

The LCF Connection

October 2019

Pastor Appreciation Tributes

October is typically known as Pastor Appreciation Month. This month we would like to honor some very special pastors. We asked the PKs (Pastors' Kids) among us, as well as those whose pastor dads attend or pastor here at LCF to share a brief tribute to their father.



by Steve Swartz

Raymond Swartz was my father and he served as pastor of Mt. Morris Mennonite Church from 1952-1985 (33 years). This is the only church that he

served as pastor. My father was not a top-notch preacher or administrator but he excelled as a loving shepherd of his flock. My mother was his true partner. With dad's kind, merciful heart and my mother's desire to serve people in practical ways, they made a great team. They were drawn to "the least of these" in our community. Jesus said, "Whatever you have done to the least of these, my brothers, you have done for me." They received few rewards here, but I believe there will be special rewards for them in heaven.



by Ann Marie Schrader and David Swartz

Our dad, **Steve Swartz**, served as pastor at Shalom Community Church (now known as London Christian Fellowship) from 1985-2002.

When we arrived home each afternoon, our father was there. He was waiting with a warm smile, caring questions about our day, and a snack. He loved us, and it was easy to imagine, because of him, a God who loved us too.

He didn't coddle us though. He pushed us to complete difficult assignments on time. He encouraged us to contribute to our church community. He made us walk home from school, and he pushed us to excel. But he coached us through it all with a steadiness that didn't heighten emotions. Not distracted by his own work or surroundings or thoughts, he was fully present. Except when he wasn't. People died at inconvenient times, and our vacations were sometimes cut short. He was gone a lot of evenings. It was clear that we weren't the only people in his life, and we saw him do his job as a pastor with the same kind of presence he practiced as a parent. That was good for us too. We learned to be tough and to sacrifice for the sake of others, which somehow wasn't so hard with him as our father.



by Jesse Diller

My dad, **Lester Diller**, has been the pastor of Buffalo Mennonite Church in Lewisburg,

PA, since 2012. He also pastored Cornerstone Community Church in Macon, MS from 1982-1998, and in Belleville, PA, from 1998 to 2011. What an incredible example he has been to me!

by Ira Sairs

My father, **Reuben Sairs**, has served as the Associate Pastor here at LCF since 2007. Before then he pastored at Mobile Mennonite Church (1989-1999) and Freedom in Christ Fellowship (1999-2001). Growing up, I appreciated my father's sermons for being inspired and respectful to his audiences. When I grew old enough to appreciate his gifts as a church leader, I realized what a gift it was to have a talented public speaker as my father. Elements of my father's sermons have influenced everything from my own personal lexicon, to day-to-day social interactions.



by Phyllis Miller Swartz and Linda Schlabach

Our father, **David I Miller**, pastored and administered church agencies for decades. His mind is logical, and his heart is kind. He's one of the most consistent people we know. And what folks saw in the pulpit and behind the desk is what we saw at home.



Continued on pages 2 & 3...

"Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."
Mark 10:43-45

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by Dan Frederick

As I reflect on my dad, *Duane Frederick*, as a father and pastor, I realize that I admire and respect his intentionality in living the kingdom life and reflecting God's love through action and self-sacrifice. He's a man with a servant heart, always present for others, and uses his time to spend it with people. He teaches about God's love, wisdom, and grace, visits those in need, and mentors youth. He goes above and beyond for our family, investing his love, time, and energy in us. He understands what it takes to be a man running the race.

The churches where my dad has pastored include: Steel City Mennonite Church (1984-1988), Bethlehem Mennonite Church (1988-1989), Marion Mennonite Church (1989-1993), Meadow Mountain Mennonite Church (1994-2010) and Pinto Mennonite Church (since 2017).

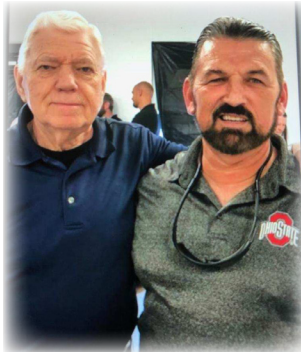
I like to think of my dad, *Philip Mbatia*, as more of a preacher than a pastor because he doesn't serve as a pastor to just one congregation. He works for Regions Beyond Ministry which is a non-profit faith organization whose mission is to provide leadership training to those in any form of Christian ministry.



