

## **FROM PASTOR CHAD**

### **An Unexpected Prayer Journey**

During our fellowship time following worship on the first Sunday in Lent my son, rather unceremoniously, came up to me and handed me a rock with a cross on it. His only words, "Here Dad!" before running off to grab a snack. I was left to assume that he had carefully wrapped the tape around the rock to form a cross in his Sunday school class and was instructed to give it to someone. I have, after all, been around Sunday school for a while now and I've read my share of curriculum, but still I wasn't quite clear on the purpose.

It turns out, I discovered after talking with his Sunday school teacher, that he was supposed to explain to me that the rock was meant to be a Lenten call to prayer. The rock was intended to stay in my pocket for the season of Lent.

I've never had a very good grasp on prayer. My own personal plan for Lent was to get out and run consistently and to commit those runs to prayer: listening (so no headphones with music or podcasts), discerning, calling for help, and crying out on behalf of others, and waiting for God.

We've been praying for some time for a good friend of ours who has been suffering from cancer and the effects of a terrible and dangerous surgery to remove tumors. There have been many days that I didn't know what to pray or how to pray and this is true when I think of all the concerns, worries, and needs in just our congregation.

The stone with the tape in the shape of a cross has moved from one pair of pants to the next for nearly 40 days now. I've nearly worn the tape off of it from rolling it around in my hand so often. Without realizing it I was turning it over and over in my pocket as an expression of praying the things I had no words for. In the same way every step on my runs have become an exercise in silent prayer. I'm learning again that the important thing about prayer is what Frederik Buechner suggests that Jesus seems to think is most important about prayer and that is that we "keep at it."

For one of the first times I can remember I've kept at my Lenten prayer practice: both the one I planned on and the one my son gifted me with. Through a small bit of grace the stone in my pocket has become a source of hope and a powerful reminder of God's presence and running has new meaning, but I don't have some amazing story to report. My friend is slowly recovering (and I'm grateful), but there is a long road ahead and some life long negative side effects from the



*Continued from previous page*

surgery. The world still groans for peace. Many of the names that have left worship with me and come on my runs remain on our prayer list. I still long to see resurrection take root in the world around me.

I think what I have discovered this Lent is best described through the words Buechner again. He describes praying for a particular result that may or may not come out the way we want by suggesting that no matter what happens "the one thing you can be sure of is that down the path you beat with even your most half-cocked and halting prayer the God you call upon will finally come, and even if he does not bring you the answer you want, he will bring you himself. And maybe at the secret heart of all our prayers that is what we are really praying for."



### **G.i.F.T. (FORMERLY VBS)**

It's once again time to consider the summer program for everyone! **G.i.F.T. (Growing in Faith Together)** flyers are now available online, included in this newsletter and in church. This year's program will be held July 12<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup> from 5:30 - 8 p.m. At every age level, we will explore what Jesus meant by saying, "Follow me and I will make you fish for people." This year, the adult portion will be led by a guest. New this year will be a middle school portion led by Chad. So grab a flyer today & sign up!

### **EVENING CIRCLE**

Women's Evening Circle will be meeting Wednesday April 15<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. in the Getz Library. We will be continuing our Bible Study "Journeys Through Revelation, Apocalyptic Hope for Today" from the Horizon's Bible Study 2010-2011. We will be studying Lesson 3. The Scripture is Revelation 4-5. Nancy Knight will be leading the study. There are extra Bible Studies in the Getz Library for anyone who wants to join us. If you have any questions please feel free to contact Nancy Knight 537-4347 or Joni Nodes 391-6263.

