

# The LCF Connection

April 2019



## Rambling Thoughts on Foot Washing

by Phyllis Swartz

When I was a kid way back in the day and in a far-away place, I loved foot washing services, unfortunately not so much for the lessons in love and service, but because I had a game I liked to play. To play this game, I had to finagle a seat by the aisle on the sisters' side of the church. Here's what the sisters did for the foot washing service. At their seats, they unbuckled their long black stockings from their garter belts, took off their shoes and stockings, and left them in a heap by their seats.

Then they walked up the aisle bare footed to wash each other's feet and give each other the Holy Kiss. The Holy Kiss part was fun to watch, but not as much fun as the bare-footed walking. The dear sisters of the church walked differently bare footed than they did with their heavy black shoes. I thought they walked like my grandpa's cows, whose names I knew as well as I knew the names of the sisters. So as each woman walked by me bare footed I'd watch her back end and match her to a cow in my grandpa's barn. I hope, that during those services, some lessons of love and service penetrated me a little, but I doubt it.

Since then, though, I've grown to appreciate why Jesus said to his disciples, "So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you."

For me, foot washing lifts pressure in three ways:

- Yes, you get dirty, foot washing reminds me. The bad attitude last night, the wracking worry, the words I shouldn't have said—I'm besmirched. I'm human. And foot washing recognizes this.
- You are in a family, foot washing tells me. You don't wash at a mall in front of strangers; you wash at home with your family.
- I need others, and they need me, foot washing shows. Each of us brings to the other a different part of the fullness of God.

And so I leave a foot washing service comforted about my humanness. Though I am dirty and needy, I am not alone.

At LCF, minus the Holy Kiss and the straight rows of bare-foot people in suits and long skirts, foot washing isn't as fun as the foot washing when I was a kid. But it is filled with much more meaning. ■

*We hope that you will join us here at LCF for our Maundy Thursday Service on April 18th, where we will have foot washing and communion.*

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

## Pursuing Christ

by Harmony Devlin

When I was a kid, most of my summers I went to Bethel Camp for a week of camp. I always felt closest to God when I was there. Whatever I was going through, whenever I was at Bethel Camp, I felt like God saw me and heard me in a special way. I realize now that He was teaching me, caring for me, and helping me to connect with him through the ministry of the counselors and leaders at the camp. I often feel like I hear God and experience him most easily, through his people.

I was raised in a Christian home all my life, but that doesn't mean I've always been close to God or felt him in my life. There have definitely been times where I have been very far from God. I did not always pursue him like I should have. Sometimes, I didn't feel like he was with me or watching over me; but, he was! He is always with us, and no matter how far we run away from him, he always stays with us.

For the past couple of years, I have had a longing like I never have before, a thirst for the Lord and his Word. I have been wanting to know more about him and the Bible. Sometimes, I find the Bible hard to understand. I used to read parts of it, but would have no idea what it meant or how it applied to me and life now.

*Continued on page 4...*





## Press On!

### A Message from the Pastor

by Reuben Sairs

If you are, or will be, like me, as you age you will have more and more frequent cringe moments as you look back on life. From Vocabulary.com:

*You may even jerk your body away from the offensive sight or sound, like the old picture of you in an "awkward stage" that makes you cringe whenever you see it. Whether it's a song you hate or someone mentioning an embarrassing moment from the past, you cringe at things that are unpleasant.*

But I'm not referring simply to embarrassing moments, which hopefully we all learn to laugh at. I'm thinking of things I've said or done that were simply inconsiderate, selfish or hurtful, or those when I was all about myself and not able to appreciate others. If we talk about our sins candidly and things we regret, these are the ones that most often bring me pain. Why couldn't I have been a better person? These are the moments that somehow you wish you could take back and do over. Some of it has only been remembered as loved ones died. At that moment you realize that you can't correct anything, at least in any normal sense. You don't get a next chapter or a chance to make it up and redeem yourself. You simply have to live with it. Why didn't I appreciate those persons more? Why didn't I love them better?

