

## **FROM PASTOR CHAD**

### **Not Just Another Pledge Drive**

For some reason we who administrate churches think of the end of October and beginning of November (or even the middle of November at LVPC) as stewardship season. Now, I'm not totally clueless, I know there are some practical reasons 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, there really isn't anything else going on in church life during this time, 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*, in Louisville, send resources to us. As I was saying, there are all kinds of practical reasons for talking stewardship in the fall.

Here's the deal, talking about stewardship once a year in order to arrange the church budget may be helpful for the session and for perpetuating the life of this institution we call Lower Valley Presbyterian Church, but is it really helping us? Does a once a year stewardship sermon help us deal with our wealth according to Jesus' teaching? Have our souls been helped, our anxieties about having enough been healed, or our approach to money been in any way changed by these once a year sermons focused on stewardship?

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. We 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 lead by the call to discipleship.

Yes, we will be talking about pledging in the next few weeks (for all the practical reasons above). However, we won't have any catchy campaign slogans (there are already enough of those around this time of year). Instead we hope when you consider pledging you'll consider how Jesus has called you to practice your faith everyday and 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 we hope that your pledge is just one part of what it looks like to live faithfully as followers of Christ.

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

\*Each of these slogans have been used by some church stewardship campaign somewhere at sometime.

**Give.**

**Growing Our  
Faith Through**

*Multiplying Our Gifts\**

**Living Giving  
Joyful**

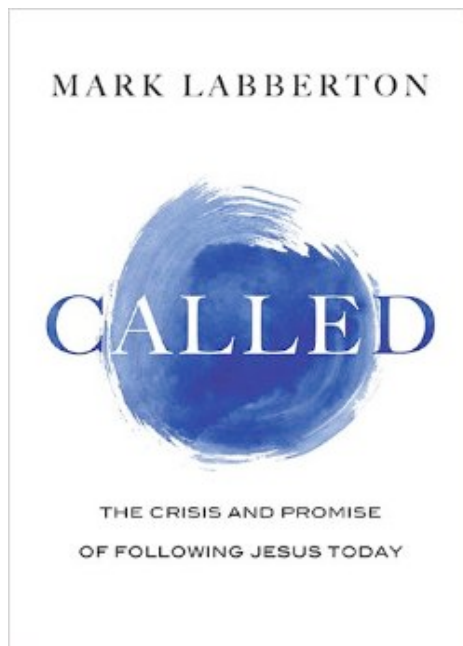
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## Called

In my short time as a pastor I have tried to avoid the temptation of handing people books. It would be easy when someone comes

into my study with a theological question or a personal struggle to listen carefully, peruse my book shelf, and then politely send them off with a prayer and some reading material to answer the question or fix the

problem. It is tempting to do because I've read some good books and I always feel that other pastors and writers are so much more articulate, but I've always felt that there is more to what I do than just handing out the right book. In spite of my lack of confidence, I've been able to trust my calling and believe that God has put me where I am because my words, my prayers, or my presence are the thing required for a particular moment. And handing out a book is very possibly a less faithful response.



Having said all that, this month I'm suggesting we pick up a book together. In many ways it speaks to one of the major themes in my preaching over the last few years. You

may even find echoes of some of my sermons, but I have found it to be a very clear and concise description of what it means to be a people who are indeed called by God. I believe it might help us to better understand the challenge

of living as God's people today. It is both a challenging and a hopeful expression of what it means to follow Jesus.

At a time when the search for *identity* seems to permeate and transfix our culture, as well as the Church, I believe Mark Labberton's book, *Called: The Crisis and Promise of Following Jesus Today* can help us. If it is true, and I am a pastor because I believe it to be so, that God's people "are meant to be the hope of the world" then I think it would be wise for us to continue to ponder how we are living as part of that truth. Reading and discussing this small book is one way we can engage in a deeper

understanding of this together.

If you would like a copy of the book please let me know or it is also available for your Kindle if you prefer.

## **SAVE THE DATE!**

**November 30 at 5:00 p.m.**  
**— Joyeux Noel Christmas Benefit Concert**

The Agape Ringers and the Faith Ensemble Ringers of Lower Valley Presbyterian Church will be participating once again in the Joyeux Noel Interfaith Christmas Concert to benefit the Open Cupboard Food Pantry of Clinton. The concert will take place on Sunday, November 30<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 p.m. at the Immaculate Conception Church of Annandale. Choirs from five different churches, along with the Salvation Army Band and the Hunterdon Harmonizers, join together to create an inspiring evening of Advent and Christmas music.

Although the concert is free, we are asking everyone to consider bringing a donation of dry or canned goods to be given to the Open Cupboard Food Pantry. In the next few weeks we will be distributing grocery bags that can be used to hold your donations. Donations are appreciated even if you are unable to attend the concert — you can leave your

donations in the back of the sanctuary, or give them to the Agape Ringers Director, Sue Hostler, and she will get them to the concert. Last year's concert was a wonderful evening in which over 4,000 pounds of food donations were collected for the Open Cupboard! It is a blessing to be a part of such a worthy cause, and we hope to see you at the concert!

### **ASP RETREAT**

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 6<sup>th</sup> at 5 p.m. to November 7<sup>th</sup> at 1 p.m. at LVPC.** The cost is \$10 and includes fellowship time, dinner from Fesco De Noche and baking of those amazing cookies. There is also a new 9-square court just looking to be broken in too!

Also, keep your eyes on your e-mail inboxes as preparations for next year are already beginning.

### **12<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL ALTERNATIVE GIFT FAIR**

The biggest mission opportunity of our church calendar is just around the corner! Scheduled for **Sat., Nov. 15<sup>th</sup>, 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.

