

The LCF Connection

April 2022

Seasons and the Hope of Easter

by Sarah Eichorn

I love this time of year when fresh life begins to transform the earth. When the dull hues give way to green grass and cheery spring flowers, and a fresh canvas of leaves on barren trees fill the earth with color once again. The singing birds join in welcoming the return of spring, and there seems to be renewed energy and vigor all around as the sun gradually starts warming the earth again.

Past and recent circumstances in our family have had me thinking lately about parallels we can draw from seasons in our lives along with the current changing of seasons. Eight years ago, we started the process of adoption. There was much excitement and anticipation as we spent the following six months completing all the necessary steps before taking our place on the waiting list for what we thought would be 18 months at the most. When the country where most of the referrals were coming from suddenly shut down to adoptions and the months of waiting stretched into years, it felt like “winter” came and settled over that part of our lives. The grueling wait drew me back to the room that would one day be our child’s nursery. There I spent hours praying, reading scripture, and dreaming of what would one day be.



Gideon & Sarah with Zaria, whom they adopted in January 2018.

Maybe an area of your life feels like it’s in a “winter” season, where the landscape of a situation looks dull and lifeless. Maybe it’s hard to have hope that “spring” will come. Perhaps just like the earth needs rest before it yields new life; maybe we, too, need a time of rest and a period of cultivating our faith and relationship with Jesus before we start seeing glimpses of “Sonshine” bringing color and new life over that area of our life. Though I didn’t enjoy the waiting at the time, I am grateful for that season of our lives, because trials give opportunity to strengthen our faith muscles and give birth to testimonies. Just like we notice the beauty of spring after a long winter, I believe our hearts can be better positioned to notice the beauty of a transformed situation after overcoming a trial as we look back and see the goodness of God in that season of our life.

It makes me reflect on the story of Easter. I can’t fathom living through the darkest day of all humanity as the Savior of the world hung lifeless on a cross, and as the intense moments of Friday turned into a silent Saturday, I wonder if they felt like all hope was forever lost. In between the horror of the crucifixion and the glory of the resurrection was a day of waiting and uncertainty of what the future held, but Sunday was coming, and Christ was at work behind the scenes. Hope dawned with the day, that Sunday morning, as the Savior of the world rose from the grave, giving meaning to life once again! Because Jesus and who He is are just as alive today as that glorious Sunday morning nearly 2,000 years ago, there is always hope in every season we find ourselves in. ■

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Showered With Love

by Katie Wenger

On Saturday, March 19th, we celebrated the imminent arrival of Jeff and Elisabeth Yoder’s baby (due May 19th). I would like to extend a huge thank you to everyone who helped make food for the event and who came and joined us in showering Jeff and Elisabeth with love and gifts.

Please keep them in your prayers as they near the baby’s due date and prepare for this transition into parenthood. ■



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

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True Satisfaction

A Message from the Pastor

by Reuben Sairs

"Our hearts (souls) are restless until they rest in you."
Augustine said that.

Blaise Pascal said,

"What else does this craving, and this helplessness, proclaim but that there was once in man a true happiness, of which all that now remains is the empty print and trace?"

This he tries in vain to fill with everything around him, seeking in things that are not there the help he cannot find in those that are, though none can help, since this infinite abyss can be filled only with an infinite and immutable object; in other words by God himself."

That has often been summarized as a God-shaped vacuum. I don't know of a Bible verse that says those things exactly, but I think it is implied throughout the Bible—a built-in emptiness in us that can only find peace in God. Psalm 42, *"As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God."*

It is human. Because that emptiness is there, people seek meaning, purpose, answers. They want to fill that space, and to understand their place in the universe. They feel empty and seek an answer. They want to identify with something larger to ennoble themselves and become what they possibly could be, or maybe, they sense, who they were meant to be.

The good news is that the hole in our heart and head can be filled. *"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled."* The bad news is that we don't always understand that the vital missing piece in our heart and head longs to be filled with righteousness (the world seen and understood and evaluated rightly, fairly, justly). In short, we long for God, but we take many wrong turns.

Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. What will satisfy the deep need of the human soul? We don't need to look far to see that people try fixes that we believers know can't work, and will disappoint.

