

Parish Happenings

February 2019

FROM PASTOR CHAD

Let's Get Connected

I'll begin by suggesting you turn your attention briefly to the annual report summary that is included with this month's newsletter. Go ahead, if you were not at the annual congregational meeting last week, leave this behind and come back to it... Ok, great, now that you have caught up on our 2018 at LVPC you are better prepared for the thoughts I'm sharing in this article.

You may have noticed the following:

- Some cool stuff happened last year in the the life of our church.
- There are a few teams that are very active and make everything from The Giving Fair to Sunday school possible.
- We didn't have a great year financially
- There were no major projects that addressed our buildings and grounds
- There were both highlights and challenges in 2018 and there will likely be some of each in 2019

Our summary didn't go into all the details, but we did discuss some of those financial challenges at the annual meeting on January 27th. Two things in particular seem to be having the greatest impact on our finances. 1) For the first 9 years I served as pastor at LVPC over 40 families/people filled out our pledge cards in November and December and then faithfully gave those amounts over the course of the following year. Our number of pledgers dropped down into the low 30's in 2017 and then last year there were only 22 pledges received. 2) Our worship attendance has remained pretty steady through the years I've served LVPC, but rather suddenly in 2018 our worship attendance dropped precipitously.

So, we have some work to do financially if we want to continue to have a meaningful mission and ministry in our community. If you have pledged faithfully in the past and continue to do so the leadership team (session) thanks you – and please as long as it is possible please keep participating in that way. If you've pledged in the past, but stopped we'd like to encourage you to consider pledging again. If you just haven't got around to filling out the pledge card (we know it is an antiquated system) please ask for one or send an email, with your pledge, to Rich Ehrlich our financial secretary (the guy who collects the cards): RnR.Ehrlich@Gmail.com. Pledging helps us plan and is an important indicator as we evaluate our overall health.

Even more importantly, as a pastor, I feel pretty strongly about the importance of worship. However, I'm even more concerned about the spiritual growth and wholeness of our congregation. How can we be a community sharing God's love and grace in the world if we don't regularly gather to extend our gratitude to God and be challenged by God's revelation in scripture? Worship is the first connection point we have for being a community of faith. We need to see each other, we need to pray and listen together, and we need to share our lives in fellowship. I'm concerned that as a community of disciples we've become less connected. I understand we are in an uphill battle against the cult of busyness and the constant false sense of connection we get from social media, but authentic community is crucial (it's right in the middle of Maslow's pyramid of the hierarchy of needs after all) and it doesn't happen with out engagement and shared experiences.

There is more to making meaningful connections to others at church than worship; serving together is a great way to get connected to our church and grow together. I hope 2019 can be a year of getting connected and engaged: in bible study, in mission, in spiritual formation, in stewardship of our facilities, in visitation and caring for our congregation, making our Sunday fellowship hour possible, and even in our church finances.



Don't be surprised to be invited to participate in one of these areas and if no one gets to you then speak first, jump in, and build community while serving our church and its mission in some way.

I believe our church can be a place of healing and wholeness, but we can't be that place without a commitment to build community together. Our leadership pledges to "serve the people with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love". I believe that they will continue to faithfully do so in 2019, but they can't do it alone. Speak to a session member (all the contact information is in this newsletter) or myself and we will get you connected to our community.



Mission News

The Mission Team invites all who are interested in learning about or want to become involved in mission to attend our next Mission Meeting on Thursday, February 7th at 7:00 p.m. in the church library. We are looking for new committee members. If you have any ideas that can lead to thoughtful discussions for our next film night, please let us know.

Buildings and Grounds

- Over the past several years, the Buildings and Grounds team has tried to tackle one large project each year. Last year, we completed some much needed and long overdue tree trimming. Some of our other large projects include: exterior painting throughout the church grounds; replacing a no longer functioning furnace; installing a generator; upgrading some of our lighting to conserve energy and reduce electric costs; and, replacing drafty kitchen windows and a door at the manse. This year, we've decided to address smaller projects, much of which can be done with little or no money. There are several areas in the church which are in need of a good clean up, possibly some fresh paint, and some minor repairs. With the help of Linda Stetler, we've already started by cleaning up the coat closet in the Parish Hall. Over the next few months, we would like to: clean up and better organize the stage; spruce up both Parish Hall bathrooms (John Leddie has already started by repairing a leak in one of them); and, clean up our basement storage areas. We could use some help! If anyone is interested in helping us tackle some of these projects, please contact Karen Newman at kjnewman115@gmail.com or 908-763-9483.
- The Buildings and Grounds team would like to put together a list of people who would be willing to help with some of the snow blowing and shoveling during the winter months. We've been lucky so far this year, but we've still got to get through two more months of winter! When it snows, we have our parking lot and driveways plowed, but the sidewalks, walkways, and front steps need to be cleared by us. This is NOT a commitment to head to the church every time it snows. We'd like to have a list of people that we can contact (hopefully with a text message) as the need arises. If you are available, great! If not, hopefully someone else will be. If you would like to be added to the list, please contact Karen Newman at kjnewman115@gmail.com or 908-763-9483.

Newsletter Options

If you would like to see the newsletter in full color, consider receiving it via email (and help save money on postage), or if you would no longer like to received the newsletter, please call or email Claudia at 908-832-2933 or lowervalleyipc@embarqmail.com. Thank you.

Upcoming Servers

Date	Liturgist	Ushers	Communion Servers
February 3	Al El-Zahr	Warren Newman and OPEN	Warren Newman Karen Newman Marilyn El-Zahr Dick Kline
February 10	Warren Newman	OPEN and OPEN	
February 17— Family Worship	OPEN	OPEN and OPEN	
February 24	OPEN	OPEN and OPEN	
March 3	OPEN	Madeleine Argue and OPEN	OPEN OPEN OPEN OPEN
March 10	Karen Newman	Lisa Coffaro and Isabel Roppolo	
March 17— Family Worship	OPEN	Cindy and Tim O'Keefe	
March 24	Warren Newman	Marilyn and Al El-Zahr	

Session Members

Lisamarie Boehm: 432-3414/lisamarie_boehm@yahoo.com

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Marilyn El-Zahr: 392-0934/marilyn.lastname@gmail.com

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Karen Newman (clerk): 638-4332/kjnewman115@gmail.com

Warren Newman: 763-6094/newmanwj@cdmsmith.com

Lower Valley Presbyterian Church
445 County Road 513
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February 2019

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.