

Parish Happenings February 2020

FROM PASTOR CHAD

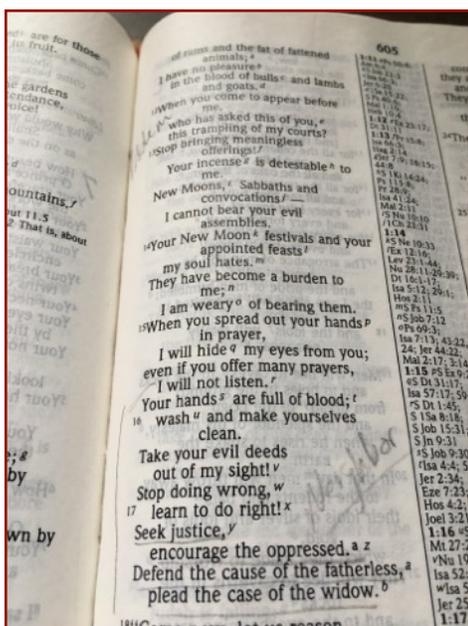
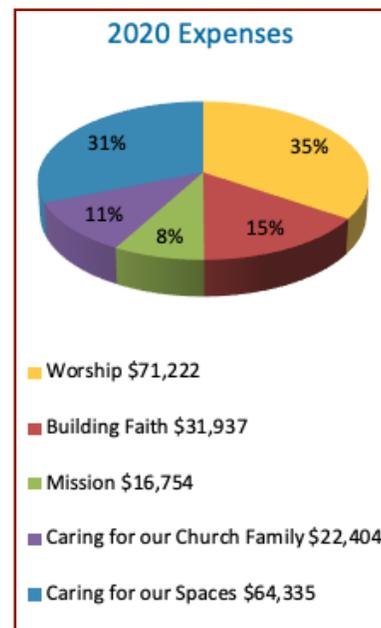
Worship Is Not a Program

If you attended the annual meeting two weeks ago, when we reviewed the 2020 budget, you probably noted that the largest single category in our narrative budget was worship. Over one third of our resources as a congregation are committed to worship.

This should not be a shocking statistic; gathering to worship is the primary activity of the church of Christ. From the start the early followers of Jesus assembled to hear and live the apostle's teaching, to pray, to break bread, and to share fellowship with one another ([Acts 2:2:41-42](#)). By the middle of the second century the Church had begun to establish patterns for worship including gathering weekly – on Sunday (the day of resurrection).

In our worship we both witness to the resurrection of Christ and we find our identity and calling.¹ God's message of hope for our world grows from our worship.

True worship includes the glory and honor due God – Father, Son, and Spirit. It also includes the enactment of God's love and justice, mercy and kindness in the world. This is the encounter and the transformation that is worth the pearl of great price, both for our sake and for our neighbors. On the one hand, Scripture indicates that worship is meant to be the tangible embodiment of God's hope in the world. Conversely, the Bible also teaches that the realities of oppression, poverty and injustice can be both a call to worship and an indictment of or failure to do so.²



So, we gather to express joy and praise, to be reminded that we are not alone in facing the challenges of our individual lives and to be reminded of our identity as people called to do justice. Our worship together is a demonstration of God in the midst of a culture that shuts God out at the same time that it reminds us of our failure to live in the fullness of life that God intends and demonstrated in Jesus. We mustn't forget God's words that come through the great prophet Isaiah. Words that are as profoundly challenging today as when they were first spoken for they suggest that we'd be better off not professing to worship as long as we fail to do justice. ([Isaiah 1:12-17](#))

Contrary to many contemporary conversations around Christian worship, biblically speaking, worship is not defined by the type of music we have, the number of people who attend, whether our pastor does or doesn't wear a robe, how entertaining the sermon is, or even how culturally relevant the service is or isn't. Worship is not a program or an event we attend. Worship is both the authentic expression of our community's unique witness to Christ

and a dangerous act that often makes us uncomfortable with our daily routines.

