

Parish Happenings

March 2016

FROM PASTOR CHAD



...we'd better get on with it. Strip down, start running – and never quit! No extra spiritual fat, no parasitic sins. Keep your eyes on Jesus, who both began and finished this race we're in.

Study how he did it.

Hebrews 12:1b-2a, The Message

March has arrived, Easter is quickly approaching, and this means *sabbatical time* is also right around the corner. Yes, we've still got most of Lent and Easter, but the Big Sur International Marathon event countdown (at time of publication) along with the increasing miles on my training schedule are constant reminders that sabbatical time will soon be upon us soon and before we're ready if we don't keep it in focus!

There are several reasons that thinking about sabbatical time is a big deal:

1. A Time for Readiness

We need to be ready! My sabbatical time is in a good state of readiness: Marathon training is progressing, transportation and hotel and important campground reservations are booked, most of the needed upgrades to our trailer have been made, and mentally and spiritually I have a clear sense of what I hope to accomplish.

Are you as a congregation ready?

There will be some extra opportunities for you all to participate in the nuts and bolts of community life at LVPC during sabbatical time: leading worship, unlocking/locking the building on Sundays, fellowship, setting up for worship in the park, helping out with G.I.F.T. to name a few.

However, much more importantly, are you ready and open to the time of growth and reflection that God has in store for you? Are you prepared to make the most of the opportunity? Have you taken a little time to consider how you might let the absence of the regular pastor be an opportunity for God to use your gifts in new ways?

If you own an Apple computer you know that they go into and wake up from sleep mode very well (just one of the many ways Apple's operating system has outshined Windows for years.) The problem with this very convenient feature is we tend to rarely restart our devices and there are some distinct advantages to shutting down and restarting from time to time. A restart of your computer can solve all kinds of problems that tend to suck your machine's short term memory and clog up processor function.

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Church life can be a bit like those Apple computers that never get shut down and restarted; our rhythms, habits, worship routines, patterns of listening, and leadership can get a bit stagnant. It might be helpful if we thought of sabbatical time as a time to shutdown and restart. It is a chance to clear out the short term memory and make space for the Holy Spirit to move freely amongst us.

In what ways have you thought about getting ready for sabbatical time?

How will you be open to the Spirit when we shutdown and restart in April?

2. A Time for Different Voices

You will be experiencing some different voices in the pulpit while I'm away. After 8 years and nearly 400 sermons it's time for that restart I was talking about – for you and for me. This will be an amazing opportunity for God to use some different voices to illuminate Scripture. God will most certainly continue to work on our hearts and minds in worship and study, but in some cases it may be that we'll hear something new when it comes from a different angle.

The session has arranged for Rev. Stefanie Muntzel, who will serve us as our Temporary Congregational Resource Pastor (you'll find a bit more about Stefanie later in the newsletter), to do the bulk of the preaching. However, some members of our church will also take a turn from time to time and just maybe you are one of them.

Is sabbatical a time for you to explore how God might use your gifts for preaching and teaching?

3. A Time for the Worship Schedule to Change

You will also experience a slight schedule change during sabbatical time. This change will serve as a constant reminder that you are taking part in a different rhythm, that our reboot is in progress, and a special attentiveness to the Spirit is required. Starting Sunday, April 24th our regular service of worship will begin at 11 a.m. with our fellowship hour (*coffee and conversation*) starting at 10 a.m. Be sure and come early enough to engage one another in the blessing of community life before migrating over to the sanctuary for our formal hour of worship in song, prayer, and the Word preached.

4. A Time for Prayer

Now is a time for prayer as preparation. You can be sure that I've been praying for our sabbatical time, but I'm also committed to making my sabbatical a time of prayer for our congregation. It's my hope that all of us will experience God in new ways during this unique time.

5. Keep the Pace

For a brief explanation and ongoing updates related to our sabbatical time you can go to my former Blog site now devoted to sabbatical time at:

<https://preachingtogether.wordpress.com>

Blessings,




WORSHIP

New Worship Time Coming!

Just a reminder that starting April 24th, our worship service will begin at 11 a.m. with coffee and conversation starting at 10 a.m.

BIO OF STEFANIE MUNTZEL



Rev. Stefanie Muntzel was ordained in Newton Presbytery in

October 2013 as the part-time stated supply pastor of Musconetcong Valley Presbyterian Church in Hampton, NJ. She joined the staff of Newton Presbytery in February 2014 and coordinates the Resourcing Center.