Drug and alcohol abuse numb us, thrill us, give us an escape or delude us into thinking they will bring enlightenment or satisfaction to our souls. Sex has always seemed like a solution, a purpose, but outside its proper boundaries it can bring such pain to lives. Love of money, as Paul told Timothy, can *"pierce people through with many sorrows."*

At LCF we must remember people are seeking peace, contentment, purpose, a solution to an emptiness in their souls. They may have tried many things, and found themselves disappointed. We have something for them. Jesus said, *"I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly."* ■

Elders Notes

by Jesse Diller

Ten of us met at the home of Rob and Doris on Tuesday, March 14. It was good to be back to a full team, with the addition of our newest elder, Abraham Ndungu, and his wife Naomy, as well as our pastoral intern, Quinton. Keith led us in prayer to begin our time together.

We began our meeting with a review of our church membership sign-ups that were completed recently. We spent quite a while discussing and praying for a number of situations; both prayer requests and praise reports for current members as well as new attenders.

We spent some time talking about our online presence via the live streaming. We are very thankful for those who join us online. There are usually around 20-30 who join us for the livestream on Sunday morning, and then usually another 20-30 who watch it on YouTube during the next month. We discussed the pros and cons of livestream / YouTube vs Zoom (where we could see who is joining us). We like the ease of what we are doing currently, and realize that sometimes people just want to be anonymous. We will continue to make sure that we invite people to join us in person or connect with us in other ways.

We spent some time talking about our youth group and its leadership. We want to have our youth ministry be vibrant and effective; part of that, we feel, is good leadership. We discussed various leads and possibilities for that team, and pray that the Lord will lead us to a good solution.

We spent some time talking about logistics related to our Sunday services. We discussed questions such as:

- Do we want to keep our service start time at 10:30 or go back to 10:00 like we had before Covid?
- What are ways that we can encourage people to come into the sanctuary for the beginning of the service?
- How can we raise awareness of the act of worship through giving?

We spent a little time planning our next few scheduled meetings, as well as our Elders' Retreat, which will be held at the Procter Center April 8-9. Reuben closed our time by praying about the various situations and issues that we discussed. ■

Council Update

by Jim Jones

The Council met via phone on Tuesday, March 22nd.

Sarah set up a Venmo profile as an additional payment option for members buying coffee, giving special gifts and tithes. It has a handy memo field to specify what the transaction is for (coffee, special donation or tithe).

Jesse Diller is ordering some parts for our copier to meet its routine service needs. His hands-on approach is a big cost saver and will extend the life of our copier.

The pastoral agreements were reviewed for Rob and Reuben. This included mileage rates and continuing education amounts budgeted and accumulated.

The council unanimously approved Doris to receive reimbursement for her travel meals while accompanying Rob for pastoral ministry to include conferences and conference fees. They are truly a team as she continues to complement Rob's ministry.

The LCF Child Protection Policy and Procedures was reviewed to ensure we are meeting the requirements for our insurance liability policy. ■

Getting to Know...Rich & Linda Pratt

Interviewed by Elisabeth Yoder



We would love to hear a bit about your background and how you came together.

We are Linda and Rich Pratt. We have been coming to LCF for about 9 months. We had been searching for a church for several months and Rich drove by LCF and suggested that we visit. From the first time we came we felt welcome. Each person that spoke to us was kind and friendly and seemed to be glad to meet us. From that day on we felt that God had sent us here, and we were glad to call LCF our church home.

Rich and I met back in 2006 and started dating. We dated for about a year when Rich asked me to marry him. We had both been single for some time, and were so happy that God had brought us together. We were married in July of 2008. I was a teacher and Rich worked with granite. We love spending time together and working on our home. We moved to London 5 years ago from the west side of Columbus, and love living in the country.

If asked to describe yourself in three words, what words would you choose?

Linda: Three words to describe me would be: loyal, accepting and outgoing. I love meeting people and hearing their stories.

Rich: I am helpful, grateful and a "MacGyver." I love a challenge and can usually come up with a solution to any difficult task.

Are there certain events or time periods of your life that were especially formative to becoming who you are today? If so, how did they impact you and your walk with God?