### **RENEWAL TIME — SABBATICAL, PART 2**

In last month's newsletter, Chad gave us a primer on the idea of sabbatical. He described sabbatical as a strategic season of Sabbath-keeping, aimed toward the end of renewing one's love of God, God's people, and God's call to well-being. During the last month, the Renewal Task Force has been busily working together on a sabbatical grant proposal for our pastor and congregation. We are using the message of Hebrews 12:1b-2a as our inspiration in planning this Sabbath time — "Let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith." In order for all of us to learn more about the idea of sabbatical and our grant proposal, please make plans to attend an **informational meeting on Sunday, April 12, following worship.**

At this point, you might be wondering what role we, as a congregation, would have in a sabbatical experience. A sabbatical provides opportunities for all of us to see new directions, renew relationships, and to begin new pursuits. All of us will be involved in the sabbatical experience! This is a continuation of the covenant relationship between our pastor and all of us in the congregation. It is a collaborative project, to be jointly owned by all of us.

We, as the congregation, will have new opportunities, through the course of sabbatical, to discover our own gifts and use them for growth in our individual and our collective ministries. Our own reflections upon what God is calling us to do might well see us trying new things in new ways! We, as a church family, will have a chance to learn new things about ourselves and the ministry we share with one another. It is a time to reevaluate our relationship with God. It is a time for the Holy Spirit to lead ministry in new ways.

We are looking forward to sharing more information with you on Sunday, April 12, following worship. If, in the meantime, you have questions and/or feedback, please contact Chad, Dick Kline, John Leddie, May Saxton, or any member of session.

"When leaders experience renewal, congregations are energized, too. Things don't just return to normal when the leader returns. New patterns of leadership emerge. New vision sprouts up." *Grace Notes: A collection of wisdom and advice from recipients of grants in the Lily Endowment Clergy Renewal Programs*

### **THANK YOU**

A big thank you to Terry Hoffman for sharing his time and talent in rebuilding the rotted porch railing at the manse!

### **PRAYER CHAIN**

The Prayer Chain is an email distribution group of people from our LVPC family. Prayer requests are forwarded to Wendy Garcia and then Wendy forwards the prayer to the entire group. If you would like your email address added to the Prayer Chain, please send Wendy an email at [kwgarcia@msn.com](mailto:kwgarcia@msn.com).

### **COMMUNITY GARDEN**

We have 4 garden beds available in our Community Garden for this growing season. If you are interested, please call Claudia **as soon as possible**. Beds are available on a first come/first served. There is a \$25 fee per bed. Registration form and covenant agreement (required with payment) can be found on the website.



## CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

The featured Sunday School class this month is the 6, 7, 8 class taught by Debbie Gartelmann and Erik Gast. Enjoy their article and pictures.

*The middle school Sunday school is a great bunch who have been very busy; they were the liturgist and ushers and greeters at family service in February and presented the Children's Message in March. Now, with Easter almost here, the class discussed that Lent is a time for confession and penitence and the meaning of these two words. Most importantly, we discussed that during Lent it is more important to be "proactive" rather than "give something up for Lent". The class agreed that making a promise to God (i.e., pray more often) or making a personal confession are more meaningful than giving up something tangible, like chocolate, during Lent. We also discussed how confession and penitence, during Lent and in general, can be difficult but important to continue building a personal relationship with God.*

*In a recent class, we read Jeremiah 31:31-34 and discussed the meaning of "covenant" as it related to the scripture reading and our promises to God and His to us. Within this scripture reading, the class discussed God's promise of coming again and writing His promises in our hearts. We discussed the importance of accepting God internally ("within our hearts") and when accepted within our hearts, He will shine through all*

*aspects of our lives, internally and externally.*

*We are looking forward to warmer weather allowing us to have some lessons outside. God Bless!*

If you have not yet signed up for **G.i.F.T. (Growing in Faith Together)** our summer program for **all**, the flyer is available in this newsletter. Planning has already begun.

