

The LCF Connection

July 2022

Those Who Stayed and We Who Left

by Phyllis Swartz

I stepped outside Amsterdam Centraal to find my seatmate on the train had told the truth. "Look out for the bikes," she told me. "In Amsterdam, they rule. And they'll run you down." The streets were full of bikes. And in triple-level racks, rows of bikes waited for more riders.



After escaping a few near hits as we dodged trams and cars and motorcycles, but mostly bikes, we were glad to check into our hotel. Until we looked out the window.

Just a few yards away was a train, on the other side of the tracks boats carried cargo, and just beyond the river, people swung over the edge of a skyscraper on the highest swing in Europe, Amsterdam with all its nightlife at their feet.



But the next morning, we found a quiet place.

On a crowded canal street, we found the nondescript door of Doopsgezind Amsterdam, a Mennonite church that has been meeting in their building for 400 years. For many of these years, they were a "hidden" church, tolerated as long as no steeples or signs marked their presence.



I can't understand Dutch. But during the service, I understood plenty—why heads bowed and faces lifted, why we stood to hear scripture, and why they baptized two—one young and one old. I listened to tunes I knew with words I didn't, except that the English for some songs kept coming to me.

One song I had never heard. But I used Google translate to read its lyrics in the order of service:
What can harm us? Whatever we suffer, You hold us by the hand.

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Internship Reflections

by Quinton Miller

I am so grateful for the time that I was able to spend at LCF over the last nine months serving as an intern. I will definitely look back on my time with you all as a time of tremendous learning and growth for myself.



One of the biggest lessons I think that God has been teaching me a lot over the course of the past year is that there is no example of a truly perfect love outside of the life of Jesus and his cross. It was last in August 2021, about a month before my internship began, that I was asking God to show me that he actually loves me deeply. This is obviously something that is foundational to our belief system as Christians, but I was really struggling to feel that love from God.

God definitely showed me that he loved me, but the process didn't happen in the ways that I thought it would, and I'm very thankful for that. It came primarily through two things:

1. Studying the Scriptures while intentionally looking for the love of God. I very quickly realized that my cry to God was, while completely authentic, not very developed. If I couldn't read about the provision of God for his creation and the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and see how deep his love is for broken sinners like me, then I was feeling entitled to things that aren't essential to the love of God.
2. The second way God showed me his love was through you as a church family, as well as my fellow students at Rosedale Bible College. The way that you accepted me into

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We All Need Love

A Message from the Pastor

by Rob Swartz

"We didn't feel loved and cared for at LCF." When I heard these words it made me sad. Yes, I bounced through some other emotions as well, but I primarily felt sad. We are all looking for a place to belong; a place to be a part, a place to be loved. Some have

had the good fortune to experience this in their family, with a group of friends, or other connections. Others have struggled to find their place in life. My hope is always that people will find a place in the church of Jesus Christ.

One of the beautiful things about the church is that Jesus connects us together as brothers and sisters in him. It's an outcome of believing. We have been adopted into the family of God, and the Holy Spirit sets about making us one. This is a beautiful, but flawed process. I know many people, and I'm sure you do, as well, who have experienced tremendous hurt instead of love in the church. It has driven a great number of people away and convinced them that the church is not a place of love. They didn't see it. They didn't feel it. They didn't find a place to belong.

So, what do we do about it? We can't always fix it, and it isn't always our fault, but how can we do our part in loving people well? Sometimes I feel like I'm always getting it wrong, and often we do. We need help, and we have that help in Jesus and the work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus teaches us and shows us how to do it. We can love well because he first loved us. The more we know his love, the more his love flows out of us.

You may think this silly, but people can see it just by observing you—even from a distance. We were talking with a neighbor this week who commented on a couple walking through our neighborhood. "I see the love of Christ in them." She had never met them. She didn't know them. But she could see it. And she was right.

