

Parish Happenings

October 2016

FROM PASTOR CHAD

Growing Old is Unavoidable, But Doesn't Have to Be Our Only Story

Last week the Fuller Youth Institute (part of Fuller Theological Seminary) released a new book based on a 4 year study of 250 congregations that are bucking the downward trend of youth involvement. The book, *Growing Young: 6 Essential Strategies to Help Young People Discover and Love Your Church*, is both challenging and encouraging at the same time.

I think we're mostly aware of the reality that the church faces, but the simple picture is this: 22 percent of the U.S. population are 18-29 year olds and yet only 10 percent of the population of our churches are made up of this age group (and I think in our church it is even less.) I could list more statistics and spend time explaining how this is problematic, but a fairly simple mathematical projection would suggest where the story if it continues on this trajectory is likely to end.

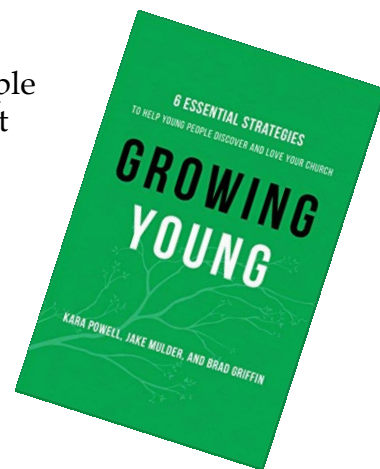
In the time that I've served as pastor at LVPC, I've been very proud of the commitment we've made to encouraging the faith development of children and youth (particularly children), but the unavoidable reality is we're aging. As much as I hate to admit it I'm getting older too (if I didn't need evidence my recent badminton injury, yes badminton, is proof.)

I want to be very clear about something; I'm not interested in youth for the future of our church. In fact, I have little interest in preserving this institution. I hear often, "the kids are our future," but honestly I have little concern for the long term future of our church. I am, however, interested in the work that God has called us to now and I think paying attention to youth is a big part of that.

Or, as the authors of *Growing Young* wrote, "The truth is, every church needs young people. Their passion enriches the soil around them. The curiosity they bring to Scripture and the authenticity they bring to relationships keep your church's teaching fresh and fellowship fruitful." (*Growing Young*, p. 14) We need young people because they are an important part of keeping us on our game, aware of our true calling, and generally awake to what the Holy Spirit is doing.

Though I've only begun to read this new book I'm encouraged, but also sense that we are being challenged to take seriously the practices suggested by the authors. It is my hope to find some partners in our congregation who will read and discuss the findings and suggested practices in *Growing Young*.

For the next several newsletters I will also be highlighting each of the 6 essential strategies and how we as a church might better engage young people in the adventure of faith.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chad', is located at the bottom right of the page.

SPECIAL ELECTION SEASON INSTALLMENT!!!

However hard we might try there is no way to avoid the daily bombardment of election-related news (for the sake of the discussion will call it news though from day to day little is actually new.) I find it very hard to imagine a scenario in which we wouldn't find ourselves in a conversation about the upcoming election. So, I thought it would be helpful if we all took a few moments to breathe deep and consider what it means to be Christians engaged in political discourse. First and foremost, I think it wise, whatever your political affiliation or leaning, to be reminded that our hope is in Christ alone. The U.S. political structure is in no way the only or best way to understand the political calling of the Christian community. Our two party system tends to lump people and policies together in often strange and random ways that have little to do with biblical teaching. It is my hope that as a Christian community and, as individual disciples, that we would not be afraid to enter our faith in the arena of public debate and conversation, but in so doing, we would always approach others with a spirit of compassion and civility. Listening honestly with the sincere goal of understanding others is not a bad place to start. You won't find much of this going on in presidential debates, but we may learn and grow and sew seeds of peace by implementing the principles listed below.

Principles of Compassionate Communication

1. Don't seek controversy or conflict. Pursue respectful honesty where everyone's voice is heard and valued.
2. Don't work toward agreement, consensus, or conversion. Work for deepened understanding.
3. When conflict emerges, don't freeze, or flee. Begin by doing your own work of compassion:
 - stop and breathe
 - identify your own judgmental thoughts
 - connect with your own needs
 - express your feelings and needs
4. Do the work of nourishing empathy:
 - keep listening and questioning until people feel heard
 - don't stop with hearing ideas; pursue until you hear feelings and needs
 - don't judge ideas, attitudes, or emotions, but discern the needs that lie beneath them

**From Marshall Rosenberg's Nonviolent Communication as cited in Fuller Magazine issue #7, page 89*

EVENING CIRCLE

Next Women's Bible Study will be held Wednesday, October 19th at 7:00 p.m. in the Getz Library. Study will be Lesson 6 "The Aroma of God Among Us" – continuing from Horizon's Bible Study: "Reconciling Paul, A Contemporary Study of 2 Corinthians". Please come and join us. Any questions call Nancy Knight 537-4347 or Joni Nodes 391-6263.

FAMILY PROMISE OF HUNTERDON COUNTY NEEDS HELP!

It's hard to believe but our Family Promise guests will be joining us again soon. The families will be with us from Sunday, October 9th through Sunday, October 23rd. Overnight and cooking volunteer schedules are currently being made. In fact, people that have helped in the past are already receiving phone calls to volunteer this time. For questions about hosting – contact Dave Loth 752-3524, or about cooking – contact Nancy Parks 876-4669.

