

The LCF Connection

May 2022



Amazed by Antarctica

by Rhoda Sommers

"Antarctica is otherworldly, like nothing I've ever seen before. Stark, cold, beautiful desolation." — Mark Hoppus

While I had been to six of the seven continents and seen many beautiful places, I wasn't prepared for the exquisiteness of Antarctica. No words or pictures will ever do justice to its majesty. The variety of wildlife that calls Antarctica home and thrives there is truly amazing.

I was gone for 15 days, and my trip also included time in Argentina. From Ohio, it takes close to two days to arrive in Ushuaia, Argentina, the southernmost city in the world. From Ushuaia, we took a small cruise ship across the Drake Passage to the Antarctica Peninsula. Ship captains allot two days to cross the Drake Passage, which is considered the

roughest water on earth. This is the place where the Atlantic, Pacific, and Southern Oceans meet. The Antarctic Circumpolar Current circles Antarctica, helps keep it cold, and there is nothing but open water, so this current is incredibly strong. In the Drake Passage, we experienced waves that were 16 feet high, and the water slammed against our outside cabin doors on the fourth deck of the ship.

The Antarctic shoreline we encountered either has very rocky beaches or mountains and glaciers down to the water line. One of the glaciers we saw is 200 feet high. We used zodiacs (inflatable boats) to travel from the ship to the shore as well as when exploring the different bays. As much as I enjoyed being on shore and hiking, my favorite thing to do was travel in a zodiac. We would sail around huge icebergs, watch penguins swimming beside us, and even met up with a Humpback whale swimming around the bay.



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Mother's Day Reflections

by Lisa Miller

This year Mother's Day will be hard for me and my family. My mother passed away last month; we will be missing her sorely. Thank you, my church family, for your love and prayers and support during that difficult time.

I expect that Mother's Day will be hard for some of the rest of you, too, for various reasons. My prayers are with you, as well. May the peace that passes all understanding guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus!

Shortly after my mom passed away, I jotted down some of my favorite memories of her in the form of a "Top 10" list as my tribute to her.

Top 10 things I remember about my mom:

1. The birdwatching. And bird listening. So many birds I could identify before I ever left home.
2. The flowers. Petunias and geraniums always. One year she gave me a corner of the garden for my very own flower garden and taught me how to turn the soil and plant and water and weed and deadhead.
3. The spiritual guidance. When trying to make the right choices in life, she taught me to pray for wisdom.



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

Elders Retreat

by Rob and Doris Swartz

We met at the Procter Center (about 20 minutes south of London on Rt. 38) on April 8-9. Due to Covid-19, we had not had a retreat for several years, so it was special to have this extended time together. We were thankful to have a full elders team, along with our overseer and his wife, Roger and Sharon Hazen, and our pastoral intern, Quinton Miller, there.

We arrived at various times on Friday afternoon. After dinner we spent the rest of the evening singing together, sharing personal updates and prayer requests, and praying for each other. We are very thankful for each person on this team—the unique gifts and perspective they bring and their heart for God and others.

On Saturday we began by looking at 1 Peter 5 and the challenge for us to shepherd the flock that is under our care at LCF, willingly and eagerly, while setting an example. Several years ago we came up with 5 points that help to describe who we are at LCF. We spent time talking about each area—discussing how we are doing, where we need improvement, and what adjustments can be made. Here are some of the take-aways from our discussions. As always, we invite any thought or feedback you have.



JESUS at the Center—Believe in Him

At the very core of everything we do is Jesus! We want it to be clear that He is at the very center, at all times. Everything else flows from that.

Real Fellowship—Live Him

We talked about the importance of being well-connected with each other and having a sense of true community as the body of Christ. We have been hearing that this is an area we are struggling with. Our hearts are saddened when we learn of those among us who are not feeling connected or of others who have left because they did not feel cared for. We recognize that this is something that all of us, both the leadership and the congregation, need to work at.

Some of the challenges we feel have contributed to this include:

- not enough time together (other than on Sunday mornings)
- the diversity among us in so many ways, but especially geographically
- Covid-19 and the many other related factors these past few years

We talked about some possible things we can do to try to encourage more and better connection.

Some of those included:

- having regular fellowship meals
- using round tables instead of the long ones
- having “brown bag Sundays” at a local park (or just in LCF’s back yard) after church
- having a designated host family on Sunday who is prepared to invite guests to their house for lunch (and if there are no guests, to invite someone from church)
- planning more mens and ladies activities, church socials, etc.

