

## From Pastor Chad

Now that Halloween is over we can safely turn our attention toward Christmas. Did I just type that?

Truth be told I've had Advent on my mind for a couple months now. And, despite being horrified when I spotted major Christmas displays up at Costco and Home Depot a month ago, I don't believe we can start preparing for Christmas too soon.

If we're going to be a people who focus on Jesus during Advent and Christmas it is not too early to begin orienting ourselves to the concerns of Christ. The preparations I speak of, however, have little to do with making shopping lists or being nice instead of naughty; it won't involve cartoon lawn ornaments or energy consuming strings of white lights either.

What I'm really interested in is living faithfully amidst the confusing array of consumer pressures, false idols, and misguided traditions that distract us from true worship. Advent is not a season for Christmas carols (those come into play during Christmas Tide - the two weeks following Christmas Eve), but a season of reflection and preparation. It is a season for deepening our understanding of just what it means for the world that God has responded to our struggle, sent Jesus, and remains "with us".

### *Excursus*

If you are a parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle or influential person in the life of a child then I'll take a moment to repeat what I've mentioned in the past. Research conducted by the Barna Group and others suggests, what I've observed to be anecdotally true, that bringing a kid to church or youth group once a week isn't going to do much to shape their faith in most cases. Children and Youth look to parents and other important adults for their cues on how to live in this world as Christians. So, we can tell the story at church, but reshaping Christmas needs to happen at home.

Every year it is my hope that as a church we can help one another bring deep meaning and faithful reflection to the Advent season. I always enjoy our annual Alternative Gift Fair (more details about this can be found in this newsletter and at our website) because it leads us into the Advent and Christmas seasons with a focus on truly meaningful gift giving.

I also look forward to our annual Advent workshop. This year it will be on Saturday November 30<sup>th</sup>, at 6:30 p.m. I'm especially looking forward to it this year because our workshop will not only be a time to gather as a church, for a collective exhale to remind ourselves to slow down, but includes a group

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project designed to connect Advent rhythms of home and family to the Advent rhythms in our community worship.

As we walk through Advent we'll use the Jesse Tree as a way of reminding ourselves of God's story, our story, how Jesus is part of the story, and how God continues to call us to be part of and keep telling the story.

Be sure and mark your calendars now and make the Advent workshop a priority. Both the Team for Spiritual Formation of Children and the Worship Team have been working to shape a meaningful Advent that brings our family life and our life as the Church together.



### **Newsletter Options**

Please help us save on postage and copier paper costs by receiving the newsletter via e-mail. Also, by receiving an e-mail version, you will be able to enjoy all our photos in color! If you are interested please e-mail Claudia at:

[lowervalleypc@embarqmail.com](mailto:lowervalleypc@embarqmail.com). The newsletter can also be viewed on our webpage: [www.lowervalley.org](http://www.lowervalley.org).

### **Monthly Calendar**

Due to lack of space in the newsletter, the monthly church calendar can be found on the church website: [www.lowervalley.org](http://www.lowervalley.org).

### **Church Directory**

Please a few minutes to look over the copy of the directory in the Parish House on the "sign up" table and make any changes that are needed. We hope to distribute an updated version in the next month or so. Also, we are missing photos for many of you, so please e-mail or drop off a photo to the church office. If you didn't receive a copy of the directory and would like one please let Claudia in the office know and one can be sent to you.

### **Alternative Gift Fair**

### **WE NEED YOUR HELP!!**

The biggest mission project of our church year is coming up in just a few weeks, on November 16<sup>th</sup>. This is truly a

project in which we can ALL participate.

**Publicity:** You can help by putting up a poster at your gym or workplace. Contact Nancy Knight or Lyn Magee.

**Kitchen Prep:** We need some people to help get everything ready in the kitchen. You would need to arrive by 8:30 a.m.

**Lunch (food and servers):** We are looking for volunteers to make and/or serve soup and desserts for the fair. We need cookies, brownies and small cakes, etc. and 1 or 2 more soups. Food items need to be dropped off at the church by 9:30 a.m. that day.

Contact Lisa Coffaro at [coffaro423@comcast.net](mailto:coffaro423@comcast.net) or call 832-0409 if you can help with making or serving lunch.

### **Soup for Sale!**

Beginning the first Sunday of December and going until the end of March we will be holding our Soup Sale to benefit our ASP volunteers' expenses and work in Tennessee this July. Please help support this wonderful

program to make homes safe, warm and dry for our neighbors in Appalachia.

### **LVPC – Ready for the Storm!**

As may recall in the September newsletter we mentioned that through the generosity of an anonymous benefactor we were planning to install an emergency generator at the Parish Hall. Well, the planning is over! We now have a new 20-kilowatt emergency generator installed outside next to the kitchen. This fully-automated natural gas-fired unit will provide emergency power to keep the Parish Hall fully functional during a black-out.

It's been a year since quite a few of our parishioners and neighbors sought refuge at our church in the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy. We were fortunate that our buildings retained power during those trying times when so many of us were left in the dark for days on end after the storm.

