

# The LCF Connection

August 2021

## A New Normal and New Future

by Youngmi Oh

Hi! We are the Oh family (Daekyun, Youngmi, and Vivi) from South Korea, who started attending LCF in 2016 with our IFI host family, Jerry and Donna Sauder. We have been watching LCF's live stream since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The pandemic has transformed nearly every aspect of our life as we know it. I wonder what "the new normal" means for you?

The past five years that we have been here in the United States have changed our lives in such a way that we could never have imagined before. That is, we became new creatures in Christ: *"The old life is gone; a new life has begun!"* (2-Corinthians 5:17) The old labels such as "atheists" no longer fit our new identities as children of God. "Living to God" has become our new normal, which calls for continual involvement in shifting the trajectory from the lateral view to the vertical.

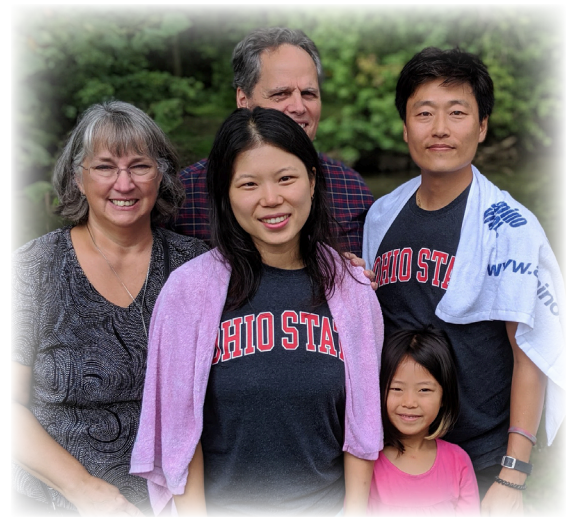
We feel so blessed that we came to know God while being a part of the LCF church family. Now that I think of our journey, it was God who sent us here, opened our hearts, and put so many Christian friends near us.

At first, Christians' selfless, God-centered, volunteering was what we found so intriguing about their faith. Even though we could not pay back what we owed as a poor Ph.D. student family, they willingly invested their time and energy for us.

And then, when going through some of our difficulties here, we could feel tremendous power in their prayers. There were church elders and friends in a small group who listened, with tearful compassion, to the struggle we were experiencing, and asked if they could pray for us (even when we did not see ourselves as Christians yet). We wept tears of gratitude, feeling warmth hand-in-hand, as our hearts gradually moved toward God, as a result of their sincere and loving prayers. We, indeed, felt that there was "something" there when we prayed. It was a unique experience for me.

*"I sought the Lord, and He answered me; He delivered me from all my fears. The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him, and He delivers them."* (Psalm 34:4,7) We tasted and saw that the Lord is good! We could see much proof that we were not abandoned by God in the suffering, feeling peace from God's word for His protection and presence. We learned that even though God does allow suffering, we are never outside God's purpose, God's provision, or God's peace. Never.

Continued on page 2...



Daekyun & Youngmi (pictured with Jerry & Donna, and Vivi) after their baptism on September 8, 2019.

Inside this Issue	
A New Normal and New Future	1
Beautiful Diversity	1
A Real Jesus Person	2
Elders Notes / Caught in the Act	2
Getting to Know Rhoda Sommers	3
Artist Spotlight: Sarah Landis	4
Bethel Camp Continues to Impact Lives	4



## Beautiful Diversity

by Jeff Gates and Doris Swartz

They came to teach the church to sing—in beautiful harmony and in various languages. LCF took on a more international flavor on Sunday, July 11, when Larissa Swartz and some of her international friends and coworkers (along with our very own Sammy Waweru and Naomi Ndungu, both from Kenya) enthusiastically led us in songs of praise to God in many different languages. It was a beautiful taste of what it may be like when we will worship God together in heaven with "the great multitude...from every nation, tribe, people and language!" (Rev. 7:9)

Larissa then shared a short update about her work with IFI (International Friendships, Inc.) in Dayton. We at LCF are thankful to be her sending church and are committed to praying for her and the ministry of IFI. Join us in praying for the many international college students whom they connect with—that would come to know Jesus as their Savior. If you'd like information about how you can be involved, contact Larissa. (Her contact info is in LCF's online directory.) ■



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.