We will see which of those ideas gain traction. We would love to hear your suggestions as well! Feel free to contact anyone on the elders team to share your thoughts.

“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”

Hebrews 10:24-25

We took turns reading through a list of “One Another” scriptures and being reminded of how God desires for us, as a church family, to interact with one another: love, be devoted to, forgive, greet with a holy kiss, live in harmony with, accept, bear with, admonish, encourage, have fellowship with, and more! We will continue to think and talk about this as we ask God to show us how to encourage better connection at LCF.

True Discipleship—Follow Him

Some encouraging ways we see discipleship happening at LCF include the young men who have been preaching and the Bible reading plan we are doing together (and preaching from) this year.

Rich Worship—Worship Him

We are very thankful for the new people that God continues to provide to help out with worship and in the sound booth. Currently, Rob is giving interim leadership to the worship team, along with Jesse and Sammy, who help provide expertise with the many technical pieces. Please be praying that God will provide a passionate and organized person to lead the worship team, do the scheduling, etc.

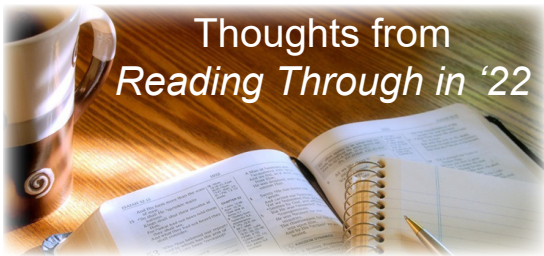
Inviting Witness—Share Him

We seem to be living in an era when there is a lack of spiritual hunger for God—both inside the church at large and in the general culture.

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Trusting God Through the Seasons

by Lucy Elfrink



Thoughts from
Reading Through in '22

I have tried several times to read through the Bible and most of the time I have failed. I found myself reading regularly and then I miss one day and get behind. Then, I'd miss another, and before I would know it, I would be a week behind, and then get discouraged and eventually give up. This time I am so happy to be continuing with my plan to read through the Bible! I appreciated the way Rob encouraged us to keep reading along with the plan even if you miss a day or two. I'm still a work in progress

and don't always meet my goals; but it has been great motivation for me to stick with it, knowing that if I miss a day I don't have to catch up before continuing on. It's nice to have the bookmark so that I can easily see where I missed. When I find time later, I try to go back and read the days I missed.

Our family began this new year by meditating on Psalm 1:1-3. Verse 3 really caught my attention. It says, *"He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers."* During Derek's spring break in March we took a vacation to Tennessee. Whenever we are in that area, we like to drive to Clingmans Dome at the top of the mountain, where you can see for many miles. The view is breathtaking! Unfortunately, this time, a portion of the road that goes to the peak was closed, so we were not able to go up there. Instead, we stopped at the borderline of North Carolina and Tennessee and saw an awesome view of a beautiful town below. As I stood there and looked, there were so many thoughts going through my mind related to what I've been reading in God's Word.

God reminded me about what I was reading in the book of Luke, where Jesus was telling his disciples how to know and to interpret the times. As I was looking at God's creation, I saw all of the trees out without any leaves, and was reminded of the many other things I see in life that look very dead and dry. Back in Kenya, where I grew up, we don't have seasons like we do here. If I sent this picture of a dry tree to them, they would think that it's dead and would not believe that it would bud and get new leaves.



As I continued thinking, I was reminded that it is spring. Very soon those dry looking trees would be clothed with fresh, new leaves and beautiful flower blossoms! It is another new season! I could hear God speaking so clearly to me about the seasons that we all go through. There are times when we look and feel so dry. Situations that make us wonder if God is really listening to us. We all go through those tough times, as individuals, as a family, a church, or a nation, when everything looks dead and we wonder what in the world is going on. It feels like everything is going wrong and the more we pray, the more things look like they're falling apart. But God reminded me that it's just a "season." Seasons don't last forever. They come and go. Before too long, things will be different. In spite of the things that may look dark and ugly, there is unique beauty and benefits to each season.

As I write this, I feel like God is continuing to encourage me that no matter what season of life I am going through, to remember that it will not last forever. He wants me to trust him and look for the beauty in whatever season we may be in. We can discover that beauty and purpose as we spend time in prayer, praising God, and reading His Word. As we wait, we can rest assured that another season will spring forth! With springtime we enjoy the beautiful trees and flowers and all the wonderful smells. We will spend more time outside taking walks, seeing and smelling the flowers, and listening to the birds sing. But, be reminded, spring will not last forever, either! Before we know it, the leaves will turn beautiful colors and the temperatures will get cooler. The leaves will once again fall off and the trees will look dead again.

