian Halstead recognizes the nurses who live in and serve Maranatha Village. From left, Nancy Mendoza, Elaine Edmundson, Lorraine Emery, Marty Landick, Carolyn Moen, Sue Ellen Barton, three representatives of senior services in Highlands County, Kathi Weaver, and another guest. Photos: Colene Price.



Veterans Appreciation Day 2025

Photos: Carole Vawter

Village Administrator Brian Halstead welcomes veterans and their families to the 2025 Veterans Appreciation Day program and meal.

Col. (Ret.) Kevin Pies, son of Dee Young, shares experiences from his years as an Army chaplain. He serves on the board of the Chaplain Alliance for Religious Liberty.

Volunteers laid out breakfast for 65 honorees and guests.

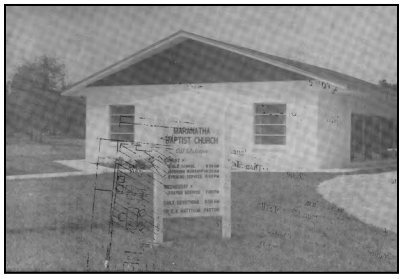
Kaye Halstead, Sharon Miller, Kim Blasdel, and Judy Byrne serve at the village's 2025 Veterans Appreciation Day celebration. Veterans, family, and friends gathered in Hamman Hall after the program held in the Maranatha Baptist Church sanctuary.

Welcome to Hamman Hall in the Heart of Maranatha Village

Jerry Webber

Ladies' Sunday School class, weekday morning chapel, GriefShare, men's prayer breakfasts, chair exercise, village dinners, banquets, birthday/anniversary/retirement celebrations, Ladies Missionary Fellowship meetings, annual Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners, church and pastoral staff offices, library, information center. Question: What do all these have in common? Answer: They're all found in Hamman Hall.

What's a Hamman Hall?



Maranatha Baptist Church first met in the building now known as Hamman Hall.

Once upon a time, the building was the first home of Maranatha Baptist Church. When Maranatha Village was born in 1973, the original plan set aside land in the heart of the village for a church building. By the time the church held its first services in October 1976, a building about half its current size had risen on the corner of Ruth St. and Maranatha Blvd., anticipating the need. By 1981 the church had outgrown that building and was meeting in a totally new worship center, its current location. (By 1999 continued growth required enlargement of this facility to its current footprint.)

Expansion of village and church programs also required enlargement of what we now know as Hamman Hall: a storage room to house tables, chairs, and equipment; a new modern kitchen to accommodate frequent gatherings for food and fellowship; space for a library. A wing was added to provide offices for pastoral and clerical staff. It could be said that the building we know today virtually "grew like topsy." But it worked—and still does—as the village and church's "family room," the heart of multiple spiritual and social activities.

Roy and Mary Hamman served as pastor and wife of First Baptist Church, Mishawaka, Ind., before "retiring" to Maranatha Village.

These photos were copied from photographs in two albums compiled by past Maranatha Village residents Peg Giles and Mable Forbes.

Why is it called *Hamman Hall*?

Roy Hamman pastored MBC from 1982 to 1986.

Dr. Roy Hamman was pastor of Maranatha Baptist Church, 1982–1986, coming from Mishawaka, Ind., where he had pastored historic First Baptist Church, 1957–1972. The congregation of this, his home church, had commissioned him in 1932 to serve with Baptist Mid-Missions in the Central African Republic, a ministry that spanned a quarter century. Roy and Mary were wed in 1952, following the passing of his first wife, Fern. The Mishawaka church honored him by designating its worship center as Hamman Auditorium. In like manner Maranatha named its busy fellowship hall Hamman Hall, through which the memory of Roy and Mary Hamman lives on.