

Parish Happenings

April 2019



FROM PASTOR CHAD

A Role for Everyone

For the eleven years I've served at LVPC we have challenged the assumption the worship is something to be consumed. The session and other leaders have attempted to steer our congregation away from a consumer approach to church and toward a more authentic community. To this end we've emphasized: the spiritual formation of children, youth, and adults, intergenerational activities, growing deep community with one another, discerning God's voice, and being a blessing to our local community and the world.

I've personally insisted, on more than one occasion: that our worship is not just one more event to attend on a packed calendar, that worship is not something simply to be consumed for our entertainment, and that it isn't a program for us to evaluate. Rather, at its best, worship is transformational. When we come to worship open to God's Spirit we leave, still with busy lives, worries, and burdens to carry, but we leave changed and better equipped to hear God's voice in the midst of all the distraction. Worship is a counterpoint to the ads that appear every time we look at our smart phone and the emptiness of social media. Consider how Frederick Buechner explains worship,

To worship God *means* to serve [God]. Basically there are two ways to do it. One way is to do things for [God] – run errands for [God], carry messages for [God], fight on [God's] side, feed [God's] lambs, and so on. The other way is to do things for [God] that you need to do – sing songs for [God], create beautiful things for [God], give things up for [God], tell [God] what's on your mind and in you heart, in general rejoice in [God] and make a fool of yourself for [God] the way lovers have always made fools of themselves for the one they love.

*A Quaker Meeting a Pontifical High Mass, the Family Service at First Presbyterian, a Holy Roller Happening – unless there is an element of joy and foolishness in the proceedings, the time would be better spent doing something useful.**

When we approach worship as consumers then it might be true that "the time would be better spent doing something useful." However, I continue to be hopeful that worship is different than all those events we attend out of obligation or for personal gain. I continue to have hope that for our community worship might be transformational.

What we do in worship is commonly described by the word *liturgy*. We often think of *liturgy* as the ordering of things, or the different parts of the service; some people might think of a liturgical church as a more formal style of worship. However, *liturgy* literally means "the work of the people." It is the work we do when we gather together on Sunday morning: we pray, sing praise, lament, love, listen for God, share the sacraments, and create community through the hope of the Gospel.

To understand worship this way is to assume that we all have a role to play and that when we do not participate the community is somehow incomplete. Worship is so very much more than what we can consume for our comfort or to assuage our guilt. We serve God together in worship and it requires the gift and presence of every single one of us.

Rick Barger writes, "To insist that only the ordained can do certain things, no matter what the circumstances are is [a consumer culture approach]. It is not the person who presides who gives the baptism or the meal its authority. The authority is inherent in the ritual's witness to the gospel."** Our work in worship, at its core, is to "witness to the gospel." This witness happens in our prayers, our song, our art, and our proclamation of the Word. It is my hope that we can all find our role in the *liturgy*, and thus our worship will become a deeper and even more authentic witness to God's Good News.

To this end I would like to encourage everyone to consider what their role in our worship is. What is it that you bring? How can you share in our worship together? For example, on April 7, our third, fourth and fifth graders will be leading worship. They won't be putting on a cute show or sharing their musical skills for applause, rather, they will be inviting the congregation to become more than spectators. I look forward to how we will be growing in our understanding of our work as we continue to be witnesses to the resurrection together.

It is not the person who presides who gives the baptism or the meal its authority. The authority is inherent in the ritual's witness to the gospel.

— Rick Barger

*Frederick Buechner, *Wishful Thinking: A Theological ABC*, (page 97-98).

**Rick Barger, *A New and Right Spirit: Creating an Authentic Church in a Consumer Culture*, (page 123).



MISSION NEWS

Save the Date!!

This year's Giving Fair will be Saturday, December 7th. Mark this important date on your calendar. The next Mission Meeting will be Thursday, April 4th at 7:00 p.m. All are welcome to attend. Always interested in hearing ways to serve our community.



Girl Scout Project

Our Girl Scout Troop will be doing our Take Action project during the 10:00 a.m. Easter service on April 21st. We will be handing out bundles of tree seedlings. Our community has lost a lot of trees due to storms and insects. We are trying to help people replace some of the trees. The bundles may include two different Maples, two different Oaks, and a Black Gum tree. We are asking for a suggested donation of \$5.00 to cover our costs. Look for us after the service outside the front doors. If you are interested in a bundle, and cannot attend the service, please email us at sfreed8@comcast.net, and we will save you a bundle.