MISSION NEWS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

Giving Fair: Save the Date

Our 14th annual Giving Fair is coming up soon. **It is being held on November 12th from 11 am – 3 pm.** (Please note the time change.) Get an early start on your holiday shopping and purchase *symbolic* gifts through donations to numerous local, regional, and international organizations. Many of these organizations are new to our fair, so please considering joining us to check them out. In addition, this year there will be "**Giving Fair Passports**". We are hoping this will be a fun way for children (and adults) to visit every organization. **If you fill your passport, you will get one free ticket for our raffle baskets!** There will be a wonderful lunch for purchase as well as interactive exhibits and fabulous raffle baskets. All proceeds from the raffle baskets will go to the Open Cupboard Food Pantry. We hope to see you on November 12th!

Giving Fair: We need donations and volunteers

Raffle Baskets: We are going to have raffle baskets again this year as another way to raise money and entice people to attend our wonderful event. We need your help with donations of **new** items to make these baskets a success! Below are

suggested items for the baskets we are offering. Feel free to donate any other items that you think will fit into our category of baskets.

Donation boxes will be located in the Narthex.

1. "**Book Lovers**": books (adult and children's), book light, bookmarks, Amazon, Califon Book Shop gift cards, etc.
2. "**It's a Date**": movie tickets, bowling gift card, restaurant gift certificates
3. "**Pampering**": manicure/pedicure gift certificate, candles, robe, slippers, nail polish, hand cream, magazines, pedicure kit, etc.
4. "**Family Night**": board games, popcorn maker, movie candy, DVD's, card games, etc.
5. "**Cooking**": Crock pot, cookbook, pizza stone/pan, pot holders, spices, Williams Sonoma, Crate & Barrel gift card, etc.
6. "**Arts and Crafts**": markers, play-doh, construction paper, paints/brushes, smocks, scissors, glue, colored pencils, stickers, drawing paper, Michael's gift card, etc.

Thank you in advance for your generosity!

Volunteers: We are looking for a few people to help out with the Giving Fair this year. We need help with the raffle baskets, balloons, food donations for the lunch, decorating, etc. If you can lend a hand, please contact Abby Ernst at abigailernst@gmail.com or 973-986-1124.

LVPC Little Free Library and Little Free Pantry

Have you see any Little Free Libraries in our area? There are a few around. The Mission Team would like to build one library and one pantry on our property. We feel this would be a great way to reach out to our local community. If you are interested in participating in the building of our Little Free Library and Little Free



Pantry, please contact Abby at abigailernst@gmail.com or 973-986-1124. We hope to build them in October. Thanks!

NURSERY CARETAKERS NEEDED

Our church is still 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 or 732-616-6188.

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Spiritual Formation of Children

The Spiritual Formation Team is delighted to announce that we have two new members: Lora Harris and Blake Haggerty. We welcome both of them and also the opportunity to expand our scope to the youth program of our church.

Sunday School is in full swing. If parents have not filled out the registration and photo release forms, they should do so as soon as possible. The forms are online and hard copies will be available in the 4/5 grade SS room and also at coffee hour after church. It is never too late to start Sunday School, so if your child is interested, please bring them this Sunday! The same is true for the youth program which meets on Wednesday nights and is open to 6th grade kids and up.

Christina Wilson and Abby Ernst are a committee of two to clean and maintain the toy stage area in the parish hall. Please help them out by having your children put away toys when they are finished with them.

Christmas Pageant

It is not too early to think about the Christmas pageant. If you would be interested in helping out in any way, please contact someone on the Spiritual Formation Team. Areas where help is needed: organizing the luncheon after the performance, helping with practices, helping with costuming, teaching the kids the songs needed, collecting props. Team: Kim Rodgers, Natalie Gast, Linda Stetler, Lora Harris, Blake Haggerty.

Art Table

See Kim Rodgers if you would like to sign up for manning the art table on family worship Sundays. We have new boxes this year!

Youth Group

For all middle and high school students we gather every Wednesday from 7-8:30 here at the church. We're exploring how the bible helps us understand our place in God's story and as always there are plenty of fun games too.



High School Students

If you are looking for deeper conversation about some of the bigger questions that fly through your mind, about faith and life, we've got an opportunity for you. Keep awake for *Random Friday and Saturday Night Gatherings* at Pastor Chad's house. Our first installment is Saturday, October 1 at 5pm. Other dates this fall will be announced. If you need more information see Pastor Chad, Kim Rodgers, or Natalie Gast.



ASP HAPPENINGS

There will be an information meeting for anyone interested in attending the summer 2017 trip to Appalachia on Sunday, October 16 at noon in the library.



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 lowervalleyipc@embarqmail.com

Pastor Chad's Contact info:

Cell phone: 908.892.0044

E-mail: revchadrodgers@gmail.com

Church Info:

Claudia Gilbert: Church Administrator

Phone: 908-832-2933

E-mail: lowervalleyipc@embarqmail.com

Website: www.lowervalley.org

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

Session Members

Lisamarie Boehm: 432-3414/lisamarie_boehm@yahoo.com

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

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

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

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
October 2	Christina Wilson	Stuart Solewater Lora Harris	Lisamarie Boehm Judy Eckwielen Stephanie Donlon Warren Newman
October 9	Richard Fincher	OPEN OPEN	
October 16 — Family Worship	OPEN	Anthony Casale OPEN	
October 23	OPEN	Lisa Coffaro and Isabel Roppolo	
October 30	Stuart Solewater	OPEN OPEN	
November 6	Marilyn El-Zahr	Terry Hoffman OPEN	Lisamarie Boehm OPEN OPEN OPEN
November 13	Judy Eckwielen	Rich Ehrlich Lisamarie Boehm	
November 20	Warren Newman	Nancy and David Knight	
November 27 — Family Worship	Terry Hoffman	Janet and Gary Kipp	

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

October 2016
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.