Our doors were open and many people stopped by to

get warmed up, have a cup of coffee, cook some food in the kitchen, grab a hot shower, or to charge electronic devices... some of us even worked in the library instead of commuting to work when gasoline became short in supply!

We were lucky and blessed to be able to serve the community and provide a safe haven for those in need. Fortunately, we'll now just be blessed to be able to help others, and not have to rely on luck!

### **Mark Your Calendars**

The Agape Ringers will be performing at an Interfaith Christmas Concert to benefit the Clinton Open Cupboard Food Pantry at 5:00 p.m. on Sunday, December 1<sup>st</sup> at the Immaculate Conception Church in Annandale. This concert is in its third year and involves several churches in the area, together with the Salvation Army Brass Band and Hunterdon Harmonizers.

Food and monetary donations will be accepted at the concert. We will be handing out grocery bags in

church several weeks before the concert in which to pack your food donations. If you can't attend the concert but would like to make a donation, we will be collecting them in church on the day of the concert (Sunday, December 1<sup>st</sup>).

For additional information, please contact Sue Hostler at 908-574-5337 or [JSHostler@gmail.com](mailto:JSHostler@gmail.com). You can also get information about the concert from their Facebook page — <https://www.facebook.com/interfaithchristmasconcert>.

We hope you will take this opportunity to support this worthy cause, while preparing for the Advent season with some beautiful Christmas music!

### **The BRAB group (Building Relationships Around Books)**

We are a group of ladies that meet in the evening on the 1<sup>st</sup> Monday of each month. We enjoy snacks & wine while having an informal & lively discussion on member-chosen books. For more info, please

contact Kim Rodgers at [chadandkimrodgers@gmail.com](mailto:chadandkimrodgers@gmail.com).

### **The Califon Moms**

Moms with young children get together weekly to talk, support each other & let the kids interact/play. We usually meet in the mornings one day a week at parks or one another's homes. This group was started by a few ladies at LVPC, but has branched out to include other moms in the Califon area. Please contact Natalie Gast at [gast.natalie@gmail.com](mailto:gast.natalie@gmail.com) if you'd like to join us!

### **Join us for Fellowship!**

Come and get to know your church family at Coffee & Conversation every Sunday after service in the Parish Hall. Eat, talk and let your kids have fun. Help support this fun time by sharing the load. Set up, bake, bring a favorite dish or help clean up. Sign up at the table in the Parish Hall.

### **Evening Circle**

The next meeting of the Women's Evening Circle will be held on **Wed. Nov. 20th, at 7 p.m. in the Getz**

**Library.** Joni Nodes will lead the lesson, as we begin the 2013-2014 Horizons Bible Study "An Abiding Hope, The Presence of God in Exodus and Deuteronomy," from Presbyterian Women. Lesson one is "God at Work," about Exodus chapters 1 and 2. Please join us for an informal evening of discussion, fellowship, prayer and refreshments. If you wish, you may bring a small snack item (fruit, nuts, cookies, etc.) to share. We will provide a beverage. There is no homework (unless you'd like to lead a lesson!) and, no commitment to come every month. We meet on Wednesdays (usually the third of each month) so you can drop off your youth at "The Channel" and come to the meeting — give it a try! For more information call Nancy Knight (908) 537-4347 or Joni Nodes (908) 236-7996.

### **Christmas Tree Sale**

We will be picking up the Christmas trees for this year's sale on Friday, November 29 and need a few extra hands to

help get the trees off the truck and sort and tag them.

We also need lots of "salespersons" starting on Saturday, November 30<sup>th</sup> from 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. and continuing each weekend until Christmas — Saturdays from 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. and Sundays from 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.

**Look for the sign-up sheet at Coffee and Conversation after service. We've created 2 hour work increments to accommodate busy schedules. Please sign up!!**

### **Advent Workshop**

**Saturday, November 30<sup>th</sup>, from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.**

We'll begin our preparation for Advent with a short time of worship. Then we'll work together on a community Jesse Tree project that will become part of our Sunday worship during Advent. Bring a leftover Thanksgiving desert to share (there is always an extra pie lying around after all the gluttony of Turkey day! Right?)

Don't know what a Jesse Tree is? Come find out more about this tradition inspired by Isaiah 11:1, "A shoot will spring forth from the stump of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots."

### **Attention All Student Actors and Actresses!**

At Lower Valley Presbyterian Church we view the Christmas Play as more than just a play. Yeah, it's cute...and sometimes funny, but it's more than that. It's an opportunity for the kids to interact with the mystery of Jesus' birth while leading the congregation in worship. This year's Christmas Play is in the works! We are currently having signups for the play after church on Sundays in the Parish Hall. No previous acting experience is required, and you can have as many or as few lines as you like — or no lines at all! We will be holding rehearsals for the play on the following dates:

**Sunday, 11/17 —**

**11:15 – 11:30**

Meet with kids to hand out play so they can look over their lines and start to practice and memorize them

**Sunday, 11/24 —**

**11:30 - 1:00**

Practice for those who have lines

**Sunday, 12/1 —**

**11:30-1:00**

Practice for those who have lines, costume sizing for those who don't have lines

**Saturday, 12/7 —**

**11:30-1:00**

Practice for those who have lines

**Sunday, 12/15 —**

**11:30-1:00**

Practice for **all** kids involved in the play

**Saturday, 12/21 —**

**9:00-1:00**

Dress Rehearsal for those with lines

**11:00-1:00**

Dress Rehearsal for those without lines

**Sunday, 12/22 —**

**9:00**

Arrive and put on costumes

**10:00**

Lead worship through performance of the Christmas Play.