**We are excited to have 4 new organizations participate this year – The Seeing Eye, Meals on Wheels, 52 Reasons to Love a Vet and America's Grow a Row!!**

### **AGF — WE NEED YOUR HELP!!**

**Publicity:** You can help by putting up a poster at your gym or workplace. Contact Nancy Knight or Claudia Gilbert.

**Kitchen Prep:** We need some people to help get everything ready in the kitchen. You would need to arrive by 8:30 a.m.

**Lunch (food and servers):** We are looking for volunteers to make and/or serve soup and desserts for the fair. We need soup (in a crock pot), cookies, brownies and small cakes, etc. Food items need to be dropped off at the church by 9:30 a.m. that day.

Please sign up during Fellowship or contact Lisa Coffaro at [coffaro423@comcast.net](mailto:coffaro423@comcast.net) or call 832-0409 if you can help with making or serving lunch.

### **ALTERNATIVE GIFT FAIR SHOPPING BOOKLET**

This year we are offering a new, easy to read Shopper's Booklet for the Alternative Gift Fair. If you received this newsletter via email, the booklet was attached. If you were mailed the newsletter and would like a copy of the booklet, you can either visit our website ([www.lowervalley.org](http://www.lowervalley.org)) and print out the pages you need or call the office at 908-832-2933 and a booklet can be sent to you.

### **ADVENT WORKSHOP**

We often hear it called the *Christmas Season*. It is the time between *Black Friday* and Christmas Day, but judging by what I see in department stores it may have already started. The challenge for us, as followers of Jesus, is that the so called *Christmas Season* doesn't really come until Christmas. While the culture is a buzz with consumer Christmas trappings we are making our way through the season of Advent. Advent is season of alertness to the hope of God's promises fulfilled. It is a time for attentiveness to God's Spirit and a deep reflection.

At LVPC we realize how hard Santa and his reindeer can make it to celebrate Advent. For this reason everyone is invited to participate in our Advent workshop.

**Saturday, November 29<sup>th</sup> from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. Bring a desert to share and we'll welcome the season of Advent together.**

### **CHRISTMAS TREE SALE**

We will be heading out to PA to pick up the trees on Friday, November 28 (the day after Thanksgiving). Please let Warren Newman know if you would like to come along. We will need help when we arrive back at church with the sorting and tagging also. The sale will be on Saturdays from 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. and Sundays from 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. leading up to Christmas. There will be a sign up sheet in the Parish Hall for salespersons. All proceeds will go to local mission needs.

### **MEALS ON WHEELS**

Meals on Wheels needs volunteer drivers in Hunterdon County. Serve your homebound senior neighbors a hot noon-time meal. The commitment to drive in only once per month during a weekday and will take only an hour or two to get that good feeling of giving. All new drivers are given an orientation and will be provided printed directions and maps. For more information, call the Meals on Wheels office at 908-284-0735 or visit their website at [www.mowin.org](http://www.mowin.org).

### **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](mailto:kwgarcia@msn.com)

### **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](mailto:gast.natalie@gmail.com).

### **MEN'S FELLOWSHIP**

We are continuing our study of the Book of Acts. It's never too late to join us. We meet on Saturday mornings from 8 - 9:30 a.m. See Pastor Chad if you are interested.

### **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: [lowervalleypc@embarqmail.com](mailto:lowervalleypc@embarqmail.com). The newsletter can also be viewed on our webpage: [lowervalley.org](http://lowervalley.org).

### Christmas Play Practice Schedule

- Sunday, November 16th: 11:15-11:30 Meet with kids to hand out play so they can look over their lines and start to practice and memorize them
- Sunday, November 23rd: 11:30-11:45 Parent meeting
- Sunday, November 30th: 11:30-12:45 Practice for those who have lines
- Saturday, December 6th: 11:30-1:00 Practice for those who have lines, costume sizing for those who don't have lines
- Sunday, December 14th: 10:00-12:00 Practice for those who have lines  
11:30-1:00 Practice for **all** kids involved in the play
- Saturday, December 20th: 9:00-1:00 Dress Rehearsal for those with lines  
11:00-1:00 Dress Rehearsal for those without lines  
Lunch of pizza and other snacks will be included. Pick up the kids in the Parish Hall.
- Sunday, December 21st: 9:30 Arrive and put on costumes  
10:00 Lead worship through performance of the Christmas Play

**Pastor Chad's Contact info:**

Cell phone: 892.0044

E-mail: [revchadrodgers@gmail.com](mailto:revchadrodgers@gmail.com)

**Church Info:**

Claudia Gilbert: Church Administrator

Phone: 908-832-2933

E-mail: [lowervalleyipc@embarqmail.com](mailto:lowervalleyipc@embarqmail.com)

Website: [www.lowervalley.org](http://www.lowervalley.org)

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

**Session Members**

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

# Upcoming Servers

Date	Liturgist	Ushers	Communion Servers	Fellowship Host(s)
November 2	Sue Huntington	Judie and Adam Ambielli	Sue Huntington Terry Hoffman Stephanie Donlon Wendy Garcia	
November 9	Stephanie Donlon	Cindy and Tim O'Keefe		
November 16	<b>OPEN</b>	Janet and Gary Kipp		
November 23	Warren Newman	<b>OPEN</b>		
November 30	Marilyn El-Zahr	Lisa Coffaro and Isabel Roppolo		
December 7	Dick Kline	<b>OPEN</b>	Sally Zeiner Linda Stetler Warren Newman Renee Ollerenshaw	
December 14	<b>OPEN</b>	Stephanie and Jeff Donlon		
December 21	Judy Eckwielen	Terry Hoffman		
December 24 7:30 p.m.	<b>OPEN</b>	Warren and Karen Newman		
December 28	Judy Eckwielen	<b>OPEN</b>		

**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!**

November 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.