

## **FROM PASTOR CHAD**

Each year, on the last Sunday in January, we hold an annual congregational meeting. Too often this is a rather perfunctory event, required by our constitution, and nothing more. There are a couple items that need to be voted on by the congregation so we can maintain decency and order. If you did not already know, Presbyterians take pride in conducting all business *decently and in order*. So, as the new year picks up steam, we will get our new church year started *decently and in order* on Sunday, January 25<sup>th</sup> following our regular worship.

You may remember that last year we made some changes in our annual meeting. We wanted it to be more than a few quick motions that a few suckers, who feel compelled to stick around, vote on. Instead the session emphasized the participation of the whole congregation (members and friends) to gather and consider both the mandatory business and the mission of our congregation. We gathered in the Parish Hall to share a meal, watched some slides which recapped our year, and heard from individual elders. It had some advantages over our previous model, but there were of course drawbacks: it can be hard to hear in the Parish Hall, there were too many pictures (though they were fun), it took too long to hear from all the elders, and parents with young children didn't have a fighting chance at getting through.

So, we're going for an upgrade and a restart for the 2015 version. Here's some of what you can expect:

- \* The meeting will be in the Sanctuary immediately following the benediction
- \* Everyone is encouraged to stay and participate (even though only members can vote we believe our whole worshipping community is a vital part of our ministry and mission)
- \* Nursery care for the youngest, most squirrely among us will continue through the meeting
- \* There will still be a celebratory lunch and fellowship time in the Parish Hall.

It is my hope and the hope of the Session, that you won't want to miss this particular Sunday as we take some time to focus on the unique ways we carry out Christ's mission together as Christ's Church.

As I mentioned above there are of course some proper motions that need to be made and voted on by those who are members; we'll be sure to do that, but the real focus will be on how we carry out, and can continue to carry out, the mission of our congregation together.

It is the role of those elected to the Session to set a course for the congregation, however, we want to know what the hopes and dreams of the people are for our church. In preparation for this shared celebration, reflection, and visioning we'd like to ask again that you spend a small amount of time to consider the following questions:

1. What is it that I most love about LVPC that makes it my church?
2. What areas of our church life need to be reinvigorated?
3. How can I be more committed to sharing in the life of LVPC?

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4. What gifts am I not sharing with this community of faith?
5. How can we, as a church, better witness to God's love in our community?

It is our hope that these few simple questions will help us remain focused on being faithful to following the Holy Spirit, promote our growing faith, and to be a community open to a changing world.

To help us in this season of reflection we will be hearing from particular Elders during our worship in January. Their goal will be to help us as individuals consider the many possible ways to respond to God's word through deeper involvement in the life of our congregation.

*God has given us the gift of carrying out Christ's work in the world. May we continue to experience God's abundant blessings as we take on the challenges and joys of this work together.*



## **CALL FOR THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION**

**Sunday, January 25, 2015 at 11:30 a.m. following worship**

As provided in the by-laws of the Lower Valley Presbyterian Church, there shall be a meeting of the congregation following worship on **January 25, 2015**, for the purpose of receiving the annual reports of the Session and reviewing the 2015 budget.

Other business to attend:

- We will elect a Nominating Committee for the year 2015
- We will elect Elders for the Class of 2017
- We will approve the Pastor's Terms of Call

All are welcome to attend. Only active members of the congregation have voice and vote.

## **CHILDREN'S MINISTRY**

The LVPC children led the congregation in worship on December 21, with their annual Christmas play. They were wonderful! Many thanks to each of them and their parents for their commitment to practices and a very long Saturday dress rehearsal. We are all grateful to Kim Rodgers who directed thirty-five excited kids. Kim was assisted by many from our congregation...it takes a community to raise our children. Thanks to all and a very special thank you to Jason Beard who coordinated

the music. Others contributed to the efforts of the Parish Life committee who presented a wonderful luncheon. All of this dedicated effort by many leads to feelings such as those expressed in the following story:

*As I was driving Serafina home from play practice the other Sunday, she asked me if I send her to church to get a 'sense of community'. I explained that the 'sense of community' is one of many reasons that she goes to church. She then asked me if I go to church because she goes. I told her that I also go to church for the 'sense of community'. I explained how important it is to have people around you who care and will help you if you ever need it. She then told me that she was glad she joined the play and happy that she goes to church because she made a new friend, Lissy Harris. She went on to say how nice Lissy was to her and that she is glad she part of the community. Serafina realized how important it is to belong to a loving and caring community.*

*– Susan Freed and Serafina Roppolo*

Our children were active in other ways this Christmas. Some sold trees, and others played the bells. Some ushered, and others washed dishes. Some managed the art table, and others made signs and carried props. Let us as a congregation extend this

spiritual guidance into the new year and beyond. Touch base with a LVPC child this week!

Sunday School classes will begin on January 4, in the classrooms. Children will join the congregation for communion.

### **ALTERNATIVE GIFT FAIR WRAP UP**

Our final numbers are in and we are so pleased to report that the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Alternative Gift Fair raised over \$15,000 for 16 local, national and international organizations. Thank you again to all who helped make this wonderful mission project such a huge success!

### **HAT AND MITTEN TREE**

Thanks to your generosity, we were able to donate two bags full of hats and mittens (most of which were handmade) to clients of the Open Cupboard Food Pantry.

