

# The LCF Connection

December 2016

## A Marriage Investment

LCF hosted a marriage workshop on November 11-12. Conrad and Lynette Showalter, from Goshen, Indiana, did a great job leading the sessions and giving us things to think about and discuss with our spouses. Thanks to Pam Shay for the great job she did organizing all the details. There were about 20 couples who participated. Here are reflections from a few who attended.



**David Perkins:** My wife, Brenda, and I recently attended the marriage workshop at LCF led by Conrad and Lynette Showalter. They used both scripture and scientific evidence to lead us through several sessions of helpful information that included informative diagrams, charts, and acronyms. They also shared many helpful illustrations from their own marriage. At various points, they would give us, as couples, a specific question to discuss together. At the end of the workshop Brenda and I were able to take advantage of one of the one-one-one counseling sessions they offered. That was very helpful to us as well.

Brenda and I are thankful to LCF for providing this opportunity for couples. It's always beneficial for us to reflect on where we are in our marriage and discover things we can do to make it better. It was good to be reminded that the marriage union is a covenant between God and both of us, not just a contract. It is a promise of love and commitment through all of the inevitable ups and downs of life. The workshop gave us tools to use to help strengthen our marriage and make it the best it can be.

**Mandy Hochstetler:** I really enjoyed the marriage workshop. I was reminded that when you marry, you speak a promise to love your spouse as Christ loves the church. It's a beautiful but impossible promise, and it is not based on whether or not your spouse acts the way you think they should. We need

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## Sharing the Good News of Christmas

The past several weeks we have been participating in activities that help us to share the good news of our Savior's birth with others near and far.



On November 19th we packed 386 Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes to send to children around the world.

The kids at LCF have been practicing each week for their upcoming Christmas program, which will be held on December 11.



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London Christian Fellowship seeks to develop authentic and passionate followers of Jesus Christ.

# For God's Glory

## A Message from the Pastor

by Reuben Sairs



God is not a tyrant who seeks to be flattered. We can't butter him up, so to speak, so that he will look with favor on us. Sometimes I feel that well-intentioned praise isn't sending the right signals. For example, I'm always a little concerned when I hear Christians declare with a certain tone that they are doing something for the glory of God. It's awkward, because of course we should be doing things, all things, for the glory of God, but we have to remember that our self-interest is always involved. A bold proclamation of selflessness sounds heroic on our part, but it might misrepresent God. I'm a little skeptical. We are not capable of acting completely selflessly. God didn't give us that capacity. Even our most selfless acts reveal our own interests. We find it satisfying to give gifts, because we want to be the kind of people who give gifts, or are generous, or are willing to serve others. If it didn't please us on some level, we simply wouldn't do it. Even if we only think in terms of rewards deferred until heaven, there is always an appeal to our own interest. Would we serve God, if hell were the reward?

Why do we want to be all about God's glory? Do our bold and brave declarations have a dangerous subtext? "See here, Heavenly Father, I did this for you, and now you owe me." It sounds heroic, but it has the relationship backwards. It reminds me of Peter telling Jesus, "I will lay down my life for you!" (John 13:37). Jesus had to break the news to him that he had the roles backwards.

We seek God's glory, and I think the Holy Spirit in us is putting that on our mind, but we have an interest, and it's a legitimate interest, and it is in keeping with the kind of being that God made us. Shortly before his crucifixion when Jesus prayed that he wanted his disciples to see his glory in heaven he said, "The glory which you have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one just as we are one." Colossians teaches us, "To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." (1:27).

We glorify God, because he is glorious, and now we see this and have what is supposed to be the natural response. When we become restored beings, we share in the glory of God who is the source of all glory. When we are in Christ, glory abounds, it comes from God, and now we're part of it. The great reflex response of worship now makes sense. When you don't really have Christ in your heart, religious devotion is probably just longing or fear or bargaining. For us in Christ it is glorifying.

Next time we say, "we do this for your glory," or "we only seek God's glory" or "to God alone be the glory" let's make sure we understand how this works. We aren't dispensing glory from our own personal stash, we are instead revelling in the source of all glory and calling anyone who will listen, or simply reminding ourselves, to look in the right direction, to credit the right source, and to bask in the glory that God puts in us and shares with us.

# Making Connections to Make a Difference

by Theresa Hennis

The name of our newsletter is The LCF Connection, and we sometimes take for granted what making connections means. One of our own LCF members, Marcus Freed, makes connections through missions work for Joni and Friends Ministry (which helps provide wheelchairs to those who need them) and for Horizon Prison Initiative, right here in London. One connection Marcus was privileged to witness was how the life of one former prison inmate was changed.

