

The LCF Connection

August 2016

Worship Night—Taking Time to Focus

by Andrea Biscup

If your life is anything like mine, busyness fills up your schedule—work, family, activities—until it's all you can do to keep your head on straight every day. It can be really difficult to focus your heart on WHY you are doing all this stuff, what God wants to do in you and around you, and what life is all about anyway.



It may seem counterintuitive to plan yet another activity in order to fix this problem of focus, but that is our hope for the Friday worship nights that we have recently started at LCF. We want to set aside one Friday evening every other month to spend about an hour (7 to 8 p.m.) focusing on Jesus and remembering our real purpose for life through worship (both reflective and celebratory) and prayer (sometimes alone, sometimes as a group). The atmosphere will be different from Sunday morning – informal, low lights, intimate, less of an agenda—a special space to connect with God.

So far, those of us who have attended the worship nights have really enjoyed them, but we would love to see a lot more LCFers join us! Please consider coming to the next worship night, which is planned for Friday, September 2, from 7 to 8 p.m.

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LCF's First VBS

by Sheila Miller

LCF hosted our first ever Vacation Bible School! Our theme this year was Submerged. It was an underwater theme, where we learned about how people see the outside, but Jesus sees beneath the surface, and sees and knows our hearts. He knows our worth, and we are valuable to Him.

The kids learned through storytelling performed by Lonnie Combs and Lydia Gingerich. They also learned through crafts, games, and snacks that reinforced the Submerged theme. They participated in singing enthusiastically and learning verses. The offering collected was given to help with Operation Christmas Child. Our Co-Captains, Rob and Danny, did a great job leading the kids every night, during the worship time.

Approximately 40 kids were registered, and the attendance each night was around 25. It was fun and encouraging to see the group leaders interacting with the kids and participating in the songs. Thank you to the 30+ youth and adults who volunteered to help make this first VBS a success! (If you'd like to see more VBS pictures, visit LCF's Facebook page.)



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Election Years

A Message from the Pastor

by *Reuben Sairs*



Election years. Oh, woe is me. Two passages always come to mind when election cycles roll around. Philippians 4:5 says, "Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand." This passage tells you what to try to do and why to do it. Although politics might be dressed up in a lot of god talk, and much of it damning one's opponents, somehow I think most political statements reflect the belief that God isn't really anywhere near at all, so we'd better take things in hand for ourselves. It is not the time for gentleness, and so from radio to Facebook, the angrier you are, apparently the 'righter' you are.

The other passage is from Timothy, and perhaps is pointed mostly at pastors. 2 Timothy 2:23-26, "But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife. And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will."

Politics have their role, and of course some issues are pressing, but I avoid most political discussions. The world without Jesus Christ often believes politics is the beginning and end of everything important (at least in election years). Political questions are the biggest and most important matters. Gaining and holding political power are the central issues of life. I simply don't think this is true. I don't think it is ever true. Even in those situations in which desperate and powerful politics are destroying lives, cities and civilizations, I still think there are higher issues. Politics can only ever be about this world and this life, and I think there is more to the picture. In life's most desperate situations, you will find political options are few, or out of reach, or simply "don't go there."

Of course, there are elaborate and complex arguments put forth by those who disagree with me. Let me anticipate some of what I get dished back at me. First, I won't own the accusation that to downplay political involvement is to be socially irresponsible. There are many ways to speak for the powerless, and to seek justice and to try to better things in the world. As I see it, once some of the issues are packaged politically they are often reduced and muddled. Sometimes ministries and individuals do a much better job of getting to the point. I also find myself playing the "age card." That's dangerous because maybe it's saying I'm just out of touch, but frankly, I've found that waiting for politics to change things is a long wait, sort of like waiting for glaciers to move.

I have another big problem in election years. Politics, especially in our time, seems to know only the language of friend and enemy, our side and their side, I'm right; you're wrong (and you're probably something like Hitler also). How on earth does someone witness for Jesus Christ and new life by being born again, of the peace of God that passes understanding, the peace given not as the world gives peace, when he or she has just punched someone in the nose politically, so to speak? My unbelieving friends think that religion is usually just a pretext for political power. Religion is merely a mask. I hope to make that a very hard position for them to hold, but I fear many Christians, especially those who are loud and frequent in political opining, make it difficult. I want my unbelieving friends, even though they won't necessarily like it, to say that I really do seem to think the Lord is at hand. Is anybody with me this year, or am I going to go it alone?

Elders' Notes

from our June and July meetings

by *Rob Swartz*

The elders' team met on June 7th and July 24th to discuss a variety of things such as youth leadership, marriage conference, elder leadership, small groups, etc. The team continues to look for an opportunity to expand the size of the elders team, but also recognizes what a significant help the Council has been in off-loading many responsibilities from the team. Thanks, Council!

