

# The LCF Connection

September 2022



## A Summer to Remember

by Reid Gates

My first stop this summer was Aim Right Ministries in Phoenix, Arizona. I was there from June 1st to July 2nd. Aim Right was a great opportunity for me to be able to see what life is like in a rough neighborhood. Getting to meet kids that don't live the best life but always seem to be happy was so awesome. In Arizona I was able to show kids that not only is God the best, but also, that I care about them and was there for them. I was thankful for the opportunity to be a friend to them and someone with whom they could talk with about God. During my time in Arizona I was able to be involved with two vacation bible schools for children and a summer camp for teens. I loved being able to learn how the elementary school kids think

and process things during VBS and also how the teens progressed during the summer camp. It was cool getting to grow relationships with my campers even though some of us have such different backgrounds. I can't thank Aim Right enough for the wonderful opportunity they gave me to participate and grow this summer!

Next, I went to Bethel Camp in Clayhole, Kentucky, from July 3-31. I loved my time there at camp because I was able to be a counselor for three different age groups.

- My first week I was able to counsel 1st-3rd graders in a day camp. This gave me and the kids a chance to kind of be crazy and have fun, but also, to learn about God several times a day.
- My next group was 6th-8th graders, who came for an overnight camp. The thing I loved about this week was that the kids were not afraid to ask me tough questions about the Bible. They really challenged my knowledge. It was awesome to see how eager they were to learn.
- My last week I worked with 4th-6th graders. Wow! What a crazy week that was! My cabin was full of a group of friends who all came to camp, knowing about Jesus but not being fully committed to following him. On the last night all of them gave their lives to Christ. It was such a special experience!

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## Unified Diversity

by Cody Miller

As a newer attendee of LCF I had the privilege of joining a gathering at Rob and Doris's home for LCF 101. Since I've been attending LCF, two of the most outstanding and, personally important, qualities I've observed here have been the warmth and diversity of the congregation. At LCF 101 both were very apparent. It was exciting to see fellow newcomers, who also share a vision of the church as a community of fellowship, as we shared stories and learned more of what LCF believes as a church.

During our gathering on July 31, "stories" were shared by all of us around the table (pictured clockwise from left: Zana, Megan, Lance, myself, Mike, Karen, Rob, and Doris). It was a wonderful taste of how sharing our stories can build and bolster communities around God's story.

I encourage anyone who is able to join in the opportunity for fellowship and outreach here at LCF. LCF 101 is a great way to start! ■

*FYI: There will be another LCF 101 coming up soon.*



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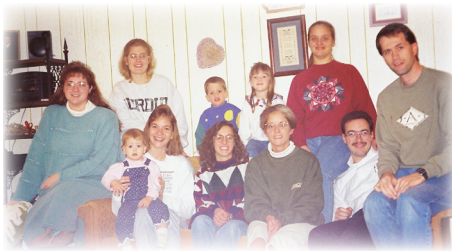


# The Beauty of Small Groups

## A Message from the Pastor

by Rob Swartz

Doris and I have been in a small group since the late '80s. I know that makes us sound ancient, but the point is that we have formed many connections and friendships that have lasted for many years through being a part of a small group.



In fact, when I first came to Columbus in 1986, I became a part of a young adults small group Bible study. That group became my family and now, almost 40 years later, Doris and I still connect with those friends at least once or twice a year. I wonder sometimes where I would be without that group, but it was part of God caring for me as a young, naive, country guy moving to the city.

Doris and I started leading groups at LCF when we were young-marrieds in our early 20s and have been greatly enriched by each one! They have proven to us to be one of the best ways to connect with, care for, and learn to know people in the church.

What is it about small groups that would cause me, a realist, to talk so effusively about them? Let me give you some arguments to consider.

**Interactive Bible Study**—We have had so many great discussions about the Bible in our small groups. I totally believe in the preaching of God's word and would never detract from the importance of this in the life of the church, but interactive Bible study definitely has an important place as well. We have had many lively discussions this past year in our group as we studied the Gospel of John, and it has been so much fun...really! ☺ It reminds me that God's word is always speaking to us, but often it is in different ways, and small group Bible study helps this come out. Bible study is a crucial piece of small group that I don't think can be compromised or watered down. There is nothing like rolling up our sleeves together, opening up the Word of God, and letting it speak to us and change us.

**Fellowship**—My closest friendships with other believers has often come from being part of a small group with them. We were made for fellowship with one another, and small groups provide the space for that fellowship to really grow. It's not the only way, but it's a great one. Our group often didn't want to go home because they enjoyed and needed the fellowship. Not one of them knew each other until coming together in our group, and it was cool to observe and see new friendships and connections emerge.

**Prayer**—And then, there is prayer. Small groups give the opportunity to share our needs and concerns with each other and lift each other up in prayer. Often we pass each other like ships in the night, not knowing the struggles and problems each of us is carrying. A small group can be a safe place for people to open up (you don't have to) and be cared for by others.

