

Parish Happenings

October 2017

FROM PASTOR CHAD

Church and Sports

One of my unwritten rules for preaching has been to avoid the excessive use of sports analogies. Although I generally enjoy sports, and at least peripherally follow most major sporting events, I recognize that not everyone identifies, watches, or

understands the subtleties of sports. It always seemed to me that preaching should be an attempt to connect with as many people in the pews as possible and to use sports as a go-to illustration was leaving a good number of people out. There is also an inherent difficulty in connecting a sports story to a scripture text in a sermon. There is a huge diversity of sports and the challenge, of course, is that NASCAR



fans might not have a desire to hear about the intricacies of a Triple Salchow and ice skating fans may not have a deep appreciation for watching machines speed around an oval for 3 or 4 hours.

So, I've chosen to mostly avoid the mention of sports except of course when the San Francisco Giants win the world series (that makes for at least 3 uses of baseball in the last 7 years) and a few running analogies used in scripture which were connected to my sabbatical.

Recently I've had cause to reconsider my previous thinking. There may be challenges with connecting to a group of people through any one individual sport, but Americans are absolutely obsessed with sports in general. I've come to see that the culture of sport may actually be universally understood. The culture of parenting and grandparenting today completely revolves around getting children to and from sporting events. Organized sports, once a way of promoting recreation and giving kids something to do in the time between school and dinner, has become the religious practice of our day. We attend youth sports events with a fever and commitment previously reserved for churches and service organizations.

As a pastor I regularly feel the tension that is created by the limited role that church plays in the lives of our congregation and community. I find myself wondering and praying that I can be part of a community of people that would throw itself into our worship and communal life the way parents, grandparents and their children and grandchildren sacrifice everything for sports.

We make sure our children never miss a practice because that's what it means to be part of a team and the team isn't complete without everyone. Teams even make sure to include the injured kid on the sideline recognizing that they have something to contribute even if they can't contribute on the field. There is a role for everyone no matter the circumstances of the present moment.

Travel teams and school teams have expectations of massive, often daily, commitments and we willingly sign on because that's what it takes. We pour money, time, and countless hours into these sports teams and very often if you can't show up, be on time, and work hard for the cause of helping the team win then you're out. Somehow churches can't muster regular attendance, commitment, or much time from most members beyond weekly worship attendance.

I have often wondered how best to communicate that being part of a Church costs us more than just an hour a week. It could be that I've been avoiding the very analogy we all understand; being part of a team requires selfless commitment and lots of practice. Our mission is vital and it takes the gifts, skill, and total commitment of everyone (the healthy, the injured, the rich, the poor, the parent, the grandparent, the busy, the retired) to make a winning team. There is a role for all of us in our life together as God's Church, but if we are to fulfill our calling we may need to consider our church commitment to be more like our commitment to sports than we've previously thought. Giving ourselves to church life means practicing the skills required for our mission: bible study, prayer, neighbor love, or as the prophet Micah wrote, do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with your God (take God seriously).

For myself, I consider the mission entrusted to the church to be far more compelling than the plastic trophy handed out at the end of the season or the unlikely possibility my child will get a sports scholarship to a Division 1 college*.

May we be reminded, as we wander together in the desert, just where life giving water is found.

Clare

*1. "The odds of winning a NCAA sports scholarship are miniscule. Only about 2 percent of high school athletes win sports scholarships every year at NCAA colleges and universities. Yes, the odds are that dismal. For those who do snag one, the average scholarship is less than \$11,000." – *8 things you should know about sports scholarships*, [Lynn O'Shaughnessy](#): CBS News Money Watch (September 20, 2012)

O'Shaughnessy: CBS News Money Watch (September 20, 2012)

FROM THE KNIGHTS

"David and I want to thank you all for the wonderful special worship service and luncheon on Sunday! What a memorable send off (we do hope to be around at least one, maybe 2 more Sundays). We greatly appreciate the excellent food, homemade desserts, beautiful flowers and table decorations, all the well-wishes, and especially the prayers. (Some of you wouldn't know that the little vases on the tables were from our wedding reception in 1973 – we've "willed" them to the church!) As I said in church, "When you see a butterfly, think of us, going south like the Monarchs, and say a prayer." We definitely need your prayers as we continue to pack, and pack, and pack...after 42 years in one house. If you know of someone looking for a home, please let them know about our house, since the contract we had fell through. Google 102 Main Street, Hampton, or search on [Realtor.com](#) for our address. The photos there look a lot better than

our house does now, since we have boxes everywhere, many walls are empty, and it just doesn't look like home! The moving truck is scheduled for Oct. 10th. We hope to drive Oct. 11-12th and unload in TN on the 13th.

We want to thank the "Local Action Team" and others who have tirelessly helped us purge our hoard of "stuff." Your pickup trucks, muscles, and encouragement have been invaluable. Thank you to other friends who have helped pack, and to everyone who baked and helped with Sunday's luncheon – we can never thank you all enough.

