

Parish Happenings

February 2016

FROM PASTOR CHAD

Lent Comes Early

Lent comes early this year. The season of Lent will kick off before pitchers and catchers report to Arizona and Florida for Spring Training: this is not always the case, but Easter is in March this year.

The pastor I used to work with often likened Lent to Major League Baseball's Spring Training. Players use Spring Training to remind their muscles what it is like to play every day.



They shake off the bad habits of the offseason and recommit themselves to being the best they can be on the field and off too. I like this comparison, but it isn't really the way Spring Training works any more; back in the 40's and 50's players generally had to get a job selling suits or go back to the farm to make ends meet and by the time spring rolled around they were over weight and out of shape. Today, even the lowest paid major leaguers, don't need an odd job to make ends meet and most spend the winter days working out so they can be in shape when Spring Training starts.

It is always my hope that the rhythm of our spiritual lives would be more like the offseason of the modern major league baseball player. It would be incredible if none of us needed Lent to get our spiritual house in order, but I'm a realist and I know my own experience would suggest I need Spring Training. We all need a spiritual practice reset from time to time. I'm not talking about the empty reset of making New Year's resolutions, but an actual retraining of our spiritual practice muscles. A life of faith requires more discipline than making a list of hopes for change. It requires some focused practice time and Lent makes for just the opportunity.

The Lenten season encourages us to consider how God is calling us to be open to deepening our faith. Traditionally, it is a time of repentance and reflection as we ready ourselves to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus and the resurrection life we are called to live. How do we do this? There is no magic formula, but the timeless practices of reading scripture, prayer, and a heightened attentiveness to God's presence make for a good daily spiritual work out (I've listed some resources to get you started at the end of this article).

Try adding a simple daily practice during Lent: prayerfully read a psalm each morning and evening, keep the radio or television off while you are getting ready in the morning and listen instead for God. God has been known to speak in silence: you can look it up! (1 Kings 19:12).

Developing a practice takes practice, so, remember that daily communion with God is meant to be a gift (not a chore), and that the habit of prayer is a lifelong practice (not a perfectionist pursuit). Don't be discouraged if it doesn't come easily at first; trust that God has begun a good work in you.

Let's not miss the opportunity to really engage the coming Lenten season. It all starts on Ash Wednesday, February 10. We will join with our sisters and brothers from Fairmount Presbyterian

Continued on next page

Continued from previous page

church in the FPC sanctuary at 7:00 p.m.

May this Lenten season be a time for developing practices that nurture our faith and so be shaped by the practices of faith beyond the training season.



Daily Readings for Lent

(http://www.presbyterianmission.org/site_media/media/uploads/devotions/2016/daily_readings_for_lent_2016.pdf)

A Daily Calendar for Reflection for the Whole Family

(http://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/environment/2016_lentfinal.pdf)

40 Days, 40 Prayers, 40 Words, Bruce Reyes-Chow

(http://www.amazon.com/40-Days-Prayers-Words-Reflections/dp/0664261892/ref=sr_1_4?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1454083232&sr=1-4&keywords=Lenten+Prayer)

WORSHIP

Ash Wednesday Service

Join us Wednesday, February 10th at 7:00 p.m. in the sanctuary at Fairmount Presbyterian Church in Tewksbury as we journey together through song, prayer, reflection, and the imposition of ashes. This is a joint worship project of the Lower Valley and Fairmount Presbyterian Churches.

ASP HAPPENINGS

BYG Has Pulled Pork Platters

BYG is taking orders for Superbowl Pulled Pork Platters which includes Pulled Pork in BBQ Sauce, Slider Rolls, and Cole Slaw. \$25 for 4-6 people or \$35 for 10-15 people. Add a side of potato salad for \$5. If interested **place your order NOW**. Last day to order is Friday 2/5. Place orders at 908-443-1294 or bygworkcamp@gmail.com. This is a fundraising event for ASP (LVPC people working the fundraiser get a share) and a great opportunity for everyone, whether you watch the Superbowl or not, to get a delicious pork platter dinner. Easy dinner! And an opportunity to help out ASP! **Pick up is Sunday Feb 7th no later than noon at the Chester Church**. OR, let Carol Casale know of your order (carjul@earthlink.net) or 908-399-3490 (text preferred) and she will coordinate a pick up from Chester (either

Saturday night or Sunday after worship service) for pick up at LVPC.

Homemade Soups!!

