

Parish Happenings

September 2016

FINAL WORDS FROM PASTOR STEFANIE



It has been just a joy to serve in ministry with you for the past few months. I really don't know what else to say. The verb "to rejoice" appears 74 times in the New Testament. The noun "joy" appears 59 times in the New Testament. Psalm 4 speaks to God saying: "In Thy presence is fullness of joy." God is the source of joy. In sharing worship, offering prayers, in planning and preparing, in the ministry I have shared with you – there has been joy. I say this to reiterate what you already know: God is present here in your faithful church community. You are blessed and you have blessed me.

It will be a joy for you to welcome your pastor, Chad, back into your midst. And it surely will be a joy for him to return to you. The coming weeks and months will be a time to share stories, to catch up on life's happenings, and to reconnect. It will also be a time to ask each other: What did you learn during this time of "sabbatical"?

*In Thy presence is
fullness of joy
– Psalm 4*

Sabbath is a time to rest. Sabbath is a time to be renewed. And with rest and renewal, your pastor may have had some insights or new ideas. And maybe he just rested and comes back simply refreshed. He will undoubtedly have much to share with you. But I hope you will share with him the good news of his time away from your experience – that you learned there is much you all can do "without the pastor": you can lead prayers and devotions at church meetings; you can plan events and adjust when planned events get rained out. In sum, I hope you can share the good news that you have been no less the church while your leader, your pastor, has been away. This is joyful news.

Really, there is much to rejoice in and about ... Again, all I can say is that it has been a joy.

Your sister in Christ, Stefanie.

**REMINDER THAT WORSHIP WILL BE SWITCHING
BACK TO OUR REGULAR TIME OF 10 A.M. STARTING
SEPTEMBER 4. FELLOWSHIP WILL FOLLOW IN THE
PARISH HALL**

FROM PASTOR CHAD

Gratitude

Returning from my long sabbath was, a little surprisingly, not difficult; it is dealing with all the firsts that present a challenge. How to shape the first sermon and what to include in the first newsletter article when there is so much to share and so much I didn't experience in the life of the congregation over the past 18 weeks.

The best course seems like a simple expression of gratitude. From the very start of this process the Lower Valley community has been incredibly supportive and I am very grateful for the enthusiasm that has been sustained through to our return.

After driving 12,298.2 miles on 930.5 gallons of gasoline across 13 states and 5 Canadian provinces we returned with a new appreciation for all that God has created. And though, I must admit, a trip of this sort sparks a kind of "wander lust" in one's soul, all those miles and sights, and unfamiliar churches has also left me with an appreciation for home. God's promises are here with the people and the place where God has called me to serve as pastor. As I sit down to write I find that I'm grateful for the time, experiences, and for the joys of a life lived in community.

I look forward to sharing the whole sabbatical (the long run, long silence and long road trip) with you over the next months as well as hearing about the congregational life (losses, joys, and mission) I missed. I look forward, with gratitude, to shaping a renewed understanding of our mission as we

consider what we've learned through sabbatical time. May God continue to bless our partnership in mission and ministry.

Blessings,




Top of the World Hwy., Yukon Territory, Canada



Double rainbow: Jasper National Park, Alberta Canada

EVENING CIRCLE

Evening Circle will be meeting Sept. 21st 7:00 pm in the Getz Library. We will continue our Bible Study of "Reconciling Paul: A Contemporary Study of 2 Corinthians". We will be studying Lesson 5 Reconciliation and the Whole of Creation. Focus Text 2 Corinthians 5:11 - 6:10. Nancy Knight to lead study. Hope to see all and new faces always welcome:) Any questions please call Joni Nodes 391-6263 or Nancy Knight 537-4347.

SESSION NOTES

Hello all. Session met this past week and discussed the possibility of moving our worship time. We changed the start time this summer and it seemed to work well. Since we are in a time of transition (Pastor Chad returning from Sabbatical), we are considering beginning worship at **9 a.m.** *What do you think? Please find a session member and give your opinion.* Thank you in advance.

MISSION NEWS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

Volunteering

Ten members of the congregation helped at a soup kitchen in Phillipsburg this summer. It was a wonderful experience and we were happy to serve!

School Supply Collection

I just wanted to say Thank You to everyone who contributed to the United Way school supply collection during the Gift program. It was a huge success!!! Enclosed is a picture they took of the day the items were dropped off!!!

Thanks again, Tracy



Giving Fair

It's that time again. The Giving Fair is quickly approaching. It will be held this year on **Saturday, November 12th from 11am-3pm.** (Please note the time change.) Please save the date! We have a few new organizations this year as well as interactive exhibits and raffle baskets. Please start thinking about donating now for the baskets. More

information to come with some other fun activities!

Our New Sponsored Child!

We have a new sponsor child from Compassion. Juliet aged out of the program!!!

Grace Mungure lives in Tanzania and her Birthday is April 27th. She is 6 years old.

Please include Grace in your prayers!!!



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

Sunday School will start on September 11. The children will begin in the sanctuary and go to their classrooms after the children's message. Parents are asked to pick up the children after service in the classroom in order to fill out registration and photo release forms. A Sunday School teacher brunch was held on Saturday, September 20. Teachers received curriculum and discussed the upcoming year. Classrooms are being prepared and everyone is eager for the new year to begin. The Pre-K, K and 1st grade class will be taught by Nicole and Jeff Dahl and Kristen Petrik. The 2nd and 3rd grade class will be

taught by Marilyn El-Zahr and Krista Jenkins. The 4th and 5th grade class will be taught by Tracy Heuneman and Linda Stetler. The 6th, 7th & 8th grade class will be taught by Erik Gast and Stuart Solewater. The high school class will be taught by Natalie Gast and Kim Rodgers. Substitutes this year are Debbie Gartelmann and Stephanie Donlon.