Each week as I meditate on the scripture passage and prepare for our Sunday service of worship I do so attempting to hold these threads together. It is always my hope that we can witness to God's message of good news for the world, find our individual identity in our call to discipleship, and be challenged to live as Kingdom people who enact God's justice. When we gather each week we are gathering for these reasons. We don't come to be entertained or to get something. "If we view worship as something that 'we want to get something out of,' then we are going to view it from a consumer standpoint."³ And we are not consumers — we are disciples.

Our worship is something we create and are always recreating together as God's people. It includes prayer, scripture, sermon, sacrament, and song, but more importantly it must always be both authentic to who we are and push us toward the justice of God. Over the years we've changed and grown and developed practices that reflect our own unique witness. For instance our children have their own separate space for spiritual formation unique to their needs, but we attempt to keep them fully included in our worship. At times the children of our community stay for all of worship and participate (even during the sermon) through art and they participate in the sacraments with the whole congregation.

At times we have also varied our musical styles. Not in an effort to attract more people, but to better reflect the many ways that music both helps us sense the presence of God and calls us powerfully to proclaim and live God's justice in the world. As we continue to explore worship together I'm excited to work with Taylor Newman who will be joining our staff as Music Director. Taylor's role will include coordinating and organizing the gifts and talents for musical expression in our own congregation, working with myself and Don to bring various forms of musical expression to our services, and at times sharing his own musical talents.

May our worship together continue to reflect what the Lord requires: "to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with our God?"

¹ Rick Barger, *A New And Right Spirit: Creating an Authentic Church in a Consumer Culture* (p. 110)

² Mark Labberton, *The Dangerous Act of Worship: Living God's Call to Justice*

³ Rick Barger, *A New And Right Spirit: Creating an Authentic Church in a Consumer Culture* (p. 125)



TAYLOR NEWMAN BIO

Taylor Newman is a multifaceted percussion performer and educator. A Hunterdon County native, Taylor began his formal studies at the Ithaca College School of Music studying with international marimba virtuoso Gordon Stout. Taylor finished his education at the Cleveland Institute of Music studying with The Cleveland Orchestra members Richard Weiner, Marc Damoulakis, and Paul Yancich, as well as world/jazz percussionist Jamey Haddad. While in Cleveland, Taylor was awarded the CIM Avedis Zildjian Percussion Scholarship and was the third place prize-winner in the 2016 Modern Snare Drum Competition.

A diverse performer, Taylor is an active freelancer in the tri-state area and has appeared with The Hunterdon Symphony, The Imperial Brass Band, The Bloomfield Symphony, The Central Jersey Symphony Orchestra, The Princeton Symphonic Brass Ensemble, The Hangar Theatre, The Algonquin Arts Theatre, and at the FringeNYC International Arts Festival. Taylor is also the drummer of Lucky Lawrence, a New York City based Americana rock band releasing their debut self-titled EP this coming spring.

A passionate educator, Taylor has taught at The Hunterdon Preparatory School, the Voorhees High School Marching Band, The Cleveland School of the Arts, Euclid High School Marching Band, and the New York City public school system. Taylor additionally teaches privately through his studio, Jersey Drum Lessons, which can be found online at www.jerseydrums.com

In addition to his musical career, Taylor is a competitive ultra-runner, competing in ultra distances up to and including 100 miles. Taylor looks forward to competing in the NJ Ultra Festival 100-Miler, Canal Corridor 100-Miler, Headlands 100-Miler, and The Sangre de Cristo Ultras 200-Miler as part of his 2020 race season. Stemming from his passion for running and its relationship to mental strength and well-being, Taylor co-founded and is President of The Move for Mind Foundation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. The purpose of The Move for Mind Foundation is to promote awareness, create an open dialogue, and provide philanthropic support for mental health with the belief that physical health is a key component of mental health, and one cannot exist without the other. Move for Mind seeks to accomplish this through community events, programming, and partnerships in the Hunterdon County, New Jersey area.



THIS SUNDAY — ASP COFFEE HOUSE

Sunday, February 9th from 4-7 p.m. in the parish hall. All the food you can eat and music for a great cause! \$10 for ages 10+.

LET IT SNOW, LET IT SNOW, LET IT SNOW!

