

# The LCF Connection

December 2018

## Christmas at First Glance?

by Pam Stanforth



At first glance what do you see? This is the question I asked Nora's grandfather, my husband, Jeff Stanforth, about the picture his granddaughter had lovingly painted and presented to me as a gift. Jeff stepped close, then stepped back, turned it this way and that and then, with a furrowed brow, hesitating; as if this was a trick question of some sort, began to share what he was seeing. "Well," he began, "I see a sun, clouds, water; maybe those are small houses at the bottom, and waves." At first glance that is what I saw; however, the more I have looked at that picture; and let me add right here that the picture sits in my prayer room space; the more I see in the simple painting gifted to me by my sweet Nora Helen. I would ask you, the reader, to stop right now, look at the picture as I share with you what it means to me, my interpretation of a little girl's painting.

First, this painting was a gift to me and precious the more because it comes from someone who loves me. This gift reminds me of another gift I received many years ago and, although Nora's gift is precious to my heart, that gift is more precious than gold to my soul and comes down from the Father of glory who gives spiritual wisdom and revelation to know him better (Ephesians 1:17). He, Father God, sent a gift, his only son, a baby born of a woman, fully human, fully God, of humble beginnings, a King lowly and meek, wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger in a stable in Bethlehem (Luke 2:12). His birth was a gift to us and, in Christmas, we continue to celebrate His birth.

Second, as I continued to gaze at the painting and to think on my Heavenly Father, I noticed the Sun was orange at the center and when mixing yellow with red, you get orange; then there was yellow encircling the orange and red points going out in all directions from the yellow. OK, maybe I looked too long at the painting; but go with me here...I was reminded that Jesus came out from the Father, the red lines, and He brings us to the Father. Jesus and the Father are one; God represented by the yellow and the Holy Spirit represented by the

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## The Meeting that Worked!

by Theresa Hennis

When LCF was challenged to attend a congregational meeting on Sunday evening, November 11th, which had the potential for low participation, they rose to the occasion!

The meeting covered several topics, one of which is near and dear to Pastor Rob's heart—serving our church rather than being "consumers" who are served by the church. He talked about how we all are a part of a puzzle, with each piece uniquely creating a successful whole. It's up to us to determine how we fit into a puzzle that is a living organism.

Many exciting things are happening at LCF, with new groups starting up: Emerge, Strive, and a totally revamped Youth Group. The question to ask ourselves about any ministry is if it is serving our purpose. (London Christian Fellowship seeks to develop authentic and passionate followers of Christ.) If it's not, we need to think about letting it go, or, maybe it just needs improvement to carry

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# The Reading of God's Word

A Message from the Pastor  
by Reuben Sairs

The reading of the Bible in our Sunday service is one of the finest moments in the morning. God is speaking. On any given morning, you might feel a little off kilter with the sermon, the music might not be working for you or maybe you are too distracted with your own thoughts to enter into prayer easily, but when the Bible is read God is talking. It can't disappoint. It is perfect. It is the word of God.

About the only thing that can go wrong is our not paying attention. It's our loss when we drift out of the moment. Starting right helps me to stay in place. Fussing with stuff disconnects us: bulletins, watches, phones, clothes. Much of our day is lived out in an electronic, phone-driven, gale-force of distraction. It takes a little practice to sit and listen as a passage is read. I think our ancestors would have had less trouble with it. Listening would not be a bad skill for ourselves to work on, and to model for the children in the room.

But listening to the reading of scripture is not just a relic from an earlier time. It's Biblical. Paul told Timothy, *"Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching."* (1 Timothy 4:12)

At LCF we try to make it as easy as possible. We coach our worship leaders to practice their reading carefully--to know what the words and punctuation mean, to look up pronunciations of names and places, to read from a legible script (probably not off a phone!) and read at a good pace (not speeding through) and with clear diction. All that takes practice, and can't be done on the spur of the moment. It takes preparation. It will be of no avail unless the congregation anticipates the moment, starts the adventure right, sits up, listens carefully.

In not so distant times, when the reading of the scriptures was thought to be an indispensable part of the worship, it became fashionable for the reader to ask people to read along. I don't. The differences in translations, the time it takes to look some passages up, and the possibility of reading detours, probably lend to as much disengagement as anything else, especially since most people are probably looking at scripture on their phone, and the magic call of other options will be luring them away. It might make it easier to stay with it, if we just listened.

Listening is a different experience than reading anyway. Listening isn't completely under our control, and doesn't allow us the right to take it on our own terms. Imagine that you are sitting in a group of the first believers who heard this message—as the letter just arrived from Paul, or you're in a synagogue after the scrolls have been brought out with fanfare, and prayers are said before reading. I predict you will find your live encounter with the word of God satisfies you in new ways that reading doesn't.