The Bible assures us that God will forgive our sins—ALL our sins, and will not condemn us, if we ask him to (don't assume this happens automatically if you haven't asked!). But do our victims forgive us? I can't answer for them, and I can't expect them to forgive—that's their choice. The prayer "Forgive us our trespasses (debts, sins) as we forgive those who trespass against us" is a very powerful, almost daily, prayer for me. About the only thing I can do on the earthly plane is to forgive others, overlook things that they have done or said that hurt me. You have heard of senior moments? I find I am making greater and greater allowances for youth moments.

Once a man much older than me, I believe he was in his 90s, had some mail correspondence with me. I don't remember what all we discussed, but he closed every letter with "press on." One letter ended with, "I don't know about you, but I plan to press on."

He was referring to some verses in Philippians 3:12 - 16.

*Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. Only let us hold true to what we have attained.*

What can I do? I can remember I've hurt others and that can make me, in turn, more forgiving. And I can say that powerful line from the Lord's Prayer and mean it. What else can I do? Press on! Will you press on with me? ■

## Elders Notes

by Jesse Diller

As we always do, we began our meeting with a time of prayer. We spent time praying for those in our congregation who are going through difficult times, as well as for each other and concerns on our hearts.

We spent the next section of our meeting talking about past and upcoming events at LCF. We enjoyed having the Barbershop Quartet sing and are happy to see the vocal ensemble that Jeff and Andrea are putting together for Easter. We hashed out schedules for this spring's Adult Discipleship Class, which will run from April 28 - May 26. We discussed about special guest speakers for a few Sundays when Rob and Reuben will not be available. We also talked about dates for child dedications, baptisms, and bringing in new members.

We spent a good bit of time talking about the Benevolence Team here at LCF. At the moment, this team only has one active member. We recognize that it is a delicate and important balance to figure out how to have compassion and care for the needy but to also be wise stewards of the finances that God has entrusted to us. We talked about what the vision for this team should be, and how we can relaunch and support it. We will continue this discussion at our next meeting.

We had planned to start working on revising LCF's Constitution, but ran out of time. We'll try to get to it at our next meeting on April 2. ■

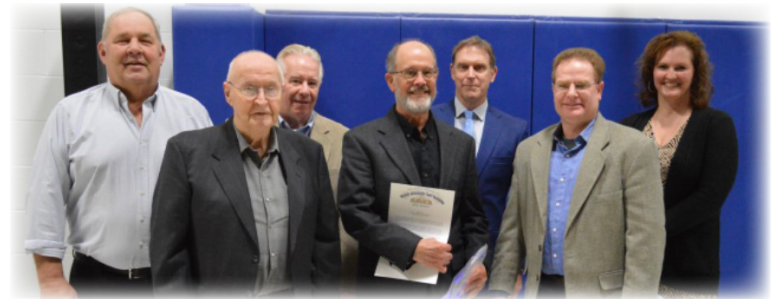
## One Body, Many Members

by Lyndon Miller

On Thursday evening, March 21, LCF's Wheelchair Ramp Ministry was invited to an Appreciation Dinner by Madison County Board of Developmental Disabilities (MRDD). Cletus Yoder, Levi Miller, and myself attended. None of us knew what to expect, but once we arrived we realized this was a big event. Among those in attendance were State Representatives, the Mayor of London, Board and Council Members of Madison County along with the Board of MRDD. Cappy's Pizza catered a delicious dinner and Zane Harshaw provided live music.

After the meal they began recognizing individuals and groups who have invested in people with disabilities. We were recognized for how our wheelchair ramp ministry enables those with disabilities to get in and out of their homes. Cletus Yoder was instrumental in starting this ministry almost 3 1/2 years ago (November 2015). Since then, we have put in 46 ramps and removed 16. Thanks to each of you who have helped out with this ministry in various ways.