# A Real Jesus Person



A Message  
from the Pastor  
by Reuben Sairs

*"It is no longer I that lives but  
Christ lives in me." Galatians 2.20*

We Christians are becoming Christlike. If you're a Christian, resistance is futile. Making you like Jesus is what is going to happen to you. Did you ever wonder why you continue on earth after you have given your life to Christ? Why doesn't God just beam you up? Important things need to be put in motion that will extend into eternity. The Holy Spirit is coaching you, the church is building you, and you are on your way: Christ is forming in you. 1 John 2:5-6, says it well,

*"But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked."*

Nothing shows our incapacities, and thus our need for a savior, more than matching our conduct to Jesus. However, that inability to live up to our goal is no excuse whatsoever! It is in our weakness that we grope toward the standard. Paul referred to weakness in his own body and then expanded it to the problems of being a Christian in this world, and told us what he received from the Lord, *"And He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.'*" (2 Corinthians 12:9)

Nobody likes artificial piety, or a kind of forced Christ-like character—probably more of a comic book than the real thing. "Forced" is actually going the wrong way. If a person is going to be like Jesus, he or she would have to be authentic and it would come from a character that is transforming from within.

Imagine what a real Jesus person would be like...

- They would be easy to be around, attractive.
- Their words would bring healing.
- They could see the people around them like Christ does, with deep love (not just pity or tolerance).
- Even the unlovely would be truly loved.

Sometimes as I walk through my day, I realize how far short I fall of seeing others as Jesus sees them. I'm full of judgement, superiority, anger, impatience. I might have learned to keep it to myself and act kindly, but my heart is still in a dark place.

Resistance is futile. Thank God! Mysteriously a voice rises in me. How would Jesus see that other driver, that person in Kroger, that person in the news who is clearly a blockhead—purely evil, or just simply annoying?

Outside of Christ there can be noble intentions and sterling character, but it seems that more often there is anger, force, belligerence, insults, impatience, and a very strong temptation to disregard another person's pain, issues or interests. What if I became Christ-like? What difference would it make? My work is cut out for me. ■

# Elders Notes

by Doris Swartz

When we met on July 13 we began by sharing personal concerns and prayer requests and then spending time praying for one another.

We discussed various aspects of our Sunday morning service such as whether or not to resume lifting an offering as part of our worship and if we should continue with our 10:30 start time or go back to 10:00. For now, we will continue with 10:30 for our start time and continue to provide and promote the current modes of giving that we have. However, we would like to be intentional about finding meaningful and creative ways to regularly emphasize the importance of giving to God as an act of worship.

We continued by talking about another important aspect of church life—fellowship. We are thankful to see things getting back more towards "normal" with opportunities for people to get together and connect—such as women's activities, potlucks, etc. We desire to be a church that cares well for each other, makes those who are new among us feel welcomed, and also not plan too many activities so as to allow our church family to have time to develop relationships with others who do not yet know Christ.

We talked about details concerning the upcoming baptism (August 22) and bringing members in (September 26), along with updates on the preaching class, youth group, and small groups.

Due to being without a 3rd elder and several scheduling conflicts, we decided to postpone our October elders retreat until next April.

We closed with a time of praying about the various situations and issues that we discussed. Our next meeting will be on August 10th. ■



*Caught  
in the  
Act!*

There were 2 Sundays in July when we did not have anyone to make coffee. John Shenk was caught helping out to make sure we had coffee available on both of those Sundays! Thanks, John! ■

*(If you would like to help  
make coffee, please  
contact Rhoda Sommers.)*



*A New Normal and New Future...continued*

After five years of study at OSU as a Ph.D. student, Daekyun has found a job at St. Bonaventure in Olean, New York, to work as an assistant professor in PETE (Physical Education Teacher Education). He will be starting there in mid-August. So, of course, we are sad we have to say goodbye to our favorite place and people. At the same time, however, we know that God has plans for us, plans to give us hope and a future (Jeremiah 29:11). Our goal in the new normal is to be loving Christians like we met here, becoming more like Jesus.