Our readings at LCF are fairly short. In other times some churches typically heard Old Testament, New Testament (epistles), and then maybe a Gospel passage read as well. I wonder if, with our small start, we could, after a while, end up there again? ■

# Elders' Notes

by Jesse Diller

We met on November 6th and continued our tradition of beginning our meetings with a time of prayer and sharing, praying for a number of requests, people, and situations.

The council is working at coming up with ways to reduce our expenses next year so that we can make our expenses closer to the income we are currently receiving. This means reducing our budget by around \$10,000. They asked for our feedback concerning several things they are considering. We spent quite a bit of time going through the recommended budget and making suggestions. We appreciate the hard work the council is putting into this.

We went over the church schedule for the rest of the year. November and December have a number of special services, guest speakers, and other events; we tried to get all the schedules lined up.

We spent some time discussing our Sunday morning services; tweaks to the weekly prayer time, the elders' vote, and church security. In light of the recent synagogue shooting, security is a topic that ought not to be ignored. The council and elders are working on ways to do what we can to ensure that LCF is a safe place, while still remaining welcoming

We noted that our church constitution is still due for some updates and revisions. We plan on revisiting that topic soon.

Finally, we spent some more time planning "The Meeting That Jim Said Wouldn't Work", working out an agenda, timetable, etc.

Reuben closed our time with prayer remembering the situations we discussed.

Our next meeting will be Tuesday, December 11th. ■

# Council Update

by David Perkins

Dan Frederick joined us at our most recent meeting to discuss the possibilities of electronic giving at London Christian Fellowship. With Dan's expertise, he was able to provide us with a handful of methods and options so that our church can utilize the ability of electronic giving. One option that was discussed in length was a giving website and app called Tithe.ly. This option seems to be the most promising and offers a variety of payment methods with hopes of ease of access to all members of the congregation. It's a one-stop shop where you have the ability to give within the app itself whether you are using the text-to-give, auto-recurring or other methods. Dan will be exploring more details about electronic giving and get back to us with more information.

The old building was discussed. A potential buyer had inquired of Jim about the cable and wireless internet availability in our area and Jim did some digging to see if this would make the property more marketable. Service for us is currently unavailable, but it appears that cable is available through the utility poles in front of our property. Jim made his way through many phone calls to Spectrum before finding the right person and the needed information. In order for Spectrum to order a survey, they would need to have a commitment from us and at least three neighboring businesses. Jim has reached out to our neighbors to give them the information. If this is successful, it would provide faster service for our church for what we are currently paying for wireless. This will also improve the marketability of the old building.

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# Child Protection Policy Update

by Pam Shay, Child Protection Team Leader

The Children's Ministry Team has been working with the Council and others to update LCF's Child Protection Policy and Procedures to ensure a safe and secure environment for our children and youth. We recently held two information update meetings for everyone who has worked with children and youth in the past as well as for those new to the process.

There is a new background check process in place, and we will eventually be updating everyone over the next few years on a rotational basis. In the meantime, if you missed one of the previous meetings, we will be having another one in January 2019 to discuss the changes. As our records are being updated, I will be reaching out to those who will need to go through the updated background check process. This will be an ongoing process—don't worry, we will be in contact with you.

Additionally, we will have different training sessions (video and in person) that we will share with child/youth care workers throughout



the year. If you have questions, please feel free to contact me.

If you are new to working in the Nursery, with children, or youth, you can begin the screening process by picking up an application with the policies and information from the information holders by the mailboxes. After you complete the application, give it to our Administrative Assistant, Doris Swartz, to be processed. Thanks so much to each of you who help out with children and youth here at LCF in so many different ways! Never underestimate the huge impact you are making! ■



*The Meeting that Worked!...continued*

it forward. If we don't have a ministry in place that you feel is needed, we want to know what that ministry idea is and prayerfully consider how it will enrich the church and the community we serve.

Several individuals have recently completed ministry terms and were given recognition and appreciation for their dedication and hard work. They were:

- Katy Miller – Junior Youth Leader, 2 years
- Dave Stewart – Initial Council member and Benevolence Team Leader, 3 years
- David Perkins – Initial Council member with term ending in December, 4 years
- David and Brenda Perkins – Youth Leaders, 4 years
- Lyndon Miller – Buildings and Grounds Team Leader, 2 years
- Sheila Miller – Congregational Care Team Leader, 2 1/2 years
- Bob Zachrich – Elder, 6 years
- Colleen Wolford – Children's Ministry Team Leader, 6 years



Nominations were submitted to be considered for the new council member and new elder. We are also currently looking for volunteers to serve in the following areas: Children's Sunday School teachers, Junior Youth Leaders, Congregational Care Team Leader, and help with landscaping. If you are interested in serving in these areas (or in another ministry area not listed) please let us know.