We love our church family. We were married at LVPC, our children were baptized here, and we have been nurtured and supported in our faith for many years, since I've been attending since about 3rd grade, and David joined after our marriage. It won't be hard to leave our house, but leaving our friends and church family is very hard. We will only be a phone call away, however, and with Skype, Facebook and e-mail, we

do hope to remain connected. Our new address is 3318 Whisperwood Circle, Kingsport, TN 37660

Thank you all – and please do keep praying! Love in Christ, Nancy and David"



FYI, Nancy's beautiful book of butterfly photographs that she so graciously donated to her LVPC family is in the Getz library for all to enjoy!

MISSION NEWS

Next Film Night:

October 13, 6:30 pm

Our next film will be "Chasing Heroin", a PBS documentary regarding the heroin epidemic in our country. Due to the topic of this film, we suggest ages 13 and older to attend; however, feel free to use your own discretion. We hope you can join us for an eye-opening film with snacks and discussion afterwards.

Volunteers Needed:

Friendly Visitor

Program

Hunterdon Helpline (a local organization that participates in our Giving Fair) has **30 seniors** on a waiting list to be matched up with a volunteer. "Helpline's Friendly Visitor program matches clients 60 years of age or older, or others who are homebound, with a volunteer of like interests. The volunteer visits the client about an hour to two a week just to chat, share a television program, read the newspaper together or whatever the pleasure of the client." Please call 908-782-4357 (Hunterdon Helpline) for more information and connect someone to a friend today. This program is free.

Help Build A Home!

Our church is volunteering with Habitat for Humanity on **Saturday, October 14**. The house we will be working on is located in Franklin Township in Somerset County. We would like 4 more volunteers from our church for this mission (ages 16 and up.) If you would like to volunteer, please email Abby at abigailernst@gmail.com as soon as possible.

Giving Fair

We are hosting our annual Giving Fair again this year on **Saturday, November 11 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.** This is our 15th year! We are always looking for volunteers to help coordinate before the fair, set up, clean up, handle the cards/money, donate food for lunch and many other ways. Please email Abby at abigailernst@gmail.com if you would like to help. In addition, we are having our Raffle Baskets again this year. Feel free to start donating new items for the baskets. There is a box in the Narthex.

Local Action Team

NEWS

We have a neighbor in need that wants our help! Throughout the fall season, we will be raking leaves and helping out any way we can. Stay tuned for specific dates and times. Please contact Lora Harris at loradtod@comcast.net if you may be interested in helping.

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Spiritual Formation of Children

Mark your calendars: The Advent Workshop is going to be November 19, after church. There will be a luncheon during fellowship time followed by the workshop. If you loved the banners displayed in the front of the church during Advent last year, come join in the fun this year. We will be working on banners and other projects. This is NOT just for children. It is for everyone in our congregation. We had a blast last year.

Sunday School is in full swing, as are our youth groups. All are welcome on Sunday mornings for Sunday school, and on Wednesdays for middle school youth group. High Schoolers often meet on the weekends. Contact Kim Rodgers if you are interested in joining the high school group. Also, this is a reminder that our church Christmas play will be during morning worship on December 24.

Please remember to return your registration forms and photo release forms. If you do not have the online forms, there are copies in the parish hall that can be filled out during coffee hour.

The Spiritual Formation Team is looking for new members. If you are interested contact Pastor Chad or the church office. We are



Our Pre-K/K class has their ears on to better hear God



Our 4/5 graders pray together during class

also looking for help with the Christmas play: directing, costumes, rehearsals, music, and food. Contact Kim Rodgers or Linda Stetler if you would like to help.

Men's Fellowship

If you've considered checking out Men's Fellowship then wait no longer. Now would be a great time to join us as we take a tour through the early church and the book of Acts. No bible experience is required for this group. We're just a bunch of beggars trying to show other beggars where to find food. This a great chance to make a deeper connection to the LVPC community. Don't wait for an invitation - this is it! Saturday mornings from 8-9:30 at the church.

APPALACHIA SERVICE PROJECT (ASP) HAPPENINGS

The 2018 ASP Trip is already being planned. The dates for the next trip have been announced – Saturday, July 14th - Saturday, July 21st. There will be an informational meeting about the trip and sign ups coming soon to LVPC.

COFFEE AND CONVERSATION

Parish Life is looking for some more people to sign up to help with Coffee and Conversation particularly for the 1st Sunday of the month, but help on any Sunday is most appreciated. Please see Renee Ollerenshaw, Lisa Coffaro or Lisamarie Boehm.

SERVERS NEEDED

If you are able to fill in any of the below open spots please let Claudia know. Thanks!!