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."
John 13:34-35

A family who attends LCF mentioned how one of our ushers greeted them with a smile and showed interest in them. They came back the next Sunday and that usher remembered their names and once again engaged them in conversation. It may seem small but it mattered. I have talked with many friends over the years in the process of trying to find a church and, while theology is crucial, a primary reason they give for choosing a church is whether they are noticed; someone talks to them, someone sees them, someone connects, someone makes a place for them.

There are many forces being exerted on the church to divide, to form little clusters, to separate, to look suspiciously at everyone. We can become inward focused, building our own little world that meets our needs and ignoring the needs around us. We will need to intentionally fight against those forces. We serve a Savior who showed us how to love unconditionally. He noticed the people no one else noticed. He cared for people who rejected him and ultimately killed him on a cross. This unconditional love is what the world desperately needs. You and I have experienced this love, and we have the opportunity to pour it into the lives of all kinds of people around us. The church, of all places, should be the place where this unconditional love is experienced. Thus, we should all be sad when it isn't experienced—either by unbelievers or believers. One of my Japanese friends asked me this week, "Why are some people not friendly?" Why indeed, I wonder?

Yet, I admit, this is hard to do! It doesn't come naturally. It always costs something. And then, there are so many people to love! Not any one of us can love them all. But together, I think we can do pretty well. My prayer is that everyone who comes to our church or rubs shoulders with us in the world will know that God is love...because of us. Will we keep our eyes up and notice the foreigner, the hurting, the lost, the broken, the lonely, the one who simply needs a friend...a place? All of us need to be loved. Will we be the person to see and to make a place for others? ■

Elders Notes

by Rob & Doris Swartz

We met on Monday, June 13th, and began by asking God to give us wisdom and guide our meeting. Rob shared a Congregational Care Proposal based on the lengthy discussion we had at our last meeting about how to care well for those in our congregation. It's a call to encourage and strengthen current connection opportunities that we already provide at LCF. The more ways that people are involved and connected with the church body (through attendance on Sunday morning, at various events, etc.) and with each other (through small groups, prayer times, serving on ministry teams, etc.) the better opportunity people will have to care for one another & be cared for.

Following up from our retreat in April, Reuben shared the guidelines and suggestions that he put together to share with our moderators to assist them as they think about and plan out the Sunday morning prayer time. He will add a few more notes based on our discussion and then will share the information with them.

Vicki shared the notes that she put together to help give some thought and organization to our monthly giving focus. We want this first Sunday of each month to be a reminder that our giving is worship and to be thankful for all God has given to us. We desire good accountability and for people to know the difference their giving makes. Vicki will add a few more notes based on our discussion and then will share it out with the moderators. Rob and Vicki will work together to provide options for moderators to highlight each month.

Jeff Gates has found LCF to be an inviting place to people of all backgrounds and abilities, as well as a place that encourages people to use their gifts and abilities. He sent the elders several ideas for us to consider that he thought might fit well with LCF. We like his ideas and are excited about the possibilities! We will talk with him further about implementing some of these.

Everence would like to know if we would be interested in having them come share about their services or host a seminar on various topics. We are not sure if that is something our people would have interest in or not. We will start by having an article in the LCF Connection about Everence - who they are and what they offer. If anyone is interested in learning more, or having us host a seminar, they can contact Lara Swain, who serves as LCF's Everence representative.

Our LCF Constitution is very outdated and has been in need of revision for a while. Keith and Jesse have agreed to give leadership to working on it. Some progress had been made, but we hope to revive the process. We would like to have a simple, functioning constitution in place that accurately reflects our organization and covers us well legally. Keith will work at getting the ball rolling again.

Reuben closed our time by praying about the various situations and issues that we discussed. Due to the upcoming busyness and travel of summer schedules we will not meet in July. Our next meeting will be on Wednesday, August 3rd, at 7 p.m. at the Swartz home. As always, our elders team invites your input of any of these things or other questions or comments you may have. ■



Getting to Know...Megan McGaffey

Interviewed by Elisabeth Yoder

Help us get to know you better! We'd love a brief background of you and your life thus far.

