

# The LCF Connection

June 2020

## A Father's Love

by Zach Freer

*"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres". 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (ESV)*

Sunday, June 21st, is Father's Day. At that time, I will have been a father for almost two and a half months. I've been asked by some friends what it's like to be a new father, and, more specifically, what it's like being a new father in a pandemic. My answer: I don't really know. I think I'm still in a little bit of a lifestyle shock. I'm only several weeks into this dad thing, and I'm still trying to figure out how to balance feeding, changing, rocking, and tummy time with my regular work responsibilities, chores at home, and oh, yeah, sleep. The lawn still needs mowed, the bathrooms cleaned, and that's just the start. To successfully complete the above activities is important, but it doesn't even begin to scratch the surface on what being a dad is all about. Even though I'm a little bit in survival mode as I make this adjustment, it's still important that I spend some down time with my wife and for us to actively maintain our relationship. And to answer the second part of the question, I imagine being a new dad to a new baby at this time in history is still pretty similar to the experience of most first time fathers six months ago, with a few exceptions. (Babies haven't changed after all.) The biggest struggle for us in this particular time has been choosing to physically isolate from friends and family out of caution for our baby's still-developing immune system.



Of course, Christians understand that the ultimate father is our Father God. He has set a pretty high bar because, I mean, after all, He is God. And admittedly, we can't even come close to his example in our flesh. So what do we even do with this? Where do we even begin? Why not just say, "Well, I'm not God," and be done with it?

The book of First John, chapter four, verses seven and eight gently command us, as those beloved by God, to love one another. It goes on to say that whoever does not love does not know God. It asserts that God is love and provides a proof for that assertion. So if God is love, and if he is a perfect father, it would stand to reason that love is an important part of the job of being a father. Verse 19 verifies this in plain terms.

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## Retirement Celebration

by Elisabeth Yoder

For many years, Vicki Sairs has dedicated her time, energy, and heart to teaching students at Rosedale Bible College the joys of learning, the beauty of life, and the value of being zany. As one of the many people lucky enough to learn from Vicki, I can attest to the impact she has on her students. She inspires creativity and curiosity, invites her students to delve into the deeper questions of not only her courses but also life and all its complexities, and

embraces the silly side of life without ignoring or diminishing the serious and helps others do the same.



*Vicki with her oldest son, Isaac, and his wife, Becky.*

At the conclusion of this academic year, on June 30th, Vicki will transition out of full-time work at Rosedale and move forward to other exciting endeavors. During her time at RBC, Vicki has found energy and hope in her connection with students and loves, as she states, "being a part of their journey into a bigger world." She also appreciates the people she works with. In her own words, "They treat me with respect and patience;

they value what I bring to the table; they are understanding and forgiving. Plus they're a lot of fun." Vicki hopes to retain the connection with students and staff by teaching two classes a year as an adjunct professor.

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## Healthy Fellowship

### A Message from the Pastor

by Rob Swartz

The first Sunday in June, we are tentatively planning to begin services at the church building again for the first time in almost three months. None of us would have ever imagined such a scenario as we began the new decade of 2020. Even as I write this,

I'm wondering what the days ahead will be like. These past months have taken a toll on us in many ways. The death toll, the fear of contracting COVID, the stress on essential workers, the job layoffs, the adjustment of everyone being at home, the escalating political tensions, the disruption of so many "normal" parts of our lives, have all affected us in ways we probably don't even know.

One of the significant ways it has affected our church is it has disrupted our fellowship. I have not seen many of you in three months. This is the longest time that Doris and I have been separated from our church family, similar to when we took our 3-month sabbatical back in 2017. We miss everyone greatly, and we can't wait to see you all again. Of course, we want to do this in as safe a way as possible, but we need you. It's the way God designed the church to be. There's a part of me that has been missing and that part is you. ☺ Yes, it has been great to stay in contact with many of you through Zoom calls, text messages, emails, and phone calls, but there is nothing like seeing each other in person. It reminds me of the letters that Paul wrote to the various churches about how he longed to be with them in person.

We are only complete when we are engaged in a healthy way with the church body. We, as Americans, love our individualism and that can be a good thing. Doris and I raised our children to be independent. We wanted them to have the skills to provide for themselves, pay bills, get along with roommates, do their taxes, fix their car, etc., without having to depend on us as parents. We are always there to help them, but they need to learn how to live their life independent of us. We as believers also need to have an independent faith, not one that tags on the coat-tails of another person or tradition or is propped up by others. However, we were never intended to function apart from the body of Christ. I love how Paul puts it in Ephesians 4:16—*"He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love."*

Doris and I look forward to seeing each of you again! We will do our best to be safe, but this time apart has also made us realize how vital the fellowship of believers is to good health, as well. May God give us wisdom as we strive for health in body, soul, and spirit. ■

## Elders' Notes

by Jesse Diller

The elders have been in communication quite a bit throughout the month about service details and online meetings—such as the Wednesday evening prayer meetings, the Sunday virtual foyer, etc.

