

FROM PASTOR CHAD

Membership

I'm not much of a joiner of things. I never really was. I didn't join any clubs in high school or college and I haven't joined any since. There were plenty of opportunities, but none of them seemed to have a compelling enough mission. In middle school, for example, my parents asked if I wanted to join DeMolay (a masonic youth organization for boys) and I responded with an immediate and unqualified, "not on your life!" Along with my deeply held aversion to wearing a suit I just couldn't see the point. In college some friends and I had serious thoughts of starting a Democrats club on campus (we were not necessarily Democrats, but there was a Republican club and no Democrat club), but in the end we, like many of our fellow Generation Xers, didn't have all that much interest in starting, joining, or maintaining a structured organization.

The one organization I did join, however, was my church. In seventh grade it became clear to me that I was loved by and called by God and that if I was going to follow Jesus it wasn't something I could do alone. I wasn't joining an organization so much as making a public profession of my identity. I became part of the very community that would support me for the next 17 years: by encouraging me to mature in faith, serving as a place of refuge during my adolescent years, giving me my first leadership opportunities, sending me off to serve others, mentoring, always loving, praying, and even financially supporting me during my seminary education.

Becoming a member of FPC Santa Rosa was not simply being a member of an organization I could add to a list and improve my resume or college application. And it was much more than all that I received. In those years I gave countless hours to student ministry, served as a deacon and elder, woke up early nearly every Saturday of my junior year to serve on the Associate Pastor Nominating Committee, helped establish a college ministry, and participated in the worship life of the whole congregation. Uniting with that community was life altering because it would ultimately mean letting go of the values of self reliance and individualism that are so ingrained in my generation.

I share all this because I remain a fairly typical member of Generation X: I'm skeptical of institutions, I have little institutional loyalty, I'm not generally impressed by authority figures, I avoid joining institutions whenever possible, and I can be as self reliant as anyone. Yet, I'm committed to the Church. I believe, with scripture, that the Church of Jesus the Christ is the hope of the world. Reformed (Presbyterian) Theology understands membership only through the lens of the waters of baptism. In choosing to be baptized or to claim our baptism through a public profession of faith we acknowledged that we belong to God. So, joining a congregation is about our identity and the way this identity will shape and reshape our whole life.

Continued on next page

Continued from previous page

We cover this with our students before they choose to unite with our congregation, but I wanted to make sure we all had an opportunity to reflect on what it means to be members of LVPC or to consider joining LVPC. It seems to me that the word, "joining", is not at all the right word. It suggests some sort of formal institutional membership like being part of Rotary. It is my hope that all the members of our community will be reminded of what it means to be a member and that those who regularly participate in the life of our church would consider being a full part of this vibrant, life giving, and life changing community.

If anyone has more questions about membership please grab me sometime after worship or give me a call and we can talk more.



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.

HUNGER DOESN'T TAKE A VACATION

The Open Cupboard Food Pantry feeds those in need all summer long even as we vacationed. Now our cupboards are getting bare and need to be replenished.

There is an OCFP basket waiting to be filled as you enter the sanctuary and as you enter the Sunday School wing of our church. Set yourself a goal for this fall and winter...bring a non-perishable food item to church each Sunday as part of your regular giving.

Special food needs are listed on the Open Cupboard website: www.opencupboardfoodpantry.org...or bring an item of your choice. Maybe watch for sale items at the store and buy 2 – 1 for your family and 1 for a food pantry family.

Food contributions will be offered up for prayer during worship the first Sunday of each month.

Why not make a contribution to Open Cupboard -- be a part of helping our neighbors going through rough times and a part of your giving to others?

ATTENTION ALL HANDBELL AFFICIONADOS

As the summer winds down, it's time to start thinking about handbell season again! Our wonderful bell choirs added so much beautiful music to the worship services. If you have enjoyed hearing us play, we would love it if you would consider joining in on the fun!

This year we will offer three individual sessions of handbell rehearsals. You can sign up for any or all of the sessions:

Session 1 – September through Christmas Eve

Session 2 – January through Easter (April 5)

Session 3 – April 12 to June 7

My hope is that people who have been interested in playing the bells but can't commit to a whole year of bell choir will consider joining us for a session or two, as it suits your schedule.

We offer two groups: *Joyful Noise* is for those who are new to handbells or are beginning ringers. *Agape Ringers* consists of more experienced ringers who are looking for more of a challenge.

