

I sure do love harvest season. Especially when the tomatoes finally ripen and all the weed pulling and fretting over the elements become a beautiful, juicy, tasty, ripe tomato.

In the Gospel of John Jesus says, “I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.” (John 10:10b) I have a special connection to these words of Jesus. In part, my feelings are nostalgic. It was a memory verse included in the summer camp curriculum, at Westminster Woods, where I spent many weeks of my summers as a kid.

And it remained part of the curriculum when I was in college and teaching the very same curriculum. I’ll never forget that Jesus came so our lives would be absolutely full. We are meant to really live!

However, I’m not sure I completely grasped the phrase “abundant life” until I started gardening and looking more carefully at God’s creation. Creation is full, the garden is teeming with life, and even given my less than adequate gardening skill, the harvest is abundant. One ripe tomato has enough seed for a hundred more tomato plants.

I’ve also seen God’s abundance in the springtime on the rather barren hillsides of Southern California. In the spring the poppies and other wildflowers, suddenly appear in brilliant bloom, and seem to be swirls of spray paint — God was the first street artist so to speak.

G.K. Chesterton maybe has the most articulate insight into the nature of God the creator when he describes God looking over each new day’s sunrise and imagine’s God saying, like a little child, “Do it again!”.

God’s great delight in all of creation extends to an ever expanding universe full of galaxies and numbers of stars and planets beyond what we can comprehend.

This very same God says, “I came that you might have life and have it abundantly.” It is so easy to lose sight of Jesus’ purpose. We fill our lives with so much that isn’t “abundant life.” It is my hope, during this time when the tomatoes cover the counter and the fruit flies are seemingly more abundant, that we will all gain a deeper understanding of God’s purpose for us. That we will have the courage to

Continued on next page



Continued from previous page

ask, “What is it to live and what makes for an ‘abundant life’ as Jesus intended?”

Over the next few weeks we’ll be reading from the middle of Luke’s gospel. The radical nature of chapters 14 and 15 are surely a demonstration of the “abundant life” that Jesus speaks of.



Calling All Young Artists!

Are you looking for a fun project? The Mission Committee is looking for someone to come up with a new design for the Alternative Gift Fair postcard. See Lyn Magee or Nancy Knight with questions. So, get those creative juices flowing and we can’t wait to see what you come up with!!

Open Cupboard Food Pantry

Looking for a Vera Bradley purse? Sporting equipment? A crystal vase, or a book, or maybe a new outfit? Have you tried the Open Cupboard Food Pantry Thrift Shop in Clinton? The food pantry serves 569 people in the

northern part of Hunterdon County each month. Food donations are supplemented with purchases made from the proceeds made at the thrift shop as well as monetary donations. Ninety-one volunteers at the thrift shop and food pantry faithfully spend hours each week for this wonderful program.

Lower Valley Presbyterian Church donates food on a regular basis – through the community garden and food collected each month. Visit www.opencupboardfoodpantry.org for hours, how to participate, what are the current needs. Donations of food can be delivered in the rear of the building during hours of operation and thrift shop donations are accepted up until ½ hour before closing. Hours are different each day — so check the web site. Success is due to the continuing support of the community.

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: lowervalleyipc@embarqmail.com. The newsletter can also be viewed on our webpage: www.lowervalley.org.

ASP Photos



Session Profiles — Part 2

We thought it would be a good idea for our Session members to give you a short profile of their responsibilities. Here is one more:

Warren Newman heads the Buildings and Grounds Committee at LVPC. As one might expect, there are so many things that need attention in order to keep our beautiful 142-year old sanctuary, the Parish Hall and the manse running smoothly and safely. There are big things, like the recent steeple repair (hiring a steeple jack to fix the loose spire and leaky bell tower roof), exterior painting, chimney repair, tree removal, boiler repair and inspection (many of us know how cold the sanctuary can get in the wintertime when the boiler shuts down unexpectedly!), and there are little things like changing light bulbs, spring and fall clean-ups, snow shoveling and gutter cleaning. Through the generosity of an anonymous benefactor, we will also soon be installing an emergency electric generator at the Parish Hall so we can

continue to be a source of shelter, comfort and aid to the community in times of need like we experienced last year in the wake of Hurricane Sandy. We are ALWAYS looking for helping hands to keep our house open and ready to serve the mission of God. Please feel free to contact Warren, Terry Hoffman or any session member if you have any questions or concerns about our church building or grounds.

Children's Ministry

Get ready — **Sunday School** starts this year on September 8. Kids will begin in their classrooms, and join their parents in the sanctuary at the end of the service for Communion. At coffee/lemonade on the lawn on the 8th, there will be a parent meeting with Kim Rodgers to review goals for our SS program and to receive the yearly calendar. Questions and concerns will be addressed at this time. This year's teachers recently attended a Breakfast Retreat to plan and prepare for the upcoming year. Everyone is excited to greet their new class members and welcome back returning

students. Teachers this year are as follows:

Pre-K-1st: Liz Burns and Debbie Gartelmann

2nd - 3rd: Wendy Garcia and Natalie Gast

4th - 5th: Linda Stetler and Marilyn El-Zahr

6th - 7th - 8th: Lyn Magee, Ron Schlidge, Tracy Heuneman, Erik Gast

High School: Kim Rodgers

Our children enjoyed the **art table** each week during summer worship and also a special children's message by Tracy Heuneman about our Compassion International Child, Juliette Joshua. Lyn Magee and Ron Schlidge took the children to the garden to work one Sunday in August. These Mission Moments with our children are important to their Spiritual Growth. Thanks to all who contributed.