During our elders meeting on May 12th, we spent the first part of our time praying together.

We talked about our online service and how things seem to be going; whether we need to adjust anything, or shorten/lengthen the service.

We spent nearly all of the rest of the meeting working on when and how to reopen church at LCF. There are many different opinions, lots of questions, and so few answers. We agreed that we want to take a middle-of-the-road, cautiously reasonable approach. We planned to meet with the council to discuss details and logistics. In the meantime, we thought about whether small groups can begin meeting, and concluded that we welcome them to do so with care—while using appropriate measures to follow safety guidelines.

Keith led us in a discussion regarding an email we received recently from Larissa Swartz, formally asking us if LCF would consider being her sending church as she serves with IFI (International Friendship Inc.). We will have more information forthcoming as details clarify.

We briefly continued our previous discussion on "cultivating a healthy church family." We recognize that during this time of the Coronavirus Pandemic, that much of what normally takes place in families—such as hospitality, group events, etc., is on hold. We will continue to do our best to connect with our church family by the various means we have available at this point, and trust that others are doing the same.

Keith closed our time with prayer. Our next scheduled meeting will be on Tuesday, June 9th. ■

## Council Update

by Jim Jones

On Tuesday, May 19th, the LCF Council and Welcome Team Coordinator discussed areas of responsibilities in preparing for the re-opening of church services on June 7th. Details included supplies needed, set up (to maximize social distancing and a touch-free environment) and a communication plan so members know what to expect.

The Council is overwhelmed with gratitude to our members as they have continued to give so generously of their finances during these stay-at-home services. ■

## Everything is Ready for You!

- The chairs in the sanctuary are set up to accommodate family groups according to social distance recommendations, with additional chairs for overflow seating in the Fellowship Hall.
- We have upgraded our internet capacity and added a camera so that we are ready to livestream the service from the sanctuary.
- We have masks and plenty of hand sanitizer available.
- We have shared out our safety recommendations and the list of changes that you will notice when you return.



We look forward to seeing you at 10:30 a.m. on June 7th—or whenever it is that you feel comfortable returning to church at LCF!!

# Strangers, Pilgrims, Temporary Residents?

by Naomi Ndungu

Our wedding video was ruined! Imagine that. Abraham and I positioned ourselves in front of the TV, on the evening of our 24th anniversary, inserted the video cassette into the console and nothing played. Even with the help of our tech-savvy children, it did not work. A heavy cloud of defeat descended on me. I had set aside this moment to relive that special occasion and more so, to see the dear people who made it happen and celebrated with us.

As a family living far from our original homeland, such recollections significantly bridge the disconnect created by time and distance. So, for purposes of not appearing to make a mountain out of a molehill, I would simply call my experience on that day a cloud. This not only spoiled the mood for the rest of that evening, but of the wedding anniversaries in the years that followed. Multiple efforts to revive the video failed, and I put away the cassette in a drawer at home.

It became clear to me that I had a very special attachment to this video when I traveled back home to Kenya two years later. During this trip, I reconnected with some key players in our wedding who had gone through some life-changing experiences. Noticing how some had their faith shaken over the years, I wished I could replay the video to them, as a reminder of their personal testimonies of God's faithfulness verbalized at our wedding.

I am not sure how our son Danny thought about it. A few months ago, he asked to take the video cassette to one more repair shop, just to give it one more trial. And boom! The video came alive. And we spent one lovely evening this February watching it as a family. Gymnastics, tears, exclamations, moments of dead silence, and questions filled the living room as we relived the experience. Our son Shepherd asked why we did not invite him to the occasion! Something stood out as my eyes "feasted" on this three-hour, 29-year-old, not-so-clear video. A notable group of immediate family members including my father, Abraham's father and sister, relatives, and friends of different ages and gender, rich and poor and the in between, have since relocated. They are no longer in this world. They are residents in that place where no one asks, "when are they coming back?"



As King David put it, following the death of his infant son with Bathsheba: *"But now that he is dead, why should I go on fasting? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me"* (2 Samuel 12:23). Scriptures are not silent on the issue of our residence. Bluntly, it is temporal residence, regardless of the documents that temporarily distinguish between citizens, permanent residents, aliens, illegals, to name a few! To the persecuted church in Peter's time, the apostle repeatedly referred to them as pilgrims, strangers, aliens, exiles, and urged them to "... live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear," and "... to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul (1 Peter 1:17 & 2:11 )." And both the Old and New Testaments have numerous reminders of this, lest we live like we belong here. Men of old lived in ways that undoubtedly portrayed their understanding of this important aspect of life. Abraham, Noah, Jacob, Joseph; they were on a pilgrimage.

Temporal comforts in our day, such as political positions, functional families, great jobs and income, posh cars, high-class residential areas, inviting churches, tend to blur our minds, giving a false sense of settlement, belonging and contentment. Surprisingly, most if not all are fading in the face of the global challenges in our day, especially the COVID-19 epidemic.