The practice times are as follows:

Agape Ringers – 9:00 a.m. to 9:45 a.m. on Sundays
Joyful Noise – 11:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. on Sundays

I invite everyone in our congregation, ages 9 – 99, to consider joining our bell groups. Experience is not necessary, and I am happy to give some training to anyone who would like to play, but feels intimidated by the bells. I promise that it's not as hard as it looks!

I will be posting sign-up sheets in Parish Hall for the next few Sundays, and will be available to answer any questions you may have about our Bell Choirs.

Our church has been blessed with a lot of very dedicated people who love making music. Please join us so we can keep the blessing going!

– Sue Hostler

THE CALIFON MOMS

Moms with young children get together weekly to talk, support each other & let the kids interact/play. We usually meet in the mornings one day a week at parks or one another's homes. This group was started by a few ladies at LVPC, but has branched out to include other moms in the Califon area. If you'd like to join us, contact Natalie Gast at gast.natalie@gmail.com.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Fifty-eight folks enjoyed VBS+ this summer! Chad led the adults in a Bible Study while the children went to art and worship sessions. Everyone joined together for games at the close of the evening, which proved to be wet and wild at times. The multi-generational summer program flourished for the second year, but is constantly evolving. Please tuck this thought away, and come join us next summer. It was a blast, with food!

Sunday School will start on September 7. The children will begin in their classrooms and then join their parents for

Communion in the sanctuary. We welcome a number of new teachers to the staff this year: Pre-K, 1 – Janine Ascenzo and Ellen Haggerty; 2nd and 3rd – Natalie Gast, Kim Rodgers, and Jeff and Nicole Dahl; 4th and 5th – Linda Stetler and Richard Fincher; 6th, 7th, 8th – Erik Gast and Debbie Gartelmann. High school students will be attending worship, sitting together, and taking notes! Sunday evening when they meet at the Rodgers' home for Journey, they will discuss the sermon and how the ideas they garnered might affect their Spiritual Journey. The teachers have been busy getting their rooms ready and will prepare with a Breakfast Retreat on September 6. We look forward to welcoming each child in a loving Christian atmosphere.

The children at LVPC are an important part of our ministry. If you are interested in getting involved in any way, please contact the Spiritual Formation of Children team. There is a place for everyone! Begin by talking to a child this week at Lemonade on the Lawn!

Students:

Journey for the high school age kids will meet Sunday evenings at the Rodgers' home. I hear there might be food! *The Channel*, a group for 6, 7, 8 graders, will again meet on Wednesday evenings in the Parish Hall. These kids play crazy games with Pastor Chad, and have an inspiring Bible Study each week. Come join the fun!

ASP RECAP

It seems like a long time since 15 members and friends of LVPC joined up with over 100 others from several area churches and headed to Johnson City, Tennessee for our yearly trip to work with Appalachia Service Project. Once again we had a wonderful, challenging (Pastor Chad's team never did get the toilet to seat properly), eye opening, exhausting, life giving, life altering experience while serving the people of Central Appalachia. The ASP Team thanks everyone who was part of organizing, financially supporting, and praying for the trip. If you missed the

worship service where members of the team shared their experiences check the website as we hope to have the audio available.

The ASP fun did not end with the trip, however. The fall retreat for those who have participated, are interested in participating or even have the slightest notion they might participate in 2015 is coming up: **November 6th 5 p.m. - 7th 1 p.m. at LVPC.** Also keep your eyes on your e-mail inboxes as preparations for next year are already beginning.



12TH ANNUAL ALTERNATIVE GIFT FAIR

The biggest mission opportunity of our church calendar is just around the corner! Scheduled for **Sat., Nov. 15th, from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m.**, in our Parish Hall, the Alternative Gift Fair is an event that brings together all of our members and the community as we reach out to people in need of help.

Representatives from about a dozen different nonprofit organizations come together to "show and tell" their stories. You can do your Christmas shopping in a way that honors Jesus – by giving to others who really need food, water, housing, medical care and other basic things that many of us take for granted.

By making symbolic gifts in honor of friends and family, your donation makes a difference. Just one example would be a \$10 gift to Family Promise (Interfaith Hospitality Network). We give you a card to present to your honoree that says, "A gift of a new pillow has been given in your honor to Family Promise," and there is also a description of the

organization and their goals.

Over the 12 years that our church has been having this fair, we have given well over \$115,000 to help others. We can honor loved ones who "have everything," teachers, neighbors, coworkers...the list goes on. Most people are gratified to know that help is given where it is needed, and our dollars are not contributing to the commercialism of our culture's celebration of Christmas, or to the clutter of "stuff" in many of our homes!