I grew up in the small town of Kalona, Iowa, as a middle-child between two other girls. I graduated from Pathway Christian School and was involved in anything I could get my hands on.

After graduating from high school, I attended Rosedale Bible College in 2017/2018, and did the Bridge Program through Rosedale in 2018/2019. From there, I participated in the Rosedale International REACH program and was on Team Israel. Unfortunately, we were sent home early in March 2020 due to Covid-19. The following year

I went back to Rosedale Bible College to graduate and then ended up officially moving to Ohio in June of 2021, which brought me to where I am now.

Has there been an event or a season in your life that was especially impactful for you? How did it influence you and your outlook on life?

I would probably have to say that my time at Rosedale, as spread-out as it was, impacted my life the most. It was during my time at RBC that I learned the most about God and myself; a lot of personal and spiritual growth. My time at RBC helped me to value and understand the importance of Christian community, discipleship, and friendship.

What do you enjoy about being part of our community at LCF?

I have been so grateful for the way I was immediately welcomed into the LCF family and then supported through the recovery from my surgery.

What three words describe the person you aspire to be?

Kind, generous, and compassionate.

What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

I enjoy doing many things, but you'll most often find me spending time with my friends. I also really enjoy playing volleyball, playing the piano, and a random assortment of other activities.

What is an experience you would love to have if money were not an issue?

I would love to travel all over the world, meet new people, and try all the foods.

Do you have a skill, accomplishment, or trait that you're particularly proud of?

Well, I was asked to be the new Program Director for Choral Camp... does that count? ☺

What are some of your passions? How do you enjoy engaging with those passions?

I am very passionate about people, worship, and spreading the love of Jesus. I really enjoy leading worship and just being involved with music ministry. I also just love to spend time with people in all different kinds of capacities.

What are some long-term goals you hope to achieve?

I hope to become an Athletic Trainer, and maybe even a Physical Therapist. I'd like to do quite a bit of traveling and maybe even live overseas for some time, probably doing some kind of medical missions.

What do you consider to be the most interesting thing about yourself?

I lived in Nazareth, Israel, for almost 4 months with REACH. I spent time volunteering in the English Hospital and the Nazareth Village, and learned some Arabic while there. Also, I can't whistle.

What's something you're excited about now?

I have several things: I am excited for my sister's wedding in June, Choral Camp in July, and then going back to school in August.

How can we be praying for you?

I would appreciate your prayers as I help to give leadership at Choral Camp July 11-22. Pray also for wisdom in making decisions about school this fall.

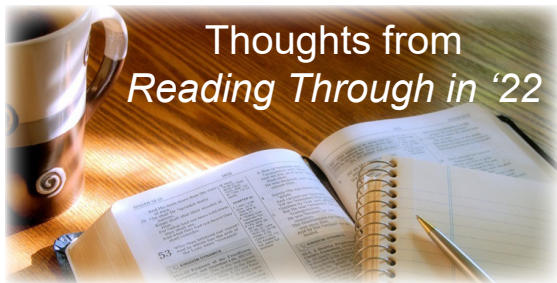
And finally, if you could choose a personal theme song to play when you enter a room, what would it be?

Crowded Table by The Highwomen

Thanks, Megan, for helping us to learn to know you better! We thank God for bringing you to be a part of our LCF church family and look forward to learning to know you better! ■



Pictured above: Megan (on the right) at her sister's wedding on June 25th. Left: younger sister Danae and her boyfriend Graham. Center: older sister, Annette and her husband Andrew.



Thoughts from Reading Through in '22

It's Never Too Late to Start

by Martie George

LCF's Read Through in '22 is a great shared project. Our congregation is blessed to have this opportunity to join a collective goal of reading and learning from God's Word together. It is quite an achievement to read through the Bible—especially in one year—but that's not the important part. The real goal, of course, is to get in and stay in the Word of God for our own personal growth and relationship with God. It is what God uses to teach, strengthen, and encourage us.



