

Parish Happenings

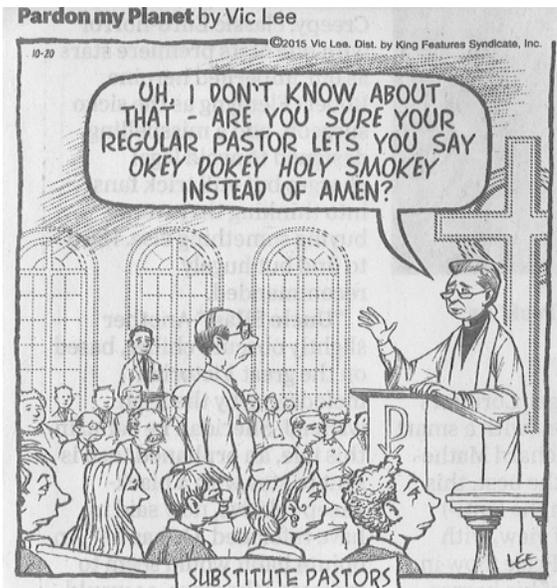
November 2015

FROM PASTOR CHAD

Sabbatical and Ongoing Congregational Life

"Let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith." (Hebrews 12:1b-2a)

In the last newsletter we published the details regarding the sabbatical grant we received from the Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Program. Over the last month I've gotten many questions and engaged in many conversations about what I'll be doing next spring and summer. The support and genuine interest in how I'll be spending the sabbatical time has been very encouraging. I am grateful to be part of such a supportive community of faith.



Interestingly, questions about the congregation's role are not nearly as common. I can't remember once being asked how the congregation will make the most of the sabbatical time. Sure, there have been some questions about who will fill in on Sundays (mainly who will preach), but little probing about the goals for the congregation during this unique time.

So, I thought I'd ask a couple important questions we should be asking. What is it that our congregation stands to gain from our pastor's sabbatical and how will we use the time to learn and grow? I'm certain there is more than one possible answer to each question, but I'll get the conversation started with a few thoughts.

The most obvious answer to the first question is, of course, a rested, renewed, and restored pastor ready for the next leg of our *race* together. I believe, however, there is more than that in store for our congregation in the coming months and I wouldn't want to limit our vision to the pastor.

While I'm gone, how we learn and grow and get the most from a time with different rhythms, new leadership, and a slightly different focus will be the real opportunity of the sabbatical time. This will be a time for new leadership to emerge as the work and witness of our church continues: spiritual formation, mission, worship, youth ministry, and pastoral care.

Do not fear the possible changes that might occur. Rather, embrace the risk of change that might renew the life and hope of a congregation.

From Grace Notes: A collection of wisdom and advice from recipients of grants in the Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Programs)

Continued from previous page

There are many people who have gifts that need to be used. New rhythms and needs might allow them to find space to share these gifts. This will be a great time to explore and discover what we can do. We might find that in depending less on the pastor in some areas of church life we will open new avenues for pastoral leadership in other areas. Our life together has the potential to become more vibrant as activities once done by the pastor are given new life and new vision by the voices and creativity of others.

For eight years we've gone about our church life with, more or less, the same rhythm. Sabbatical time forces us to consider new rhythms and explore both the strengths and weakness of our congregational life.

I found the following words, from a church that has previously received a Clergy Renewal grant to be particularly encouraging, "When leaders experience renewal, congregations are re-energized, too. Things don't just return to normal when the leader returns. New patterns of leadership emerge. New vision sprouts up."

It is my sincere hope that we, both myself during my sabbath time and the congregation while I'm gone, will make the most of the experiences and new opportunities that will emerge.

Another important aspect of the sabbatical is what we referred to in our grant proposal as a Congregational Resource pastor. We are looking forward to working with a Congregational Resource Pastor who will support the session's vision for sabbatical time through preaching, teaching, and walking along side us in this sabbatical journey. This may mean some changes in worship time to accommodate a pastor presently serving another local congregation and leading worship on Sunday mornings already. The session is looking at this change as an opportunity to be reminded throughout the sabbatical that we are listening for God and praying to be renewed and reformed.



STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

There are a million reasons and ways to give to our LVPC community, but as the Thanksgiving season arrives, please remember your pledges as a sign of gratitude for all that LVPC means to you. Our 2016 pledge drive letter from the finance team will be sent out shortly – please take the time in the coming weeks to reflect on what LVPC represents to you and your family, and consider how you can share your gifts of time, talent, and money with our vibrant (and growing!) community.

EVENING CIRCLE

The Women's Bible Study group will meet in the Getz Library Wednesday, November 18th at 7:00 p.m. We are continuing the Horizons Bible Study, "Journey Through Revelation Apocalyptic Hope for Today", Lesson 7. This lesson will focus on Revelation 12. Any questions please call Nancy 537-4347 or Joni 236-7996.

HANDBELL CONCERT

**SAVE THE DATE! Sunday,
November 29, 5:00 p.m.**

**5th Annual Joyeux Noel
Christmas Benefit Concert**

The Agape Ringers and the Faith Ensemble Ringers of LVPC will be participating once again in the Joyeux Noel Interfaith Christmas Concert to benefit the Open Cupboard Food Pantry. The concert will take place on Sunday, November 29th at 5:00 p.m. at the Immaculate Conception Church of Annandale. Choirs from five different churches, along with the Hunterdon Harmonizers, join together to create an inspiring evening of Advent and Christmas music. Although the concert is free, we are asking everyone to bring a donation of dry or canned goods to be given to the Open Cupboard Food Pantry. In the next few weeks, we will be distributing grocery bags that can be used to hold your donations. Donations are appreciated even if you are unable to attend the concert — you can leave your donations in the back of the sanctuary, or give them to Sue Hostler, and she will get them to the concert. It is a blessing to our handbell groups to be a part of such a worthy cause, and we hope to see you at the concert!

