

# The LCF Connection

July 2017



## The LCF Connection Caring About Each Other's Stories

by Doris Swartz

"People who attend London Christian Fellowship in London, Ohio, might not realize how fortunate they are. They can wake up on the first of the month, open their email, and find an invitation and a link to the current month's issue of *The LCF Connection*, the little church newsletter that is so much more than that..."

*Connection*, the little church newsletter that is so much more than that..."

That's how Vicki Sairs begins her article about *The LCF Connection* in the July *Beacon*. Based on interviews with Theresa Hennis and myself, Vicki goes on to describe what people will find in *The LCF Connection*, who has helped with it in the past, and some of the history behind it. She quoted me as saying, "From my records, it looks like the desire to communicate with the congregation in a regular written form started in the very early years." I had fun taking a trip down memory lane and showing Vicki my three-ring binders filled with newsletters from the past—pictured above in their various forms. How many of them do you remember reading? From left to right:

- Shalom Community Church's early *Newsletter*, dated May 20, 1989.
- The two-page *Shalom Communicator*, published monthly from August 1990 to November 1993.
- The quarterly, four-page newsletter, *Shalom Community Church Connection*, which ran from 1992 to 1995.
- *The LCF Connection*, as it was renamed, which was started back up in 2004 as a four-page, black and white newsletter on colored paper.
- Our first *LCF Connection* printed on our new color copier in August of 2010
- Continuing on through our recent May 2017 issue, with many more to come.



Vicki's article continues with lots of interesting details about the process of putting *The LCF Connection* together each month, including some of the joys and challenges the editors experience and their desire to share the stories of LCFers. She quotes editor, Theresa Hennis, saying, "The finance, council news, events, and other kinds of stories keep us up-to-date and informed, but to really reach out and touch someone's heart, I believe it's the stories from the heart that matter most. . . . I learn so much more about God and myself by reading about what other people have experienced and how they've grown closer to God as a result."

Vicki ends the article by sharing some of our practical tips for other churches who may be interested in starting their own church newsletter. Be sure to pick up a copy of the July *Beacon* to read the whole story. Thanks so much, Vicki, for giving visibility to this monthly feature of LCF that helps all of us to stay connected.

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## Pastoral Sabbatical

by Rob & Doris Swartz

Thanks so much to you as a congregation for your strong support in affirming the sabbatical that was proposed by the elders and council. Since the summer is here, we are getting ready to begin our sabbatical! We will be gone from LCF for the months of July, August, and September.

We will spend the first couple of weeks with our children and visit the three churches they attend in the Dayton area, attend Xenos Summer Institute, work on the final details of our itinerary, and pack for a long trip out west. Our plans are to leave mid-July and return the end of September.

Our trip will be anchored by three pastoral retreats (in Colorado, Oregon, and Illinois) which are led by people who have a heart for caring for pastoral couples. In between these retreats we will be staying at various places (from cabins and our tent, to homes

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## Anger and Hatred

### A Message from the Pastor

by Reuben Sairs

Anger and hatred are nothing new. Cain is the perp of the first recorded murder in the Bible, and isn't it depressing that first blood was drawn over a religious dispute with jealousy hiding in piety?

It is more than slightly distressing that Christians still try to wrap up their anger and hatred in righteousness. When I know exactly what God's opinion is, then he's on my side. Resisting me is resisting God. Someone might call for Biblical support, but too often it is not forthcoming. It was obvious to me, and it should be to you, too. Don't ask questions! You're just trying to confuse me! Anyway, if someone interprets or applies the Bible differently than I do, obviously they're deliberately distorting it.

We shouldn't play this game. In Matthew 5 (excerpts) Jesus says, "He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get?" And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?"

Not hating is not enough. In fact I am to be full of love for all people—the righteous and the unrighteous, or should I say even the people who disagree with me? Part of this is built on humility—"forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those of others." And it is built also on the simple awareness that we are often wrong, and that we act most defensively when we suspect we might be wrong. Often we get louder and more stubborn when we know we haven't built the strongest case. We hope some good old-fashioned bluster and volume will carry the argument.

Of course, Christians always say they love others, but do they? Is it real? Some of the love we need to express is God working out real righteousness and godliness in us through the Holy Spirit. Without God's work in our lives it is very unlikely that we'll get past our own anger and hatred.

