

Parish Happenings

November 2022

FROM PASTOR CHAD

Change Comes

If you've made it to worship in the past few weeks you are aware that my parents have been out from California. Their visit was strategically planned so they could see the last of our family march in the Voorhees marching band. I've been a band Dad for eight years and that season of life is coming to a close. This newsletter is coming to you on the eve of the VHS marching band's last performance with one of my children.

Like so many things in life that reach a conclusion there is some sadness mixed with joy. I'll look forward to having my fall weekends free from loading and unloading instruments, but I'll miss listening to the drum cadence as they march on and off the field and watching my kids

perform and have fun with the band in the stands at football games. Music at the high school has brought a lot of joy to my family and an important centering to the high school years.

Things do change we can count on that. I mentioned that my mom was in town; my mom in town means something is going to change at home because she's always gotta clean something when she's here. This time around we've gotten a rearranged living room, a major decluttering of the former homeschool office, rearranged and decluttered kitchen drawers (still trying to remember which one to open for the silverware), and, of course, a clean fridge (thanks mom). I look forward to cooking in the newly organized and decluttered kitchen and I'll look forward to what future falls without marching band will bring.

As I think about our congregation and its mission in the community over the last 150 years I think about how much it has changed in that time. The whole thing started when some people had a vision

Do not remember the former things,
or consider the things of old.
I am about to do a new thing;
now it springs forth, do you not
perceive it?
I will make a way in the wilderness
and rivers in the desert.

Isaiah 43:18-19



With Noah on Senior Night

to gather for worship in this valley in the summer of 1870. That led to the purchase of the land (for \$300 from Samuel K. Weller and his wife) that we still worship on today. The foundation of the building was finished, by volunteers mostly, by the spring of 1871 and the sanctuary was dedicated in December.

[Dare I mention at this point that we've been planning a face lift to the sanctuary and some deferred maintenance work for 6 years.]

The real purpose of our church was of course not the physical building, but the formation of a community and that kicked off in earnest in May of 1872. For 150 years the Lower Valley Presbyterian church has worshiped Jesus and served its community. Years before 513 would be traveled by vehicles with an internal combustion engine and forty-six years before Califon Borough was incorporated people gathered in this spot for worship and fellowship. Over all that time the world has seen many changes, our nation has seen many changes, and without a doubt this congregation has undergone many changes, yet, we remain a community rooted in discipleship of Jesus the Christ.

Our congregation has rearranged the furniture several times in those 150 years. We've decluttered and reorganized and reprioritized. The physical building has had additions and subtractions, leaders have come and gone, fundraising schemes have come and gone, and even traditions have come and gone, but our core mission to make disciples of Jesus, to worship faithfully, to study scripture, and to serve our community remain. While we are in a time of immense change at the moment I hope that we can find encouragement from the past 150 years and the courage to welcome, together, the *new thing* that God is doing.

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CELEBRATING LVPC'S SESQUICENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY

The last few years have certainly upended many plans, but we didn't want to let 2022 slip away without acknowledging and celebrating the sesquicentennial anniversary of our congregation. On May 7, 1872 our congregation was officially organized by the Presbytery of Morris and Orange. That's 150 years ago last May and if you didn't know the definition of sesquicentennial you've learned something new today. Our building was erected the year prior and I suspect the real work of *the church* was already begun, but the moment our mission was officially recognized by the larger Presbyterian church was 150 years ago.

We plan to celebrate and mark this 150th year on the first Sunday in December. This has been our annual recognition of notable membership anniversaries Sunday and seemed like a good time to celebrate. There will be a reception and lunch following the worship service so mark your calendars for December 4th.



We'll take a look back at some fun history: for instance did you know that the original organ cost \$1,200 and had to be pumped by hand or that from 1910 to 1915 the church played a major role in building a sidewalk from main street so people could get from town to church?

And we'll celebrate God's call to be the church of Christ in the years ahead of us.

SUNDAY SCHOOL HAPPENINGS

Our one room school house approach kicked off in September and our dedicated teachers (Mike Reaves and Ken Ernst) and the children that join them on a given Sunday are finding a rhythm. Each week they build community, read a bible story and share in some related activities together.

We welcome Jordie Kipp to the Sunday school team.

Younger children not quite ready for a bible story and accompanying activities will be welcomed by Jordie Kipp during the service. Jodie is an experienced teacher with a background in Montessori and has graciously agreed to spend time with our youngest during worship.

YES, IT IS ALREADY THAT TIME AGAIN

... time to start thinking about Christmas Trees. The trees for our annual sale are scheduled to be delivered right around Thanksgiving. Keep your eyes and ears open for the opportunity to help unload and set up and sell trees Saturdays and Sundays during Advent. Participating in the tree sale is a fun way to interact with our community, share some Christmas spirit, and help the bottom line.



NEWS FROM MISSION

The mission team is seeking input from the congregation. As already stated, we are moving away from our annual Giving Fair. This year we are requesting the names of local organizations that you'd like the mission team to donate to this year. Please email Marilyn El-Zahr at marilyn.lastname@gmail.com with the name of the organization you'd like LVPC to donate to and the reason why you selected this organization. In early January, the mission team will divide mission money between the organizations you selected.

YOUTH GROUP

High school youth group has begun on Sundays from 7 - 8:30 p.m. We generally meet every Sunday at the church for some fun and games and a bit of bible study and fellowship. Our main communication comes from our Student Communications Coordinator's large text group. If your phone number is not part of that group and you'd like it to be, make sure to let pastor Chad know and we'll get you included.

ADULT SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Men's Fellowship: There's plenty of bible study, but that's not all. Join us virtually on Saturdays at 8 a.m. We share life and wrestle with scripture together. At the present we're spending time in Exodus. Contact Chad with any questions to get the zoom link.

PRAYER CHAIN

Reminder! The church maintains a virtual prayer chain. If you would like to be informed about those in need of prayers, and are willing to commit to prayerfully participate, please contact Krista Jenkins at kjenkins1970@gmail.com. Prayer requests can also go to Krista.

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Lower Valley Presbyterian Church
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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.