

# The LCF Connection

February 2021

## Blessing One Another

by Theresa Hennis

*“And do not neglect to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.”* Hebrews 13:16

I cannot tell you how blessed I feel to be a part of such a giving and generous church family. My family has experienced much love and help from so many of you and saying thank you doesn't seem sufficient. So, I just wanted to take this opportunity to encourage you as a church body to continue to find ways to show God's love to one another.

Jesus knew we would need “one another” as we traversed this journey of life. Being a part of a church family means blessing others and receiving blessings along the way. We serve one another in many ways—one of the most important is faithfully praying for our fellow church members when they indicate a need for prayer.

In addition to praying, look for practical ways to bless someone when you become aware that they are struggling or have a need. We often ask if there is anything we can do to help, but people might be reluctant to voice a request, worried that they would be a bother. That is when we can do a little detective work, or if we know the circumstances and the challenges they face, we can choose to take them a meal, mail a card with a check or gift card, or drop off flowers just because. All these things can brighten someone's day more than you know, because it might be that very day that they have experienced a setback, depression, or just a need to feel that someone cares.

The Holy Spirit's leading is something we should seek when we wonder what we can do to make a difference. He knows exactly what our church family members are going through, and He uses us to minister to one another. However, even if we don't feel that we know exactly what they need, it is never a mistake to reach out in love through simple acts of kindness.

Despite the trying times we live in today, our LCF family is busy doing God's work, and that is something I don't take lightly, because I and my family have been blessed abundantly because of you, and we thank you from the bottom of our hearts. ■



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## With Regrets

by Phyllis Swartz

LOVE

Now that I'm sixty-five, I can look back to the many times I didn't love fully. Here's one example:

I wish I had a second chance with Alex Cole. He was one of my first middle schoolers almost thirty years ago, when I didn't know much about teaching. Looking back I see my mistakes, the biggest being that I didn't like Alex Cole.

If he were my student now, I'd make myself learn to like him. I'd work at it until I could see that his hair tufted on his head like the straw in the windrow piles behind my grandpa's combine. I'd keep looking at his face until I could find strength behind stubbornness when he set his jaw and spirit behind temper when his eyes blazed.

But I didn't do this with Alex Cole. Instead, in an effort to help him be good, I collected evidence of his badness. I chastised his tone, filched the notes he passed, marked his tardiness, assigned detentions for defiance, and called his parents with complaints. When the school year ended, I was relieved I wouldn't see Alex Cole again. And I didn't, not for my whole teaching career.

A few days after I retired from teaching I took a walk and heard someone call, “Mrs. Swartz?” A man pulled his greasy hands from a truck engine and said, “I'm Alex Cole.” As we chatted, he was friendlier than I deserved.

“Do you have kids?” I asked.

He pulled open his shirt to show me three kids, their portraits tattooed on his chest.

I planned to stop by Alex Cole's yard on another walk, to maybe apologize for being a bad teacher. But I didn't get a chance.

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# Reading the Bible Carefully

A Message from the Pastor  
by Reuben Sairs

I wrote about Bible interpretation in the September issue of the Connection. I mentioned that I wanted to come back to that topic. We could read the Bible without really thinking about HOW we read it. I think if you want to get the most out of your reading, you should think about how to read it. Does the Holy Spirit automatically take care of that? Is the way we read the Bible intuitively correct because the Holy Spirit helps us along? It might sound odd to say, but the Bible won't support you in those assumptions. We can have the Spirit and invite him along as we read, but we still have to learn to read and do the work of reading.

I believe the Bible is the inspired word of God—without mistakes or human pollutants. I don't think we read well when we don't have the sense that God is speaking to us and that the Bible is our final authority for Christian thought and practice.

I mentioned four principles in September:

1. In English you are always reading a translation, and translation always involves interpretation.
2. The Bible writers wrote to an audience in their time, and we want to understand it like the first readers would have.
3. If we're making Biblical applications we need to understand the difference between an illustration and an instruction. I'm going back to that issue in this column.
4. We have to think carefully about how the Old and New Testaments interact.

The Bible's books stretch across three languages and thousands of years, reflecting very different cultures. All in one book! The Bible is really a library of books. If we think about the different kinds of books or writings we can describe this as a consideration of genre. If we walk into a library we know a map is not a book of poems, a cookbook is not a car manual, a history book is not in the science fiction section. We might ask where the children's room is. Where are the self-help books? Romances? And, by the way, can I get it online and read it on my phone? Would there be a reason to want a book instead? Remember that once upon a time they were all scrolls, and some parts may have been passed on orally before that!