The Family Worship art table projects will be new in September. We hope the kids look forward to expressing their thoughts about the scripture with these new materials. Children of all ages are welcome to participate at the art table. You might notice new colored posters in the sanctuary soon. They were colored by the children during worship this summer. Everyone did a great job!

The GiFT program ran this summer in July. The children's portion was run by Camp Johnsonburg and the adult portion by Stefanie Muntzel. Everyone who came enjoyed the programs. Plans are under way for next year already.

GiFT next summer will be July 9 - 13. Put this on your calendar early so vacations can be planned around it! We'd love to see you all. It is a wonderful time to join together for a good meal and community fellowship.

The Spiritual Formation Team is actively looking for new members. The group meets once a month, and plans and manages those programs which involve our children. If you are interested please contact someone on the team: Kim Rodgers, Natalie Gast, Nicole Dahl, Linda Stetler. We are also looking for an additional person to work in the nursery. Contact the church office if you are interested.

As we approach the new Sunday School year, we hope that you will support your children's efforts to learn more about Christian life. We encourage you to be aware of the opportunities in our church life for you and your children. Blessings to all our families at LVPC.

LVPC Students

We've just said "goodbye!" to several of our students as they headed off for college. This is certainly a time of reflection for the parents who raised them and the siblings still at home and their parting should also cause our whole community to pause and reflect. The



students and young adults who choose to follow Christ and worship with us are a huge part of our community here at LVPC. We depend on them to bring life and energy through their unique gifts while we invest our faith and life experiences in them. I know we will continue to support and pray for those students off to college and the world beyond, but their new adventures serve as a reminder of how important it is to help our students in building a strong foundation in Christ.

A vital part of our mission at LVPC is nurturing the faith of youth so they can move into life or college with confidence that they know who they are, who they belong to, and how God is calling them to live. These are the reasons we have Wednesday night youth group, Sunday school classes, the ASP mission trip, support Camp Johnsonburg, and invite everyone to learn and grow through participation in worship, study, and service.

Here are some things to pay attention to this fall if you are a high school or middle school student, know one or live with one:

Wednesday night Youth Group for middle and high school students

We meet nearly every Wednesday from 7 - 8:30 for fun and games, community building, prayer and bible study.

This fall we're kicking off on September 14

Camp Johnsonburg Ultimate Youth Night

Sunday, November 6 from 6pm - 8pm at Camp Johnsonburg. We'll meet at the church at 5pm and be home by 9pm.

Appalachia Service Project Retreat November 4-5

Our first retreat of the year is coming quickly so mark your calendars. This is for any students or adults who have participated in the ASP trip or are considering taking part next summer. The trip is open to all students who will have their 14th birthday by mid July.

Parents of Students and Other Interested Adults

Do you wonder what it is we do with those lines painted on the floor of the Parish Hall? This year we'd like to make sure we have a closer partnership with parents, so we're inviting all parents of middle and high school students to join us at our Wednesday night September 28th gathering. We'll talk about some of our goals and activities and maybe more importantly we'd like to know how we can support you as parents.

ASP HAPPENINGS

Thank You!

LVPC sent 17 volunteers to Bud, WV. from July 16th - 23rd to work with Appalachia Service Project (ASP) to make homes warmer, safer and drier. They joined volunteers (the BYG or Big Youth Group) from Chester Community

Presbyterian Church, Stillwater Presbyterian Church, Califon Methodist Church, First Presbyterian Church of Hackettstown, Fairmount Presbyterian Church, and St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Flemington.

Our volunteers were: Carol and Julia Casale; Sophia El-Zahr; Tim Ferraro; Annalee, Lissy, and Lora Harris; Jeff, Renee, Jake, Melissa and Lizzy Ollerenshaw; Isabel Roppolo; Stewart and Skylar Solewater; Sarah Tyms, and Sara Varga.

We want to thank our generous congregation for supporting all of the ASP fundraisers which helped make this trip possible. Not only did we help raise the support for each volunteer (they do pay \$150 of their own money to go), but we raised enough to send a donation to ASP. With all the flooding in West Virginia this summer, that extra money will be a big help to needy families. Thank you!

– Nancy Knight



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 lowervalleypc@embarqmail.com

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Cell phone: 908.892.0044

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Church Info:

Claudia Gilbert: Church Administrator

Phone: 908-832-2933

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

Session Members

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

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Upcoming Servers

| Date | Liturgist | Ushers | Communion Servers |
|--------------|------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| September 4 | Stephanie Donlon | Terry Hoffman Judy Eckwielen | Stephanie Donlon Lisamarie Boehm Judy Eckwielen Terry Hoffman |
| September 11 | Warren Newman | Nancy and David Knight | |
| September 18 | Terry Hoffman | Rich Ehrlich Lisamarie Boehm | |
| September 25 | Dick Kline | Judy Eckwielen OPEN | |
| October 2 | Christina Wilson | Stuart Solewater OPEN | Lisamarie Boehm OPEN OPEN OPEN |
| October 9 | Richard Fincher | OPEN OPEN | |
| October 16 | OPEN | Anthony Casale OPEN | |
| October 23 | OPEN | Lisa Coffaro and Isabel Roppolo | |

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

September 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.