

# Parish Happenings

May 2016

## **FROM PASTOR STEFANIE**

Before he was off to his Sabbatical, I asked pastor Chad what he hoped I might offer the members of Lower Valley Presbyterian Church while he was gone. We had already worked out the list of my responsibility: I was to plan worship, preach, be available for special services and emergency pastoral care, moderate Session, and generally be available to resource leaders of the congregation as they negotiated their ministry in his absence. Chad's response to my question was simply that he wanted this congregation to hear a new voice.

Over the next 14 weeks, you will hear a different voice in worship. It won't always be mine. Of course we will have our appreciated liturgists. But also, on May 29<sup>th</sup>, will be a worship service led by your 4<sup>th</sup>/ 5<sup>th</sup> grade Sunday school class. Of course, on June 5<sup>th</sup>, we will worship in the park – with some birds adding their voices to the liturgy. Your ASP team will be commissioned and in late July return to tell their witness. Also, two church leaders have stepped up to give a sermon – at some point over the summer. Are you curious about who? Would you like to add your voice?

Discovering new voices or rediscovering familiar voices which help us grow and appreciate God's grace is important. Last week I heard a song by Paul Simon on the radio. There was no denying that it was “a Paul Simon song”. I knew the voice. But as much as it was familiar, something made me pause and think, “How have I not heard this song before, could it be new?”. Then it was announced that this was the first single off Paul Simon's soon to be released album. I was thrilled. This 74 year old's music has had incredible longevity. So I could not help but think of Paul Simon as I wrote this article and about the new voice I was supposed to be for you these months.

We sometimes refer to writers, poets and musicians “finding their voice”. This isn't about the sound our vocal chords produce. When communicating from a place of genuineness, one's unique voice comes forward. When I hear an artist's new “sound”, I listen for its faithfulness to their voice. I've seen and heard artists who try and re-invent themselves with a gimmick. It might be interesting, but it falls flat. I'll be listening for this when I fully hear Paul Simon's new album later this summer. I imagine I will like what I hear. Pastors also need to find their voice as preachers. It is interesting that the word Voice comes from the Latin root *vocare*, which is also the root word for vocation. It is part of a pastor's calling to listen for God's voice, and to share what they hear with others in a way that is authentic to who they are. Part of what pastor Chad is doing on Sabbatical is honing his voice as he is reconnecting with things that feed his soul – with nature, with silence, with family, with himself and with the Creator who made him uniquely Chad. My prayer is that your pastor will be refreshed and come back with his very recognizable voice. Maybe when you listen you will say: “How have I not heard this song before, could it be new?”.

And so I plan to offer you my voice and my support over the next few months. For the most part, I would think what I share should sound familiar. I will just be reminding you of God's love for you. I guess this is a spoiler alert, for as the pastor joke goes, that is my “one sermon”! I pray that we will all listen with open ears, hearts and minds to all the voices which will be lifted in worship over the next several months, for God surely always has something good to say to us and needs us to give voice to this Good News!

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## **WORSHIP**

### **Worship in the Park!**

**Mark your calendars for our Annual Worship in the Park which will be on June 5<sup>th</sup> at Califon Park.**

## **THANK YOU**

The entire family of Marion Vandewater would like to thank the many members of our congregation who helped to make the April 9<sup>th</sup> Memorial Service and Reception such an uplifting event. The handbell ringers under Sue Hostler's expert direction worked many extra hours to play a favorite hymn, and Don practiced overtime to play many other favorites beautifully and "loudly" as Marion had requested in her written suggestions. Thank you to Wendy Garcia for coordinating a wonderful luncheon, and to **all** who provided salads and desserts, set up, cleaned up, and worked behind the scenes in too many ways to mention. It truly was inspiring to see the caring teamwork of our church members — we can never thank you enough!  
*Nancy Vandewater Knight and family*

## **NURSERY CARETAKERS NEEDED**

Our church is looking for experienced, energetic, and dependable nursery workers to provide care for children ages infant - 4 years during worship services on Sunday morning, and for other occasional events. This is a great opportunity for someone to be involved in our community. It is a paid position and the employee must be willing to submit a background check. If you know someone who may be interested please contact Christina Wilson at [cmwilsondvm@gmail.com](mailto:cmwilsondvm@gmail.com) or 732-616-6188.

