

The LCF Connection

April 2021



What's New at Olentangy?

by Dawn Yutzy Showalter

"Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations... from everlasting to everlasting you are God." Psalm 90:1

Through the questions and concerns of early 2020, our young congregation at Olentangy needed the Lord! With the unknowns of Covid in our midst, meeting online for times of learning together, discussing Scripture, and praying for one another proved to be a precious gift of encouragement.

Church in the Grass—During the warmer summer months our group met outside under the trees at Whetstone Park or on the campus of Rosedale Bible College, often lingering after the service to eat our picnic lunches and to catch up on one another's lives. We savored those moments—there is strength and joy in being together!

First Baptism—One lovely Summer Sunday during our morning worship, we gathered around the Rosedale pond to listen to the testimony of our brother Shema and to witness his baptism. His life journey began in Rwanda and led to Columbus where, by God's grace and the love of believers, he found a church home at Olentangy.



"New" Meeting Space—Starting in the fall of 2020, a portion of our congregation began to gather again in person at our rented space on Henderson Road. This meeting place in the International Friendships (IFI) office complex had been secured in the fall of 2019, offering more space for our

Continued on page 4...

Inside this Issue

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| What's New at Olentangy? | 1 |
| Greetings from Thailand! | 1 |
| What is Prophecy? | 2 |
| Elders Update | 2 |
| Getting to Know Jeff & Jodi | 3 |
| Hoop, There It Is! | 4 |

Greetings from Thailand!

by Candice Mast

Hello to our LCF friends from the Mast family!

It's been awhile since we've visited, and I'm sure we haven't had the chance to meet all of you yet! We used to attend LCF back in the early 2000's and were commissioned by LCF as mission workers to Thailand. We've been here almost thirteen years total now, which is so hard to believe! We have tons of happy memories of small groups in many of your homes, Christmas plays, Easter egg hunts, great sermons, fellowship meals, play groups, and good conversations after church. It's been awhile, but we still think of you as one of our favorite church "homes."



Tom and Candice, Claire (18), Eliza (15), Silas (12)

It's been a strange year for you and us both, and we think of you with a lot of empathy for all you've gone through with Coronavirus being so debilitating in the States. We've had some lockdowns here in Thailand and a few periods of online school for our kids, but cases have never skyrocketed in Bangkok, and we are so thankful for that. We hope to visit the States this summer for the first time in three years. A government quarantine will be required when we return to Thailand for our next four-year term. We get some strange looks when we say

Continued on page 4...



255 US 42 NE, London, OH 43140
(740) 490-2121

LCFweb.org

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

What is Prophecy?



A Message from the Pastor

by Reuben Sairs

What is prophecy and how does it function in the church today? I am deeply skeptical of much of what is touted as prophecy, and yet I think it is a gift that the Holy Spirit gives to the church and that it is functioning all the time in a Christian fellowship.

What is it? Prophecy is simply the Holy Spirit using us to speak to one another in insightful and helpful ways. When the Holy Spirit gives us a prophetic statement for another or for ourselves, He isn't necessarily bypassing our wisdom, experience, or our various roles in the church. Why wouldn't the Holy Spirit use those things? The idea is that it is the Holy Spirit putting it all together for an occasion, and it is not only human energy at work. It comes from God for us.

People have said prophetic things to me. I sensed it, evaluated it, and was satisfied that it was what the Lord wanted me to hear at that time.

Authentic prophecy helps us to see what is in front of us. 1 Corinthians 14:3 is a go-to verse, "...the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation." A few verses earlier 1 Corinthians 14:1 prods us to seek this gift. And why not? The supply of "upbuilding, encouragement, and consolation" is rarely exhausted in congregation. We need it, and we can almost always use more.

1 Corinthians 13:9 also tells us that we prophesy "in part." Beware of a know-it-all prophet who can't be challenged. 1 Corinthians 14 says:

- "Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge." (verse 9)
- "But if anything is revealed to another who sits by, let the first keep silent." (verse 30)
- "For you can all prophesy one-by-one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged." (verse 31)

That gives us a learn-to-shut-up-and-listen-to-others-too message.

1 Thessalonians 5:20-21 tells us to not despise prophetic utterances, but to test them and "hold to what is good."

What I don't see in the New Testament is any emphasis on ecstatic states, or motor-mouthed utterances with a lot of gibberish. I don't see prophets given some kind of final authority.

Although there are a few examples (remember Agabus in Acts 11 and 21), there doesn't seem to be a special emphasis on foretelling the future. There are other prophets mentioned specifically—Philip's 4 daughters, for example. In most of the churches, prophets were never given a church office. It would appear the gift was to function in our midst, but not with a formal title or formal authority.

In the New Testament, prophetic statements function within the church world. You don't see any self-appointed prophets hurling denunciations at society at large, or pretending to give God's own opinion on political questions.

