

## Parish Happenings

### June 2019

#### FROM PASTOR CHAD

#### **Budgets and the Cultivation Generosity**

Generally speaking we who administrate churches think of the end of October and beginning of November (or even December here at LVPC) as stewardship season. Now, I'm not totally clueless. I know there are some practical reasons, beyond we've always done it this way, for this: it is the natural time given the budget cycle, from a budgeting perspective it helps to get pledges in plenty of time for the session to plan, the fall season tends to mark a return to more consistent attendance as rhythms of the school year take over many of our lives, everyone else is giving stewardship sermons at this time of the year, and this is the time when, the well meaning folks in the *mothership* (PCUSA national offices in Louisville, KY) send resources to us. As I was saying, there are all kinds of practical reasons for talking stewardship in the fall.



Talking about stewardship once a year in order to arrange the church budget may be helpful for the session, but I'm not sure it is working well for perpetuating the life of this institution we call Lower Valley Presbyterian Church. Does a once a year stewardship sermon actually move us to have a healthier relationship to wealth according to Jesus's teaching? Do we talk about church and personal finances enough to heal our souls, bring relief to our anxieties about having enough, or to transform our approach to money? In the past ten years have you done anything different in your financial life because of an experience at church? Are we, as a church, becoming more generous? Has our individual giving increased? Have we reprioritized our budgets after being challenged by scripture, or a sermon, or the people around us in church?

Judging by just about any measure you could dream up I would have to say we pastors have failed to offer much help to our flocks. In general people are inundated with economic advice and confusing ideas about money and wealth, but very little of this advice is given from a biblical perspective or, more importantly, from the perspective of following Jesus. I'm as guilty as the next pastor for letting the "stewardship campaign" lead the way when we should be led by both our individual and collective call to discipleship all year long.

**“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.**

*Matthew 6:19-21*

It is also true that while our church's finances are an important part of our life together this can not be the sole reason to talk about money, generosity, and discipleship. Somewhere around 40% (the precise percentage depends on the raging debate among scholars about how to classify a parable) of Jesus' parables are about managing money and possessions and there are something like 288 verses, in just the Gospels, that deal with the subject of money. So, this would seem to be something we pastors need to talk about

more often. The church budget is affected by our understanding of Jesus, money, generosity, and discipleship, but we need a broad approach.

I read somewhere recently that 'if we only define generosity as dollars, we've missed the point. Generosity has to do with life.' Becoming more generous is part of discipleship. To follow Jesus is to be generous with our time, our energy, willingness to listen to others, hospitality, and commitments. For our community here at LVPC to grow, thrive, and carry out our mission as followers of Christ together we are called to extend our understanding of generosity. I believe this will lead us to stability in every area of our church life.

Jesus has called us to practice our faith everyday and we need to regularly reflect on how being part of our community of faith, at LVPC, is an important part of that calling. Every week in worship there is an opportunity to offer not just checks, but our whole lives to God's purposes in the world and it is always my hope that our pledges are just one part of what it looks like to live faithfully as followers of Christ.

May knowing and embracing God's call generosity be a blessing to all of us.

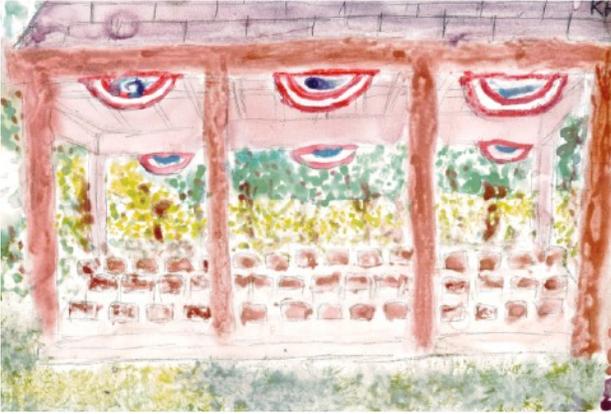


#### **NOTE FROM THE FINANCIAL COMMITTEE**

Since our last congregational meeting in January, LVPC has continued to struggle financially. Our income for the first four months of the year is \$5,327 below budget. This is a result of several factors, not least of which being Pledge Contributions not being realized. For those who have graciously pledged, please help us with this effort by keeping current your pledges.

Lower Valley Presbyterian Church - Financial Snapshot			
Four Months Ended April 30, 2019			
	2019 Actual	2019 Budget	Difference
Income	\$ 42,056	\$ 47,383	\$ (5,327)
Expenses	62,850	65,598	(2,748)
Net Income (Loss)	\$ (20,793)	\$ (18,215)	\$ (2,579)

Thankfully our expenses are also below budget, but not to the extent of income. Therefore, we have transferred more than expected from our savings to pay operating expenses. We are always looking for new ways to raise money so that we can cover our operating budget, whether that be through events, fundraising or other means. Please contact us and any session members with any ideas you may have to help strengthen the financial position of our church.