As the evening went on I soon realized that we were just a small part of a much greater picture. One of the categories of recognition was for individuals who have served those with disabilities for 20+ years. One of those individuals was Jeff Gates. It takes a special person to do what these individuals do, day in and day out. As you get the opportunity, ask Cletus how you can help with a ramp, or take the opportunity to thank those, like Jeff, who regularly care for people with disabilities—people who need love and understanding just like we all do. ■



Pictured from left: Ted Slanker (MRDD President) Levi Miller, Bill Dean (Ohio House Representative), Cletus Yoder, Jeff Davis (Ohio Department of Disabilities Director), Lyndon Miller, and Susan Thompson (MRDD Superintendent).



# An Interview with *Jeff & Maggie Gates*

*Interviewed by Theresa Hennis*



Jeff and Maggie Gates started attending LCF last summer. Here are some questions we asked them, to help us all learn to know them a little better.

## **What is your profession?**

Jeff has worked for the Madison County Board of Developmental Disabilities as an administrator for 21 years. I am a school counselor at London City Schools.

## **Where are you from, originally?**

Jeff is originally from Henrietta, NY, a suburb of Rochester. I am from London.

## **How did you meet each other? Was there anything different or unusual about your engagement/wedding?**

We met at Miami University. I was a resident advisor and Jeff was a residence hall director. Our stories of the first time we met differ. Regardless, we connected and four months later were engaged.

Our wedding was at London First Presbyterian Church and it was hotter than blue blazes that June! We had to have electric fans blowing on the cake so the buttercream frosting would not melt and cause the cake to slide. Oh, and when I threw my bouquet, I completely missed the crowd! We will celebrate 30 years this June.

## **How many children do you have?**

We have two kids; Aaron is a sophomore acting major at Ohio University and Reid is a freshman at London High School.

## **What would your children say is the most interesting thing about you as a family?**

Our college student said "I don't know." Reid says we are musically inclined.

## **What is something no one at LCF knows about you that you think is interesting?**

Jeff's is that he was an extra in the Robert Redford baseball movie, "The Natural." Mine is that I got to pet a flamingo.

## **Do you have a favorite hobby?**

We have too many hobbies! Our house is packed with projects.

## **If a movie was made of your life what genre would it be; who would play you?**

It would be a comedy. I would be played by Patricia Heaton and Drew Carey would play Jeff.

## **If you were famous, what would you be famous for?**

Jeff would be famous for sports writing or theater direction. I would be famous for making it to January 2nd before losing Mom of the Year status!

## **If you had to eat one meal every day for the rest of your life what would it be?**

I would eat pizza. Jeff would eat pasta.

## **What's the best piece of advice you've ever been given?**

Jeff's is "Life is not a dress rehearsal." Mine is "When comparing yourself with others, remember that we all 'spend' differently."

## **What would be the most surprising scientific discovery imaginable?**

Mine is a vaccine that eliminates hate. Jeff likes my idea so much that he joined the band wagon.

## **What would be the title of your autobiography?**

Mine would be "You Have Got to Be Kidding Me!" Jeff's is "If You Can't Sing Well, Sing Loud!"

## **What is your absolute dream job?**

Jeff's dream job is working at the Baseball Hall of Fame Museum in Cooperstown, NY. Mine is working part time at an historical farm museum, and my other part-time job would be visiting those in the hospital no one visits. Fortunately, we can both find our dream in the "town where baseball lives!" Of course, this is assuming we are able to retire eventually!

## **What book of the Bible inspires you the most?**

I am slowly reading the Bible for the first time so have no idea which book is my favorite. Jeff's favorite is Genesis because it starts with "In the big inning..." (see previous question); seriously, though, the story of Joseph's coat of many colors is his favorite.

## **Who is your favorite person in the Bible?**

Jeff likes David because Jeff always roots for the underdog.

Thanks, Jeff & Maggie for helping us to learn a bit more about you. We are thankful that God brought you to LCF (via Reid's friendship with Vernon), and we are grateful for the ways you have already enriched our lives! ■

# Marriage Date Night

by Pam Stanforth

On Saturday March 2, 2019, about six LCF couples shared in a fun night out attending Marriage Date Night at Grove City Baptist Church. We started our evening with dinner at Chipotle, already gearing up for a night of laughter as we shared life events with one another.