Linda: Growing up in a Christian family, Jesus was always an important part of our family. My mom, dad and grandmother were wonderful examples to my brothers and myself. We actually moved across the street from our church in Grove City so that my Dad would not be late for service. He loved being there early so that he could greet everyone as they came in. I sang with mom and dad in church from the time I was about 5 years old. We had no accompaniment but just sang Acapella for many years. I was so small that my uncle built a box for me to stand on to see over the podium. I have sung in church all of my life, and it is my passion to sing for God.

Rich: I think everything happens for a reason. Every event in my life, good and bad, has shaped who I am today. I worked hard all my life and in 2014, injured my back. I could no longer work at my job and visited several doctors. After several attempts to diminish the pain and not finding anything that worked, I found a doctor who could help and began a series of back surgeries. The last surgery enabled me to be able to do a few things I was not able to do before it. This last surgery was such a blessing from God, as no one else had given me much hope.

What are a few things you each appreciate about the other?

Linda: One of the things I love about Rich is that he has a huge heart and would do anything in his power to help those who need him. He can create and fix anything. If he doesn't know how to, he will search it out and find the steps to complete the task. He loves me unconditionally. I am so proud of his new hobby/work. He is limited physically as to what he can do but he has turned his limitations into a wonderful expression of his creativity and skills. Last fall he became interested in burning images into wood. He can take an image or saying and burn it into a plaque or piece of art by putting the image or words on the computer and creating a template, which a machine uses to burn it into a piece of wood. They are truly beautiful and creative. Pictured on the right are several of the projects he has made. He is hoping to turn his pieces into a business of custom pieces.

Rich: I am grateful for Linda and everything she does for me. Some days I am still in pain and it is difficult to tolerate. Linda is sensitive to it and can tell when I am having a rough day, although I try not to complain.

What are some things you are passionate about?

Linda: I love singing from my heart. My music is a gift from God, and I promised Him a long time ago that I would never turn down an opportunity to sing for His glory. We are both passionate about our love for God and our family. We pray together and remind ourselves every day how blessed we are and that our blessings come from God.

Is there a particular passage of the Bible or Biblical character that are especially meaningful to you?

Linda: My favorite passage in the bible is Philippians 4:6 & 7. "Don't worry about anything, instead pray about everything. Tell God what you need and thank Him for what He has done. Then you will experience God's peace." I am sometimes a worrier, and this verse reminds me that everything is in God's hands, and He doesn't want us to worry.

Rich: My favorite bible character is Job, and I aspire to be like him. He was given many trials and troubles in his life, but through all of them he never lost his love for God. Job reminds me that no matter what I face in this life, God is with me through it all. I try to make the best of each situation and not let anything hold me back.

If money weren't an issue, what hobbies or interests would you love to pursue?

Linda: If money were not an object, I would love to travel and spend time with Rich relaxing and enjoying new places.

Rich: I would love to teach others to do electrical and wood working. Kids today do not get that kind of training and thus, become adults who cannot repair anything at home and end up having to pay someone else to do simple tasks.

What is an interesting "fun fact" about yourself?

Linda: A fun fact about me is that I used to play softball four nights a week and love the sport. I also love Buckeye Football. I always tear up the first game of the season when they come out of the tunnel at the Shoe.

Rich: I love to have fun and make others laugh. I am light-hearted and funny. I love to work with my hands and step back and see the results.

What is something you each enjoy about being part of our community at LCF?

Linda: I love singing with the worship team and feeling like I am contributing to the service.

Rich: I love the potlucks and ushering, and meeting new people.

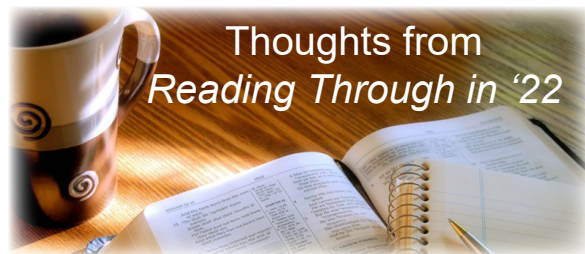
We are so happy that God led us to LCF. We have enjoyed getting to know each one we've met. LCF has been so warm and welcoming we have felt at home from the first service we have attended. We would like to thank all of the congregation at LCF for making us feel so welcome and valued. ■



Growing in God's Word

by Pam Stanforth

Thank you to our pastors at LCF for inviting and challenging us to read God's Word, and for preaching through it as we read along throughout the year. What a great idea! I hope you are enjoying it as much as I am! Here we are in April already! My guess is that many of us may be struggling to keep up.