*Thank you,
Serafina and Abigail Roppolo*

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

The 3,4,5 grade Sunday school class will be leading worship on April 7. They would enjoy your support. There will be no Sunday School that Sunday.

The Spiritual Formation team is looking for new members. If you are interested in becoming involved with the faith journey of our congregation, please consider this opportunity.

COMMUNITY GARDEN

Our garden is growing ... come grow with us!

Do you love to garden? Would you like to have a sunny spot with a nice, tall fence and all the tools you need to grow fresh, healthy food for your family during the spring, summer and fall? Would you love to also help feed those less fortunate right here in our community? If you answered "yes" to these questions, then our community garden is the place for you.

Our garden has raised beds, including three extra-high beds for those whose bodies may not bend as easily as they used to. Beds are available for rent for \$25 each (you can rent 1, 2 or 3 beds) and the garden is open from March through October. We supply soil, compost, water, wheelbarrows, and a shed full of a variety of tools. You provide the seeds, plants and labor.



In addition to the personal garden beds, we also have a number of beds dedicated to growing food for the Open Cupboard Food Pantry. We ask that each garden member spend a few hours, one or two weeks of the season helping with the pantry beds and doing general garden maintenance. We harvest all summer long and into the fall for the Food Pantry. Last year, we donated 300 pounds of onions, potatoes, green beans, peas, tomatoes, cucumbers, lettuce, spinach, beets, watermelons, and more.

The garden is a great way to meet other members of the church and community and an important mission project. If you would like more information, please speak with Karen Newman (908-763-9483) or visit our website at www.lowervalley.org/mission/mission.aspx. If you're ready to sign up, contact Claudia in the church office at 832-2933 or email lowervalleypc@embarqmail.com.

NEWSLETTER OPTIONS

If you would like to see the newsletter in full color, consider receiving it via email (and help save money on postage), or if you would no longer like to receive the newsletter, please call or email Claudia at 908-832-2933 or lowervalleypc@embarqmail.com. Thank you.

Holy Week Schedule

Maundy Thursday (4/18)

Communion Service at 7 p.m. in the parish hall

Good Friday (4/19)

Sanctuary open from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. for prayer and reflection

Easter Sunday (4/21)

*Sunrise Service at 6:30 a.m. with fellowship
following in the parish hall*

*Family worship at 10 a.m. with fellowship
following in the parish hall*



Easter Flower Order Form

(orders are due with payment by 4/14)

If you would like to order Easter Flowers to decorate our sanctuary, please fill out the order form below and drop it in the offering plate or send it to the church office. Prices listed below include foil. Please indicate the desired quantity and enclose payment with your order.

Name: _____

In memory of: _____

In honor of: _____

Flower	Price	Qty	Total Cost
Mini Daffodil	\$4.00	_____	_____
Daffodil (8")	\$8.00	_____	_____
Easter Lily (4-5 blooms)	\$8.00	_____	_____
Tulip (6 blooms)	\$6.00	_____	_____

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
lowervalleypc@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: lowervalleypc@embarqmail.com
Website: www.lowervalley.org

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

Session Members

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Karen Newman (clerk): 763-9483/kjnewman115@gmail.com

Warren Newman: 763-6094/newmanwj@cdmsmith.com

Upcoming Servers

Date	Liturgist	Ushers	Communion Servers
April 7	3rd, 4th and 5th graders	3rd, 4th and 5th graders	3rd, 4th and 5th graders
April 14 (Palm Sunday)	Marilyn El-Zahr	OPEN and OPEN	
April 21 (Easter Sunday/family worship)	Judy Eckwielen	Karen and Warren Newman	
April 28	Dick Kline	OPEN and OPEN	
May 5	Al El-Zahr	Karen and Warren Newman	Karen Newman Warren Newman OPEN OPEN
May 12	Karen Newman	OPEN and OPEN	
May 19	OPEN	Judy Eckwielen and Madeleine Argue	
May 26 (Family worship)	OPEN	Lisa Coffaro and Isabel Roppolo	

If you are able to serve in one of the OPEN spots, please let Claudia know. Thank you!

Lower Valley Presbyterian Church
445 County Road 513
Califon, NJ 07830
April 2019

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.