This year's program will be July 12-16. The theme is "Follow me and I will make you fish for people." The adult worship portion will be guest-led, the middle school and teen program will be led by Chad. The younger kids will be jointly led by parent volunteers.

up in a Christian home and blessed to be part of a church family. She felt called to ordained ministry. After being selected for ministry by the Church of Scotland and graduation from St. Andrews, Maureen completed two years of post graduate work at the University of Edinburgh. She

served as associate Pastor for Christian Education and Youth in Raeford, NC for over six years, as well as in various positions within the Presbytery of Coastal Carolina. In 2007, Maureen joined the staff of The Presbyterian Church of Basking Ridge as the director of Youth and

Education. In May, 2009, she received her Doctor of Ministry from Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia, with a focus in Christian Spirituality. The congregation of the Presbyterian Church of Basking Ridge called Dr. Peterson as Associate Pastor in September, 2010. We look forward to her inspiration at our retreat. Anyone who is interested in teaching SS in the future is welcome. Contact someone on The Spiritual Formation of Children Committee for details: Kim Rodgers, Christina Wilson, Natalie Gast, Susan Huntington, Linda Stetler.



When you sign up, be sure to indicate what position you would enjoy. We look forward to a time of

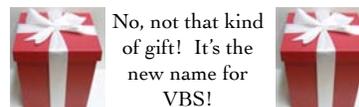
fellowship, food and fun together.

The spring retreat for Sunday School teachers will be April 25, from 9 to noon. The speaker will be Dr. Maureen Paterson. Maureen was privileged to grow





# G.i.F.T.



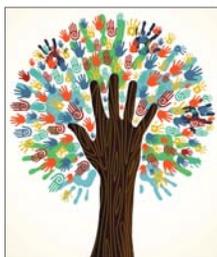
No, not that kind of gift! It's the new name for VBS!

## GROWING IN FAITH TOGETHER



Grow Spiritually

Growing In Faith Together



JULY 12-16, 5:30 -8:30PM



Lower Valley Presbyterian Church  
 2015 Summer program  
 445 County Rd. 513  
 Califon, NJ 07830  
 908-832-2933  
 www.lowervalley.org

Do you know how to fish? Well, it's not necessary for this community adventure. (Maybe next time!) But for now, come by yourself or with your family, to explore what Jesus meant by saying, "Follow me & I will make you fish for people" and might look like to us today.



### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- All ages are encouraged to attend!
- We will start each night with dinner together.
- There will be activities for kids, adults & everyone in between.
- Child care will be available.
- We need adults to lead activities for the younger kids. If everyone volunteers 1 night, then everyone will have the chance to participate in the guest led adult section of G.I.F.T. Chad will lead the middle school ages & teenagers instead of the adults this year. (New!)
- \$25 donation per family. Single adults attending are asked to bring some food to share as their donation. After signing up, Linda Stetler will contact you to coordinate the nightly meals/desserts.
- Any questions, contact Kim Rodgers at [chadandkimrodgers@gmail.com](mailto:chadandkimrodgers@gmail.com) or 908-892-0141.



Immediately they left their nets and followed Jesus.

Does the same thing Jesus said so long ago, affect us the same way today? How can we drop everything to follow him? Is that really what he wants? There are so many questions & apprehensions that can surround this. Let's discuss & explore it together!



**Sign up now!** You know you're thinking about summer already, so pencil GiFT in as well!

Family Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Names & ages of children attending: \_\_\_\_\_

Names of adults attending: \_\_\_\_\_

Names & ages of children needing nursery care: \_\_\_\_\_

Where can you help? (please circle)

Art Games Practicing Our Faith

(if more than 1 adult is available to help, please indicate which area each would like.)

What is the best way to get in touch with you? \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this section to the church office or in the offertory plate.

## Holy Week Schedule

### Maundy Thursday:

Communion Service at 7 p.m. in the parish hall

### Good Friday:

Sanctuary open from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. for prayer and reflection  
Stations of the Cross – 1 p.m. at St. John Neumann Parish in Califon.  
Theme this year is “Ecology & Humanity”

### Easter Sunday:

Sunrise Service at 6:30 a.m. with breakfast following in the parish hall  
Family worship at 10 a.m. with fellowship following in the parish hall

### **THIS OLD HOUSE!**

It's hard to believe that Lower Valley Presbyterian Church was constructed back in 1872. A dedicated group of worshippers and local craftsman came together then and built what has become a local landmark and historical fixture within our community. Over the years, our church campus has seen expansion, renovations and upgrades, including the building of the Manse in 1874, construction of the office, library, classrooms and the Parish Hall in 1949, renovation of the Sanctuary interior in 1966, Parish Hall kitchen and bathroom renovations in 1994, and the Sanctuary boiler replacement in 2000, to name just a few of the highlights.