I think we are in the midst of a great apostasy in the American evangelical church. We've become tribal, and factional. We have become opinionated. We've learned to speak harshly. We have lost our sense of boundary between the church and the world. We have lost our sense of proportion, priority and perspective. We are offering little to the world other than the same unloving harshness, hatred if you will, and extremism that can be found in society at large. And worse still we dress it up in piety.

What a difference we could make if we allowed God to make us into Christians in these matters! We could change the tone of conversations, reconcile people one to another, make peace where argument and fighting have taken over. We could bring healing. We could make a straight path for the Lord. We could make it attractive to serve Christ and live for him. We could make sin look ugly; and righteousness look desirable. Christians hold many beliefs that the world might find obnoxious at worst, or hard at least. Wouldn't we like to be the kind of people that others hate to have to disagree with—the kind of person that another would like to see their way to be? And what part of this would God not be pleased with?

## Elders' Notes

by Donna Sauder

We are so thankful for the opportunity that you all have given to Rob and Doris for a time of refreshment and renewal! When we met on June 13th, we spent most of our time making sure that all their responsibilities would be taken care of in their absence. You never know how much someone does until they leave!!! Thanks to each one of you who have stepped up to make sure LCF continues to function as a healthy body while Rob and Doris are away! Please pray with us that God would restore, revisit, renew, and refresh them this summer as they travel out west to attend pastoral retreats and spend time in nature. Our associate pastor, Reuben Sairs, is available for any questions or help that you may need, as are our elders, Jesse Diller, Jerry Sauder. and Bob Zachrich.

We also discussed the Columbus church planting initiative in which some of those attending LCF are involved. We, as an elder team, affirmed the one who is giving leadership to it, to be licensed at LCF through CMC after being processed by the ministers at the Annual Conference in July. They are hoping to begin meeting in July. We are excited about being a part of God's kingdom expanding in Columbus!

Please contact our associate pastor or any of the elders if you have any concerns that should be addressed.

### Introducing LCF's New

## Worship Team Coordinators

by Rob Swartz

I have enjoyed giving leadership to LCF's Worship Team the past number of years. However, I am excited about turning this responsibility over to a capable team of three young leaders. They will work together to provide vision and direction to the worship leaders and teams members, with each of them having a specific area of focus.

- **Jesse Diller** will provide the primary leadership. Jesse brings strong technical ability, a good ear for music, and a heart for worship.
- **Sammy Waweru** will oversee the sound and instruments. Sammy is an awesome "techie"—someone you can always count on to go "above and beyond" - usually with things that are not noticed behind the scenes!
- **Andrea Biscup** will provide the organizational leadership. Andrea does a wonderful job scheduling the 30+ people who lead, sing, and play instruments, as well as keeping the notebooks and music in good shape.

Thanks Andrea, Jesse, and Sammy for providing leadership in this way!



# Columbus Church Plant Becoming a Reality

You've read recently in the Elders' Notes about a church plant that is happening in Columbus. There are quite a few single young adults who attend here at LCF that are helping out with it (see picture below). One of them has written this article to help us understand their vision and passion for reaching out to the lost in Central Columbus. Because of the sensitivity and closeness of this content, the author would rather her name not be published with this piece. Feel free to ask anyone on the LCF Elders Team for missing details. Please keep this group in your prayers as they seek to know Christ and make him known in the city.



As I walked down the steps into the basement of the apartment building next to mine, I was reminded of the missionary books my parents read to me growing up. The midnight meetings underground had a specific anxious and exciting feel to them that I detected in myself as I entered the room full of my dear brothers and sisters. We had been talking about this “church plant” for a while, but it felt more real now that we were having a scheduled meeting with a typed discussion outline and several older and wiser folks dispersed among the circle.

At that meeting in early March we began to tread the waters of starting a church. Where and when would we meet? How will the church be structured? Who will join us? Why do we feel compelled to do this? While many of these questions were asked without a clear or comprehensive answer, we all agreed on the last one: God was moving in our neighborhood,

and to best join his work, we would need encouragement from brothers and sisters, a setting for discipleship, a time to discern his will as a group, and a time to worship him together; we would need a church.