Please put the date on your calendar now and plan to bring friends. Word of mouth is the best

advertising! Please let Nancy Knight (908-537-4347), Pastor Chad, or Claudia Gilbert know if you can help.

The Mission Committee needs your help to pull this event together! Every member of our church can help in some way. The original committee is getting older and can not do it all...please think about how you can help. Lyn and Ron Magee's move is leaving a big hole – please let us know if you have computer talents or other skills that can help us carry on this wonderful mission project.

NURSERY CARE SUBS

The nursery is in need of a few substitutes we can call when Colleen won't be able to make it. Please let Kim Rodgers know.

THE BRAB GROUP (Building Relationships Around Books)

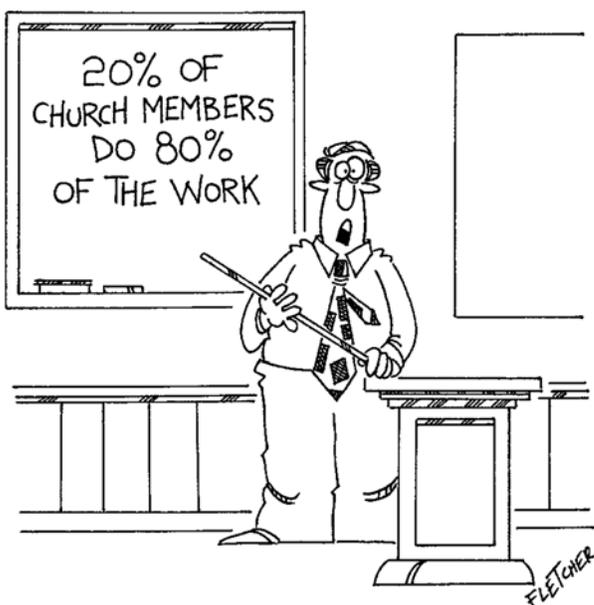
We are a group of ladies that meet on the 1st Monday evening of each month. We enjoy snacks & wine while having an informal & lively discussion on member-chosen books. For more info, please contact Kim Rodgers.

MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Men of all ages are invited to join our new Men's Fellowship group which meets on Saturday mornings from 8 - 9:30 a.m.

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 any photos in color! If interested please e-mail: lowervalleyipc@embarqmail.com. The newsletter can also be viewed on our webpage: lowervalley.org.



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"So the question is: 'How to get that 20% to press on to greater achievement?'"

Johnsonburg Presbyterian Center

2014-2015 Retreat and Event Schedule

NEW Ultimate Youth Nights	9/21 & 11/16	6 p.m. - 8 p.m.
Youth Lock-In Event (Fri-Sat)	10/17	Fri. 7 p.m. - Sat. 10 a.m.
4th and 5th grade Retreat	11/1 - 11/2	
Sr. High Retreat	11/21 - 11/23	
Jr. High Retreat	12/5 - 12/7	
Confirmation Retreat #1	2/6 - 2/8	
Jr. High Retreat	2/20 - 2/22	
Confirmation Retreat #2	3/13 - 3/15	
Sr. High Retreat	3/27 - 3/29	
Spruce Up Day	4/18	

Camp Johnsonburg offers a comfortable and relaxing place for youth groups to spend the weekend without having to do any of the planning. We provide the Leadership, Program and Music! Go to www.campjburg.org for more information and to register.

Session Members

Lisa Coffaro: 832-0409/coffaro423@comcast.net

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

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

Hunter Wilson: (703) 304-1445/hunter22wilson@gmail.com

May Saxton: 537-4963/saxton-family@comcast.net

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

Upcoming Servers

Date	Liturgist	Ushers	Communion Servers	Fellowship Host(s)
September 7	Sue Huntington	OPEN	Sue Huntington Terry Hoffman Linda Stetler Lisa Coffaro	Magee
September 14	Dick Kline	Stephanie and Jeff Donlon		Haggerty
September 21	OPEN	Karen and Warren Newman		
September 28	OPEN	Lisa Coffaro and Isabel Roppolo		
October 5	Sue Huntington	Wendy and Kyle Garcia	Sue Huntington Terry Hoffman Wendy Garcia Renee Ollerenshaw	
October 12	OPEN	Marilyn and Al El-Zahr		
October 19	OPEN	OPEN		
October 26	Judy Eckwielen	Terry Hoffman OPEN		

**If you are able to serve in an OPEN spot please contact the church office.
If you are unable to serve in an assigned spot please try your best to find a
substitute and let the office know of any changes. Thanks so much!**

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: lowervalleyipc@embarqmail.com

Website: www.lowervalley.org

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

September 2014
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.