I love God's Word! It is through God's Word that we learn of God's character, his great love for us, and the Good News of salvation. I enjoy reading the Bible, and the times when I don't, I pray that God would give me a renewed love for his Word.

When I read the Bible, I like to use several versions. I enjoy reading some books using the King James Version. For other books or sections of scripture, I like to read from different versions for ease of reading and understanding. I like to turn pages of a paper Bible, but I have two apps that I enjoy using, as well. I don't have an Amplified Bible, so I have an app for that. I also use the Bible Hub app, which has many helpful features. I like using the commentary feature when I am studying.

This year is half-way over and so is the journey to Read Through in '22. For those who started in January, you are half-way through! However, if you are like me and have not yet joined in with the wonderful communal effort, I encourage us to remember that it's never too late to start and that we can join in, even now, at any level that we can. I am adding the New Testament, Psalms, Proverbs portion of Read Through in '22 to my personal reading. Whether or not you choose to participate in this specific plan, I know from experience, that we will certainly be blessed by any time that we spend reading God's Word. ■

Just a reminder that whether or not you are "Reading Through" we would love to hear your thoughts about God's Word—how God is using it to speak to you and things that you find helpful. If you would like to share with us, please contact Doris Swartz.

Congratulations to Another LCF Graduate!



Jodi Traverse

After taking college classes for the past 5 years, I graduated from Columbus State Community College with an Associate of Applied Science in Social and Human Services. My passion is helping foster children aging out of the system, so I'm hoping to find a way to get involved in that whether through a job or volunteer work.

We apologize that we missed including Jodi in the June LCF Connection along with the other LCF graduates. Hopefully we didn't miss anyone else! If we did, please let us know. ■

Internship...continued

your church body and allowed me to work with the children and get to know the congregation over time was such a blessing to me. Through these experiences, I got to watch and work with people who were pouring their lives into others and sharing the love that God has shown them.

As I transition to being back at home, I am currently working at a small-town golf course and getting back into life in my home community and church. My plan is to start taking online classes seeking a bachelor's degree in elementary and special education. After I finish getting that degree, I would like to work in the school system.

Those Who Stayed...continued

As the pipe organ played, I thought of the Anabaptists who had been flayed and drowned in Switzerland and beheaded and burned in Germany. I thought of those who had fled, some to Holland and some even further to America.



And it struck me. In this hidden spot, just off the Amsterdam streets, we were together again—those who stayed and we who left.

After the service, a man came to me. He had heard of our pilgrimage. And he had something to say. "A family history," he said, "can weigh heavily." And he is right. But one hour in that sacred spot lightened the weight. ■

Phyllis and her husband Steve, enjoyed taking a 3-generation trip (with their son and his wife, and their 4 children ages 11 to 16 from Rome to Rottingham, May 22 - June 9th. For more stories from their journey check out their blogs and Facebook posts.

My time at LCF really helped to confirm that working with kids is something I thoroughly enjoy and that I would like to have a career that allows me to serve youth in the communities around me. If you think about me, I would appreciate prayer for patience as I re-enter my home community. I have been apart from them for the better part of three years, and I know it will be a process to re-establish some of those connections. Thank you all so much for investing in me and for the love that you have shown me this past year. I hope to visit you all again soon! ■

Upcoming Events

See bulletin announcements for more details.

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| July 9, 9 a.m. | Ladies' Breakfast Outing at Der Dutchman |
| July 10, 3-6 p.m. | Youth Pool Party and BBQ at the Bakers |
| July 22-24 | CMC's Multiply Conference in Maryland |
| July 31, 12:30 | LCF 101 at Rob & Doris's home |

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.
Editors: Theresa Hennis, Elisabeth Yoder, Kelli Dean, & Doris Swartz. If you prefer that we not use photos of you in the Connection, you may opt out by emailing us.