

Parish Happenings

November 2020

FROM PASTOR CHAD

Praise the LORD, all you nations!
Extol him, all you peoples!
For great is his steadfast love toward us,
and the faithfulness of the LORD
endures forever.

Praise the LORD!

Psalms 117

As we continue to wake up each day to unprecedented times we are reminded by the shortest psalm – a simple call to worship – that our hope is in God’s enduring faithfulness. These few lines of text call us away from the news feed on our phone or the talking heads on our screens to a different focus. In the midst of a pandemic and an extremely divisive and important election we are reminded that God does not abandon us. Even in challenging times we are called to worship and recognize God for God’s consistent presence.

COVID-19 has disrupted many of the rhythms of life we were used to and for many it has created great hardship and sadness, but it hasn’t kept the Church or our church from worship. Yes, it has changed and we don’t much care for worship by Zoom or Vimeo, but we have continued to “praise the LORD” with out fail each week for the last seven months. For my part I’m thankful that some are able to gather in person while others can safely join us for worship through modern technology.

Our session continues to thoughtfully and carefully consider the health and safety of our whole community as well as the church’s staff while carrying out our calling. This means that for the foreseeable future we will continue to worship with masks, socially distanced, following all state recommendations, and online. If the present surge in cases of the virus require a change in our present approach we will not hesitate to move completely back online or take any other necessary precautions.

God’s steadfast love and faithfulness are intended to be a constant comfort to us. I love how Eugene Peterson chose to translate this part of the psalm: “God’s love has taken over our lives.”

As important as I believe American elections and as critical as good leaders are to the wellbeing of our nation and the world there is nothing as powerful as being “taken over” by the love of God. In this moment of great uncertainty on the precipice of momentous change in our country (a sure thing no matter who wins Tuesday’s election) we can be certain that God’s love is the most important factor in our daily lives.

God's love gives us the hope of overcoming divisions among us, the 400 year scourge of systemic racism, the existential threat of climate change, vast global economic inequality, and the daily struggle to find our individual place in a complicated world.

May the love and faithfulness of God be your strength and motivation each day.

Celebrating 15 years

Believe it or not and, yes, even in the midst of this pandemic, on November 12th, we're celebrating the one who keeps our pastor in line and keeps the day to day of our church life decent and in order.

After 15 years as our church administrator Claudia Gilbert continues to lose sleep over all the details of the church schedule, the Giving Fair, the monthly newsletter, and countless other important details. We are extremely grateful for her early years seeing us through a period of transition, her many years of stability and commitment to our congregation, and the many gifts she continues to share that help us carry forward our mission at LVPC.

Thanks Claudia!



MISSION NEWS

Annual Giving Fair

This marks the 18th year of our annual Giving Fair. This year we are going virtual due to COVID-19 restrictions. The Virtual Giving Fair will begin on "Giving Tuesday" which is on Tuesday, December 1 and will close on Saturday, December 21. Mike Reaves continues to work hard on developing a website for purchasing symbolic gifts through donations to charities. You can access the virtual giving fair through the church website under the mission tab or at this link givingfair.lowervalley.org. Remember the reason for the season. This is gift giving that changes lives.

Christmas Tree Sale

The church will be selling Christmas Trees beginning on Saturday, December 5th. Volunteers will be caravanning to BJ's Tree Farm on Saturday, November 28 at 7 a.m. to pick up the trees. To sign up for tree pick up or sales please visit: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60b0c45a8aa28a0f94-lvpc1> or speak with Ken Ernst.

BIBLE STUDIES AND YOUTH GROUPS

Women's Bible study meets the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month (November 4 and 18), from 7:00-8:30 in the Parish Hall. We are currently studying the book of Esther. Please join us!

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

Middle School Youth Group (6th, 7th, and 8th graders)

Yes, we are living in a difficult time to gather a group of middle schoolers and let them run wild in the Parish Hall for an hour and a half each week, however, we all still need community. Middle school youth group takes place on Wednesdays from 7-8:30. You'll need a mask and we'll remain

socially distanced, but we can gather for some 9 square, prayer, bible study, and other socially distanced games.

High School Youth Group

Our next meetings will be on November 8 and 22 from 7-8:30. Because of COVID protocols we will meet in the Parish Hall. Bring a mask and we'll share in some community building, bible study and prayer together. We'll also be spending some time talking about what it means to be part of the church and specifically the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for those students considering confirmation. All are welcome so bring a friend. Be sure to let Pastor Chad know you're interested in attending and he will keep you updated on our meeting dates.

Upcoming Servers

Date	Liturgist	Ushers	Communion Servers
November 1	Marilyn El-Zahr	Karen and Warren Newman	N/A
November 8	Kim Rodgers	Marilyn and Al El-Zahr	
November 15	Renee Ollerenshaw	Peggy Macaoay and Mike Reaves	
November 22	Warren Newman	OPEN and OPEN	
November 29	Karen Newman	Judy Eckwielen and Mike Reaves	
December 6	Jacob El-Zahr	Mike Reaves and OPEN	N/A
December 13	Peggy Macaoay	Kim Rodgers and OPEN	
December 20	Judy Eckwielen	Karen and Warren Newman	
December 24 4:30 p.m service	Mike Reaves	OPEN and OPEN	
December 24 7:30 p.m. service	Warrem Newman	Marilyn and Al El-Zahr	
December 27	Kim Rodgers	Peggy Macaoay and Judy Eckwielen	

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
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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.