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.

MISSION NEWS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

Giving Fair: The Giving Fair is on **Saturday, November 14th from 10-2**. Get an early start on your holiday shopping and purchase *symbolic* gifts through donations to local, regional, national, and international charities. There will be representatives from 17 non-profit organizations with *interactive* exhibits. Come pet a Seeing Eye puppy, spin a wheel of questions and play other games. Also, this year we will have raffle baskets with ticket sales benefiting the Open Cupboard Food Pantry. And, if you bring one canned food item to the event, you will receive one FREE ticket! As a final note, the Giving Fair has always been a very successful event in regards to the amount of money given to worthy organizations. Our goal this year, however, is to have more people attend the event, get to know the organizations and share the knowledge. We

encourage you and your family and friends to join us on **Saturday, November 14th**. *If you would like to help with the event, you can donate food items (please contact Lisa Coffaro) or share an hour or so of your time (please contact Abby Ernst).

UNICEF Sewing Project: We are teaming up with UNICEF and Delilah from 106.7 Lite FM to sew hats for premature babies in Haiti. If you would like to participate, please join us in the Parish Hall after church on **Sunday, November 22nd**. Adults and children are encouraged to attend. No experience required. We plan on sewing and knitting preemie hats. Please bring any fabric, thread, sewing machines, needles and yarn you may have. Hope to see you then!

Elijah's Promise: We recently wrapped and delivered another box of silverware to Elijah's Promise, a soup kitchen in New Brunswick. They were very appreciative! In addition, we are planning another day of service to help in the kitchen. If you would like to participate, please contact Abby Ernst. (*Please note: we are only looking for adult volunteers this time.*)

Newark Christian School Sponsorship: We received information regarding the new student we are sponsoring. Her name is Genesis Garcia-Penzo and she is in 3rd grade. We have been invited to visit the school to watch their Christmas program on **December 18th at 7:00 p.m.** In addition, we can send letters and gifts to Genesis. The information is on the Mission Bulletin Board.



Mission Team: Madeleine Argue, Judy Eckwielen, Abby Ernst, Lora Harris, Tracy Heuneman, Nancy Knight, Renee Ollerenshaw, Chad Rodgers, Isabel Roppolo, and Anne Underhill.

ADVENT WORKSHOP

We often hear it called the *Christmas Season*. It is the time between *Black Friday* and Christmas Day, but judging by what we see in department stores it may have already started. The challenge for us, as followers of Jesus, is that the so-called *Christmas Season* doesn't really come until Christmas. While the culture is a buzz with consumer Christmas trappings, we are making our way through the season of Advent. Advent is a season of alertness to the hope of God's promises fulfilled. It is a time for attentiveness to God's Spirit and deep reflection.

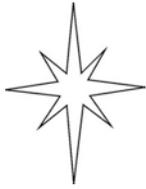
At LVPC we realize how hard Santa and his reindeer can make it to celebrate Advent. For this reason everyone is invited to participate in our Advent workshop.

Saturday, November 28th from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. Bring a dessert to share and we'll welcome the season of Advent together.

"SELFIE" DIRECTORY

First ever in the history of church directories! Every photo in our new directory will be a selfie. Look for Chad at Fellowship to take your own pic. Samples selfies below





13th Annual Giving Fair



Saturday, November 14th — 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Lower Valley Presbyterian Church in the Parish Hall
445 County Road 513, Califon, NJ
908.832.2933

Get an early start on your holiday shopping at the Giving Fair and purchase symbolic gifts through donations to local, regional, national, and international charities.

There will be representatives from 18 non-profit organizations with INTERACTIVE exhibits.

Free cards for purchased gifts

Charitable gifts are tax deductible

Fair trade gift table —Beads For Life

NEW This Year: RAFFLE BASKETS

Benefiting the Open Cupboard Food Pantry

Bring one canned good and receive a FREE raffle ticket!

Can't attend? Call or visit www.lowervalley.org for a gift list

Lower Valley Presbyterian Church Giving Fair

*In a culture of excess things:
Gift giving that changes lives*

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

Lisa Coffaro: 973-713-4870/coffaro423@comcast.net

Stephanie Donlon: 537-2604/stephaniedonlon@yahoo.com

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

Wendy Garcia: 867-7186/kwgarcia@msn.com

Terry Hoffman: 689-7646/tbeehoffman@aol.com

John Leddie: 537-9622/dovendog@comcast.net

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
November 1	Sue Huntington	Judie and Adam AMBIELLI	Sue Huntington Lisamarie Boehm Renee Ollerenshaw Terry Hoffman
November 8	Stephanie Donlon	Judy Eckwielen Lisamarie Boehm	
November 15	OPEN	Nancy and David Knight	
November 22 — Family Worship	Stephanie Donlon	Terry Hoffman OPEN	
November 29	Warren Newman	Lisa Coffaro Isabel Roppolo	
December 6	Dick Kline	OPEN OPEN	Stephanie Donlon Judy Eckwielen Lisamarie Boehm OPEN
December 13	Nancy Knight	Kirk Petrik OPEN	
December 20	Judy Eckwielen	Terry Hoffman OPEN	
December 24 4:30 p.m.	N/A	OPEN OPEN	
December 24 7:30 p.m.	Marilyn El-Zahr	Karen and Warren Newman	
December 27 — Family Worship	OPEN	Janet and Gary Kipp	

**If you are able to serve in an OPEN spot,
please let Claudia know. Thanks!!**

November 2015
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.