

Parish Happenings

June 2015

FROM PASTOR CHAD

Running Alone with No iPod

I think I should start off by clarifying that I don't think of myself as a runner. I never was much of an athlete as a kid and my coordination has certainly not improved with age. I've only come to running in the last few years and for most of that time I've generally thought of running as a form of mental torture.

Why then do I run? Well, for my general health and well being, but also because I can. Too many people I know can't: because of cancer, or bad knees, or age, or general health challenges. So, in a way, I run for them as well as for myself.

I'm a routine person so running works for me when it is regularly part of my schedule. This means there are stretches where I'm out running regularly and then there are times when my routine changes and running is too easily shelved. However, I have found when this happens that I'm a bit crankier, feel less mentally healthy, and certainly out of shape.

Much like my experience with running, over the past few years, I've always struggled to find a prayer rhythm that works. For me prayer is both physically (I tend to fall asleep) and mentally hard. Sure, when someone has an acute need, or I've got a pressing problem prayer isn't nearly as challenging. "Lord Help!" is not so difficult. But, the daily routine of listening, discernment, discipleship, and gratitude I've always found to be a challenge. Making the move to tie up my running shoes and to set aside a few moments to pray have proved equally difficult.

We pray body and soul and no other way. The body is neither the prison of the soul nor the enemy of prayer, though we have treated it as such. Instead of denying the body in prayer, we must deny bodiless prayer. When the body falls asleep, praying stops. When the body awakens, prayer continues. When the body stays in one place, prayer issues from that place and is affected by the environment of that one place.

Dave Hansen, *Long Wandering Prayer* (p. 50)



As Lent came into focus I took to the less icy roads with a Lenten challenge: run outside, alone, and without any artificial distractions (namely digital distractions like an iPod and headphones, but also other runners) and pray. Many years ago I was given a short little book, called *Long Wandering Prayer*, by Dave Hansen. For all the years it has been on my shelf it has continued to challenge me to develop a more vibrant prayer life.

I've tried sitting for long periods in my office, or the sanctuary, or my garden, or in a retreat center, but those attempts always lead to sleepiness. Hansen describes taking long walks as a way of opening himself up to prayer that may begin with a crisis, but ultimately leads to listening and discernment.

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So, I've developed a new rhythm for prayer and health. I lace up my running shoes and, unplugged, head down the road for prayer. The mental torture of running has been replaced by the distraction of prayer that wanders from the concerns expressed on Sunday morning to hopes and dreams for the congregation. As the miles add up so do the prayers for the people and places that I pass, concerns for the children on the school busses, longing for the wisdom of the Spirit for leading a church, and gratitude for the creation that surrounds us. The body and prayer are inseparable in Hansen's experience and I have come to that place as well. When the body is awake, prayer has a chance and prayer shapes us for the life we are called to live.

In John 15 Jesus says to his disciples, "If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples." Prayer is the most tangible way to "abide" in Christ that I know. It is indeed hard, but the results will speak for themselves as we become disciples.



ASP PRAYER CARDS

This year we will once again offer "Prayer Postcards" featuring each of the ASP volunteers. The postcards will have a photo of each member of the LVPC team and prayer requests. The postcards can be yours for a \$10 donation each, fully tax deductible.

During June, our ASP volunteers will have the postcards available and can talk with you during Coffee and Conversation after worship.

Our volunteers are:

Laura Hostler, Isabel Roppolo, Carol, Anthony and Julia Casale, Annalee and Lora Harris, Chad and Annalise Rodgers, Katherine Rupprecht, Colleen and Morgan McCord, Terry Hoffman, Sara and Allison Varga, Melissa and Jake Ollerenshaw, Sarah Tyns and Jeff Dahl.

Collect the postcards over the coming weeks and keep them handy to remind you to pray for each person before and during the trip. By backing the trip financially and with your prayers, you can be an important part of this mission opportunity. We are very grateful for all of our generous congregational support!

EVENING CIRCLE

Our end of year meeting will be a luncheon at Riley & Jake's (1831 Route 31, Clinton) at 12:30 p.m. on June 15th. The cost is \$19.00. Contact Nancy Knight 908-537-4347 to RSVP. We did this last year and it was a fun time with good food. Hope to see everyone there!

SAVE THE DATE!

Worship At The Park will be on June 7th at 10:00 a.m. with our parish picnic to follow. Everyone is asked to please bring a salad, appetizer or dessert to share. Also, if you would like to bring your own cups, utensils, plates, etc., you are welcome to do so. Parish Life will be supplying drinks, subs and sandwiches as well as paper goods for those who need them.

Please call or text Lisa Coffaro at 973-713-4870 or email her at coffaro423@comcast.net for any questions, special needs and to let her know what you're bringing.

GET THE NEWSLETTER VIA EMAIL

Please let the church office know if you would like to start receiving the newsletter via email. It's a great way for us to save on paper and postage, and you will enjoy full color photos!

**FAMILY PROMISE OF
HUNTERDON COUNTY
(formerly Interfaith
Hospitality Network)
NEEDS HELP!**

Fairmount Presbyterian Church in Tewksbury is looking for volunteers to sit with, make dinner for and stay over night at its Community House with families that are displaced. There are all shifts and openings available and it's a wonderful way to help those in need. If you have questions or would like to help you can speak with Chad, Lisa Coffaro or Renee Ollerenshaw for info. If you are already familiar with this wonderful program and would like to host/help, please contact Dave Loth at 876-3656 or delmml@aol.com. To provide food, please contact Nancy Parks at 876-4669 or parks130@embarqmail.com. Any other questions, please speak with Bob Eyet at 268-5123 or

reyet@eathlink.net. The time frame we are trying to cover is June 21st thru July 5th.