**Caring and Connection**—Healthy small groups help the church as a whole care for one another, and that is part of the reason I love them. I said in my article in June that it's impossible for me to care for everyone. When I know someone is in a small group, I know there is a good chance that they are being cared for well by the church; not always, but the probability is much higher.



Information about new small groups will be coming soon. Please consider joining one; not just for yourself, but for the others there whom you will be able to connect with and care for. These groups can look pretty different, so find one that fits you well. The Wednesday night prayer time is essentially a small group...centered around prayer. Our group is usually a mixture of friends

from the community as well as those from LCF. Reuben's will have more focus on teaching and less on fellowship. Other groups will have their own flavor. I encourage you to join a group—for you, for others, for God's kingdom. ■

# Elders Notes

by Jesse Diller

Since we did not have an elders meeting in July, we began our August 3rd meeting with a snack and time of catching up. We shared personal updates and prayer requests with each other and then spent time praying for one another.

Many of us have been, and will continue to be, traveling quite a bit this summer, so praises and prayer requests were shared regarding that. We prayed for a number of people whom we have had good spiritual conversations with, that the seeds which were planted will grow. We also prayed for upcoming events, physical needs, etc.

We followed up with discussion from the action points noted at our June meeting. Much of that included updates to various documents and discussions concerning:

- the LCF Constitution
- guidelines for our moderators
- a document to help with our weekly prayer focus, as well as our monthly Worship in Giving focus
- ways to help us as we strive to shepherd the congregation well, in hopes that no one "falls through the cracks"
- a survey to help us to determine interest in having Adult Sunday school

We spent time discussing a proposal that we received for some updates to the furniture in the foyer and ways that we can be welcoming to those with special needs.

We discussed a few special speakers at LCF, both upcoming and recent.

We will be kicking off groups again in September. We want to give good visibility to them as they are a key opportunity for discipleship, community, and relationship building—beyond our Sunday morning service.

Rob noted that Jesse's 2nd elder's term and Keith's 1st elder's term both expire in December. Sometimes this process can take a while so we will begin the process at our next meeting, on September 22.

Reuben closed our time by praying about the things we talked about. ■

# Getting to Know...Zana Hagerman

by Theresa Hennis

We use the Connection interviews to give you a small glimpse of who your fellow LCF members are, and we hope that it spurs you on to talk to those people and build relationships. We'd like you to meet Zana Hagerman, if you haven't already, and we hope you enjoy getting to know her better.

## Where did you grow up, and where do you live now?

I grew up in Jacksonville, Illinois. I live in London now.

## Are you married, and how many children do you have?

I am divorced. I have two daughters, Marlie and Kyrah, and a son, Joey, who passed away in 2020. I also have six grandkids and one on the way,

## Are you from a big or small family?

I'm the oldest of four girls. My dad had all girls!

## What did you hope to be when you grew up?

I wanted to be a movie star, singer, or a teacher.

## What is your career/profession now?

I take care of developmentally disabled adults in their home as a Home Health Care Support Associate.

## What do you feel is your calling from God, or your special gift?

I've always felt I was an encourager. When I got basal cell carcinoma in a mole on my head, people told me I was positive throughout the ordeal. The mole was small, and I had not noticed it. I've had it a total of 20 years. I've been in remission since January of 2020.

## What is something people might not know about you that you feel is special/unusual?

My husband at the time and I adopted a son, Joey, at age 14, who had come to us at 12. He died at 33. We were the house parents in a therapeutic foster care home in Pleasant Plain, Ohio. We had 30 - 35 boys with emotional traumas and some mental issues. We were the step-between foster care and juvenile for these boys. Some came from the foster home system, some were rejected from adopted parents or foster homes and even sometimes placed with us by parents or grandparents who could not handle them. So of course, they often had anger issues. It was quite a challenging time.

## Who influenced you or influences you the most in your life?

My mom. She died 22 years ago. Then, I got to know my dad better, and I appreciate him. My parents taught me to love God. My sisters and I are best friends. My family has helped me and supported me.

## What is your favorite hobby/pastime?

I like decorating and hand quilting. I used to work at a flower shop, designing the flower arrangements. I like to sing. I have sung in choruses and special groups. I can't get through a song now, though, without crying because of all I've gone through. I get so emotional since the cancer. The doctor told me that I could have passed away. I'm so overwhelmed with gratefulness. One of these days I'd like to be able to sing, but not now, because I just cry. A friend told me the Holy Spirit is cleansing me through my tears.



## What do you look forward to in your future?

Growing closer to God, and trying to be a good influence for my family and friends,

## What is one thing you'd like to do that you never have?

I want to travel to Scotland, Europe, travel the Bible path, the Holy Land.

## If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be?

To finish what I start! I start many things and need to finish them.