October 8 – liturgist
 October 22 – 1 usher
 October 29 – 1 usher
 November 5 – 2 ushers and
 2 Communion servers
 November 12 – liturgist
 December 3 – liturgist and
 1 Communion server
 December 10 – 1 usher
 December 24 (4:30 p.m. service)
 – 2 ushers
 December 24 (7:30 p.m. service)
 – liturgist

NEWSLETTER OPTIONS

If you would like to receive the newsletter via email or would like to be removed from the distribution list, please let the church office know. Thanks!!

Johnsonburg Fall Fun Day!

Join us on Sunday, October 8!

at Johnsonburg Camp and Retreat Center

2pm Fun for all ages: open trails, boating, zipline, pumpkin warm fuzzies, corn hole, pumpkin bowling, Gagaball, &

Meadowview Cabin Open House

5pm Live Music by Colofonia String Ensemble; hors d'oeuvres

5:30pm Chili Dinner and Volunteer Recognition

Children 0-4 Free

Youth 5-12 \$10

Adults \$12

Wear your plaid flannel shirt and c'mon down!

Register at www.campjburg.org

A PREVIEW OF REFORMATION SUNDAY MUSIC

Major quincenary observances in church history don't exactly roll around very often, which makes this coming Reformation Sunday (October 29th) all the more special. It marks 500 years since Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses, or "grievances" against the Roman Church, to the castle church doors in Wittenberg, Germany — a daring and high-risk act of defiance that came to be celebrated as the beginning of the Protestant Reformation.

As Pastor Chad can explain in more detail, and with much more authority than this layman, early Protestants soon divided into two main camps: Lutheran and Reformed. Although I'm a long-time church musician in the Reformed tradition, I must confess that I much prefer Luther's inclusive and expansive take on the role of music in worship over the much more "severe" attitude of his reformer counterpart, John Calvin. Really, there's no comparison! Consider this passionate (though not very tactful) excerpt from Luther's writings and then try to imagine it coming from the pen of Calvin:

"Next to the Word of God, the noble art of music is the greatest treasure in the world. It controls our hearts, minds and spirits. A person who does not regard music as a marvelous creation of God does not deserve to be called a human being; he should be permitted to hear nothing but the braying of asses and the grunting of hogs!" [Source: Center for Church Music]

Fortunately, most Reformed denominations, including PC(USA), have come to adopt Luther's musical model. So, in both the worshipful and celebratory spirit of the occasion, and aspiring to Luther's regard of music as a "marvelous creation of God," we will be featuring not one, but two Reformation "fanfares" in the October 29th service. (No surprise that both pieces incorporate phrases from Luther's best-known hymn, "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God.")

Two of our resident brass players, Annalise and Ava Rodgers, will be joining me in the short, festive opening fanfare. The closing organ postlude, suitably titled "Fanfare for Reformation," is an extended concert piece that makes dramatic use of modern harmonies, as well as just about all the available stops on our 1200-pipe organ (fair warning!).

And speaking of the organ, this year also happens to be its 50th anniversary. It was in 1967 that the Mudler-Hunter Company of Philadelphia was commissioned to rebuild and expand the instrument to its current dimensions. As far as we know, Luther was not an organist (his preferred instruments were lute and flute), but I'd like to think he would have approved of this and all the varieties of devotional music-making that are a part of the worship experience at Lower Valley.

Don Scafuri



Martin Luther (Getty image)

We are looking for church members
(of any age) who would like to
contribute something to our
newsletter. Share your experiences,
your memories and your hopes for
LVPC. We want to hear from you.
E-mail Claudia at
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

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

Kyle Garcia: 867-7186/ kylesgarcia@yahoo.com

Sue Hostler: 574-5337/JSHostler@gmail.com

Warren Newman: 638-4332/newmanwj@cdmsmith.com

Renee Ollerenshaw: 832-7250/Jems101992@gmail.com

Kim Rodgers: 892-0141/chadandkimrodgers@gmail.com

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

Upcoming Servers

Date	Liturgist	Ushers	Communion Servers
October 1	Renee Ollerenshaw	The Donlon Family	Renee Ollerenshaw Warren Newman Lisa Coffaro OPEN
October 9 — Family Worship	OPEN	Lisa Coffaro Isabel Roppolo	
October 15	Judy Eckwielen	Ed Getz Lisamarie Boehm	
October 22	Warren Newman	Rich Ehrlich OPEN	
October 29	Marilyn El-Zahr	OPEN OPEN	
November 5 — Family Worship	Judy Eckwielen	OPEN OPEN	Renee Ollerenshaw Judy Eckwielen OPEN OPEN
November 12	OPEN	Renee and Jeff Ollerenshaw	
November 19	Dick Kline	Judy Eckwielen Madeleine Argue	
November 26	Judy Eckwielen	Abby and Ken Ernst	

Please let the office know if you are able to serve in one of the OPEN spots

Lower Valley Presbyterian Church
445 County Road 513
Califon, NJ 07830
October 2017

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.