

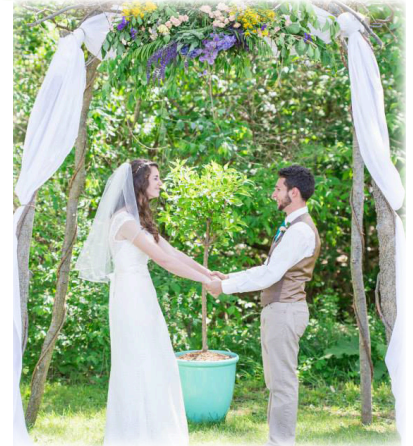
The LCF Connection

February 2016

My Transition into Marriage: Taking One Day at a Time

by Allison Delagrange

I think that I've had a pretty dramatically different experience than other "Newly Marrieds," in that I kind of went into marriage expecting the worst. That is certainly not because I had a reason to believe that Karl would turn out to be a terrible husband, or that our sincere vows to each other were really empty promises. Instead, my skepticism was mostly due to the well-meaning advice that I had been given by family and friends who wanted me to enter marriage looking at things "realistically." While some were at least half-joking, they would say things like "Enjoy being engaged—that feeling won't last long," "God uses marriage to break us down and purify us," and "Get ready for 'real life.'"



What they accomplished was probably not what they intended, and I remember being terrified of getting married, while still determined that was what God wanted for Karl and I. I think one of the reasons that these admonitions were so frightening was that for us, dating had not been an in-the-clouds dreamland. It had been

full of uncertainty, setbacks, and struggle. It seemed obvious that if marriage was so much harder than dating, we would be in trouble for sure. Yet after Karl and I got married, I came to a shocking realization: I loved being married! And while now some of the challenges we faced were new, other challenges that we had experienced while dating had disappeared.

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A Love that Lasts

by Theresa Hennis

On December 25, 2015, Levi and Cora Miller celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary! In a time when so many marriages end in divorce, it is refreshing to see a couple who has faithfully lived out their wedding vows for 65 years. During those 65 years they have lived in Iowa, Florida, Indiana, and Ohio. They have 9 children, 27 grandchildren, and 39 great-grandchildren.

We asked them to share a few of their thoughts on what makes a successful and lasting marriage.

What do you think is an important piece of advice or key to a lasting marriage?

- Don't forget the commitment you made to your spouse when you shared your marriage vows.
- Pray together daily.
- Plan your finances together. Learn to control your expenses. Make major financial decisions together. Seek counsel from parents or other financially successful church people about financial decisions.
- Ask forgiveness when you've wronged your partner.
- Don't harbor secrets from one another.
- Get actively involved with a church.



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255 US 42 NE London, OH 43140
(740) 490-2121

www.LCFweb.org

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What is Truth?

A Message from the Pastor

by Rob Swartz

Our small group has been studying the book of Daniel and I was intrigued with the scenario in Chapter 6 where King Darius the Mede enacted a law that could not be overturned; a law of the Medes and Persians. When the law he enacted required him to throw his friend and chief administrator, Daniel, into the den of lions, King Darius tried every possible means to save Daniel by changing it or repealing it, but he could not. It was a law that even he, the greatest king of that time, could not change.

It reminded me of principles and truths of God's word. Do we look at them like the law of the Medes and Persians; truths and principles that cannot be changed? Do we see them like David did in Psalm 19?

*"The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul...
The precepts of the law are right, giving joy to the heart...
The ordinances of the Lord are sure and altogether righteous."*

It seems to me that we have all kinds of opinions on politics, marriage, divorce, sex, war, etc. that are based on opinion, experiences, books, movies, famous people, family background, and many other factors, but the only perfect word on the subject, God's word, has little bearing. From all appearances, much of what we believe seems to be based on the simple fact that we want to believe it, therefore it is true for us.

I remember having many discussions with a good friend at Command Alkon about the truth of Christianity. He does not believe the Bible is true, and of course, I do. At one point in our discussion, he asked me a question that I have thought about often since. "If you discovered one day that what you believe to be true, isn't true, would you change your belief?" It's a great question and he meant it to shake my faith, but in fact it strengthened it. How much of what we believe and what we do is based simply on the fact that we want to believe it to be true, regardless of whether it is truth or not?