## When did you come to LCF? And what brought you here?

A year ago. It was because my daughter and husband drove by it and told me about it, because they knew I was looking for a church home.

## What could we do for you, as a church?

You have done a lot already. I'm thankful for Clete and Nathaniel and so many others who have helped me out in various ways.



Zana (on the right) with her one of her daughters and granddaughters this past Mother's Day.

## If you could come up with a cure for something, what would it be?

For people to come to know Christ. That they would be more aware of their sin, that they need help, and that they make Jesus sad when they do not turn to him and honor him. ■

## In and Out... of Routines

by Rosy Shenk

Routines are amazing things. I have a wonderful morning routine for much of the year. Routines help me remember what should happen next. Every morning I get up, take a shower, drink my coffee, and read my Bible. No questions, no deep thoughts about what to do next, it's just automatic.

This has been my routine for many mornings. Things may come up that disrupt it, but generally, there are no questions about the order of my morning. I happily mark the little "x's" that cover that day's Bible reading, and look with pride at the weeks and months of completion.

But then another major part of my routine, the starting time for my job, ends. I finish teaching for another year, and summer is here! Suddenly the linchpin of my routine is gone. I don't have to be somewhere at a certain time. I'm at home!

Suddenly my morning routine disappears. I thought it would be easy to maintain, but the freedom of unplanned days definitely moves into disrupting routines and makes it more difficult to remember to read my Bible while I'm drinking coffee, because, after all, I can read it after I've checked my phone, after I've started the laundry, after I've done many of the other things I like to do. Throw in the busyness of summer and the trips that we are taking, and the nice chart suddenly develops huge holes.

I wish I could say that I have found an answer to getting back to consistent daily Bible reading. I have binge-read several times to catch up, but this can be difficult if you hit a patch of genealogies, or get lost in the theological arguments of Paul. I finally decided that I will read the assigned readings of the day and leave it at that. I think I'll quit trying to catch up.

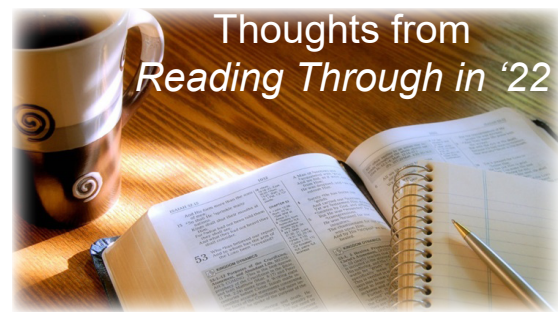
I have discovered that regular Bible reading brings blessings. It's a reminder that God speaks to us today. Most days, there are passages or verses that help me focus on the issues I'm facing and remind me of God's presence in those times. The Bible outlines for us the ways God wants to work in our lives. As I read the Bible, I see the amazing work of the Holy Spirit as he shapes and molds us, those "fragile clay jars" to become something that contains "great treasure" (1 Corinthians 4:18 NLT).



When the days go by and I forget or neglect to read the Bible, I often find myself struggling with old doubts, and false ideas about God. It is when I maintain my time in Bible reading that I find a more settled place in my spirit, and it is easier to trust in God and his plan.

School is starting back up again, and that means, for me, that my morning routine should soon return. My little boxes will once again be faithfully filled. I encourage all of us to look for those moments where we can

make time to read the Bible, to meet with God, even when our routines are jostled by the circumstances of life. God is there, always, waiting for you. ■



## Thoughts from Reading Through in '22

## Council Update

by Jim Jones

The Council met by phone conference on August 16th.

The council and the elders team is looking for someone to fill our Child Protection Team Leader position. Duties include training and compliance of our Child Protection Policy. In addition they ensure that those who work with our children and youth know their responsibilities and that random Sunday School checks are completed by the ushers.

Council unanimously agreed to increase travel reimbursement expenses for Rob and Doris. Since expenses for Doris were recently included for reimbursement we did not have any historical data to establish a realistic figure. Council will approve increases as needed through the rest of the year. as we will have a more realistic figure for the 2023 budget. In addition the language in the pastoral agreement was clarified to reflect the changes.

Council unanimously agreed to lift the building use restriction by outside sources that was put in place two years ago due to COVID. Our building use policy is in the process of being revised since it is over 20 years old.

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday, September 28th. ■

### *A Summer to Remember...continued*

I will always be thankful to Bethel Camp for giving me such a great opportunity to learn and grow!

I would like to thank you, as my church family, for all of your financial help, but especially, for all of your prayers while I was away. It is so awesome to know that I have such a great support base at home while I am gone!

And now, I am off for the next adventure—to start my 1st year of college at Mount Vernon Nazarene University! Please continue to pray for me when you think of me, that I will grow strong in Christ as I seek to follow him and share his love with others. ■

## 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 not use photos of you in the Connection, you may opt out by emailing us.