Please support our ASP Mission Trip this summer by purchasing delicious homemade soups made by our church families. Our group that travels with ASP is helping to keep those families less fortunate warmer, safer and drier! Look for members of our ASP team during Fellowship in the Parish Hall!

COFFEE AND CONVERSATION HELP

We are looking for people young and old to help with Coffee & Conversation once or twice a month. We are starting groups of 4 with a leader in each group to set up and clean up. Come help keep our Coffee hour running smoothly by signing up to be in one of these groups. I will organize them with 1 person in charge. Everyone can still help by bringing food or drink to share when you can. I hope we can work this out so we can continue this wonderful extension of Sunday service. Please sign up in the Parish Hall or contact me as soon as possible. Thanks!

Lisa Coffaro
coffaro423@comcast.net
973-713-4870

FROM THE FINANCE TEAM

Per Capita Assessment

What is Per Capita?

Per Capita is LVPC's assessment from the Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA) to maintain our structure of governance and connectedness. Per Capita is assessed at \$34.00 per church member and is divided among the General Assembly, Synod and Presbytery.

What do Per Capita dollars provide?

More specifically, per capita funding covers expenses related to holding the General Assembly meeting, bringing together church leaders for training events, developing and administering ordination exams, producing the Book of Order, and maintaining a Presbyterian presence at ecumenical groups and gatherings worldwide. On a more local level, Newton Presbytery uses per capita funding for administrative, building, and salary costs that help it to pursue its constitutionally required activities along with its mission to promote healthy congregations and community.

Why should I pay Per Capita?

Paying per capita is similar to contributing one's dish to a potluck meal. It is part of the glue that holds Presbyterians together. This is important;

let's try to raise the funds to cover our per capita expense this year! If you have not done so, please pay your family's (LVPC members only) portion of the per capita expense, and designate it as such on your check or envelope.

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Children's Ministry

With advent season, Christmas services, and the business of the holiday seasons squarely in the rear view mirror; this month we're going to focus on the Pre-school, Kindergarten and First grade Sunday School class happenings taught by Kelly Hostler and Nicole Dahl. The two reoccurring themes the kids have been working on as of late have been Peace and Forgiveness (two very adult topics). The students have been hard at work at using their gifts to construct projects that can be used to remind them of peace and the peace we find with the Lord. The kids made peace lanterns and peace ornaments to serve as reminders to be at peace with one another. We also talked about the places in our lives that make us feel the most at peace. During another, more lively, discussion the students were asked to give some examples of forgiveness; and how we can forgive like the lord forgives us. We came to find out that breaking of a

sibling's legos is NOT a forgivable offense. In all honesty the younger students really understand forgiveness, probably better than most adults do (myself included). This year's Pre-K Sunday school class continues to work on prayer, sharing of joys & concerns, creating, and developing relationships with the lord and one another. If you ever get the opportunity, sit in with a Sunday school class and be amazed at what a blessing our church community's children are. And while you are there check out the massive new cork board.

Evening Circle

The next gathering of the Women's Association Bible Study will be held on Wednesday, Feb. 17th at 7:00 p.m. in the Getz Library. We just finished "Journey through Revelations" and will begin a new study which yet to be determined. We welcome any suggestions but we normally choose one of the studies from the Presbyterian Bible Study "Horizons". Any questions please call Nancy 310-1748 or Joni 391-6263.

Men's Bible Study

It's a great time to join the Men's Fellowship Group! We are beginning a new study of the Prophet Isaiah. We meet on Saturday mornings from 8-9:30 a.m. If you are interested, have questions or

would like a study guide see Pastor Chad.

OFFERING ENVELOPES

If you haven't done so already, please pick up your offering envelopes in the narthex.

CAMP JOHNSONBURG!

Winter Camp –

Join us at Johnsonburg February 12-14 and see what camp has to offer in the winter season! Fellowship and hot chocolate around the fireplace! There will also be an option to skiing or tubing at a local mountain! For more information visit www.campjburg.org or call 908-852-2349.

Summer Camp –

The wait is over! The time is now to register for summer camp! Register online by February 16th to receive the Early Bird Discount! For more information visit www.campjburg.org or call 908-852-2349.

ANNUAL REPORT

If you were unable to attend the Annual Congregational Meeting which was held on January 31st and would like a copy of the Annual Report that was handed out, please visit our website (www.lowervalley.org) or contact the church office for a copy.