A couple of things I have learned from observing his life is to always treat people with love and respect and, that in life there is never an end to learning, and one should always be willing and ready to learn.

by Dave King

My father, *Paul D. King, Sr.*, has faithfully served as a pastor for the past 52 years; first at Little Bell Baptist Church and then at Back Run House of Prayer, where he still serves. I really appreciated his dedication to God, his family, the church, and his co-workers at C-Pac Services (where he worked for 30+ years). He would



come home from work, spend time with me and my siblings, then would minister to the church family. My parents traveled throughout OH, KY, and WV to preach and sing at various churches. My dad comes from a long line of preachers. His knowledge of the Bible never ceases to amaze me. I am so very thankful for everything he taught me!

My dad, *George H. Swain*, pastored at Uhelny Kamen Kirkev (Cornerstone Church) in Prague Czech Republic from 1993-2016 and has been pastoring at Homerville Grace Brethren Church in Homerville, OH, since 2018. Dad is incredibly hard working and persistent. While in Prague working alongside Campus Crusade for Christ, every household in the city was offered the Jesus Film and a chance to know Christ and get involved with a church or correspondence bible study. A lot of this endeavor was done door-to-door, putting fliers in mailboxes and talking to people.



by Jim Jones

My father, *Vernon Jones*, felt the calling to be a pastor after he retired from the army as a WWII veteran when I was three years old. He was the pastor at Zion Lutheran Church in Columbus from 1964-1983. To me he was a father first, then a pastor. He spent a lot of his time visiting and caring for the members of the church. Even through all that, he would



make time when I was young for hikes at Hocking Hills. It was just our time together, and I cherish those memories to this day when I go hiking down there. We grew closer as I became older, and I'm always thankful for the relationship we had.

"Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever." Daniel 12:3

by Katherine Patterson Paronto

by Shepherd Ndungu



My father, *Allan Patterson*, graduated from Bluffton College with a degree to teach social studies. He received his master's degree in teaching from Miami University. While raised Presbyterian, Allan was a Conscientious Objector during the Vietnam War and served 2 years through the Mennonite Alternative Service as a teacher in Newfoundland, Canada. When he returned, he

taught 7th grade social studies at Langston Middle School in Oberlin, OH, for 22 years. In 1989, he felt God's call and took a year sabbatical to seek God's will and attend Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, IN. Following that year, he became pastor of Peace Mennonite Church in Elyria, OH, where he pastored for over 20 years, until his retirement. He and his wife, Elizabeth "Betsy" Patterson, then moved to London, OH, and he served as interim pastor at Cornerstone Mennonite Fellowship in Plain City for several years.

My dad, *Abraham Ndungu*, served as pastor in 6 different churches over a 27-year period, before our family moved here from Kenya in 2009. I love my dad. We can go from deep discussions regarding heavy topics to making jokes together that embarrass my mum. I envy his passion for studying God's Word and wanting others to know more about it. A characteristic that I



hope to embody from my dad is how hard he works; whether it be grading papers, working 10-hour shifts, or just investing time into relationships. Above all, he has been a key player in my walk with God, and I am most thankful for that.

by Lisa Miller

My dad, *Wesley Stolfzfus*, pastored at Bowlings Creek Mennonite Church in KY from 1957 until he retired in 1998. He served as interim pastor at Sunrise Chapel for several months in 2002. One of my fondest memories of dad as a pastor is when he would say a blessing over the congregation to dismiss church on a Sunday morning. He would lift both of his hands towards heaven and over the group and would pray, "The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face to shine upon you and give you peace." And God did! He has brought me much peace.



by Rob Swartz

My dad, *Edwin Swartz*, gave his life for the church. As long as I can remember, we served the church in whatever way was needed. It was a clear priority. Dad led the youth bible studies for years, and many of those youth still talk about the impact he had on their lives. Later in life, in 1980, at the age of 53, he became pastor of our church, Riverside Mennonite in Au Gres, Michigan. As a teenager, I remember it being a difficult time. The challenges of ministry and difficult people took their toll on my dad and our



family. Seven years later, at the age of 60, he died of a heart attack. As I sat at my dad's funeral at the age of 21 and listened to person after person share how my dad had impacted their lives, my own life and direction was changed. I wanted my life to be more than just about me. Over the years I have wished many times that dad and I could compare notes and build that camaraderie that we never really had, but it was not to be. Even so, I think I understand him better and admire him more than ever. He gave his all for the church and the kingdom of God with no regrets, and I hope to follow in his steps and do the same. Someday we will have that chance to make up for lost time.

by Larissa Swartz

My dad, *Rob Swartz*, has served as lead pastor here at London Christian Fellowship since October 2002. He has disciplined me in so many ways, and I'm thankful for the example he sets for me in humble, Christ-centered leadership, not only in church, but in our family. Even now, I continue to learn from his wisdom and experience as I serve in leadership in full-time ministry. I'm thankful for the way that he continues to encourage and support me to keep a healthy balance



in all aspects of my life and to bring Jesus into every area. I may not have always listened to him well over the years, but my respect for him has increased greatly as I've experienced for myself some of the heaviness and difficulties that come with leadership in a ministry setting. Thanks, Dad, for always reminding me to focus on Jesus and pursue Him first.

