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Press Release

New Director of Music Comes Just in Time for the 90th anniversary of The Village Chapel Sanctuary

As members of The Village Chapel celebrate the 90th anniversary of their Sanctuary, new Director of Music, Steven Gourley, settles in to his new position.

Gourley, 27, joined the staff of The Village Chapel as Director of Music on February 1 after spending the last four years in the Denton/Lewisville area of Texas, just North of Dallas. A native of Goldsboro, North Carolina, Stephen earned his Bachelor's degree in Organ Performance from the North Carolina School of the Arts, and his Masters in Organ Performance from the University of North Texas, one of the premier music schools in the country. Stephen has been playing for worship services since the age of 16, and has served churches in the Methodist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, and Episcopal denominations. In July of 2013, Stephen was selected as Organ Scholar for the Royal School of Church Music Carolina Course, where he shared accompanying duties with the Course Organist, playing for rehearsals, midweek services, and the closing services.

John Jacobs, Senior Pastor of The Village Chapel, praised the selection of Gourley who, he said, *"brings a resume of excellence in the field of organ music and a very mature approach to the leadership of the music at The Village Chapel. We could not be more delighted to have Steven leading our very talented choirs at all three of our Sunday morning services and the ongoing special events so many have enjoyed in the past. We envision Steven being a part of our Chapel team for many years to come. He fits into our history quite well."*

The Village Chapel is an outgrowth of the "Pinehurst Religious Association," dating back to the beginning of Pinehurst. The first Interdenominational worship service was held in 1898. James Walker Tufts, founder of Pinehurst, invited Dr. Edward Everett Hale from Boston (and personal friend), to be the first minister. Both Hale and Tufts envisioned a community where people of all backgrounds could live and worship in Christian love.

The Chapel's present cornerstone was placed on April 13, 1924; and the first worship service was held on March 1, 1925. Hobart Upjohn, the architect for the Chapel, won a Diploma of Merit in Turin, Italy, for its graceful colonial design. This April The Village Chapel celebrates the 90th anniversary of the laying of that cornerstone.

The other two buildings, completing The Village Chapel complex, are the Administration Offices (dedicated in 1961), and the Chapel Hall (dedicated in 1991). Between these buildings are the Tuft's Memorial Gardens, a beautiful place for meditation and prayer. A few blocks from the Chapel is the Care Cottage, a building containing a variety of spaces used for Sunday School, meetings, Bible Studies, and other programs and events.

The Chapel has a restored four-manual Cornel Zimmer organ designed by former Director of Music John W. Shannon. The organ features 80 ranks of pipes and digital sounds, with 94 stop controls. It is the largest organ in Moore County.

The Village Chapel is located at the corner of Azalea Road and Village Green in the Village of Pinehurst. Everyone is invited to worship at The Chapel in celebration of these two important events... the anniversary of the Sanctuary and the new Director of Music, Stephen Gourley.