## **SPIRITUAL FORMATION**

### **Evening Circle**

The next meeting of the Evening Circle will be on May 18<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m. in the Getz Library. We will be continuing our study with Lesson 4 from the Horizon's Bible Study "Recognizing Paul". Lisamarie Boehm will lead the lesson. Call Nancy Knight 908-537-4347 with any questions.

### **Spiritual Formation of Children**

It is so hard to believe that the Sunday School year is drawing to a close. We have been blessed with lots of faithful children and have all, teachers and kids alike, learned more about the love of Jesus and the grace of God.

During the Easter service, the children painted butterflies at the art table. They are displayed on the wall in front of the sanctuary. It is a blessing indeed to have the message, He is risen, before us each Sunday as we sit in the congregation. Good job kids, and some adults too.

The 4/5 grade class has been busy this spring. They prepared boxes for Operation Christmas Shoebox. Each child chose a boy or girl and an age category, and shopped for gifts that they thought might delight a child in need. In class, we decorated the boxes and wrote notes to the children. We are eager to see where are boxes might go, and hope we hear back from some of the children. We have also been preparing to lead worship on May 29, by learning the different parts of the worship service, and choosing different jobs to do. Please support the 4/5 class on May 29<sup>th</sup>.

The Spiritual Formation of Children Team hosted a brunch on April 16, as our spring retreat for Sunday school Teachers. We shared stories of Sunday School and ideas for improving our time with the children. We are in need of teachers for next year at almost every level.

If you are interested in teaching, please contact any one on the team: Christina Wilson, Natalie Gast, Nicole Dahl, Kim Rodgers and Linda Stetler.

### **G.i.F.T**

Mark your calendars! GiFT will be July 10-14<sup>th</sup> this year. As we have been doing, it will involve all ages. New this year, the children's portion of the program will be run by Johnsonburg! We are really looking forward to the ideas & energy they will bring to the program & hope that you can join us. More details will be available as it gets closer.

### **MISSION NEWS AND UPCOMING EVENTS**

#### **Book/Bake Sale Update**

Thank you to all the volunteers helping with the sale as well as baking and donating books. While we did not have much foot traffic, we did end up making over \$700 for the ASP trip this summer! Thank you all. In addition, all the leftover books went to Annalise Rodgers' 4H Club Book Drive. Win-win for everyone!

#### **Silverware Collection for Elijah's Promise**

Thank you to the overwhelming support for Elijah's Promise, a soup kitchen in New Brunswick. We collected **572 pieces** of silverware! They will be delivered next week to the kitchen. Hopefully, real

silverware will give a little dignity to those in need. Thank you all for your generosity!

#### **Phillipsburg Soup Kitchen: Volunteers Needed**

Our church has volunteered to work at the soup kitchen in Phillipsburg on **July 23<sup>rd</sup> from 10:45 a. m. - 1:30 p.m.** We committed to **ten volunteers** ages 11 and up. There is a sign up sheet in the Parish Hall. Hope you can join us for a great day of service!

#### **Local Action Team Update**

The Local Action Team would like to announce a new Nomination form. (*Please see the form at the end of the newsletter.*) Do you know someone who is a wonderful neighbor and deserves assistance from the Local Action Team? Is that neighbor elderly, a single parent, disabled, injured or otherwise in need? If so, please nominate this person and/or family. If selected, they will receive aid from our team to do small chores, painting projects, clean up, yard work, grocery shopping or something else they need all at no cost to them! Please fill out the attached form and drop it in the Mission mailbox outside the library OR contact Lora Harris directly. Let's bring some joy and help our neighbors!

