

The Church and The Spirit

As the frenzy of springtime chores and end of school year activities begin to overwhelm us it is worth a slight pause. It is worth taking a time out to take a *breath* and remind ourselves that Easter Tide is ending and the season of Pentecost is upon us.

Why, you ask, is Pentecost all that important? In his book, *Simply Christian*, N.T. Wright points us in the right direction when he says of the Church and the Spirit, “The two walk together, hand in hand. We can’t talk about them apart.”

I’m as guilty of making this mistake as anyone. I talk a great deal about the Church, our church, the early church, and what it means to be part of a church, but say and even reflect very little on the Holy Spirit.

It can be so easy to focus on the stuff we do at church and think that we do this stuff by the power of our collective will or even by our own individual strength. We study church trends, demographics, and strategies for growth all because we have convinced ourselves that if we just implement the right program our institution will thrive.

This is not, however, the way the bible describes the Church. In the second half of the Gospel of Luke (maybe better known as the book of Acts) the Church is a dynamic community being shaped powerfully by “wind” and “flame” — the Spirit. Nothing seems to happen outside the movements of the Holy Spirit and time and again the *breath* of God moves in surprising directions.

Pentecost is the one Sunday when the Holy Spirit comes into focus for us. We read Acts 2 which describes the disciples’ dramatic encounter with the Spirit. It is this event which serves as a catalyst for the formation of the Church. Prior to this movement of the Spirit the disciples have little direction and no impetus for carrying out Jesus’ mission.

I believe that Pentecost has much to teach us, but at the very least it would be wise for us to be reminded that everything we do as a church is done by and through the power of the Holy Spirit:

- Caring for the sick
- Nurturing the faith of our children
- Loving our neighbor
- Reaching out to our community
- Telling God’s story
- Showing compassion for the outcast
- Feeding the hungry
- Growing deeper in faith together

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We can't depend too much on the Spirit. Jesus promised that we wouldn't be on our own, but an advocate or friend would be sent to accompany us on the journey of faith. I for one am looking forward to celebrating Pentecost. Not losing my way during the Springtime frenzy requires taking time to *breathe*. Keeping God's mission, the mission given to the Church, in focus always requires that we *breathe*. It is the Spirit that enables us to be a community of disciples that hears the words of Jesus and puts them into practice.

Pentecost Sunday is May 19th. The worship team encourages us all to come with a sense of expectation, and prepared to participate in our celebration of the Spirit in our midst. Wear red (the traditional liturgical color for Pentecost) and take time during the week prior to *breathe* and reflect on the way the Spirit has moved in your life.

It might help to read one or all of the following passages before you come to worship:

- Genesis 11:1-9
- Acts 2
- Romans 8
- John 14:8-17, 25-27

May the *breath* of God, the Spirit, be our guide as we strive ever more to follow the way of Jesus.

Cheryl

Community Garden

There has been a flurry of activity in the garden over the last few weeks. The 2013 season officially began on April 13th and many gardeners were busy prepping their beds by the next afternoon. The next few weeks involved building 11 new raised beds, filling them with soil, and spreading wood chips in the surrounding pathways. Many members

and friends gave time and effort to making the expansion possible. We'd especially like to thank John Leddie, Terry Hoffman, and Bob Runge for sharing their gifts for carpentry and building the new frames. And, Tim McKinnon for bringing his tractor over to move soil and mulch.

It could have been because of the long winter, but whatever the case, there is a lot of energy out in the garden so far. The gate is open so feel free to walk down the rows, check out what people are planting and strike up a conversation with someone in our local community. This year a third of the gardeners are associated with our



congregation so there are plenty of people to welcome. If you do not have a bed in our garden for the season, there are still many ways to participate. Eight of the beds are managed collectively and all that produce is taken to The Open Cupboard Food Pantry. Call Lyn Magee at 832-2142 if you are interested in getting your hands dirt.