The Buildings and Grounds team is putting together a list of people who would be willing to help with some of the snow blowing and shoveling during the winter months. When it snows, we have our parking lot and driveways plowed, but the sidewalks, walkways, and front steps need to be cleared by us. Pastor Chad often takes care of the bulk of this, but he will be having surgery on his shoulder in early January, and won't be able to help at all this winter. This is **NOT** a commitment to head to the church every time it snows. We'd like to have a list of people who we can contact (hopefully with a text message) as the need arises. If you are available, great! If not, hopefully someone else will be. If you would like to be added to the list, please contact Karen Newman at kjnewman115@gmail.com or 908-763-9483.



BIBLE STUDIES AND FELLOWSHIP

Women's Bible study meets the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month, from 7:00-8:30 in the library. Please join us as we study the book of Matthew using N.T. Wright's "Matthew for Everyone." and together learn more of who Jesus was, his teachings, and what this means for our lives. Join us!

Men's Fellowship: There's plenty of bible study, but that's not all. Join us on Saturdays at 8 a.m. in the church library. We share food and life and wrestle with scripture together. At the present we're spending time in the Gospel of Matthew.

ASH WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26

Please join us for an interactive Ash Wednesday worship service that will use all your senses. The 7 p.m. service will be a joint effort with Fairmount Presbyterian Church and will be held at Fairmount.

MEALS ON WHEELS

Meals on Wheels needs your help! As one of the last meal delivery programs in New Jersey to depend solely on volunteer drivers, new drivers are always needed. By committing approximately two hours, once a month, you can make a big difference in the lives of Hunterdon County's homebound seniors by delivering hot, nutritious lunches. For more information call Meals on Wheels at 908-284-0735, visit their website at mowih.org, or email info@mowih.org.

OUR GARDEN IS AMAZING!**Open Cupboard Food Pantry, Inc**

(A 501(c)(3) Charitable Organization)
PO Box 5071, 37 Old Hwy 22
Clinton, NJ 08809

www.opencupboardfoodpantry.org

(908) 730-7320

7 November 2019

Lower Valley Presbyterian Church
443 Rt 513
Califon, NJ 07830

Dear Friends,



Is the growing season over? Every time I think I'll write to thank you for your produce donations, you bring more.

This year you donated 443 pounds of produce to Open Cupboard Food Pantry. I can't overstate how much receiving these fresh foods means to our clients. Most pantries are only able to distribute non-perishables; we are truly grateful that your generosity is part of what enables us to provide healthier foods.

We've got big changes at the Pantry as our founder and leader for the last 26 years, Anne Underhill, has retired. She is replaced by Jennifer Tavormina who brings her own unique qualities and abilities to the position. We look forward to the energy and new ideas her leadership will bring.

Thank you. We couldn't do it without you.

Gratefully,


Tobey Wodder, Secretary

No goods or services were received in exchange for this donation.

“...for I was hungry and you gave me food...” Matthew 25:35

Pastor Chad's Contact info:

Cell phone: 908.892.0044

E-mail: revchadrodgers@gmail.com

Church Info:

Claudia Gilbert: Church Administrator

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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/wnewman115@gmail.com

Upcoming Servers

Date	Liturgist	Ushers	Communion Servers
February 2	Al El-Zahr	Renee Ollerenshaw and Mike Reaves	Renee Ollerenshaw Marilyn El-Zahr Warren Newman
February 9	Marilyn El-Zahr	Karen and Warren Newman	
February 16 – Family Worship	Karen Newman	Peggy Macaoay and OPEN	
February 23	Jacob El-Zahr	Renee Ollerenshaw and OPEN	
March 1	Peggy Macaoay	Cindy and Tim O’Keefe	OPEN OPEN OPEN OPEN
March 8	Kim Rodgers	Karen and Warren Newman	
March 15 – Family Worship	Warren Newman	Marilyn and Al El-Zahr	
March 22	Karen Newman	Peggy Macaoay and OPEN	
March 29	Peggy Macaoay	Kim Rodgers and OPEN	

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
February 2020

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.