

Parish Happenings

June 2018

FROM PASTOR CHAD

The Work of the People



I've been thinking about and reading about the Church in North America and the particular challenges it faces since I was in college. There is little dispute that we live in a radically consumer oriented culture. We need not go further than our cell phones to find ads tailored specifically to our particular interests, age range, desires, perceived needs, and previous browsing habits. We are drowning in false advertising and the empty promises of ad makers.

I along with many pastors, professors, and students of church trends feel that for too long our churches have not stood over and against this *consumer culture*, but have unwittingly become part of it and even embraced it. When our attendance dips or we don't seem to be connecting with people we are tempted to resort to the same schemes for marketing our congregations that Madison Avenue advertisers use for their clients. We look for new ways to *sell* our churches based on the programs we have to offer you, your children, and your neighbor. We start talking about what we have to offer as if we're competing in a marketplace. We talk as if our purpose is to entertain, to share happy thoughts, disseminate helpful information, and deliver individual satisfaction to consumers.

During the years I've served as your pastor the session of LVPC and I have attempted to steer the congregation away from a consumer approach to church and toward a more authentic community. To this end we've emphasized: the spiritual formation of children, youth, and adults, intergenerational activities, growing deep community with one another, discerning God's voice, and being a blessing to our local community and the world.

It is not the person who presides who gives the baptism or the meal its authority. The authority is inherent in the ritual's witness to the gospel.

— Rick Barger

I've also insisted, on many occasions, that our worship is not just one more event to attend in an already over scheduled week. Worship is not something simply to be consumed for our entertainment, a program for us to evaluate, or a place to accumulate some sort of cosmic good will. At its best worship is transformational. When we come to worship open to God's Spirit we leave, still with busy lives, worries, and burdens to carry, but we leave challenged, changed, and prepared to walk fearlessly in the way of Jesus in our daily lives. Worship is more than just a balm for our troubles. It is where we are continually reminded that our calling is to be like Jesus.

What we do in worship is best described by the word *liturgy*. We often think of *liturgy* as the ordering of, or the different parts of the service; some people might think of a liturgical church as a more formal style of worship. However, *liturgy* (from the Ancient Greek word *leitourgia*) literally means “the work of the people.” It is the work we do when we gather together on Sunday morning; we pray, sing praise, lament, love, listen for God, share the sacraments, and create community through the hope of the Gospel.

To understand worship this way is to assume that we all have a role to play and that when some do not participate the community is somehow incomplete. Worship is something so much more than what we can consume to meet a need. This is why we don't baptize people in the back yard swimming pool on Saturdays or call our Friday supper with friends The Lord's Supper. We need the gathered community witnessing together on the riverbank, coming to the table, or in the sanctuary for our work to be complete.

Rick Barger writes, “To insist that only the ordained can do certain things, no matter what the circumstances are is [a consumer culture approach]. It is not the person who presides who gives the baptism or the meal its authority. The authority is inherent in the ritual's witness to the gospel.”* Our work in worship, at its core, is to “witness to the gospel.” This witness happens in our prayers, our song, our art, and our proclamation of the Word. It is my hope that we can all find our role in the *liturgy*, and thus our worship will become a deeper and even more authentic witness to God's Good News.

To this end I would like to encourage everyone to consider their own role in our worship. What is it that you bring? Do you have a testimony of God's grace to share? A concern to lift up? An expression of hope or a healing word? Our Spiritual Formation and Worship Team has prepared a short survey to help better understand how our congregation connects to our worship. I hope you will take a few minutes to fill it out and then consider your own role in our shared work. I look forward to how we will be growing in our understanding of this work as we continue to be witnesses to the resurrection together.

* Rick Barger, *A New and Right Spirit: Creating an Authentic Church in a Consumer Culture*, (page 123).



Chris

MISSION NEWS

Family Promise Volunteers

We are looking for volunteers to help during the weeks of **June 17th - July 1st** and **October 7th - October 21st**. Fairmount Presbyterian hosts Hunterdon homeless families these four weeks in their church. Volunteering includes making dinner or hosting. This can be a good opportunity for families, Girl Scout/Boy Scout Troops, friends, etc. Please consider volunteering for one day or evening (or more). If you are interested, please contact Lisa Coffaro. Lastly, several other members of our church have participated in the past and are more than willing to share their experiences.

Movie Night

Our next movie night will be on **SUNDAY, June 24th at 5:30 p.m.** with dinner, snacks and discussion afterwards. The movie will be "An Armor of Light". This film follows an "Evangelical minister trying to find the moral strength to preach about the growing toll of gun violence in America. The film is a courageous look at our fractured political culture and an assertion that it is, indeed, possible for people to come together across deep party lines to find common ground." Please consider joining us in the Parish Hall.

Box City

Unfortunately, this event was rained out. However, the congregation donated **\$516** through the pledge plate. Thank you to all that donated! The money will go towards helping our homeless population here in Hunterdon County.

Sunday Sundaes

Our ice cream social was a success! Please stay tuned for more socials this summer. Dates TBD in June, July and August.