Just like in a library, the Bible has different kinds of writing. We find history, poetry, letters, stories, instructions (how to). There are some types of writing that aren't immediately familiar to us, like apocalyptic writing or prophecy. Some important parts, like the gospels themselves, are their own thing—the fancy word is *sui generis*—they aren't exactly biographies, are they? Even within the various types of writing there are mixed elements within each: illustrations, jokes, anecdotes, advice, commandments, poetry, quotations. A psalm might instruct us, illustrate the point, and give us a little history. It might give advice, or it might reflect a commandment. It expresses emotion, and it might reveal an ugly side to our lives. Some lines in the psalms seem



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very human, and there is a conspicuous absence about what God might have to say about a particular thought.

A careful Bible reader should think about genre when they open the Bible. Am I looking at history? Am I looking at a letter? Am I perhaps looking at a sermon that was circulated to churches? The form of the writing will help you understand it better. Knowing whether a letter is to a church or an individual will help you.

I'm pretty sure the readers of this little column would all agree that whatever it is, it is something God wants us to know and know about. It will feed us, help us, and bring God's light into our cloudy minds. ■

# Council Update

by Jim Jones

Looking back on 2020...it has been a year of challenges, but God has been faithful in so many ways.

Our technical team rose to the challenge to provide timely online streaming of the services at a moment's notice with ingenuity and uncommon adaptability.



Nathaniel Smith did a wonderful job enlarging the Audio/Visual booth to meet the increased requirements at an extremely reasonable cost.



Recently, someone at LCF noticed the gravel parking lot was getting bare in the main pathways and entrance and offered to donate gravel and spread it.

Even though we had services "online only" for part of the year, 2020 giving was modestly more than our expenses for the year.

The LCF Council continues to be overwhelmed by how well our church family continuously comes together, gives generously, and works so well with one another, as the body of Christ. We are thankful for each person and for the many ways God has faithfully provided. ■



# Getting to Know...The Shenk Family

*Have you met John & Rosy Shenk yet? How many members of their family can you name? We have enjoyed knowing some of their family for quite a while, and others of them we have just been learning to know more recently. We asked John and Rosy to help us learn to know them and their family better.*

## How did you get connected with LCF?

Our daughter Elisabeth, and her husband Jeff Yoder, have attended LCF for quite a while. When we started looking around and visiting churches, they thought we would enjoy LCF and invited us to join them. We visited several times and always left feeling challenged and encouraged. During the COVID lockdown from March to May of 2020, we watched the livestream fairly regularly, and when in-person services started again in June, we began attending regularly (And we still leave challenged and encouraged!).

## How many children do you have, and their names, ages?

Are you ready for this? ☺ We have nine children, ranging in age from 34 to 13. We have 3 sons and 6 daughters.

1. Daniel (married to Emily, lives in central Ohio) 34
2. Marina (married to Landon Lehman and living in Providence, RI) 32
3. Hans (married to Courtney, lives in Central Ohio) 30
4. Lara (married to Levi Ziegler and living in Rapid City, SD) 29
5. Alisha (temporarily here in Ohio due to being furloughed from her job in South Dakota) 27
6. Elisabeth (married to Jeff Yoder)—our LCF connection! 25
7. Katie (married to Corin Wenger; they live here in Central Ohio and attend LCF) 22
8. Kerry (lives at home and also attends LCF) 20
9. Patrick (enjoys helping the tech guys at LCF) 13 and still in school!

## How many grandchildren do you have?

We have 7 adorable grandsons!

- From the Lehman household: Christopher (8), James (7), Nathaniel (4), and Matthias (1)
- From Hans and Courtney: Adrian (4) and Elliott (2)
- From Daniel and Emily: Theo (3)

## How did you first meet, and is there anything special/funny about your engagement or wedding?

John and I met while we were both attending Rosedale Bible College known as Rosedale Bible Institute back in those days. At our wedding, John's entire family showed up in sneakers, hiking boots, etc., to remind John that he had showed up to both of his sisters' weddings in sneakers (he maintains that both times were unavoidable!) The look of horror on my mom's face when she saw his family's shoes was priceless! We have a few pictures! And, of course, they changed into more proper footwear before the wedding.

## What did/do you both do as far as careers?

We lived in Northwestern Ontario, Canada for six years, working with First Nations people in a variety of ways. We lived on a reserve and worked with a small church there. Later, we moved further north, working at a school that actually shut down soon after we moved. We helped clean out buildings, etc.

John: I have worked for many years as a welder at a local fabricating shop (Gingway Products).