We can easily imagine how the gift of prophecy can be distorted. Declaring yourself to be a prophet is a good way to get attention for yourself, push your opinions, and find a special status, or to try to put yourself above the group somehow. Maybe that is one of the reasons it never became a church office, or was pinned down very tightly in the New Testament. Speaking for God can easily be claimed, and is probably impossible to refute—resisting the prophet would be resisting God.

My free pastoral advice is to be careful. The world is full of self-appointed prophets. Don't look for prophecy in exotic and dramatic situations and in flamboyant characters who put on a show. Look for prophecy in the person sitting next to you at church who might not even know that they have said something prophetic to you. ■

Elders Notes

by Jesse Diller

Our meeting on March 9th was via Zoom. We began by catching up with one another about recent funerals, trips, etc. Rob opened our meeting with prayer, remembering those situations.

Rob updated us with where things are with the youth group. We are thankful that God has provided some young people who have a vision to invest in the youth group. Sarah Landis and Peyton Miller are both excited about the opportunity to give interim leadership. Rob and Doris are working closely with Sarah and Peyton in this process. We would like to find a couple to serve as a sponsor couple who would be able to work with them. Continue to keep both the youth and these young leaders in your prayers.

We discussed the upcoming changes that are happening with the church Council, as Tasha steps down from her role as treasurer. We discussed the Council's nominations for her replacement. We expressed our deep appreciation to Tasha for the wonderful job she has done serving as treasurer over the past 5 years!

We spent some time planning the services coming up on Easter week. We plan to have a Maundy Thursday communion service on April 1st and are excited about the prospect of meeting in person to celebrate Easter this year! We want to do all we can to make it a wonderful celebration of Christ's resurrection. We talked about possibilities such as planning some special music, some type of a dramatic vignette, or reading, etc.

We are happy to see the numbers of Covid infections and hospitalizations going down as more people continue to get the vaccine. We are hopeful that trend will continue and look forward to things opening up and returning more towards "normal." We anticipate that some things like social distancing guidelines may be around for quite a while, but hopefully we will begin to see some changes soon.

We discussed a difficult situation that needs a lot of prayer right now. Reuben closed our time by praying about that situation, as well as for the various other things we discussed in our meeting. Our next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday evening, April 13th. ■

Getting to Know...*Jeff & Jodi Traverse*

Where are you both from, originally, and where do you call home now?

We both come from around here. Jeff is from Dublin, and Jodi is from Plain City. We now live between Plain City and London but are planning to move right into the middle of Plain City this summer.

You will be celebrating your 2nd wedding anniversary in June. Is there anything that stood out to you about your special day, something that touched you both about your wedding or a special moment you'll never forget?

While the guests were moving from the ceremony to the reception, we went downstairs with our family and bridal party and had our own little first dance.

Do you come from large or small families?

We both come from large families. Jeff is the youngest of 6. Jodi is in the younger half of 7.

Do you have a hobby you like, individually, and that you both like to do as a couple?

One thing we really enjoy doing on free evenings is online gaming with family. We also love doing puzzles together.

Do you help with any particular charities or ministry outreach, and what is it you do?

We aren't currently involved in any, but Jodi is working on getting involved with the Bridges program that helps foster youth aging out of the system.

Who or what has inspired you the most in your life and how?

There are so many people who have inspired us! The one we will highlight here is Dale Schuler. He is involved with the youth ministries at Linworth, the church Jeff grew up in, and constantly goes above and beyond to develop good mentorship relationships with the youth. He still reaches out to us from time to time just to check in and let us know he cares about us.

What is most meaningful to you in your walk with God? A certain devotion time, a special place to have quiet time, or anything in particular that helps draw you closer to Him?

One thing we have found to be really helpful is joining a small group at church. That improved not just our relationship with God, but also our connection to the church.

If you could share one piece of advice to anyone who is thinking of getting married, what would that be?

Don't expect perfection from yourself or the other person. Mistakes will be made no matter how hard you try. The beautiful thing is that grace and forgiveness will help you grow closer and strengthen your relationship in a way that "perfection" never would.

What do you look forward to doing in your future as a couple?

We hope to do some traveling and explore the world a little bit as we have opportunities. We are also hoping to be able to eventually open our home to foster youth.

Where do you both work or go to college/university?

We both work at Jodi's family's business, Gingway Products. Jeff likes to say he does metal origami since he does a lot of the cutting and bending to get the pieces ready for the welders to put together. Jodi is currently working in the office. She is also working on finishing up her AAS in Social and Human Services at Columbus State and is hoping to be done with that by the end of this year.

What is your dream career?

Jeff thinks he might already have his dream career. He had been considering pursuing a mechanical engineering degree but realized he enjoys the hands-on work more than the design work. Jodi is dreaming of being a stay-at-home foster mom and possibly working or volunteering part-time with the Bridges program.