MISSION NEWS AND UPCOMING EVENTS **Spring Book and Bake Sale!**

We are having another sale on **Saturday, April 2nd**. We need your help in order to make this sale a success. Here are some ways you can help:

- Donate your used books: fiction, non-fiction, hardcover, paperbacks, children's books, etc. (**Please note:** we will not take textbooks, catalogs, encyclopedias or outdated computer, business, self-help, health or travel books.)
- Donate individually wrapped baked goods for the bake sale. (Can include homemade nut-free, with nuts, gluten-free, etc. **Please label.**)
- Volunteer to organize the books for the sale ahead of time.
- Volunteer to work the day of the sale selling books and baked goodies.

Please let Abby Ernst know if you are interested in helping at abigailernst@gmail.com or see her during Coffee and Conversation. Thank you!

Volunteers Needed

We have committed our church to volunteer on July 23rd from 10:45 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. at the Phillipsburg Soup Kitchen. We need 10-12 people ages 11 and up. If you are interested, please contact Madeleine Argue or anyone on the Mission Team.

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.

MEMBERS NEEDED: SANCTUARY REMODEL PROJECT

Session has been discussing the desire to revamp the Sanctuary. New carpet? New paint? Remodeled and/or a new bathroom? Decor? If you have ideas and want to give input, we are looking for members to be part of the remodeling team. Responsibilities include meeting with the team on a regular basis, helping to design the plan and helping to raise the funds needed. If you are interested, please contact Stephanie Donlon, Abby Ernst or Warren Newman.

**A LETTER FROM JULIET
ULANGA, OUR SPONSORED
COMPASSION INTERNATIONAL
CHILD**



Translation

Dear Lower Valley Presbyterian
Praise the Lord Jesus. I like to greet
you in the name of Jesus Christ. I
hope you are fine and healthy and
you are doing well with your
work in ministering a child.
I am also fine. I thank God
so much. I am doing well. On
my side, educationally, I thank
God so much for he is helping me.
I am trying so hard. I have
thanked God so much for giving
me the great favour again of
continuing with studies, so
as to fulfill my future goals.
Also, my sincere thanks to
you wherever you are, on
behalf of the whole board
of Compassion. I love
you so much because I know
you too love me. I love you
so much. May God give
you long and good life
full of joy and peace. Amen.
I love you always. You will
always remain in my
heart. Thank you so
much for the gift that you
sent to me. I used it to
pay the college fees. I am
in a government college at
Hombolo street, in Dodoma.
Welcome so much.

Get the newsletter via e-mail so you can enjoy the full color version! Call or e-mail Claudia in the office — 832-2933 or lowervalleypc@embarqmail.com

Pastor Chad's Contact info:

Cell phone: 892.0044

E-mail: revchadrodgers@gmail.com

Church Info:

Claudia Gilbert: Church Administrator

Phone: 908-832-2933

E-mail: lowervalleypc@embarqmail.com

Website: www.lowervalley.org

Office hours: W-F, 8:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Session Members

Stephanie Donlon: 537-2604/stephaniedonlon@yahoo.com

Abby Ernst: 439-3549/abigailernst@gmail.com

Terry Hoffman: 689-7646/tbeehoffman@aol.com

Warren Newman: 638-4332/newmanwj@cdmsmith.com

Kim Rodgers: 892-0141/chadandkimrodgers@gmail.com

Hunter Wilson: (703) 304-1445/hunter22wilson@gmail.com

Karen Newman (clerk): 638-4332/karennewman@embarqmail.com

Upcoming Servers

Date	Liturgist	Ushers	Communion Servers
February 7	Stephanie Donlon	Carol and Anthony Casale	Stephanie Donlon OPEN OPEN OPEN
February 14 — Family worship	Rachel Gast	Marilyn and Al El-Zahr	
February 21	Stuart Solewater	Terry Hoffman Ken Ernst	
February 28	Nancy Knight	OPEN OPEN	
March 6	Warren Newman	OPEN OPEN	Abby Ernst OPEN OPEN OPEN
March 13	Richard Fincher	Madeleine Argue Stuart Solewater	
March 20 — Palm Sunday	Christina Wilson	Terry Hoffman Rich Ehrlich	
March 27 — Easter/Family worship	Terry Hoffman	Karen and Warren Newman	

**If you are able to serve in an OPEN spot,
please let Claudia know. Thanks!!**

Lower Valley Presbyterian Church
445 County Road 513
Califon, NJ 07830
February 2016

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.