While we all attended churches that were already providing us these things, we felt it was important for church to be close. Most of us were driving 30 minutes every Sunday morning to be a part of churches which had doctrines and communities we valued. This led us to ask the question, what if we planted a church with those same principles right here? Later on in March, as I read that month's issue of Christianity Today, I found Rod Dreher's cover story to be a compelling case for living in close proximity to those you worship with. Since he says it better than I could, I'll quote some of it here:

“Why be close? Because ... the church can't just be the place you go on Sundays—it must become the center of your life. That is, you may visit your house of worship only once a week, but what happens there in worship, and the community and the culture it creates, must be the things around which you order the rest of the week.” Later in the article, he cautions that “Community itself won't make you holy if you aren't committed to prayer and cultivating a personal relationship with Jesus... the gift of community is that it builds a social structure in which it is easier for Christians to hear and respond to God's voice and in which others hold them accountable if they lose the straight path.”

With the work we are joining in this city, it feels important to have that centrality, community, and accountability. Since March we have been meeting for prayer and discernment in answering the questions we raised at that first meeting. Our vision is that people who identify with this church grow in faith, maturity, and obedience, as well as being involved in outreach with a focus on a) unreached people groups from all over the world who reside near us, b) the universities we attend and, c) inner-city initiatives bringing the love and salvation of Jesus to this city. We are excited to start meeting together as a registered Conservative Mennonite Conference church in July 2017.

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## City Challenge 2017

by Meredith Hochstetler

For this year's youth mission trip, we went to Rosedale International Center's City Challenge in Columbus for five days, June 14 - 18. As youth, we were challenged to awaken and take off our veneer in order to live as a direct reflection of Christ. Each day, we had new opportunities of outreach relating to the city and its people. I was able to go paper bagging and pass out homeless kits in the city, as well as participate in Reaching The Nations International's Jesus Fun Day. At Jesus Fun Day youth had the chance to connect with children and teens of the surrounding community at a park while playing games and enjoying a bible lesson. Throughout the week, I learned and experienced the power of prayer and what it's like to show God's love in a public manner. Overall, City Challenge has stretched and impacted my life in an amazing way that has truly helped me with my personal walk with God.



# A Creative Fundraiser

Gabrielle Stewart is going on a mission trip to Nicaragua with a youth group from Siloam Fellowship in Goshen, IN, June 24 - July 2nd.



On Sunday afternoon, June 11, she and her mother, Boni, hosted a paint party at LCF to help raise funds for Gabrielle's upcoming trip. The afternoon included a delicious lunch, all the supplies necessary to make a beautiful painting, and a fun time being creative with friends.



## VBS 2017

by Sheila Miller

This year's theme at VBS was Galactic Starveyors. We learned how God created us in His image and wants a relationship with us. We saw how sin messed up the relationship between us and God, but that God had a plan to restore that relationship by sending Jesus, his Son, to be the sacrifice for our sins.

The kids learned through crafts, games, a nightly video along with a puppet show, and stories with an object lesson that illustrated the teaching point for the evening. They also did lots of singing and memorizing verses.

We had 29 kids registered this year with an average attendance of 22. Over half the kids were from the community! A huge thank you to everyone who helped to make things go smoothly! Our prayer is that many seeds were planted for the Kingdom!

### Upcoming Activities

- July 5-7 Xenos Summer Institute
- July 23 Communion
- July 27-30 CMC Conference, Kidron, OH



### Sabbatical...continued

and a condo - many of which are being made possible by the generosity of others) where we will relax and spend extended time with God, each other, and in nature. We are well equipped with a pile of books that we are looking forward to reading and discussing, our hiking shoes, and hammocks. ☺ We plan to spend July heading west, most of August traveling up the Oregon and Washington coast and visiting family in that area, then spend September working our way back home along a more northern route. We will be taking a break from social media to help us disconnect from our normal life and allow us to better connect with God and each other. We realize that our friends and family will be curious to know how we are doing and where we are, so we will try to do a blog post (at [www.rdschwartz.wordpress.com](http://www.rdschwartz.wordpress.com)) or put a few pictures on Facebook every once in awhile.

We hope and pray that this will be a good experience for you as a congregation, as well. It has been exciting to see how God has been putting the pieces together for this sabbatical - both by providing so many of you to cover all of our responsibilities while we are away to providing places for us to stay while we are gone. We have been here at LCF almost every Sunday for the past 30 years (doing administrative work for 24 of those years, and pastoring for the last 15) - so three months sounds like a really long time to be away from our church family! Know that we will miss each of you greatly and will look forward to being back with you again! In the meantime, we are excited about what God is going to do in our lives and in yours over these next three months! When you think of us, pray that God will use this time to renew and refresh us, and to equip us to be the leaders he wants us to be. We love you and will look forward to seeing you on October 1st!



## 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: 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).