Stefanie has been blessed to have worked in a variety of ministry settings. Prior to graduating from Union Theological Seminary in New York City in 2002, her experience included college ministry with the PC (USA), youth ministry leadership in New York City, and youth ministry and new church development in New Jersey. Beginning in 2004 Stefanie served as Director of Christian Education and Mission at Covenant Presbyterian Church in Scranton, PA and for eight

years enjoyed the wide range of duties this role entailed.

Stefanie is a lifelong Presbyterian — her mother is a retired Presbyterian pastor and her father a retired ethics professor. She currently lives just outside Califon with her husband Rev. Rich Gelson, son Crosby (12) and step-daughters Rebecca (14) and Anna (17). She is an avid walker of her dog Dinah. She is a fan of the outdoors, music and story. She speaks German well and is constantly struggling to tame her curly, willful hair. Above all, she is a passionate witness to the Good News of the grace of God through Jesus Christ.

ASP HAPPENINGS

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!

LIBRARY RE-DO

We are looking for helpers to repaint the Getz Library. We will be prepping and priming on Friday, March 11 and painting on Saturday, March 12. We will also be hanging new blinds. Any help will be appreciated. Please contact Abby Ernst (973-986-1124 or abigailernst@gmail.com) if you are available to help.

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

COMMUNITY GARDEN

Spring will be here before you know it! It's time to start thinking about our community garden. If you or your family would like a plot to garden in this year, the time to register is now. This year's registration form is posted on the LVPC website under the Mission tab at www.lowervalley.org or you can call the office to have one mailed to you. We'll also be looking for help getting the garden ready for the season....we've got a lot of wood chips to spread! If you have questions about the garden or would like to help out, please contact Karen Newman at karennewman@embarqmail.com

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Evening Circle

The Women's Bible Study Group will meet on Wednesday, March 16th at 7:00 p.m. in the Getz Library. We have started a new Horizon's Bible Study, "Reconciling Paul, A Contemporary Study of 2 Corinthians". There are Bible studies in the Getz Library to use and we will be covering Lesson 2 "Paul in the Context of Ancient Corinth". We were asked to read 1 Corinthians before the meeting. If you have any questions please call Nancy Knight 310-1748 or Joni Nodes 391-6263.

OFFERING ENVELOPES

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

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.) You can put your donations in the narthex vestibule or on the left side of the stage.
- Donate individually wrapped baked goods for the bake sale. (Can include homemade nut-free, with nuts, gluten-free, etc. **Please label.**)
- Organize the books for the sale ahead of time.

- 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!

Other Mission Opportunities

- We are all set for another shift at Elijah's Promise in New Brunswick. It is on April 9th from 10:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. Please let Abby Ernst know if you're interested. Thanks!
- 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.

Easter Flower Order Form

(orders are due with payment by 3/20)

If you would like to order Easter Flowers to decorate our sanctuary,
please fill out the order form below and drop it in the offering plate
or send it to the church office. Prices listed below include foil.
Please indicate the desired quantity and enclose payment with your order.

Name: _____

In memory of: _____

In honor of: _____

Flower	Price	Qty	Total Cost
Mini Daffodil	\$2.85	_____	_____
Daffodil (6")	\$5.90	_____	_____
Easter Lily (4-5 blooms)	\$8.90	_____	_____
Tulip (6 blooms)	\$5.65	_____	_____
Tulip (8 blooms)	\$9.00	_____	_____

Holy Week Schedule

Maundy Thursday

Communion Service at 7 p.m. in the parish hall

Good Friday

Sanctuary open from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. for prayer and reflection

Easter Sunday (3/27)

Sunrise Service at 6:30 a.m. with fellowship following in the parish hall

Family worship at 10 a.m. with fellowship following in the parish hall

Get the newsletter via e-mail so you can enjoy the full color version and help us cut down on paper and postage costs! 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
March 6	Warren Newman	OPEN OPEN	Abby Ernst Lisa Coffaro 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	
April 3	Stephanie Donlon	Lisa Coffaro Isabel Roppolo	Stephanie Donlon OPEN OPEN OPEN
April 10	Judy Eckwielen	Carol and Anthony Casale	
April 17 — Family Worship	Dick Kline	Janet and Gary Kipp	
April 24	Abby Ernst	Cindy and Tim O'Keefe	

**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
March 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.