The evening did not disappoint. We enjoyed the comedy and music ministry of Amberly Neese, Jonny Diaz and Leland Klassen who is the main character in the movie, *Extraordinary*. (Jeff and I watched this movie later—a good movie) Having opportunity to enjoy our church family in a social setting was uplifting. I did a little homework to check out the

Statement of Faith of MDN and was thankful to learn they share our own statement of faith at LCF. This, for me, made the night that much more enjoyable, knowing I could relax being confident that the content would be honorable. I could imagine Jesus having a good laugh at some of the humorous takes on real-life situations we face each day of our Christian walk. I give this event a big thumbs up! ■

*Pursuing Christ...continued*

Last fall, I started meeting with Doris Swartz every other week to pray and study God's Word together. It's like my eyes and ears have been opened in a whole new way. I am pursuing God and he is pursuing me! I've made a commitment to read and study God's Word consistently, and this is a game changer, y'all! When you decide that you want to grow closer to God and you make time for him and his Word, he will speak to you in more ways than you could ever imagine! Doris and I are reading the "Bible in One Year" plan. Every day we read a section from Psalms or Proverbs, a section from the New Testament, and a section from the Old Testament, along with a commentary that ties them all together. It takes quite a bit of time but it has been amazing to see how God has been speaking to me so clearly.

Since I have chosen to pursue God and his Word, I have discovered how he uses the Bible and its stories, that were written many years ago, to show me how to handle situations that are going on in my life today. For example, last November my mom told our family that she got engaged and would be getting remarried in December. I was shocked and deeply hurt. I don't think words can describe the pain it brought. I had to deal with a lot of disappointment, anger, and frustration. I was struggling to find a way to love my mom through these decisions she was making. During that time I was reading in 1 Peter 4:12. This is taken out of context some, but I felt like it spoke directly to me: "*Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.*" I had certainly been surprised at the fiery, messy ordeal that had come my way; but now, I realized that God was using it to test me. It definitely felt like something strange was happening to me because I grew up thinking something like this would never happen to me. Shortly after that, I read in 2 John, verses 1-6, about love. It was not like I was thinking "Ok, I need to learn how to love my mom so I'm going to turn to 2 John and read." No, I was reading my normal devotions and this just "happened" to be where I was reading! When I read that, I knew that God saw me, and he was guiding me. Even though it was not going to be easy, I knew he wanted me to love my mom. It has not been easy, but it has definitely been rewarding to see God bringing about healing and restoration in my relationship with my mom.

I find that as I search for the Lord and his will, instead of my own, that he is constantly using the Bible, people, and situations to speak to me. I hear him and see him, and am growing in ways I never have before. I can testify that if you are willing to seek God and put him first, he will speak to you. It's unbelievable! He gave us the gift of his Holy Spirit and the Bible to help guide us through this life. I am thankful that I have freedom to study it without fear. I am thankful that God provides us with a way to make it through the hard days and the good ones. We just need to choose to seek him above everything else, and then listen, and obey. ■

## Upcoming Activities

April 18—Maundy Thursday Service, 7 p.m.  
April 21—Easter Celebration  
April 26 - 27—Elders Retreat at Farmvilla  
June 10 - 14—Vacation Bible School  
July 10 - 12—Xenos Summer Institute  
July 26 - 28—Multiply Conference



This joyful group of ladies was "caught in the act" of cooking and serving a delicious meal of ham and potatoes, green beans, rolls, cole slaw, and desserts, to Betsy Patterson's family and friends, following her Celebration of Life service at LCF on Tuesday, March 19th. Thanks so much to each person who helped out in various ways—from playing piano and running sound to cooking and cleaning up! You helped to make the day go smoothly and were a blessing to many! ■



## 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, 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.*