Marcus says, "One of the graduates of Horizon Prison Initiative, Silas, who was a drug dealer, came to know Christ. He is now spreading Christ's love in his home country of El Salvador."



On the first Joni and Friends missions trip Marcus went on, Silas was the first national on the team. He set the pace, and now the team has three nationals. Another member of the team, Edwin Gingerich, a volunteer for Horizon, also knew Silas, and accompanied Marcus on the most recent October 2016 Joni trip.

The team is made up of two parts—the Total Access Team (TA) and the Wheelchair Team (WC). Silas worked on the TA Team to help make a local school in El Salvador wheelchair-accessible. Edwin and Marcus worked together on the Wheelchair Team.

"One of the real God moments," Marcus says, "is that Silas has now been back in El Salvador for only two years and has been used by God to share his testimony with the staff and workers at the school."

Silas is very proficient in English, as well as Spanish, and translated for the Joni and Friends staff and became very important on the TA Team. Edwin and Marcus were able to help get wheelchairs to 250 people, children and adults, and the team was made up of therapists, mechanics, pastors, and support people to each family that received a wheelchair.

The theme of the missions trip was Good, Good Father. "One remarkable experience I had was with a lady who suffered from Alzheimer's, who received a wheelchair," Marcus says. "When the chair was just about complete, I sat with her, and the translator told me that she was calling out to her biological father. I pulled up the song Good, Good Father in Spanish on YouTube and played it as I gave her my hand. She spoke in Spanish, and I asked the translator what she was saying The translator said she was praying. I ended up playing the song three times, allowing her to hold my hand, and both of us were overcome with tears. I have no idea what she said, but knew that the Spirit of God was present."



Whether you're a homemaker, a woodworker, an executive, or not sure of your profession yet, God can use you, right where you are, to make a connection to the life of someone who needs God's love.

To find out how you can help the Joni and Friends Ministry, visit [joniandfriends.org](http://joniandfriends.org) or contact Clete Yoder, Wheelchair Corp Coordinator, at 330-904-1747.

To find out how you can help the Horizon Prison Initiative, please contact Marcus Freed, Volunteer Coordinator, at 740-604-0563.



# Taking a Break Together

by Vicki Sairs and Doris Swartz

The elders gathered at the Procter Center near Midway on Friday evening, November 4, and spent that evening and most of the next day talking, praying, and thinking out loud about the church. Present were: Reuben & Vicki Sairs, Bob & Bettyjo Zachrich, Roger & Sharon Hazen, Jerry & Donna Sauder, and Rob & Doris Swartz (Jesse Diller was able to join us for Friday evening only).

We were happy to have Jerry and Donna Sauder and Jesse Diller with us. The elders had recently asked Jerry and Jesse if they'd consider

being elders. They both said they are open to serving in that way. We invited them to join us for our retreat so that we could learn to know them better and they could get a feel for what the elders' commitment would involve, should they decide to accept the invitation and go through the confirmation process. (Note: They both accepted the invitation and the congregation will vote on December 11 regarding the elders' recommendation for them to become elders.)

On Saturday morning we discussed things to be thankful about at LCF: the church is welcoming to newcomers; it's truly a community church, with a broad variety of backgrounds represented; it has its own style and identity, and is flexible about trying new things. We are happy that people are saying yes to serving in different ways, and we love the variety of people we have on stage, leading worship and prayer on any given Sunday—they are diverse in age, gender, and race; and we love that.

We took time to dream about what LCF can do and be. This would include: being used more as a community center; maintaining our Anabaptist beliefs in an invitational way; being people who hunger for God's Word, prayer, and gathered worship; creating space for Scripture reading during the service; thinking more about how we pray and what we can pray about when we're together; seeing people grow in faith.



Roger, our overseer, encouraged the elders to consider providing Rob with a sabbatical. He would like to have a contact person at LCF to work with to see this become a reality for Rob.

Rob spoke with us openly about issues and feelings he has been struggling with the past several months—feeling depressed, burned out, overwhelmed, inadequate, tired, etc. He wants to be able to finish well in ministry but feels that in order to do so, some things need to change. The elders affirmed Rob in the great job he is and has been doing at LCF. The team assured him that what he is feeling is typical for most pastors and that he is not expected to excel at all areas of pastoring. They encouraged him to “fan into flame” the gifts that God has given him personally and committed themselves to helping him do whatever is necessary to refuel.

The elders also recognize the toll that the past 14 years of ministry have taken on him and feel that Roger's recommendation of a sabbatical could be what Rob is in need of for refreshment, equipping, and vision. It was noted that a sabbatical would need to be given to Doris, from her administrative duties, as well. We closed the morning with a time of prayer for Rob and Doris.