We are committed to helping marriages grow and thrive, and so, we have made plans to have a marriage conference here at LCF November 11 - 12. Our speakers will be Conrad and Lynette Showalter, from Goshen, Indiana. We are excited about the opportunity to have Conrad and Lynette who have great experience in counseling and teaching, and we hope many of our married couples take advantage of this opportunity.

We would like to continue to encourage our small group ministry and plan to meet with current leaders and hopefully find some leaders to start new groups this fall. If you are interested in small group ministry, please contact one of us.

We are grateful for the leadership given for VBS and the number of people who volunteered to help. It is exciting to see how God provides people for ministry opportunities. We hope the VBS team is encouraged after their busy week.

We are grateful for Rosanna Miller and Benji Martin's leadership of Crossroads this past year. Thanks to Justin Scheffel, who will be stepping in to take Benji's place this coming year. Crossroads is exploring working together with Shiloh to minister to post-high young adults in both of our churches. We think this is a great opportunity to work together with one of our sister churches.

We are curious whether LCFers would prefer adult class during our Sunday morning this fall as we have done in the past or to offer it as an evening class. We decided to take a Sunday morning poll to determine which direction to pursue.

Other things were discussed such as:

- a possible women's retreat,
- what ministries to support,
- receiving new members,
- youth leadership planning, and
- future training classes that might be offered.

As we provide leadership at LCF, it is our prayer that we would be directed by the Holy Spirit and what God would have for us in ministry. Please pray with us that his will would be done in the ministry at London Christian Fellowship!

Council Update

by David Perkins

It is that seemingly unfortunate time of year where we approach the end of summer. Soon, the kids will be going back to school and everybody will be trying to squeeze the last bit of fun they can out of the warm weather. As the temperatures begin to drop and we enter the fall season though, that doesn't necessarily mean that the fun has to stop. The LCF Council has many plans and events to look forward as we enter the last half of this year.

There is nothing like enjoying a hot cup of coffee on a cold morning, and soon, you will be able to enjoy one at the new LCF Coffee Bar. The plans for the project are coming together smoothly, and we are starting to get a vision of what it will look like in the foyer of LCF. We are excited to see this project in the works, and we hope that you are excited too. Thanks to everyone that is involved with this project.

The new Facilities Master Plan Committee has met for the first time on July 17. As they continue to meet and discuss the future of how to utilize the grounds and property of LCF, we would welcome any of the congregation to join in on the conversation. This group is discussing topics such as adding a community garden, cemetery, extending the parking lot, etc. Keep an eye out for the next scheduled meeting and come if you are interested or talk to a member of the Council if you have any questions or ideas.

That is all we have for now, but like always, the Council will make sure to keep you updated on the things we are working on for the good of LCF. Please continue to keep the leadership at LCF in your prayers and be sure to read the monthly LCF Connection to stay informed.

It's All About Love!

The theme of this year's Xenos Summer Institute was "Love—the Mark of the Christian". Those who attended certainly received a lot to process and think about. We asked them to share a favorite quote or thought from the conference that impacted them. Here are some of their responses:

Richard Troyer: To love as Jesus did will cost you something.

Danae Swartz: "Don't be fooled by a society that has chosen to follow the path of selfishness and the external signs of success. We are called to follow the greatest leader, and we are involved in the greatest cause. Let's be faithful to that call." Ajith Fernando

Steve Swartz: "When the anticipation of heaven is rendered insignificant in comparison with life now, you feed your sense of entitlement." Larry Crabb

Pam Stanforth: Listening to Fouad Masri, a third generation ordained pastor born in Beirut, Lebanon, and who is passionate about sharing the love of Christ with Muslims changed my heart. Fouad's message of God's love to Muslims who are among the ALL whom God loves, shined a light on my hidden cultural bias. I learned much from his three breakout sessions and came away with a calmed heart, allowing the Holy Spirit to do His work in me. I may still feel nervous about sharing Jesus with Muslims, but not fearful, because I know the work is not mine but God's. To learn more visit crescentproject.org or fouadmasri.com.

Doris Swartz: "The larger story of God's unfailing love is unfolding at every corner of your life—even when the smaller story unfolds in the darkness of life...May we wear the mark of the Christian and put Jesus on display by how we relate in any circumstance of life and any condition of soul." Larry Crabb

Sandy Gregg: "The whole concept of a comfortable, convenient, passive Christianity is not something that works...It's about destiny that comes from commitment, a commitment that comes from sacrifice—a sacrifice that comes from testing." Clive Calver

Mark your calendars for next year's conference, July 5 - 7, 2017. The theme will be on God's Living Word with guest speakers D.A. Carson and John Lennox.