Like most New Year's resolutions that we make, we seem to lose initiative as the months progress. Our commitment to reading through the Bible in a year can start out with vitality and determination but life's busyness and challenges interrupt our best-laid plans and schedules. If and when we miss a few days we may become discouraged as we try to catch up. Or we may feel overwhelmed with the task and begin to lose desire to keep up. If you are struggling, know that it is OK!

Don't be discouraged or feel like you have to go back and read everything you missed. Just find today's date and start reading again. The true intent of this challenge is that each of us will personally develop this life-giving habit of spending time regularly in God's Word—learning to enjoy reading it, hearing God speak to us through it, ingesting God's wisdom from it, inviting His Kingdom to come and Him to transform us through it.

Sometimes, though, the things we read in scripture can be hard to understand, and it can be confusing how things fit together. We must rely foremost on the Holy Spirit, asking him to give us wisdom and insight as we read and study. I have found that Bible study tools can also be a big help! Like a well-stocked garage for the carpenter or auto mechanic, having the right tools is so helpful for getting the job done well. The work is much harder to do, if not impossible, without the correct tools.



The bookmarks that LCF provided are a great tool to help guide us, remind us, and "keep us on the same page." They are a tool that will keep us on track so that we can reach our goal. (If you don't have one you can pick one up at church or print one from our website.)

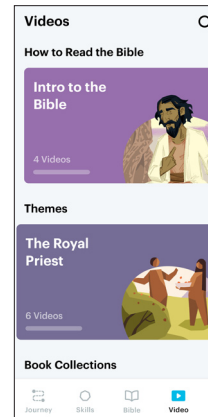
Allow me to introduce another tool that I've recently discovered, which has been so helpful for me. I think Rob mentioned it in a sermon so perhaps some of you may already be aware of it and using it. I just want to take this opportunity to make sure that all of you are aware of it, since this tool has literally changed my daily devotion time. I have a difficult time ending my Bible time and often realize that much of my morning has passed, and I am still engrossed in God's Word!

Before I share this tool, I remind you that, as with any tool, we must be diligent to take time to carefully research and evaluate any tool. I encourage you to do as I did, and read about it, check out the lives of the people who created the tool, testimonies of those who use it, etc. My husband says that Craftsman tools are best because of the guarantee that comes with the tool. I look at this tool somewhat like a Craftsman. I hope you will find the same benefits from it as I have.

Bibleproject.com is a free, non-profit organization that currently has 140 videos, 150 podcasts in (13) different languages, as well as (68) YouTube videos. Their stated goal is that: "We hope to help you to read the Bible with heart (and not lose your head)." Their animation studio has lots of excellent short-form fully-animated videos that help to make the biblical story accessible to everyone, everywhere. They are tailored in short bursts of time to make it easily digestible, evidenced by more than 150 million views. They have an excellent downloadable devotional with free online modules for busy moms called, #MomCon. Their study guides are based on historical content and context, which is so important. The classroom site is excellent, and they offer graduate-level Bible classes.

I have incorporated their animated overview into my daily devotion time (they have one for each book of the Bible), and I view one prior to reading a chapter or book. It has greatly helped me to have a more clear understanding of the book, its historical setting, and the overall message and context. The Bible Books animations hold my interest and are excellent tools for my grandkids, as well. The classroom portion is one of my favorite tools!

Remember, this is just one tool. There are many others that you may choose to use to help you study and better understand God's Word. I would encourage you to at least check this one out and consider it. It's one I highly recommend! You may remember the old TV commercial for potato chips that said, "I bet you can't eat just one." I feel the same way about the Bibleproject animated videos! I bet you won't be able to stop with just one! ☺



Enjoy growing in Christ and in the knowledge of His Word! It is always time well-spent! ■

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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, 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.