Congregational Care

At Lower Valley, ways in which we care for one another can be seen every Sunday at worship, during coffee hour, behind the scenes, and throughout the week. Prayer chains, encouraging words, visits to the homebound, our mission work, caring for and teaching the children, and offering assistance to those in need it are just a few examples. We all play an integral part in showing our mutual care for one another.

To ensure that the specific and ongoing needs of our church family are met, we are in the process of forming a Congregational Care team.

This team will do things like organize meal delivery for new parents or for those grieving the loss of a loved one; visits/ phone calls to homebound members as well as caregivers; cards/letters sent to those undergoing surgery or dealing with illness. If you are interested in joining the team or are willing to share your ideas with us on how we can better care for our church family please contact Wendy Garcia at kwgarcia@msn.com. Also, if you have a specific need that we can help you with, please contact Wendy or the church office.

Spiritual Formation of Children

The Spiritual Formation Committee hosted a breakfast retreat for our Sunday School teachers on April 20. Many thanks to this year's teaching staff: Pre, K, 1 — Donna Leddie and Liz Burns; 2 & 3 — Wendy Garcia and Marilyn El Zahr; 4 & 5 — Karen Newman and Linda Stetler; 6, 7 & 8 — Debbie Gartelmann, Lyn Magee, Ron Schildge, and Tracey Heuneman; 9-12 —

Kim Rodgers. We at LVPC are blessed to have these teachers who guide our children in their spiritual development. The last day of Sunday School will be June 2. At the retreat teachers evaluated this year's program and discussed the goals for next year. Tracy Heuneman led the group in a prayer exercise. If you are interested in teaching or substituting in September, please let Kim Rodgers know. New teachers are always welcome.

Vacation Bible School will be July 7-11, this summer. Planning volunteers are getting together at noon on May 5, for a first organizational meeting. If you miss this meeting and would like to help with the planning, please contact Kim Rodgers. There will be more planning sessions. Remember that VBS is taking on a new look this year by inviting everyone in the congregation to participate. Dinner will be served to all followed by fellowship and music based on *Fruits of the Spirit*. The children will break into groups for crafts, games and worship,

while the adults will join together for a bible study. Adults are needed to lead the children in one of the sessions for one evening during VBS. Please plan to join in this multigenerational experience. More information to follow.

Mark your calendars. The church picnic will be held at the Califon Park again this year on June 9. Last year was a wonderful day with worship, food, games and fellowship. You will have a great time!

Worship in the Outdoors

On Sunday, June 9th, we will be holding worship outdoors at Califon Island Park. During this special service we will be welcoming new members. Worship will begin at 10:00 a.m. Feel free to park in the lot and along the road just outside the park. After worship we will be having our Beginning of Summer Celebration Picnic. Please bring a salad or dessert to share along with chairs for yourself and your family. The church will supply sub sandwiches and drinks. We will be having a church-wide softball game along with field

games like the three-legged race and other relay games. Come dressed to play with any mitts, balls, bats and other yard games you can find around the house! Let Lisa Coffaro know if you have any special needs or concerns at 832-0409. We want everyone to be able to make it as we spend time together as a church family!

Liturgists STILL Needed

We are looking for people to be a liturgist. The following dates are open: 6/30, 7/28, 9/22, 10/13, and 10/20. No experience is necessary. If you are interested, please let Claudia know or speak with Pastor Chad.