I believe that what God says is truth; irrefutable, unchanging, irrevocable truth. It doesn't matter what I think or want to believe. It doesn't matter who wants to change what or who has an opinion about what. It doesn't matter what I want to do. I can't accommodate God's truth to fit my lifestyle. I can't modify it to fit my choices. What God says about forgiveness is what stands. His words about marriage, divorce, and remarriage are what carry. His call to sexual purity is perfect and right and true. There is nothing and no one who can refute or change these truths.

It would be best for us to give these words the prominence they deserve. There is no thought or opinion greater than those of God himself. We would do well to listen. They are some of the most challenging callings in life and impossible to follow except through the power of the Holy Spirit. However, as David reminds us, they revive the soul. They give joy to the heart. They give light to the eyes. They are a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. They are sweeter than honey and more precious than gold.

Elders' Notes

by Vicki Sairs

The Elders met on January 12 at Rob and Doris's house. Our meeting covered a lot of territory, starting with approving the 2016 Budget and ending with prayer. In between those two things we talked about:

VBS—Sheila Miller is interested in doing a Vacation Bible School this summer. We support her in pursuing the idea as long as she can find an adequate team of people who share the vision and are willing to help with it.

Congregational Care—Rob updated us on people that he and Doris are working with in various ways; he also told us that Sheila Miller has agreed to head up the Congregational Care Team, and Amie Smith will be helping. Thanks, Sheila and Amie!

Elders Nominations—The church approved Bob Zachrich to serve a second 3-year-term as elder. We reviewed the nominations that were given on ballots, and Rob will check with them. We are hopeful about these possibilities.

Ministry to Veterans—We discussed how to show appreciation and care for the veterans among us, without condoning war and violence. It's a tricky and complex issue. We noted the information received from Titus Peachy at MCC. We will continue to think and pray about this. Vicki agreed to help keep this need in front of us.

Marriage Encouragement—We want to find ways to strengthen and encourage married couples at LCF. Reuben & Vicki will check with Conrad & Lynette Showalter to see if they would consider doing some type of marriage seminar at LCF.

Membership—At our Celebrate the Church Sunday on January 10th, we received eight new members. 38 of our 71 members signed the membership commitment. Doris will follow up with the remaining members. It may be good to note a place on next year's form where people can check: "I am not an official member here at LCF, but I joyfully commit to these things."

Men's Ministry—It seems that God is stirring some interest in men's ministry here at LCF. We will think and pray about the following possibilities (some may be able to be combined) and see how God leads.

- 180 Recovery Program—This is a program that helps men overcome sexual addiction through the power of God's Word and the Holy Spirit.
- Accountability Group—There is interest in starting an accountability group among men in our church/community.
- Men's Bible Study—Several men would like to start a men's Bible Study. This could potentially be part of the above noted accountability group.
- Men's Life Groups—Would the men of LCF be interested in their own LIFE groups (similar to the women)?

Council Update

by David Perkins

There is always a feeling of starting fresh in the New Year. It seems we all have a desire to improve on the years that have passed and making this one even better. After a short break for the holidays, the Council was able to meet to talk about what's on the agenda for 2016 and how we could continue to improve things here at LCF.

First, we would like to thank all who have signed up to be a part of the new team/committee structure as well as thank all who are still serving. Some new teams and committees have been introduced to the congregation such as the Congregational Care Team. The Council will continue to work with the newly established teams as well as the other teams to help them grow and improve.

This year, the Council will begin to focus on how to incorporate opportunities for mission trips at LCF. These trips will either be through LCF or other sources. We will be doing research to provide resources to those who have interest to go on mission trips. We welcome any ideas or feedback from the congregation. Feel free to share your ideas with any of the Council members (Pam Shay, Dave Stewart, David Perkins, and Rob Swartz). We will be coming up with a list of different mission trip opportunities to present to the congregation throughout the year.

There are several other things on the agenda of the Council that we will be bringing up throughout the year. We will make sure to keep the congregation updated on all the projects that we are working on. So, feel free to talk to us if you have any questions and keep an eye out for your monthly Council Updates.