Rosy: I homeschooled our children for about 18 years while running a (very small) baking business from our home. After we quit homeschooling, I worked at several bakeries, and then in 2015, I returned to teaching and have been teaching 5th and 6th grades at Plainview Christian School, near Plain City since then.

## Who or what has been your greatest inspiration in life ?

John: My parents, Harold and Barbara Shenk, were people persons. We always attended small mission churches. They made a point of getting to know many of



*This picture of our family was taken at Katie and Corin's wedding in August 2018. Since then, we have added two more grandchildren...and Patrick has grown quite a bit!*

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# Elders' Notes

by Jesse Diller

We began our Zoom meeting by sharing various updates and concerns and then spent time praying together about them. Some of those people and situations included: those going through hard times, those with upcoming surgery, many who are feeling lonely and disconnected from the church during this time, and those who will be traveling.

We discussed and approved the proposed budget from the Council. We are so grateful for God's faithfulness and the generous giving of our LCF family. We are thankful to be able to end the year with a surplus—in the midst of a pandemic and even without taking the government assistance. We plan to share the budget with the congregation, and will take a vote on it on January 31st.

We talked a bit about the youth group. Ray and Grace Raber's 4-year term is scheduled to end this spring but when the youth group decided to start meeting online, they figured this would be a good time to go ahead and transition out. The youth group has been rather small for the past while. We spent some time discussing possibilities for keeping the youth a vital group. Rob will be in communication with Shepherd Ndungu who has been working with Ray and Grace in leading the youth and Peyton Miller (who has also been helping out some), as well as those who are in the youth group. We will continue to think and pray regularly about this situation.

The Coronavirus pandemic has hindered our usual times of church celebrations and fellowship. We discussed what to do with some of the things typically on our schedule like communion, our annual Celebrate the Church and membership renewal, as well as child dedications.

We closed with prayer, remembering the things we discussed. Our next meeting is scheduled for February 9th. ■

*With Regrets...continued*

Two days later just as I drove by his house on an errand, two SWAT vans and three police cruisers pulled up in front. In my rear viewmirror, I saw officers surround Alex's house. The next day I read in the paper about drug dealing and the shoot-out. I sat there in sadness.

I wished I had liked Alex Cole when he was in seventh grade. ■

*Shenk family...continued*

the neighbors in our small towns. We would often visit international students at a local college. And they seemed to be forever running into interesting folks. Many of these were often welcomed into our home, creating a far-flung network of friends and memories.

## **Are you involved in any particular ministry/volunteer work?**

John: I have visited Sudan several times to help with building projects connected with a ministry run by a Sudanese friend of ours. Locally, I am involved at DNA in Plain City. And I consider Rosy's job, teaching at a Christian school, to be very much a ministry.

## **Any special interests/hobbies?**

Rosy: I enjoy knitting, cooking—particularly new, interesting looking recipes from other countries.

John loves hiking. He has done several week-long hikes with different family members—not me! Because I don't enjoy hiking! 😊

We both love to read.

## **If you could share one particular piece of advice or life lesson with us, what would that be?**

John: Be intentional with your opportunities.

Rosy: I sort of model my life after Tolkien's elves where Frodo says In Lord of the Rings, "Go not to the elves for counsel, for they will both say 'yes' and 'no.'" 😊 I try to listen a whole lot more than I talk...I don't always succeed, but it's generally a better way to go!

## **How did you come to a relationship with Christ, and was it because of someone else or how did it come about?**

John: We were both raised in solid Christian homes.

Rosy: When I was 13, I met the Lord in a deeply personal way during meetings at our church. While that was a beginning, my spiritual journey has been marked by many times of renewal. It seems I can get into a spiritual rut, and then the Lord shows up in a remarkable way once again to remind me that I am his child.

## **Is there a particular book, passage, or scripture in the Bible that you draw comfort/strength from?**

Rosy: I have loved Matthew 11:28-30 for years, where Jesus says:

*"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened,  
and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me,  
for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.  
For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."*

Just the love in Jesus' heart that is revealed when he asks us to come to him, with our heavy burdens and he will give us rest has been a real encouragement through many years, and difficult times.

*Thanks, John and Rosy for that interesting interview! We are thankful that God brought you to LCF and look forward to continuing to learn to know you and your family better! ■*

## 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](mailto:secretary@lcfweb.org). Editors: Theresa Hennis, Elisabeth Yoder, Kelli Dean, and Doris Swartz  
*If you prefer that we do not use photos of you in the Connection, you may opt out by emailing us.*



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