A great posture to have would be that of Abraham: *"By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God (Hebrews 11:9-10)."* Dear friend, what could be preoccupying us today and keeping us from focusing on the eternal? ■

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## A Father's Love...continued

I struggle with love at times. I struggle to show it to others when I give in to stress and anxiety instead of resting in the Father's peace. I get blinded at times by what I see around me instead of remembering the truth He tells me.

The mouse pad in my classroom has printed on it an interpretation of 1 Corinthians 13 as it applies to being a teacher. I don't have the personal job experience to even begin to imagine all the various ways 1 Corinthians 13 applies to being a father, but a start might be to replace the word "love" with "father" and go from there.

A father is patient, a father is kind. He does not envy or compare his children to others or to their siblings. He does not boast or is proud, but humbly serves his family. He does not dishonor others but rather teaches his children that God created all humankind in His own image. A father is not self-seeking, but first works to provide for his family. He is not easily angered or hot tempered and keeps no record of wrongs. A father does not delight in evil but disciplines his children so that they learn to rejoice with the truth. A father always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres to bring his children closer to Christ.

It's a tall order. No one does it perfectly. We need to show grace both to ourselves and to our fathers. I think Satan has really worked into our culture this idea of dad-blaming and this narrative that dads are lazy, unresponsive to their families' needs, and generally fairly stupid and insensitive. Don't buy it. It's a ploy to get us to give up without a fight. We can't do this on our own, and it will be tough, but we have all the help we need. Our prayer as dads should be for the ability to better reflect the Father's love both to our families and to those around us and to trust that the Holy Spirit will continue to perfect us as we continue to pursue Christ. ■

# The Power of Words—Written and Spoken

by Pam Stanforth



*Editor's note: Pam Stanforth believes in using the gifts God gives us to glorify him. She uses her gift of writing to point others to her Father, and she was inspired to write a book titled *The Princess of Waterfall Castle* that would speak his love, through her, to her granddaughters, carrying the message of how precious they are in his sight and how powerful they are as God's own princesses. She wrote the following in response to questions about what she hoped the book's impact would be. To read more about Pam and her new book see the article in the March 30th edition of the Madison Messenger. ~ Theresa Hennis*

*"For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." Hebrews 4:12, KJV*

If Jesus be in us, God's Holy Spirit in us, His life force alive in us, then there is wonder-working power, Word of God in us. There is a but—we must feed on God's Word and come into intimate relationship with Jesus to know Him in the power of His Word. God's Word is truth, and I know it is, when He says that there is power in our tongues to speak life or death. We should, with the utmost care, consider our words in the light of His. I have been guilty of speaking without considering the impact of my words. Lately, when I speak carelessly, the Holy Spirit brings to my remembrance my 2020 goal, To Understand the Power of Words in the Light of His Word.

I find this a most challenging choice of a goal. What does this have to do with my book, *The Princess of Waterfall Castle*? As I have reviewed this story, I find lessons in words the characters have spoken: frivolous careless pronouncements of love, intentional, hurtful heart-rending words, bequeathal and legacy words, words that demanded a life, words that gave life and, above all, the Words of Life spoken in prayer and thanksgiving to God. The most powerful message of this book is that God is our need, our power, and our salvation throughout the ages, that all peoples have always endured challenges, times of tears, deep sadness, heart-rending loss, peace, promise and joy, but with Jesus, we can be victorious through it all.

As far back as my memory allows, as a young child, I understood the power of the spoken word because I was forced to be silent and could not speak my truth. In this book, I write about four strong female characters in a time when women were not allowed to be outspoken. Yet, they found ways to impact the lives around them, positively and negatively. The one thing I most identify with was not what my life was like, but what I yearned for it to be—one with a strongly Christ-centered family with a mother and a father who prayed and who modeled love and positive morals before their daughter. The main character was ripped away from her family and forced to make her way alone; yet, because she had such a powerful foundation established by praying parents, she was able to stand strong in the face of overwhelming odds.

I hope my readers will identify with the positive message of hope that runs throughout the pages of my book—that there is no need for fairy godmothers or mysticism when there is a REAL LIVE HEAVENLY FATHER WHO LOVES HIS PRINCESS DAUGHTERS BEYOND MEASURE! ■

## Retirement...continued

After she steps back from teaching, Vicki is excited to devote her time and energy to writing. She plans to treat her writing as a full-time job and intends to write every day. She is excited to set to work on revising one novel, rewriting another, and completing a third.

We are thankful for her many years of service at Rosedale and are excited to support her as she tackles her next chapter with the same vibrant silliness and enthusiasm she has devoted to teaching. Congratulations, Vicki! We hope you enjoy this new stage of life! ■

## Can You Find Dorothy?

On Friday, May 8th, a group of us from LCF joined Dorothy (in the top right photo) on Zoom to celebrate her 100th birthday. It's not the way we had hoped to celebrate, but nonetheless, it was a very special celebration and we were thankful to be able to see her smiling face! Thanks to each one who helped to make her day special! ■



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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.