

ANNUAL REPORT

High School Students

Over the past year many of our high school students have made a regular commitment to being present on Sundays and many Friday nights. There's often home made pizza or ice cream sundaes involved, but their real commitment has been to asking hard questions about God and faith. Using a curriculum called *Can I Ask That?*, they have bravely taken on topics from "does the bible contradict itself?" to "does God endorse violence?" If you've got questions about God and faith we'd suggest you take them to one of these students during coffee time.

Giving Fair

At the center of our Mission Team's activities was the 15th annual Giving Fair. With passports to get stamped and more new organizations to learn about the Giving Fair continued to be a great way to celebrate Christmas, learn about some great service organizations, and enjoy fellowship together. Before it was over brainstorming for a new look and better spreading the word about this great event in 2018 had already begun.



2017 Highlights in Focus

In many ways 2017 felt like another solid year of worship, spiritual formation, youth group, mission activities, and fellowship. All the events surrounding Sabbatical in 2016 made 2017 feel sort of normal. Normal turns out to be worth celebrating. We experienced some great losses as well as opportunities to celebrate what God is doing among us and in all cases we've found new opportunities to reach out to one another with the love and compassion of Christ.

Spiritual Formation

The team continued their work of supporting and resourcing our Sunday school teachers and thinking deeply about how we at LVPC can better nurture the faith of all our members. A few new folks joined the team and brought with them new energy, creativity and enthusiasm. The creative exploration of this team brought us the wonderful banners that graced the front of the sanctuary during Advent and Christmas and worked hard to get Scooby and friends dressed and ready for action.

There was adult formation too. The Spiritual Formation Team and the Session took time to listen to God's voice in scripture at regular meetings, there were two retreats for Sunday school teachers, and of course the Men's Fellowship continued its weekly Saturday morning study (first Luke and then Luke's second book Acts).

Mission

Our Mission Team began 2017 with the goal of narrowing the focus of our mission efforts, developing a unified purpose, and better understanding where God is calling our congregation to serve our community and world. Step one was a retreat focused on the biblical foundations of our call to discipleship, defining *mission*, and exploring



A Scooby-Doo Christmas

This year our Children's retelling of the Christmas story came with a twist. Our friend Rev. Robin Curras wrote (just for us) a unique Christmas play that featured all our favorite cliché's from the old cartoon and most notably delivered the transformative message of Christmas.

Memorials

It is with sorrow that we have lost,
 from our fellowship,
 members of our families, friends
 and neighbors –
 people of significance in our lives
 and in the life of our community.
 We miss them, for their places
 among us can never be filled by
 another.

- Terry Hoffman
- Jan Kline
- Jim Staiano

Special Thanks

We can not conclude any year with out expressing gratitude to those who have served on our session. The following elders have completed two consecutive terms of service.

- Warren Newman
- Kim Rodgers

Both Warren and Kim have served our congregation with a great deal of energy, imagination, and love for the building, our people, and our shared mission.

our core values. Out of this retreat the team decided it was important to engage more of the congregation in the conversation and started hosting monthly film nights. The documentaries covered a wide range of issues facing our community, country, and the world and included a group discussion after each film. Our high school students proved to be great partners on the journey. We look forward to honing our focus in 2018 while continuing to engage the world we live in through ongoing film nights. The team also continued to support many mission and service efforts including: the summer trip to Appalachia, serving local meal programs, holding the 15th annual Giving Fair, and supporting the education of children through sponsorship programs (in Africa and Newark).

Stewardship

Our continued health depends in part on financial resources. As a congregation we, once again, remained faithful to our pledges. Although there was an unusually large decline in the number of pledges we received in 2017 total giving to our church remained very stable. We again received a generous anonymous gift at the end of the year and our spending on repairs and maintenance was less than usual. All of this has kept us in a stable financial position. However, there is room to grow in this area as we continue to have a deficit each year which is covered by funds transferred from our savings.

House and Grounds

There is always more to do. This year's success, however, was avoiding any major surprises from our facility. However, regular painting maintenance did restore the long neglected barn. There will be plenty to do in the coming year, but we did enjoy a relatively quiet year which is certainly part of the financial story.

REFORMation

This team continued faithfully working behind the scenes to develop a plan for some needed updates and improvements to our facility. They have assessed the current state of our whole facility, worked with Paul Kipp to develop a plan that addresses our goals of safety, improved access, and some overdue updates and maintenance. Early in the new year we hope to have a scope of work from the Architect, Joe DeMaria, and sketches and plans to share with the whole congregation. Look for more in early 2018.

**Remembering the blessings and challenges
 of 2017 we boldly and confidently carry
 God's mission into 2018**