### **ASP TRIP UPDATE**

We have 19 Volunteers working hard to raise their trip money for ASP 2015. The second deposit of \$50 will be due in January. Some of the Christmas Tree Sale money will be going toward the trip, since the volunteers supplied a good portion of the labor this year! The trip will be to Johnson City, TN again this year.

### **EVENING CIRCLE**

Women's Evening Circle will be meeting Wednesday, January 21 at 7:00 p.m. in the Getz Library. Our Bible study is from Horizons Bible Study "An Abiding Hope, The Presence of God in Exodus and Deuteronomy". All are welcome in fellowship and Bible study.

### **FROM THE STEWARDSHIP TEAM**

Just a reminder that if you haven't sent in your pledge yet, please do so as soon as possible. Thanks!

### **A NOTE FROM THE FINANCE TEAM**

#### ***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 \$33.00 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.

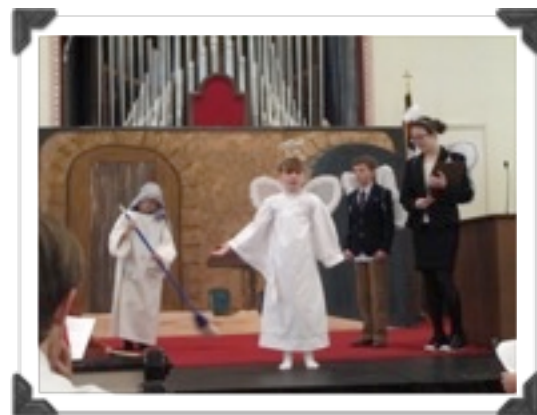
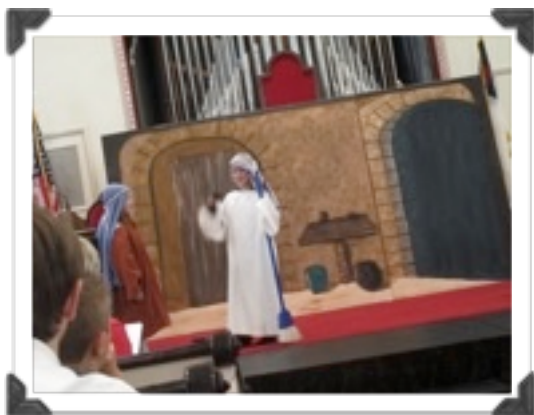
#### ***Why should I pay Per Capita?***

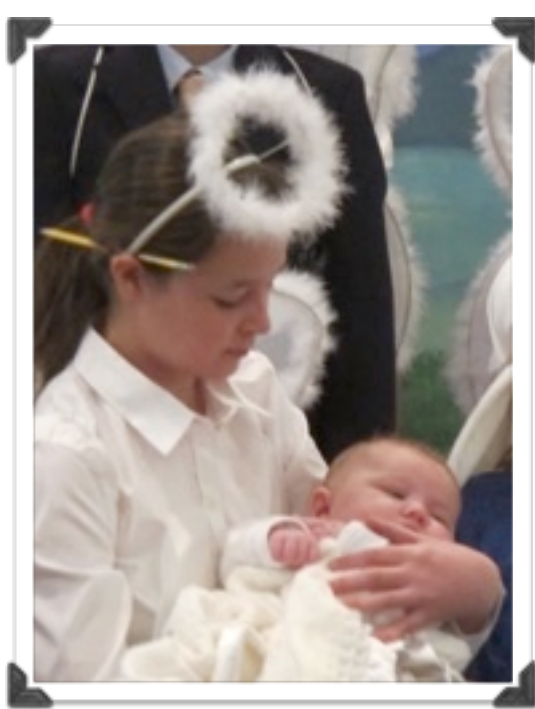
Paying per capita is similar to contributing one's dish to a potluck meal. It is part of the glue that holds Presbyterians together. This is important; let's try to raise the funds to cover our per capita expense this year! If you have not done so, please pay your family's (LVPC members only) portion of the per capita expense, and designate it as such on your check or envelope.

### **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).

# Scenes from our Christmas Play!





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# Upcoming Servers

Date	Liturgist	Ushers	Communion Servers
January 4	Sue Huntington	Carol and Anthony Casale	Sue Huntington Stephanie Donlon Judy Eckwielen Terry Hoffman
January 11	Rebecca Newbold	Janet and Gary Kipp	
January 18 (family)	May Saxton	Judy Eckwielen Stephanie Donlon	
January 25	Marilyn El-Zahr	Cindy and Tim O'Keefe	
February 1	Warren Newman	Lisa Coffaro Isabel Roppolo	Stephanie Donlon Warren Newman Lisa Coffaro <b>OPEN</b>
February 8	Stephanie Donlon	Nancy and David Knight	
February 15 (family)	Christina Wilson	Terry Hoffman Linda Stetler	
February 22	Dick Kline	May Saxton Lisamarie Boehm	

Art Table Schedule	Children's Message Schedule
January 18: Marilyn El-Zahr	January 25: May Saxton
February 15: Renee and Melissa Ollerenshaw	February 22: Kyle Garcia
March 15: Jen Donnell and Susan Freed	March 22: Kim Rodgers
April 5: Jen Wysocki	April 19: Ron Ascenzo
May 24: Isabel Roppolo	May 17: May Saxton

**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  
January 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.