What can we do, as a church family, to encourage you?

Something that would encourage us is seeing more people getting involved in things like small groups and helping out with volunteer positions. We didn't realize what we were missing out on until we started contributing a little more to the church. You will absolutely get more out of church if you put more into it.

What are some good things you've learned or experienced this past year?

This past year has reminded us to be extra-thankful for our good jobs and our family. One special thing we got to do this year is spend ten days with Jodi's family on a West trip they had been planning for several years.

What are some hard things you've gone through the past year?

We are still babies when it comes to the whole adulting/being married thing, so this year has been challenging in many ways without throwing a pandemic into the mix. We took on new responsibilities at church with streaming and children's ministry which stretched us a lot, especially when things didn't go according to plan. One of the hardest things we've been dealing with is trying to find purpose in the everyday routine of life since we've now crossed off most of those major "growing up" milestones. ■





Caught
in the
Act!

Hoop, There It Is!

by Doris Swartz

You may remember back in October 2019 when there were several young guys at LCF who were collecting money to purchase a basketball goal to install in the Fellowship Hall.

The money was raised, the basketball goal was ordered and delivered, and then...Covid happened (and the hoop has waited in its cardboard box for over a year).

On Wednesday, March 17th, Randy and Martie George were "caught in the act" of getting the hoop out of the box and onto the wall!

A big Thank You to Randy and Martie for doing such a nice job of putting it up, to Rob Devlin and Reid Gates for organizing the project, and to each one of you who contributed money towards it.

Now, it's time to play some basketball!!! ■



Thailand...continued

we are coming there! There is currently quite a bit of fear of traveling to America because of the virus. Many of Claire's high school friends are no longer considering going there for university. However, we are forging ahead because we miss our families a lot and want to help with Claire's transition as she heads to college this fall. She hasn't made a decision about a school yet, so your prayers for that are appreciated. We think of you guys who were LCF playmates of hers that are in the same boat this year!

As we look back on a full year of living with Coronavirus, I think there are a couple of things we've learned. I know some of you have faced painful losses during this time, and our hearts are with you. Hopefully we've all found some things to appreciate, as well.

Firstly, we've seen that God is not stopped even by a worldwide shutdown situation. We've heard so many stories about the cool opportunities that have opened up through a more flexible church model and through online Bible studies (like Bible studies in Bangladesh). Tom has been a part of an online Bible study with a Thai church throughout this time and learned to teach Bible online at Bangkok Christian International School. I was able to continue teaching Pakistani refugee kids online, even when I couldn't visit their homes anymore. There has been no slow down or shutdown of the movement of God or of his power, and I'm more thankful than ever that I serve a God who is for everyone around the world and whose plan covers us all. What an exceptional time to be a part of the world-wide kingdom of God and to see all the ways our cultures can connect to encourage faith!

Secondly, isolating has been an awesome connecting time as a family. I felt we were close before, but this has pushed us together in a new way. Sometimes it was frustrating as we were all on Zoom calls, and our house doesn't have enough rooms with doors that close! There was definitely boredom and frustration with each other. But having teens around all the time was also pretty revolutionary when they are usually busy with school and friends and pulled in different directions. Si and I got hooked on whipped coffees, we played a lot of family games, and there were a lot of group exercises going on. I wouldn't trade the time together this year for more busyness, more meetings, more work, more anything else. We have a limited amount of time to treasure our kids and teach them, so the isolation was a great reminder to invest where it's most important. We've also learned about handling disappointment, strengthening our marriage, and the value of more flexibility.

Please share with us sometime what you have learned and appreciated during this pandemic time. (Our contact info is listed in LCF's online directory.) We are hopeful that we will get to see some of you in July! ■

Olentangy...continued

developing fellowship. Virtual gatherings have run along with in-person meetings in recent months.

Early 2021 Teaching Series—Highlights of 2021 so far have included a series on some core Anabaptist teachings: Discipleship, The Community of Believers, Our Relationship with Government, Biblical Non-Violence (taught by LCF's own Reuben Sairs), and Non-Conformity. Those topics generated great discussion in break-out groups, challenging our thinking and setting the stage for our upcoming study of the book of Romans.

Name Change to OCC—During our annual business meeting in January, we affirmed changing our church name from Olentangy Mennonite Church (OMC) to Olentangy Community Church (OCC). This has been under consideration for the past year, and the change is now official. Forty people signed the OCC 2021 covenant indicating their desire to participate in the life of the church.

Leadership Transition—Coming up this summer, OCC will celebrate four years since its first Sunday gathering. Andrew Sauder, who has served faithfully as lead elder since the beginning, will pass the mantle to Dorvan Byler in July at the completion of four years. Dorvan has served alongside Andrew on the elders team.

As a young congregation, we have seen God's faithfulness in so many ways and have found him to be our dwelling place. ■

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. 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.