Marriage Transition...continued

Now, I certainly haven't been married very long—about 7 months, actually—but I think I may have learned something from this situation. “Real life” does not begin after you get married, or after you buy your first car, or after you start working long hours. Instead, the moment we enter this world, we have begun living our real life. Jesus said to “Give your entire attention to what God is doing right now, and don't get worked up about what may or may not happen tomorrow. God will help you deal with whatever hard things come up when the time comes.” (Matthew 6:24 MSG) While certain chapters of our life's story are obviously different from other chapters, and maybe more challenging, Jesus promises to walk with us and to make us ready for each step as it comes. He sometimes even gives us surprising joy and fulfillment in living moment by moment.

A Love that Lasts...continued

What do you think keeps love alive in a marriage?

- Prayer is very important.
- Studying God's word for direction in life and for making decisions.
- Not holding grudges.

What do you each like to do for each other to show your love?

- We share household responsibilities.
- We give each other hugs and kisses.



Levi & Cora with their 9 children - taken shortly before their daughter, Brenda (Marcus Freed's wife) passed away in April 2014.

Thanks Levi and Cora, for the wonderful example that you give us of a love that lasts through life's ups and downs. We are thankful for the blessing that you are to so many, including our church family here at LCF. May God bless you with many more wonderful years together!

Upcoming Activities

Feb. 13	Rob & Harmony's Wedding
Feb. 15-18	CMC Pastor's Conference, Sugar creek, OH

LCF's New Year's Eve Celebration



We welcomed in the New Year with a fun evening of volleyball, board games, and snacks, followed by a time of worship and prayer from 11 p.m. - midnight.



"How Was Kenya?"

by Danny Ndungu



Imagine thoroughly attempting to answer the question, "How was your day?" in great detail. You would probably speak of having much less traffic on your morning commute, staying fully awake in an 8 a.m. class, or maybe spilling coffee on your shirt. But even if you break a sweat trying not to leave out any details, you are guaranteed to leave something out.

This past December, I spent my college break in Kenya with friends and family whom I had not seen for over six years. I savored every moment of it, even turning into a "morning person" to maximize the experience. Yet, coming back to the States, it is hard to give a substantial response to "How was Kenya?"

With this in mind, I will touch on some highlights and hope that you will talk to me for more than just this sneak peek.

I will miss spending time with little kids—cousins, nieces, and nephews (first cousins once removed are considered nieces and nephews). Nothing else brought me more joy than watching the younger ones perform songs they had learned in school, holding crying children, dancing, playing tag, etc. You should have seen their faces when I gave them American candy! Every once in a while I would sit back and smile, simply awed in how much they had grown. I slept heavily almost every night, happily exhausted from trying to make up for my six years in absentia.

Time spent with my grandmothers was even more special. Nothing beats sitting by Cûcû (Grandma) listening to stories of my parents growing up. One story was of my dad, who was being chased by a Maasai man for mischief, only to turn and taunt him to run faster! In reminiscing about great hardships that have come their way, my grandmothers spoke to me about the power of spending time in prayer, trusting in the Lord, caring for the least of these, and obeying my parents. Ephesians 6 sounds so beautiful in Kikuyu.

I was not ready to leave Kenya, a place that I call home. However, I am also thankful to come back to a loving church family, a second home. For more on delicious goat meat, Kenyan church services, and how to pronounce "cûcû", please talk to me sometime.



Naomy's mother with her grandchild.



Abraham's mother and two of her grandchildren, Grace and Njeri.

Celebrate the Church Sunday



On Sunday, January 10, we were reminded that "we have a home" and that we are part of God's great big family! We brought in eight new members—Myron & Mandy Hochstetler, Rosanna Miller, Karl & Allison Delagrange, Joe & Tasha Staubaugh, and Rob Devlin. Current members reaffirmed their memberships, appreciation was given to those who serve as leaders at LCF, and everyone was given the opportunity to sign up to help with various service opportunities in the coming year. The day ended with a wonderful potluck meal and fellowship together.



The LCF Connection

A monthly newsletter designed to enhance communication at London Christian Fellowship

What did you think? If any of the stories in this Connection sparked an idea or opinion you'd like to share, email us at connection@lcfweb.org. Editors: Doris Swartz, Trish Eaton, Theresa Hennis, and Amie Smith
If you prefer that we do not use photos of you in the Connection, you may opt out by emailing us at connection@lcfweb.org.