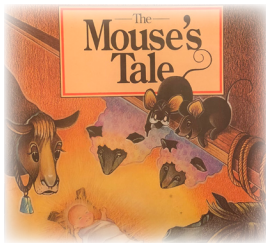
The 2019 budget was discussed. Jim Jones, Chair of LCF's Council, shared things that the council has been pursuing to help reduce our expenses—in light of our decreased income and the current deficit we have been experiencing. Some of the things discussed include: reduction in our monthly mortgage payments, adjusting the amounts we give to RMM, RBC and CMC, and other budget concerns. They welcome feedback and suggestions as they continue to try to fine-tune the budget.



During the morning service we brought in six new members: Clayton Carner, Jodi Gingerich, Jeff Traverse, Nathan & Alice Jenkins, and Harmony Devlin (not pictured). That evening, all who are members of LCF were given the opportunity to renew their membership for 2019 by signing the membership book.

As a practical reminder that each one of us (both members and regular attenders) serve a significant role in our church body here at LCF, we were encouraged to think about what we bring to the body as we look for a piece (or multiple pieces) to fit into the puzzle of a beautiful church. The completed puzzle reminds us that we need each person to use their gifts and talents to make LCF a beautiful picture of a church that functions as God intends it—where every piece is important! ■





## Don't Miss "The Mouse's Tale"

by Katy Miller

The LCF kids are at it again! This year on Sunday evening, December 16th, at 6:30 p.m., the proverbial curtain will go up and the kids will perform *The Mouse's Tale* written by Cindy Hansen and Bob Latchaw.

*The Mouse's Tale* is the Christmas story, narrated by Granny Mouse, and told by the animals in the stable on Christmas night. In this silly yet sentimental play, we meet:

- Daryl the donkey who carried Mary to Bethlehem,
- Clarice the cow who gave up her manger for the baby Jesus' bed,
- the sheep—Saul, Stan, and Sally, who saw the angels on the hilltop,
- and Carl, Cory, and Conley—the camels who were guided by a bright star.

The kids have really enjoyed learning their parts and are excited to share their performance with you! There will be light refreshments in the Fellowship Hall after the program. You won't want to miss it!! ■



## Caroling the Good News

by Doris Swartz

*"Down in a lowly manger  
the humble Christ was born.  
And God sent us salvation  
that blessed Christmas morn..."*

On Monday, November 26th, the falling snowflakes and pretty Christmas lights provided a beautiful setting in our hometown for sharing the good news of Jesus' birth through Christmas carols at London's Olde Fashioned Christmas. In talking with a young lady afterwards, she told me, "Hearing your church sing Christmas carols made it feel like I was in a Hallmark Movie—except that the snow was real!" ☺



Thanks to each person who braved the cold to come and help sing. Thanks, also, to Steve and Phyllis Swartz for providing delicious cinnamon rolls and hot drinks at their home afterwards! ■

### Council Notes...continued

Team Leads and nominations were discussed. The Council provided input of various nominations for positions in the Buildings & Grounds team and the Council itself. The Elders will be tasked to ultimately fill the newly open positions for the Congregational Care and Children's Ministry teams.

The 2019 church budget deficit of \$2,300 was discussed. After review of various items on the budget and carryover balances, it was decided that additional funds would not be budgeted into Benevolence for the 2019 budget. With the suggested budget adjustments, the 2019 deficit is down to approximately \$1,000. Since the amount is so low and we have 52 Sundays to make it up, the Council unanimously decided to take it on faith that 2019 will recover the deficit.

Our last meeting this year is scheduled for the third week of December. Be sure to let us know if you have any questions in the meantime and keep an eye out for your next Council Update. ■

### Christmas at First Glance...continued

orange; because they are all three in one; Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Third, I saw the water below and was reminded of the meaning of my water baptism, and the white clouds above, of the cleansing power of Jesus Christ's blood; how he took a sinful life, mainly-mine, and made it white as snow.

Lastly, I hope you can see what I see. Not that this was the intent of a young child's painting, simply a picture for her grandma. Her intent was to share her love with me, and I received it with gladness.



May I encourage you to look closer just as Jeff did. Now, see the Creator in all things, in all people. See His love, His light calling out to a lost and dying world (John 1). See Christmas all around and believe in Jesus Christ, God's only son who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin, Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, is seated at the right hand of the Father, and will come again to judge the living and the dead. Merry Christmas all year long! ■

## Upcoming Activities

- Dec. 7 Ladies' Christmas Party, 6:30 p.m.
- Dec. 9 RBC Choir sings at LCF, 10 a.m.
- Dec. 16 LCF Christmas Program, 6:30 p.m.
- Dec. 23 LCF Family Christmas & Brunch, 9:45 a.m.



## 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, Elisabeth Yoder, and Doris Swartz. If you prefer that we do not use photos of you in the Connection, you may opt out by emailing us.