I encourage you to think about what season you are in. It may be a season where you feel completely dead and dry and can't seem to see any beauty at all; or perhaps it's full of life and flowers—beautiful things that are easy to see. Regardless of the season, be reminded that it is a God-given season. It comes with its own beauty waiting for you to discover and enjoy...while it lasts. After that season is over for you, perhaps you will have the opportunity to encourage someone else who is struggling through a similar season.



We read in Ezekiel 37:1-10 about Ezekiel being taken to a valley full of dry bones and he was asked if those bones could live again. His answer was, *"Oh Sovereign Lord, only you know."* Then he was asked to prophesy to those dry bones, and one-by-one, every bone was joined together, exactly in the place where it belonged! Whether it's trees or bones—this is the hope we need to be reminded of.

Lord, you know what season I am in right now. I know that you alone can bring life once again to things that appear dead. Help me to trust you in the process no matter how things may look or feel right now. Thank you for your reminder in Isaiah 43:2 that, *"When you pass through the waters, I will be with you, and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze."* Thank you that regardless of what season I am in, that you are with me and that I can trust you with the process and can know that you bring dead things to life! ■



Antarctica...continued

Icebergs “calve” from glaciers and must be at least 16 feet across to be considered an iceberg. Only 10% of an iceberg is above the water which is one of the reasons they are so dangerous. They also flip over in the water. Blue icebergs means the air has been squeezed out of the ice, and these are considered pure glacial ice. We saw seals napping on top of smaller icebergs.



We encountered three different kinds of penguins: Adéle, Chinstrap, and Gentoo (pictured on the left). We visited a number of Gentoo rookeries and saw penguins almost done molting for the season. Penguins lose all of their feathers at once, and it takes Gentoo penguins 25 days to complete the molting process. During this time they need to stay on shore which means they can’t eat anything since they only feed when they are in the water.

Antarctica is breathtaking and rugged. Humans have “conquered” and altered so much of God’s beautiful creation, but Antarctica felt pristine by comparison. ■

We Thank God for You!

- For our physical mothers and spiritual mothers
- For new mothers, seasoned mothers, and grandmothers
- Mothers who are here with us and mothers who have passed
- For those who long to be mothers but have not been able to
- For mothers of young children, ones who are busy with school-age children, those who are struggling with teenagers, or are learning how to parent young adult children
- For those who are dealing with pain/abuse from their mothers
- Mothers missing their children who are far away—physically and/or spiritually
- For foster mothers, “adopted” mothers, and all who love & care
- For each woman who serves and nurtures here at LCF—teaching Sunday School, working in the nursery, caring for/making meals for those in need, leading us in worship, and giving of themselves in many other ways—**We love you and thank God for each one of you!!** ■

Happy Mother’s Day!



Mother’s Day...continued

4. The singing. Around the house, in the garden, in the kitchen. Or at a church event. She would sing high tenor, I would sing soprano, Carol alto, and Dad would sing either tenor or bass, depending on what mood struck him.
5. The quiet talks, and the way she always drew you out, asking questions, really interested.
6. Sometimes she would laugh so hard that her whole body would shake.
7. The butterscotch pudding she would make when I came home, because she knew I liked it.
8. The way she taught me to make a pie crust. I can still see her fingers crimping the scallops around the edges. There was arthritis in some of her fingers. But not anymore!
9. The way she always asked about our pets, even though she didn’t think much of dogs, or cats, or pets of any kind, really.
10. Her never-ending love for me. That I could always count on. ■

Elders Retreat...continued

It can be discouraging to see. We want to be faithful to keep preaching the Word, praying, and trusting God to do the work in people’s hearts. Vicki (with help from Thomas at RBC) made a great 10-minute video that was shared at Pastors Conference that talks about the importance of sharing God’s love with people where they are, in an inviting way. We will plan to show it at LCF during an upcoming Sunday morning when we have a message along the theme of outreach.

Persistent Prayer—Seek Him

We would like to work at expanding our Sunday morning prayer time to include regular prayers of general confession, thanksgiving, times of silent prayer, prayers for leaders, current events, healing, restoration, and salvation. We want to find ways to pray more specifically and personally as a church body for needs that are shared among us.

We closed our time together by praying through the LCF directory as God guided us, especially remembering the people and situations that were part of our discussions. ■



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.