We will miss you, LCF family! Thank you for showing us a great example of the body of Christ. *"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven"* (Matthew 5:16). ■



# Getting to Know...Rhoda Sommers

*Interviewed by Elisabeth Yoder (who happens to be Rhoda's niece) ☺*



## **Please give us a brief background of yourself to help us know you better.**

I grew up in Plain City, Ohio, on a farm. I have two older brothers and a younger sister. My maternal grandparents lived beside us, and I was deeply influenced by my step-grandmother and her zest for life. As a child, I wanted to become a nurse educator, live in a large city, and drive an orange Pinto. None of those has happened, but I've lived a wonderful life and been incredibly blessed by all the experiences I've had.

My undergraduate degree is in elementary education, and I taught elementary and middle school before earning my graduate degrees and serving in higher education. Teaching has always felt like a gift to me because of the transactional nature of the teaching-learning process. I seldom teach now because I ended up serving as an administrator at multiple colleges and universities.

In 2019 I found a job in Springfield and moved to London so I could be closer to family. I am so happy to have the opportunity to see my mother, siblings, nieces and nephews, and great-nieces and nephews more frequently. While these relationships have always been important to me, it's so lovely being a more regular part of their lives.

**What are three words that describe the person you strive to be?** Do justly, love mercy, walk humbly—I know that's more than three! ☺

**Where do you work? What are some of the joys and challenges of your work?** I serve as dean of the School of Health, Human & Public Services at Clark State College in Springfield. While I've been an administrator in Christian higher education for many years, this is my first experience in public higher education. What I find most satisfying is that I have the opportunity to help students realize their goals and use education as a means of enhancing their lives. I work with many people who are committed to student success and work tirelessly toward this goal. I count it a privilege to lead our efforts and create a collaborative work environment.

We serve a wide variety of students at Clark State, and many of them have life experiences much different than mine. Their life circumstances often compete with their educational goals, and sometimes family members are outright hostile toward their academic pursuits. The pandemic has exacerbated the struggles. It is challenging to know how to both show compassion and yet hold students accountable for meeting expectations and remain consistent in following policies.

**What is something you enjoy doing for fun?** I enjoy knitting, reading, and gardening.

**How many countries have you traveled to? Is there one that stands out as your favorite?** I think I've been to 12 countries, but I've been to China and/or Hong Kong at least five times so that's the country I'm most familiar with and have the most memories about. During several of those trips, I had the opportunity to teach Chinese Christians involved in education. The most special experience was discussing Jesus as the master teacher with a group of students at an underground seminary. I also had the opportunity to teach instructional strategies to a group of North Korean educators when I was in Beijing. My experiences in China and India allowed me to see how culturally driven one's educational philosophy is. The country I'd most like to visit again is New Zealand. Its topography is exquisite, and I loved all the sheep and farmland on the South Island.

**What is a personal accomplishment you are proud of?** Between personal and professional travel, I've been to six of the seven continents. Current plans are to travel to Antarctica in February 2022 so I'm hoping that soon I'll be able to say I've traveled to all seven continents.

**What is a fun fact about yourself?** I go through regular cycles of wondering how I could justify the purchase of a motorcycle.

**What is a Biblical truth you wish people paid more attention to?** I wish more Christians, myself included, understood the depth of God's heart for justice, equity, and inclusion.