ASP Trip Update

The 2013 Appalachia Service Project (ASP) Work Trip from July 20th until July 27th will be to Martin County, Kentucky. Our twelve volunteers are busily earning

their trip expense money. Each individual volunteer pays (or raises) a \$200 deposit, and the rest is earned through various fund raisers. Our congregation has generously made and bought quarts and pints of various soups for several months, which has raised nearly \$700. The group of churches traveling together to Kentucky, the "BYG" group (Big Youth Group), started "Penny Wars," which has been a great success. Many of our members have emptied pockets and coin purses (someone even brought a \$25 "brick" of rolled pennies from the bank!). We have raised over \$150 with the coins, and it all goes to our 12 volunteers, even though we put coins in the jars which are



labeled with other church's names. It is just a fun way to try to compete for the "best" church! So far, LVPC is winning our Penny War. (Pennies go in the LVPC jar and are "positive points;" other coins and bills go in the other churches' jars and are "negative points" for them.) Each church is participating, and the money raised goes to the volunteers in the church where it is collected. It will be fun to see which church ends up with the most points in the end! Thank you to all of our faithful members who are

participating in the work trip, even without actually going!

ASP Prayer Cards

This year we will have "Prayer Postcards" available 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 May and June, our 12 ASP volunteers will have the postcards available and can talk with you during Coffee and Conversation after worship.

Our volunteers are:

Rev. Chad Rodgers; Anthony, Carol, Ben and Julia Casale; Terry Hoffman; Laura Hostler; John Leddie, Jake and Melissa Ollerenshaw; Isabel Roppolo and Sara Varga.

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!

**Join us for our next
Family Game Night
on Friday, May 24th!!**

Session Members

Here is a list of our current session members and their phone numbers:

Lisa Coffaro: 832-0409

John Leddie: 537-9622

Stephanie Donlon: 537-2604

Lyn Magee: 832-2142

Wendy Garcia: 867-7186

Kim Rodgers: 832-0956

Terry Hoffman: 689-7646

Warren Newman: 638-4332

May Saxton (clerk): 537-4963

May 2013

Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
			1 The Channel: 7-8:30 p.m.	2	3	4
5 Fellowship: 11 a.m. Journey: 6-7:30	6 Adult Bell Practice: 7:15 p.m.	7 Sewing: 9:30 a.m., GL	8 Open Cupboard Food Pantry Volunteer Dinner: 5 p.m. The Channel: 7-8:30 p.m.	9	10	11
12 Mother's Day Fellowship: 11 a.m. Joyful Noise practice: 11:15 Journey: 6-7:30	13 Adult Bell Practice: 7:15 p.m.	14 Sewing: 9:30 a.m., GL	15 Evening Circle: 7 p.m. The Channel: 7-8:30 p.m.	16	17	18
19 Fellowship: 11 a.m. Journey: 6-7:30	20 Adult Bell Practice: 7:15 p.m.	21 Sewing: 9:30 a.m., GL Session: 7 p.m., GL	22 The Channel: 7-8:30 p.m.	23	24 Game Night: 6 p.m.	25
26 Fellowship: 11 a.m. Journey: 6-7:30	27 Memorial Day	28 Sewing: 9:30 a.m., GL	29 The Channel: 7-8:30 p.m.	30	31	

Upcoming Servers

Date	Liturgist	Ushers	Communion Servers	Fellowship Host(s)
May 5	Sue Huntington	Judie and Adam Ambielli	Sue Huntington Kim Rodgers Lisa Coffaro Warren Newman	Ollerenshaw Nodes
May 12	Stephanie Donlon	Donna and John Leddie		Garcia Wilson Magee
May 19	Joni Nodes	Judy Eckwielen Eleanor Raposo	Children's Message: Tracy Heuneman	Gast Stetler Wilson
May 26 Family Worship	May Saxton	Linda Stetler Terry Hoffman		
June 2	Dick Kline	Janet and Gary Kipp	Kim Rodgers Warren Newman Judy Eckwielen TBD	
June 9 Worship at Califon Park	May Saxton	Lisa and Chris Coffaro		
June 16	Nancy Knight	Marilyn and Al El-Zahr		
June 23	Judy Eckwielen	Cindy and Tim O'Keefe		
June 30	TBD	Stephanie and Jeff Donlon		

**If you are able to serve in one of the TBD spots, please let
Claudia in the office know. Thanks!**

May 2013

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.