The team spent Saturday afternoon discussing a variety of issues, including LCF's Family Christmas, the membership covenant, communion, the budget, training people to do public Scripture reading, training new moderators, and possible topics for preaching and teaching.



## A Big Thank You!

A big thank you to the woodworking crew at Acorn Cabinets (Richard Troyer, Merv Schlabach, and Aaron Biscup) for the beautiful table they made for the front of the sanctuary, which we will use to hold the Advent wreath, communion elements, etc. Thanks also to those who worked at the Farm Science Review the past two years to earn money to pay for the materials to build it.

## Upcoming Activities

- Dec. 2 - Ladies' Christmas Celebration at 6:30 p.m.
- Dec. 4 - RBC Chorus sings at LCF
- Dec. 11 - LCF Christmas program, 6:30 p.m.
- Dec. 25 - LCF Family Christmas
- Dec. 31 - Worship Night
- Jan. 8 - Communion
- Jan. 15 - Celebrate the Church Sunday and Potluck
- Jan. 21 - Youth attend Winter Jam 2017

# Celebrating 50 Years!

by Doris Swartz

How many of these 50-year-olds (or soon-to-be) can you identify from the Class of 1984-85?

Bonus: Can you name the 4 LCFers who are turning 50 this month?

50 years ago...back in the year of 1966:

- Star Trek was broadcast for the very first time.
- Pampers created the first disposable diaper.
- Mastercard was founded.
- The colorful game Twister was released by Milton Bradley.
- The Sound of Music won the Oscar for Best Picture.
- You could buy a gallon of gas for only 32 cents.
- Plans were being made for the very first Super Bowl—which was played on January 15, 1967. (The Packers beat the Chiefs.)
- And...quite a few people here at LCF were born!

I am one of those individuals, and since my birthday comes at the very end of the year, those born in 1967 are just as close in age to me as those who were born in 1966. There are at least 21 of us at LCF who were born in 1966 or 1967. That's almost 20% of our congregation; and interestingly, 12 of the 21 combine to make 6 married couples! I tried to collect senior pictures from as many of them as possible for a trip down memory lane. ☺

As I think about so many of us entering our fifties, and all of us here at the beginning of a brand-new year, I'm reminded of some of my favorite verses taken from Psalms 39:4-7:

*"Lord, remind me how brief my time on earth will be. Remind me that my days are numbered—how fleeting my life is. You have made my life no longer than the width of my hand. My entire lifetime is just a moment to you; at best, each of us is but a breath." We are merely moving shadows, and all our busy rushing ends in nothing. We heap up wealth, not knowing who will spend it. And so, Lord, where do I put my hope? My only hope is in you.*

May God help all of us to live each day with an eternal perspective—enjoying and making the most of every moment, every day, and every year that he blesses us with.



*In case you need a little help—pictured from top left to bottom right: Matt Yutz, Boni Stewart, Lonnie Combs, Rob Swartz, Sheila Miller, Richard Troyer, Daleesa Combs, Keith Scheffel, Phil Hostetter, Bettyo Zachmch, Dave Stewart, Bob Zachrich, Doris Swartz, Grant Shoemaker, and Lucy Elfrink.*

*Bonus: The last three, Doris, Grant, and Lucy, along with Merv Schlabach, who is not pictured, were all born in December of 1966.*

## Marriage Investment...continued

to get rid of the unhealthy ideals and expectations that we have or we'll end up ripping up the person. Instead, choose to embrace your spouse—the one you chose to make that promise to. And last but not least, acceptance in marriage is underrated.

**Lucy Elfrink:** All of the sessions were so inspiring! Even though Phil and I were only able to attend Friday evening, we were so blessed. I liked when they asked us to share with each other how committed we are to our marriage and how satisfied we are in our marriage. It was a good reminder to use gentle start-ups. Instead of using "I...", say "We...". Such as: "We can do better in this area...", instead of blaming the other. I liked the way they compared marriage to a bathtub: the longer you are in it, the more cold it tends to become. God wants us to keep energy flowing in to our marriage so that it does not become like a cold bath tub.

**Andrea Biscup:** One thing that stood out to me from the marriage workshop was the distinction that Conrad and Lynette made between "criticism" and "complaint"—criticism being an attack on the person, while complaint is an attack on the problem, with the mind-set that we can fix this 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 [secretary@lcfweb.org](mailto:secretary@lcfweb.org). Editors: Trish Eaton, Theresa Hennis, Amie Smith, and Doris Swartz. 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](mailto:connection@lcfweb.org).