**What is your best piece of advice on living well?** I don't consider myself especially courageous so I often make decisions by asking myself—What will I wish I had done when I'm 80 years old and sitting in my rocking chair? What are the memories I will wish I had made? These questions help me make decisions when I feel fearful, which is often! ☺

**Is there a Biblical character you relate to? What about their story speaks to you?** I love the story of Esther. She was incredibly courageous and faithful to God's calling on her life. Her uncle, Mordecai, tells Esther, "And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?" While I'm not royalty, I've had so many opportunities to serve others through my work as an educator, and it's encouraging for me to believe that God has called me to certain roles and certain people because I am part of his plan to bless their lives.

**What is at the top of your bucket list? What about it excites you?** Currently the top of my bucket list is visiting Antarctica with my lifelong friend, Deborah. We had reservations to travel there in October 2020, but the pandemic scrapped those plans. I'm excited about seeing penguins in their natural habitat, being on my last continent, and sharing this experience with my friend. ■



## LCF Artist Spotlight: Sarah Landis

Horatio Spafford was a successful businessman in Chicago, and he and his wife Anna were actively involved in their church and in serving their community. In 1871 Horatio lost much of his business to the great Chicago fire, and it was in that same year that he also lost his youngest son to illness. While this is all very tragic and sad, it was far from the last of the Spaffords' troubles.

A couple years following the fire, after building his business back up, Horatio booked a vacation for his family: passage on the Ville du Havre across the Atlantic to support their friend Dwight L. Moody. Soon before leaving, however, he learned he would have to stay behind. He promised his family that he would catch up with them in Europe later. But this was not to be.

Several days into the journey, the Ville du Havre collided at sea with another ship and began to sink. Horatio's wife Anna gathered her four daughters close and prayed with them as their ship went down. Miraculously Anna was spared, but all of her daughters drowned.

Upon hearing the news, Horatio left on the next available ship to join his wife in England. He asked the ship's captain to inform him once they reached the spot at sea where the Ville du Havre sank. It was over this spot of the ocean that claimed his remaining children that Horatio penned these words:

*When peace like a river attendeth my way,  
When sorrow like sea billows roll,  
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,  
It is well, it is well with my soul.*

These words have been both a comfort and a bullet to me over the years. There are few songs that can cut to the depths of my soul as quickly as this one. I have sung these words in confidence with tears of joy on my cheeks, and I have doubled over in sorrow, unable to sing them in the midst of my troubles.

I long to have faith like Horatio and Anna, whose love for Jesus and lives of service were undeterred by tragedy. The light of God was shining in the midst of their darkness, and from their young adult years to their old age they served their Lord and their neighbors with the peace and love of Christ.

This painting is a simple one, but it serves as a reminder of the history behind this special hymn. It's quite haphazard and chaotic, with thick layers of paint in some sections and bare canvas in others. Broad, rough strokes of blue paint, and smooth blended sections from splattering water over the canvas. Dark, defined works, and black and white paint splattered over it all. The juxtaposition of elements, representing the contrasting tensions of faith - to bring together the rough and the smooth, light and dark, tragedy and peace, sorrow and hope. ■



*Sarah lives life vibrantly! She shares an apartment with her sister and brother, in Plain City, where she volunteers with DNA. She works as a server and musician at The Syndicate in Bellefontaine. Here at LCF she gives leadership to the youth group and leads worship. She plans to attend Ohio State this fall to pursue a degree in education. To learn more about Sarah read her interview in the October 2020 LCF Connection.*

## Bethel Camp Continues to Impact Lives



Two youth from LCF attended Bethel Camp (in Clayhole, Ky) June 21-26. It was the first time for both of them and here is what they have to say about it.

**David Stukey:** I'm so glad I was able to go to Bethel Camp this summer. I loved being there, creating a lot of new friendships, and greatly growing my faith. I had an amazing time and can't wait to go back again!

**Reid Gates:** I really enjoyed the opportunity to grow such awesome friendships with everyone at Bethel Camp, but the best part was getting to grow my faith and come closer to God. I definitely will be back!



*David (center) and Reid (to the right of him) with some of their new friends.*

Continue to pray for the ministry of Bethel Camp, the campers who attend, and the staff who serve. ■

## 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, 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.*