Thanks so much to each one who took this opportunity to help us learn to know a little about your dads who are/were pastors. We thank God for each of these servant leaders and the impact that their lives and ministries continue to have on us as a church body here at LCF. May all of us be encouraged to likewise live our lives loving God and serving others as we point them to him! ■



Elders Retreat

by Rob & Doris Swartz

The elders team, along with our overseer and his wife, Roger and Sharon Hazen, met at Farmvilla (a rental home near Plain City located at the end of a very long country lane) Friday evening and Saturday, September 20-21. We began our time Friday evening by sharing concerns that were on our hearts and praying for them, the church, and each other, along with asking God to guide our retreat. We ended the evening with some fun and laughter as we played "Cards Against the Mennonites" (a homemade game similar to Apples to Apples).

Saturday we rolled up our sleeves and discussed a variety of thoughts, ideas, and questions regarding how we can provide good leadership at LCF. We appreciate the variety of people on our team and how we can hear from God through each one.

We finished sharing our lists of "The top 5 things on our heart for LCF" and were encouraged to hear the following consistent themes emerge:

- making sure that we keep Jesus first
- highly valuing the teaching, preaching, and study of God's Word
- equipping and engaging our congregation together in the work of ministry
- continuing to follow Jesus' teachings in the area of peace and nonresistance
- encouraging a rich and deep relationship with God, as well as with others.

We sensed a strong unity of purpose and direction for the church.

We discussed our current church structure. Rob highlighted the need for an administrative pastor/elder to handle this part of church work in which he isn't particularly gifted or called. We discussed again the desire to care for our youth and children and to consider possibly hiring a youth and children's ministries pastor at some point. We trust that God will provide for the resources and leaders needed in his time.

We continued talking about an upcoming discussion/preaching series on sexual purity, not focusing in on just hot topics, but covering it as a whole. We would love to do this with an opportunity for discussion to make sure we try to answer the questions that people have.

We ended our time together celebrating and thanking God for the many good things we see happening in the church and in the lives of people at LCF! We encourage you to do the same. God is at work, and we want to give him all the glory! Thanks for your prayers! ■

Celebrating New Life in Christ!

by Maggie Gates

Cecil Frances Alexander said, "All things bright and beautiful, All creatures great and small, All things wise and wonderful, The Lord God made them all."

I feel confident saying that Mr. Alexander could have written this on September 8, 2019, when eight adults chose to be baptized, or as Jerry said, "dipped," in the creek.

The day was bright and beautiful when we humbled ourselves before those gathered, to share our testimonies, as small creatures before our great Lord. Many shared wise words from scripture. Anna reminded us that Augustine said, "Baptism is an outward sign of God's inward work." All had stories of wonder...



From left: Lonnie Combs, Daekyun & Youngmi Oh, Zoie Brashear, Maggie Gates, Jerry Hayes, Anna King, and Jim Jones



After being baptized Zoie reflected, "I liked how it was outside because God created nature...getting baptized in the water made me feel closer to God." Jim reminded us of Jesus' final command in Matthew 28:18 where he said, "All authority on heaven and earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Some shared glimpses of adversity. Youngmi said, "It was such a blessing that I could wholeheartedly rely on God and have faith in Jesus as my personal Savior, who will fight for me, so I need only to be still." I believe that all who were baptized would agree with Daekyun and Youngmi's statement: "With our baptism, we want to declare in front of you, that in prayer, study, fellowship, and witnessing, we will follow Christ the rest of our lives, 'no turning back.'" ■

Upcoming Activities: We hope that you will join us at LCF on October 13th for a potluck meal after church.

Farm Science Review

by Doris Swartz

The annual Farm Science Review was held on September 17-19. Thanks so much to all those who got up very early so they could be there and ready to serve others with a smile by 6:30 a.m. ☺ (Marcus Freed, Clayton Carner, Tim Shay, Levi Miller, Myron & Mandy Hochstetler, Jeremy Hisey, Clete Yoder, Keith & Shannon Scheffel, Colleen Wolford, and Rob & Doris Swartz.)

The \$445 that was earned will be put towards some of the non-budgeted items on the council's waiting list. ■



Sunday at the Park

September 22 was a gorgeous day for our "Sunday at the Park." We had a great time of worship and learning from God's Word together, along with enjoying good food, fun, and fellowship.



A big thank you to Jeff Gates who has been helping to capture LCF moments with photos! For more pictures visit LCF's Facebook page.

The LCF Connection

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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: 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.