VBS Plus+ (see photos below) took place July 7 – 11. Our children enjoyed a week of fun, games and spiritual growth. Adults enjoyed a week of no cooking, and a Bible Study with Chad. The new look of VBS was fantastic. Next year, plan to join us. One of the highlights of the week was the Mission Moment

presented by Tracy Heuneman each evening. Money was collected for the Compassion Medical Assistance Fund. The fund provides medical help to children facing major health issues such as cancer or surgery. A stuffed dog named Band Aids helped Tracy each night. The children put an actual colorful band aid on the dog for each \$20 collected. Some of the kids did extra chores at home to earn money



for the Fund. The VBS Plus+ group collected \$461 for the cause. A huge Thank You to all the children and adults who contributed.

The first **Game Night** of the fall is September 27, in the Parish Hall. Plan to come to this informal gathering. Bring a dish to pass for dinner and a game to play. Adults, no child necessary to join in the fun!!

The Journey and The Channel groups will begin again this fall. The Journey, which will begin on September 15, is a Sunday evening group for high school students. They meet at the Rodgers' home and there is food! The group discussion considers faith and faith practices. The Channel is a group for 6, 7, 8 graders and meets in the Parish Hall on Wednesdays evenings for fun and games. The Channel will start up on September 18.

Community Garden – A Giving Garden

Once again, the Lower Valley Community Garden has been going strong all summer long and has produced bountiful harvests for many. A joint venture between the town of Califon

and LVPC, the garden was expanded this spring and now contains 44 raised bed gardens, 8 of which are dedicated to growing produce for the Open Cupboard Food Pantry in Clinton. The remaining beds are rented for a nominal fee by members of our congregation and residents of our local communities. The 11 new garden beds were constructed by a talented team from our church and filled with soil by volunteers from LVPC and local townspeople. A 'critter fence' around the garden has done a good job keeping wildlife at bay. One new addition in our shed is a used refrigerator which holds harvested produce in advance of the Tuesday deliveries to the Food Pantry. We also now have a 3-bin composter (thanks, Jeff Donlon!) to recycle plants and produce that are done. This material along with fall leaves will make a great soil amendment come next spring.

The 8 raised beds for the Open Cupboard Food Pantry have produced hundreds of pounds of produce over the summer, including tomatoes, potatoes, beans, beets,

radishes, onions and zucchini. Many other vegetables have also been donated by gardeners who have enjoyed an over-abundance of harvests in their own beds during the summer. Volunteers usually meet on Mondays to harvest what has ripened during the week and one of the 3 garden managers delivers the produce to the Food Pantry on Tuesdays. Volunteers have also been responsible for watering and weeding the gardens, staking up the big plants and succession planting seeds as some of the earlier vegetable plants wind down in their production. We have been working on laying down wood chips this summer – keeping the weeds down is always a challenge! Many thanks to our gardeners and the Eckwielens for their efforts in getting this done. In August, our children had a first-hand lesson on how God provides for us. Students were able to help harvest some produce for the Food Pantry and plant new seeds in the Community Garden, experiencing the lesson that God gives us many opportunities to share with

those who may be less fortunate.

The garden has been a great place for neighbors to run into each other and for others to forge new friendships. The unofficial feedback so far is that the community gardeners have had a great season in the garden both with bountiful harvests and cultivating relationships. A Harvest Party will be scheduled for sometime in October – stay tuned for newsletter and in-church announcements regarding this even.

Planning for next year’s garden will be starting shortly. If you would like more information on the garden, contact Pastor Chad through the church office or Lyn Magee (lynmagic@gmail.com).



Steeple Repairs Completed!

This past year Buildings and Grounds took on the project to correct the long standing problem of the tilting spire that adorns our sanctuary steeple. We hired a steeplejack to repair the spire and, also to paint it since it was due for a repainting. During the repair process, the steeplejack noticed that the bell tower roof and corbels under the eave were in terrible shape. So, we expanded the repair job to include a new roof on the bell tower. It now boasts the prettiest copper roof that no one will ever see! Many of the corbels were replaced with new ones that were fabricated by our own Gary Kipp. The project was started last fall and suspended during the winter, but was completed this spring!



Upcoming Servers

Date	Liturgist	Ushers	Communion Servers	Fellowship Host(s)
September 8	Judy Eckwielen	Stephanie and Jeff Donlon	Sue Huntington Bobbie Sliker Renee Ollerenshaw Linda Stetler	Lemonade on the Lawn
September 15	Nancy Knight	Janet and Gary Kipp		Lemonade on the Lawn
September 22	Warren Newman	Terry Hoffman STILL NEEDED		Lemonade on Lawn
September 29	Dick Kline	Marilyn and Al El-Zahr		
October 6	Judy Eckwielen	Judie and Adam Ambielli	Kim Rodgers Terry Hoffman Renee Ollerenshaw Sue Huntington	
October 13	Sue Huntington	Lisa and Chris Coffaro		
October 20	STILL NEEDED	Judy Eckwielen Madeleine Argue		
October 27	Robbie Axelsen	Karen and Warren Newman		

If you are able to serve in one of the STILL NEEDED spots, please let Claudia know.Thanks!!

September 2013

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.