Giving Fair 2018

Yes, it's early, but we are starting to plan for this year's Giving Fair now. We are planning on making this a much bigger event this year. This includes moving the date to December, having music and entertainment, a live nativity outside, the Christmas Tree Sale going on at the same time, food and of course the actual Giving Fair in the Parish Hall. We would like people to consider joining us in this endeavor. We need a Music/Entertainment Coordinator, Live Nativity Coordinator and Food Coordinator. Please contact Abby or anyone on the Mission Team if you are interested. We will be discussing the details at our next Mission Meeting on **Tuesday, June 12th, 2018 at 7p.m.**

WORSHIP IN THE PARK/CHURCH PICNIC — JUNE 3

Join us on June 3rd as we Worship in the Park and Celebrate Baptisms and Confirmations followed by our annual picnic. Bring your own chair. All are welcome, please bring your favorite side dish, salad or dessert to share. We will be providing the sandwiches. If you have any questions or would like any additional information please contact Renee Ollerenshaw at jems101992@gmail.com or 908-448-6672. Look forward to seeing you all there and coming together as a church community.

FRIENDS DAY AT CAMP JOHNSONBURG

Join in the fun on July 7th from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. for Friends Day and Dedication of the Waterfront at Camp Johnsonburg. All activities will be open! Adults-\$15, 6-12 year olds-\$10, 0-5 year olds-free. Closing worship will be celebrated in the butterfly garden. For more information and to sign up visit www.campjburg.org.



SPIRITUAL FORMATION

- The church picnic is Sunday, June 3, in the Califon Park. It will be a spiritual service with communion, confirmation of our young people, and a baptism in the river. A picnic will follow the service. Sandwiches will be provided. Please bring a dish to pass.
- On July 1, the new GiFT program will begin in the evening from 5:30 to 7:30. Dinner will be served, followed by a Bible Study for adults and youth, plus an activity and babysitting for children. There will be four sessions altogether. Addition dates are July 8, 22, 29, all Sunday evenings. Please join us for fellowship and discussion together. Back to the basics — our bible studies will focus on busting myths. We'll take a look at what scripture has to say about four beliefs commonly held by Christians.
- The Spiritual Formation Team is reading *In God's Presence, Experiencing and Embracing the Holy in Worship*. We are discussing ways to make our Sunday worship more meaningful with a greater connection to the Holy. To that end, you will soon be receiving a simple survey to help us understand what you as a congregation might like to see on Sunday mornings. Please take the time to fill in the survey either online or on paper. We want to know what things are helping you to experience God in worship, and what things you might like to see in the future.

COMMUNITY GARDEN

Our community garden is open for the season and we still have 4 beds available for rent. The garden is an important mission project as it provides the Open Cupboard Food Pantry with fresh produce throughout the summer and early fall. It also provides a place for community members to come together to garden and get to know each other. We are also looking for a few more garden managers this year and would love to have some folks from the church take on this role. The managers work together to plan different projects for the garden and take turns during the growing season tending to the food pantry beds along with other gardeners. If you are interested in renting beds, please let Claudia know. If you have any questions about the garden or are interested in serving as a manager, contact Karen Newman at 908-763-9483 or email kjnewman115@gmail.com.



NEWSLETTER OPTIONS

If you would like to receive the newsletter via email and enjoy seeing it in full color (and help save money on postage), or if you would no longer like to received the newsletter, please let Claudia in the office know. Thank you.

APPALACHIA SERVICE PROJECT (ASP) HAPPENINGS



Prayer Cards

Prayer cards are available for purchase during fellowship each week. Please consider supporting our volunteers who are going to Magoffin County, Kentucky this summer to make homes warmer, safer, drier.

Bluegrass Festival

the 10th Annual Frontporch Bluegrass Festival is July 7th from 10am-8pm. This is a fun event that helps support all the local volunteers traveling to Appalachia. The location is Gazebo Park, Main Street in Chester.

We are looking for church members
(of any age) who would like to
contribute something to our
newsletter. Share your experiences,
your memories and your hopes for
LVPC. We want to hear from you.
E-mail Claudia at
lowervalleypc@embarqmail.com.

Pastor Chad's Contact info:

Cell phone: 908.892.0044
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

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

Jeff Dahl: 201-574-5901/jjdahl08@gmail.com

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

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Renee Ollerenshaw: 832-7250/Jems101992@gmail.com

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

Upcoming Servers

Date	Liturgist	Ushers	Communion Servers
June 3 — Worship in the Park	Warren Newman	Jennifer Kozak OPEN	Warren Newman Marilyn El-Zahr Lisamarie Boehm Karen Newman
June 10	Judy Eckwielen	Lisa Coffaro and Isabel Roppolo	
June 17	OPEN	Karen and Warren Newman	
June 24	OPEN	Lisamarie Boehm Rich Ehrlich	
July 1	OPEN	Jennifer Kozak and Judy Eckwielen	OPEN OPEN
July 8	Judy Eckwielen	OPEN OPEN	
July 15	Marilyn El-Zahr	Madeleine Argue OPEN	
July 22	OPEN	OPEN OPEN	
July 29	OPEN	Lisamarie Boehm OPEN	
August 5	Dick Kline	The EL-Zahr Family	OPEN OPEN
August 12	Judy Eckwielen	Jennifer Kozak Rich Ehrlich	
August 19	OPEN	OPEN OPEN	
August 26		Lisamarie Boehm Judy Eckwielen	

Lower Valley Presbyterian Church
445 County Road 513
Califon, NJ 07830
June 2018

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.