A Cincinnati Trip to Remember

by Gabrielle Stewart

The LCF youth, along with Reggie, Benji, and Brenda, spent the week in Cincinnati July 5 - 9, where we had several opportunities to serve and do outreach. One of the places we were able to serve was Cincinnati Urban Promise, a day-care that is in the process of relocating to what used to be a nursing home. The new building will not only have a day-care, but will also have a church. When we arrived at the day-care we met a woman named Joni. Despite all the struggles they've had with this new building, her dedication is to these children, and she is committed to helping them no matter the cost. After helping move everything to the new location, we helped clean and pick up trash. One thing that I loved about this day-care is they really emphasized the word "integrity". It was really great to see all these kids who come from different backgrounds be able to learn from God's Word and be in such a positive environment.

We had other opportunities to share God's love to people at the Lord's Gym. People came for praise and worship and a message, then enjoyed a meal afterward. Several of our youth were able to help serve food. It was great to see how God is working in the lives of the people there.

We had the fun privilege of going to the Creation Museum and the grand opening of The Ark Experience. It was amazing seeing a life-size replica of Noah's ark. We enjoyed spending our last day at Kings Island.



LCF Youth to Bethel Camp



Pictured from left: Mandi, Layne, Sophia, Gabrielle, Meredith, Janelle, Sabrina, Emilie, and Kendra

Mandi Scheffel and Janelle Schlabach were two of the nine youth girls who attended Bethel Camp's June Youth Camp in Clayhole, KY, June 27 to July 2. Following are their post-camp reflections:

Mandi: I'm sure that I would not be the only one to say that Bethel Camp was a blast, and that is why I look forward to camp every single year. Bethel Camp never fails to make an impact on my life, and every year I never want to go home. The chapel time is always great and very encouraging, and the activities are engaging and contain never-ending fun. I think we can all agree that the worst part of Bethel Camp is having to climb so many stairs just so you can collapse on your bed. So if you are looking to lose a few pounds while having the time of your life, then Bethel Camp is the place to go. Besides the many mosquito bites and all the bumps and bruises, I had a fantastic time, and I can't wait till next year.

Janelle: One thing I like about Bethel Camp is its spiritual emphasis. Chapels and cabin devotions highlight ways to connect with God. Bethel Camp is a great way to connect with God and others.

Shepherd Ndungu and Bryce Swartz attended Bethel Camp's July Youth Camp July 25 - 30, and had fun "roughing it" with 6 other guys in their primitive cabin - a tent at the top of a big hill.



THANKS to Grace Ndungu, Bryce Swartz (counselors), Shannon Scheffel (crafts), Sharon Headings (cook), and Larissa Swartz (worship leader), who gave a week of their summer to help out with various responsibilities at camp. Thanks also to all of the drivers who helped to transport the kids to and from camp and to those who donated to LCF's Camp Fund to help cover transportation costs and other camp expenses.

Junior Youth Grow at Bethel Camp

Pictured from left: Wesley and Emily Miller, Breanna Duncan, Ethan Hostetter, Vernon Hochstetler, and Kristen Schlabach all attended Bethel Camp's junior youth camp July 18 - 23.



Breanna: This was my first year going to Bethel camp, and I was nervous. I was thankful to have some friends from church to go along to camp with. They helped me not be so nervous. While I was at camp I learned that the scriptures tell us what God wants us to do and not to do. I also learned that when we are letting our negative attitude get in the way, we need to stop and think about how God wants us to respond. During our free time, some of the things I enjoyed were hanging out with my friends (new and old), playing carpet ball, and going creek hiking. I can not wait to go back next year!

Vernon: I had a lot of fun at Bethel Camp. There were a lot of activities, food, and great games. I loved playing soccer and participating in the tournaments. I won the carpet ball tournament. The theme was "Transformed". I really enjoyed chapel. The Bible lessons were easy to understand. My favorite Bible story was the story of Gideon and how he followed through when God told him to only take 300 soldiers to fight the Midianites.



Choral Camp Fun *by Kaleigh Duncan*

This is my second year of going to Choral Camp. I was excited to see several people from last year. During devotions we were studying Psalm 100. I learned that since God made us, we are his. Since God created us he feels ownership for us. Some of the things I enjoyed at Choral Camp were the hymn sing, capture-the-flag, and the shaving cream and sponge fight. I am glad I had the opportunity to go to Choral Camp.



A Tribute to Reggie *by Layne Headings*

We would like to acknowledge Reggie, our youth leader for the past 2 1/2 years. We appreciate all that you did for us! We are so glad that we had the opportunity to get to know you. You have been so patient with our youth group, and the food that you made for us was delicious! © Reggie, we appreciate all of your hard work in being our youth leader. We wish you all the best!

Upcoming Activities

- August 4-7—CMC Conference in Greenwood, DE
- August 7—Baby Shower for Jenn Frederick, 2 p.m.
- August 21—Hymnsing at Shiloh Mennonite Church, 7 p.m.
- August 26-28—LCF Annual Camp-Out
- September 2—Night of Worship, 7 p.m.
- September 20-22 - Volunteer at the Farm Science Review



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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 secretary@lcfweb.org. *Editors: Doris Swartz, Trish Eaton, Theresa Hennis, and Amie Smith*
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