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.

MISSION TEAM

The Mission Team had another great meeting this month. We discussed goals which include sending a team of people somewhere out of the country at some point, setting up quarterly hands-on activities (such as volunteering at a soup kitchen) and having better communication with the congregation. We also discussed the budget and where funds should be

allocated. We got an update on the upcoming ASP trip and learned that Alternative Gift Fair plans are already in the works. **We are looking for a few people to help coordinate this fantastic event. Please let us know if you would like to help.**

Lastly, we also learned that the congregation has an opportunity to email letters to Juliet, the young lady our church sponsors through Compassion International. Her birthday is August 1st and we're sure she'd love to receive some birthday greetings. If anyone would like to write to her go to Compassion.com. Log in with username: Lvpc and password: Jesus. You can upload pictures too. She would enjoy hearing from you.

We hope to have a volunteer opportunity set up for late June. Stay tuned for more information. The next Mission Team meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, June 30th at 7p.m.** All are welcome.

OFFICE SUMMER HOURS

Beginning June 15th, the office will have limited hours:

Claudia will be on summer break until August 12

Pastor Chad's summer plans are as follows:

Vacation: June 15 - June 29

ASP Trip: July 18-25

PLEASE NOTE: While Chad is away Warren Newman (908-763-6094) or Wendy Garcia at (862-432-7647) will be available for any pastoral concerns.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

G.i.F.T. is coming in July 12-16! This year's summer program will include a middle school group taught by Pastor Chad. The middle school group will also be making dresses for children in Africa! The adult group will be led by Stephanie Muntzel, Pastor at Musconetcong Valley Presbyterian Church. It is never too late to sign up for dinner, worship, games and fellowship. We hope to see you there!

The church worship service will be held in the Califon Park on June 7. Please join this worship service...it has been an inspiration to many for a number of years. There will be special music, an art table, babysitters, the annual picnic, and games. Join us there at 10:00 a.m. Please bring a salad or dessert to share.

Each year at this time, we realize, as Sunday School comes to a close, that it takes many disciples to teach and guide our youngsters at LVPC. Thank you to all who gave the Children's Message this past year: Kim Rodgers, Isabel Roppolo, Susan Huntington, Abby Ernst, May Saxton, Kyle Garcia, Ron Ascenzo, the 6, 7, 8 grade SS

class, and the 4th and 5th grade SS class. The art table during Family Worship allows our kids to listen to the scripture and express their feelings about it. Thanks to all those who manned the art table: Wendy Garcia, Stephanie Donlon, Kelly Hostler, Melissa Ollerenshaw, Lora Harris, Renee Ollerenshaw, Jen Donnell, Susan Freed, Jen Wysocki, and Isabel Roppolo. Sunday School Teachers this year were Janine Ascenzo, Ellen Haggerty, Jeff and Nicole Dahl, Kim Rodgers, Linda Stetler, Richard Fincher, Erik Gast, and Debbie Gartelmann. We thank all these dedicated disciples who regularly teach our children. Susan Hostler leads the bell choir which involves a number of our young people. We all enjoy her efforts immensely and thank her for her service. Kim and Chad Rodgers lead our teens in a number of different ways: Wednesday night middle school group, confirmation class, girls' Bible study, and Sunday night dinner at the manse. We thank them for their dedication to our emerging adults. Have you counted? A whole host of adults at LVPC have contributed to our kids'

spiritual journey this past year. Please consider being involved in some way this fall. Contact anyone on the Spiritual Formation of Children Team if you would be interested in joining our efforts with our precious children: Kim Rodgers, Christina Wilson, Natalie Gast, Susan Huntington, Linda Stetler, and Chad Rodgers.

On May 24, Pentecost Sunday, the 4th and 5th grade class donned red shirts and led the worship service as ushers and greeters, liturgists, and presenters of a dramatic reading. They did an awesome job, reminding us all of their integral place in our congregation. Please enjoy the pictures of them in action.

**Our 4th and 5th graders
leading the Pentecost
Worship Service**



Pastor Chad's Contact info:

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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

Lisa Coffaro: 832-0409/coffaro423@comcast.net

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

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

Upcoming Servers

Date	Liturgist	Ushers	Communion Servers
June 7 (Worship in the Park)	Warren Newman	Janet and Gary Kipp	Stephanie Donlon Warren Newman Kim Rodgers Lisamarie Boehm
June 14	Dick Kline	The El-Zahr Family	
June 21	Nancy Knight	Carol and Anthony Casale	
June 28	May Saxton	Terry Hoffman Kirk Petrik	
July 5	Sue Huntington	Stephanie and Jeff Donlon	Sue Huntington Lisamarie Boehm
July 12	Rebecca Newbold	Linda Stetler Lisamarie Boehm	
July 19	Marilyn El-Zahr	Lisa Coffaro Isabel Roppolo	
July 26	Warren Newman	Terry Hoffman OPEN	
August 2	Judy Eckwielen	Judie and Adam Ambielli	Lisamarie Boehm OPEN
August 9	Christina Wilson	Linda Stetler OPEN	
August 16	Stephanie Donlon	Janet and Gary Kipp	
August 23	Dick Fincher	Carol and Anthony Casale	
August 30	Dick Kline	Nancy and David Knight	

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

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.