As time marches on, we are continually faced with the challenges of aging infrastructure and the need to maintain and preserve our LVPC facilities. Our most recent challenge has been the breakdown of the heating system serving the Parish Hall. No doubt you've noticed that Coffee and Conversation after service has been a little “cool” recently!

Over the past several weeks, LVPC Session has addressed this issue by soliciting proposals from several commercial heating system installation contractors to replace the Parish Hall heating furnace as well as having an energy assessment audit performed on the existing heating, mechanical and lighting equipment in the Sanctuary and Parish Hall. This energy assessment was performed to determine if LVPC qualified to participate in the New Jersey Clean Energy Direct Install Program; a state incentive program designed to identify measures to reduce utility costs by replacing inefficient equipment with energy efficient alternatives. This state program pays 70% of the project cost; meaning we would pay only 30% of the total cost to replace the dual furnaces in the Parish Hall basement as well as all of the lighting in the Sanctuary, office, library, hallways, bathrooms and Sunday School and Happy Face classrooms. The added benefit of this program is the long-term energy savings we would realize by having new energy-efficient heating

equipment and long-life LED lighting.

So what are the costs? Surprisingly, the five proposals we received for just the Parish Hall furnace replacement all differed by only 2.5%, reflecting an average price of \$8,100. The Clean Energy Direct Install proposal, which includes the furnace replacement and all of the lighting upgrades came in at \$9,100. Based on these proposals, the Session feels that the Clean Energy proposal offers us the best value and return on our investment and has decided to participate in the program. A formal application is now being submitted on our behalf to the NJ Board of Public Utilities for processing. We expect that the process to obtain approval and the necessary construction permits will take about 4 to 6 weeks to complete.

We can expect the new Parish Hall furnace to be installed just in time for the nice, warm Spring weather!

## Upcoming Servers

Date	Liturgist	Ushers	Communion Servers
April 5 (Easter)	Rebecca Newbold	Karen and Warren Newman	Warren Newman Stephanie Donlon Terry Hoffman Kim Rodgers
April 12	May Saxton	Stephanie and Jeff Donlon	
April 19	Warren Newman	Terry Hoffman Linda Stetler	
April 26	Judy Eckwielen	Carol and Anthony Casale	
May 3	Stephanie Donlon	Lisa Coffaro and Isabel Roppolo	Stephanie Donlon Lisa Coffaro <b>OPEN</b> <b>OPEN</b>
May 10	<b>OPEN</b>	Terry Hoffman Lisamarie Boehm	
May 17	Christina Wilson	Nancy and David Knight	
May 24 (family)	4th & 5th Graders	4th & 5th Graders	
May 31	Dick Fincher	Judie and Adam Ambielli	

Art Table Schedule	Children's Message Schedule
April 5: Jen Wysocki	April 19: Ron Ascenzo
May 24: Isabel Roppolo	May 17: May Saxton
	May 24: 4th and 5th graders

**If you are able to serve in an OPEN spot please contact the church office. If you are unable to serve in an assigned spot please try your best to find a substitute and let the office know of any changes. Thanks so much!**

Lower Valley Presbyterian Church  
445 County Road 513  
Califon, NJ 07830  
April 2015

## **The Vision of our Church**

Lower Valley Presbyterian Church is a community of believers who worship God in word and deed, nurture each other through prayer, friendship, and education, and seek to serve others in the Spirit of Jesus Christ. Our four areas of ministry are faith development, caring for each other, outreach ministry and supporting ministry.