## **WORSHIP IN THE PARK/CHURCH PICNIC — JUNE 2**

Join us on June 2<sup>nd</sup> as we Worship in the Park followed by our annual picnic. All are welcome, please bring your favorite side dish, salad or dessert to share. We will be providing the sandwiches. Look forward to seeing you all there and coming together as a church community. *(Artwork by Kelly Hostler)*

### **ASP PRAYER CARDS**

Our Appalachia Service Project trip is July 13-20 to Greenbriar County, WV. We are again offering Prayer Cards featuring our volunteers and will be selling the cards for \$10 each during May and June before and after church. Please make checks payable to "Lower Valley Presbyterian Church" and note "ASP Trip" in the memo line. Thank you in advance for your generosity!

### **MISSION NEWS**

#### **Save the Date!!**

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

### **BIBLE STUDIES AND FELLOWSHIP**

**Women's Bible study** meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> 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.



### **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 received the newsletter, please call or email Claudia at 908-832-2933 or [lowervalleyipc@embarqmail.com](mailto:lowervalleyipc@embarqmail.com). Thank you.

### **Family Promise**

Family Promise is “the only homeless shelter for children and their families in Hunterdon County, we respond to the emergent need in our community.”

June 16 - 30 we are joining Fairmount Presbyterian and several local churches to once again help respond to the need for shelter in our community. Please mark your calendars and consider being an **overnight**

**host or be there for 3 hour shifts during the weekend** (contact person for that is Dave Loth at 752-3524 or delmml@aol.com) or **providing a meal** (contact person for that is Nancy Parks at 876-4669 or parks130@embarqmail.com) during one of the above dates. Opportunities to sign up will be coming very soon.

Additionally we are looking for some folks who would be interested in taking on some of the coordinating roles if we are to continue hosting Family Promise. We’re currently signed on to host guests again in the fall (October 6 - 20). If you would like to know more about ways to increase your involvement in this important mission please speak to Pastor Chad or Marilyn El-Zahr.

On May 11th, several of our youth spent the night sleeping “outside” (in the parish house) in cardboard boxes to raise funds to support Family Promise of Hunterdon County’s homeless families, and to increase awareness about homelessness in our own community.



## **SPIRITUAL FORMATION**

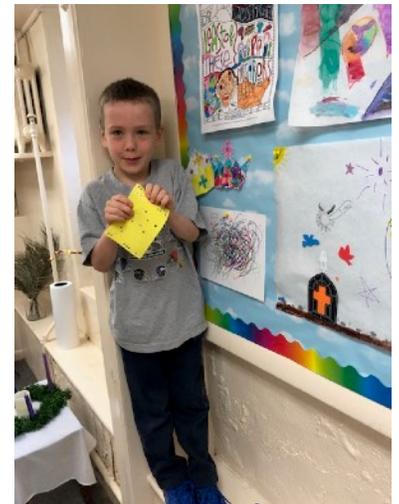
The 3, 4, 5 Sunday School class led morning worship on April 7. Their focus was on the book of Jonah and they presented the scripture as a choral reading. The class learned about the different components of the worship service and were able to serve communion. Congratulations to all who participated.

The Spiritual Formation team manned the art table on Easter. The children painted butterflies and frogs. These will be displayed in the sanctuary on banners. Watch for their art work.

As Sunday School winds down, it is time to think of next year. Teachers are needed in the fall. Generally two teachers work with each class so that they each have an opportunity to attend worship. If you would be interested in teaching, please see Linda Stetler or Kim Rodgers. There is a need!

The Spiritual Formation team is also always looking for new members. Prayerfully, consider joining us as we plan for the faith journey of our entire congregation.

Pictures included are the 3,4,5 grade class and the 1,2,3 grade class.



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](mailto:lowervalleypc@embarqmail.com).

**Pastor Chad's Contact info:**

Cell phone: 908.892.0044  
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**Church Info:**

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

**Session Members**

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Warren Newman: 763-6094/[wnewman115@gmail.com](mailto:wnewman115@gmail.com)

## Upcoming Servers

<b>Date</b>	<b>Liturgist</b>	<b>Ushers</b>	<b>Communion Servers</b>
<b>June 2 — Worship in the Park</b>	Marilyn El-Zahr	Marilyn and Al El-Zahr	Marilyn El-Zahr Linda Stetler Krista Jenkins Lisa Coffaro
<b>June 9</b>	<b>OPEN</b>	Jennifer Hoffman and <b>OPEN</b>	
<b>June 16</b>	Judy Eckwielen	Karen and Warren Newman	
<b>June 23</b>	Marilyn El-Zahr	Linda Stetler and <b>OPEN</b>	
<b>June 30</b>	Dick Kline	<b>OPEN and OPEN</b>	
<b>July 7</b>	<b>OPEN</b>	Judy Eckwielen and <b>OPEN</b>	<b>OPEN</b> <b>OPEN</b> <b>OPEN</b> <b>OPEN</b>
<b>July 14</b>	<b>OPEN</b>	<b>OPEN and OPEN</b>	
<b>July 21</b>	<b>OPEN</b>	<b>OPEN and OPEN</b>	
<b>July 28</b>	Karen Newman	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  
June 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.