### **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).

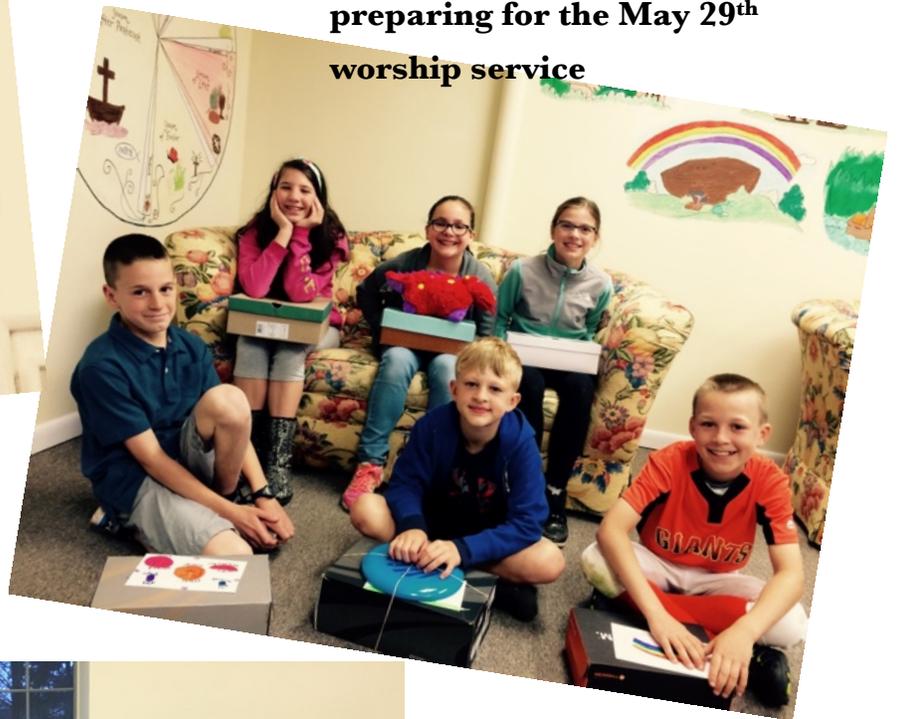
### **ASP HAPPENINGS**

#### **Car Wash**

Our car wash fundraiser was a success!! We had a beautiful day, a lot of fun and a great turn out!! We even washed a fire truck. Thank you to all who participated and to all those who supported our ASP event by getting their cars sparkling clean.



**Butterfly banner created by our children during Easter service**



**The 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders preparing for the May 29<sup>th</sup> worship service**



**Our Youth Group enjoying “Toxic Cereal” night — always a favorite with the kids!**



LOWER VALLEY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
LOCAL ACTION TEAM  
Nomination Form

Do you know someone that is a wonderful neighbor and  
deserves assistance from the Local Action Team?

Is that neighbor elderly, a single parent, disabled, injured or  
otherwise in need?

If so, please nominate this person and/or family below.  
If selected, they will receive aid from our team to do small  
chores, painting projects, clean up, yard work, grocery  
shopping or something else they need all at no cost to them!

Please fill out the information below and drop it in the Mission  
mailbox outside the library OR contact Lora Harris directly.

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I would like to nominate: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Please provide name, address and/or contact information of the nominee)

because \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Why are you nominating them?)

The Local Action Team can help this person and/or family by

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(What services do you think would be most helpful?)

Nominated by: \_\_\_\_\_

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Local Action Team Contact: Lora Harris  
[loratod@comcast.net](mailto:loratod@comcast.net)  
908-763-1946

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](mailto:lowervalleypc@embarqmail.com)

**Pastor Stefanie's Contact info:**

Cell phone: (973) 722-2304

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**Church Info:**

Claudia Gilbert: Church Administrator

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Office hours: W-F, 8:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.

**Session Members**

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

## Upcoming Servers

| Date                               | Liturgist                        | Ushers                              | Communion Servers  |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| May 1                              | Stephanie Donlon                 | Judy Eckwielen<br>Richard Fincher   | Wendy Garcia<br>Lisa Coffaro<br>Judy Eckwielen<br>Stephanie Donlon |
| May 8                              | Marilyn El-Zahr                  | Marilyn and Al El-Zahr              |  |
| May 15                             | Abby Ernst                       | Madeleine Argue<br>Stuart Solewater |  |
| May 22                             | Terry Hoffman                    | Rich Ehrlich<br>Madeleine Argue     |  |
| May 29 —<br>Family Worship         | 4/5 Grade Sunday<br>School Class | 4/5 Grade Sunday School<br>Class    |  |
| June 5 —<br>worship in the<br>park | Stephanie Donlon                 | Nancy and David Knight              | Stephanie Donlon<br>Abby Ernst<br><b>OPEN</b><br><b>OPEN</b>       |
| June 12                            | Judy Eckwielen                   | Lisa Coffaro<br>Isabel Roppolo      |  |
| June 19                            | Richard Finches                  | <b>OPEN</b><br><b>OPEN</b>          |  |
| June 26                            | Dick Kline                       | Abby and Ken Ernst                  |  |

**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  
May 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.