If you have any questions about the play, please contact Kim Rodgers at [chadandkimrodgers@gmail.com](mailto:chadandkimrodgers@gmail.com), or by phone at 892-0141.

### **Alternative Gift Fair**

If you want to have a very special day, come to the Alternative Gift Fair right in our own Parish House on Saturday, November 16<sup>th</sup> from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. We will have representatives from 12 different non-profit organizations who can share amazing true stories about how you can help people in need. Bring your gift list! Do you need a gift for your child's teacher? How about a gift of peanut butter, jelly, bread and applesauce for the Open Cupboard Food Pantry in

**Join us for our next  
Family Game Night  
on November 22<sup>nd</sup>**

Clinton? This costs just \$10, and you receive a custom gift card to present to the teacher you are honoring. Your gift is tax deductible. Just \$5 could help buy a nutritious snack for a child at SAFE in Hunterdon; you might give the gift card to a neighbor. For a friend or co-worker, you might consider a gift of a new pillow (\$10) to the Interfaith Hospitality Network. Do you know someone who loves biking? How about an honor gift to Pedals for Progress? In this newsletter there is a copy of our "Shopping List" and directions for using it. Some people enjoy filling out their list ahead of time, matching gifts to recipients' interests and bringing it to the Fair. If you are unable to attend but want to participate, just fill out the form, attach your check made out to Lower Valley Presbyterian Church and mail or bring it to the church office. We will send or give you the gift cards.

Here are some ways you can help expand our church's mission giving through our Alternative Gift Fair:

### Here are the directions for using the enclosed order form:

1. Make your selections and enter the dollar total in the right most column for each item you select.
2. Sum the cost of all your gifts and enter that amount into the Grand Total box on the back page.
3. Enter your name and complete address on the bottom of the back page along with any Special Instructions for mailing your gift cards.
4. Send your completed shopping list along with a check in the correct amount to:

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

Please write **AGF** in the lower left corner of the front of the envelope

**Your gift cards will be shipped to you within 10 days!**

- Pray for the people who represent the organizations and for the volunteers who are working that day. Pray that more "shoppers" will come and will catch on to the concept of alternative giving.
- Explain alternative giving to someone who doesn't know what it is. Invite a friend or relative to come to the fair with you. Enjoy our wonderful homemade soup lunch while you discuss this new way of giving.
- Decide to give at least one alternative gift this year. Even small gifts all add up to make a difference.

- Tell your family that you would be honored to receive an alternative gift this year. Then tell them where they can get these gifts!

- Suggest to a good friend that the two of you exchange alternative gifts this year — start a new tradition!

Come and see why our Alternative Gift Fair raises more money for mission every year. Experience the joy that comes from giving gifts in the spirit of Christ. Celebrate Jesus' birthday in a way that brings honor and glory to God.

# Upcoming Servers

Date	Liturgist	Ushers	Communion Servers	Fellowship Host(s)
November 3	Sue Huntington	Renee and Jeff Ollerenshaw	Sue Huntington Linda Stetler Lisa Coffaro Warren Newman	Gast Donlon Nodoro Freed
November 10 Family Worship	Joni Nodes	Donna and John Leddie		Rodgers/Nodes/ Nodoro
November 17	Marilyn El-Zahr	Terry Hoffman Ed Getz		Parish Life/Stetler
November 24 Family Worship	Judy Eckwielen	Madeleine Argue <b>Need I more</b>		Ollerenshaw/O'Keefe
December 1	Dick Kline	Cindy and Tim O'Keefe	Terry Hoffman Linda Stetler Sue Huntington Sally Zeiner-Morrish	
December 8	Nancy Knight	Janet and Gary Kipp		
December 15	Stephanie Donlon	Marilyn and Al El-Zahr		
December 24 4:30 p.m.				
December 24 7:30 p.m.	Robbie Axelsen	Terry Hoffman Rick Ehrlich		
December 29 Family Worship	May Saxton	Stephanie and Jeff Donlon		

## Art Table Schedule for Family Worship

11/10: Linda Stetler

11/24: Lora Harris

12/29: Jennifer Wysocki

1/19: Stephanie Donlon

2/16: Renee Ollerenshaw

3/16: Isabel Roppolo and Lisa Coffaro

4/20: Kim Rodgers, Natalie Gast and Linda Stetler

5/25: Donna and Erika Leddie

Lower Valley Presbyterian Church  
445 County Road 513  
Califon, NJ 07830  
November 2013

## **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.