

The LCF Connection

January 2023

Both Hawks and Doves

by Phyllis Swartz

How would it feel to be cloistered with a group of people? Especially if you couldn't leave and you were stuck with impossible people, seeing their flaws up close and every day?

A safe way to find out is to read *The Hawk and the Dove* and the other eight books in a series written by Penelope Wilcock. The characters in this series live in another time and a faraway place—in a monastery in 14th-century Yorkshire. But as you read, you'll recognize the people you know—those you'd like to avoid, those who make you laugh, those who bring you comfort, and those you can't stand but can't do without.



You'd think a book set in a monastery would be full of saints, but you'll find they are people like us, both bad and good, sad and funny, selfish and giving, wise and foolish.

But they can't do what we do so often—break fellowship with impossible people. So they stay stuck together.

You'll go with them into the rhythms of monastic life—silence and worship and rising in the night to pray—all ways to practice the rule of St. Benedict in a fallen world. You'll watch them work in medieval ways—growing and cooking food, tending animals, making shoes, nursing the old and infirm, illuminating manuscripts, and lighting their rooms. They welcome pilgrims and help the poor and educate the young. Together, because they can't get unstuck.

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A Special Advent Service

by Audrey Maust



As soon as you walked into the doors of LCF on December 4th, you knew something special was about to happen. Every seat was filled and many new faces arrived with eager expectation. The Chorus from Rosedale Bible College filled the auditorium with sounds of Christmas music. Each year they join us to lead in worship with a beautiful combination of singing and instruments, featuring a mixture of old and new carols.

The service also included scripture reading by Angie Stukey and lighting of the advent candles by the Dean family.

Trevor Schrock, a Rosedale student from Maryland who is doing an informal internship at LCF this year, gave the morning message. He challenged us to "Fight for the Faith" like Jude challenged the believers long ago to do. It was a wonderful way to celebrate the 2nd Sunday of Advent together. ■



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Elders' Notes

by Rob Swartz

On Wednesday, December 7th, the elders enjoyed a good meal together at Los Mariachis as we celebrated Jesse Diller's 6 years of service on the elders' team. We expressed our appreciation to Jesse for the great job he has done. We will miss his input, humor, and willingness to write the Elders' Notes for the LCF Connection each month. We hope that these monthly updates help to keep you connected with us as an elders' team.



As we ate, we caught up with one another and shared areas where we see God at work, as well as situations for us to be in prayer about. We thank God for each of you and pray for you often. As always, we invite your thoughts

and feedback at any time and welcome any specific prayer requests you may have. We look forward to seeing what all God has in store for us at LCF in this new year! ■

1st Christmas Cabaret at LCF

by Doris Swartz

On Wednesday, December 14th, the MCBDD (Madison County Board of Developmental Disabilities) held their annual Christmas Cabaret at London Christian Fellowship. Jeff Gates coordinated the event. It was a beautiful evening spotlighting the musical talents of disabled individuals from the Madison County community, along with some of their talented friends—including London's Mayor, Patrick Closser.



The atmosphere was fun and festive as friends and family came to enjoy this one-of-a-kind Christmas program. It was filled with many laughs and memorable moments. You had to be there

in person to appreciate how touching it was to see people who are often overlooked or put down by our society shine brilliantly in the spotlight as they celebrated and sang songs of Christmas!



Rob and I were both moved to the point of tears as we felt the presence of Jesus among us and were reminded of His great love for each one of us! Some of us are able to hide our "disabilities" more than others, but we are all broken and hurting

people—desperately in need of the Savior, whose birth we gathered to celebrate. If you get a chance next year, I would highly encourage you to come to connect—and be blessed! ■



Council Update

by Jim Jones

The council is working at finalizing the 2023 budget proposal, which will be presented and discussed at the short business meeting that will take place after the potluck on January 15th.



We welcome Rhoda Sommers, who was just recently confirmed by the congregation, as our newest council member. She is an experienced leader in higher education, having served as the Dean of Health, Human, and Public Services at Clark State. Prior to that she served as Dean for 11 years at two different institutions, Malone University in Canton, OH and Taylor University in Upland, IN. She has also served as a full-time faculty member in teacher education for 5 years and taught elementary and middle school in Ohio and Pennsylvania for 13 years. Rhoda brings an incredible wealth of experience and expertise to the table.

A special thank you to our Buildings and Grounds expert, Merv Schlabach, who devotes a good portion of his spare time to maintaining our church building. His efforts and repairs are often behind-the-scenes and can go unnoticed. We are grateful to those who lend Merv a helping hand with various projects. One example was Dale Headings, who helped out with some roof repairs in the entryway, among other things.



Currently, Merv is working at changing our foyer lighting over to LEDs, which will eliminate the need for a ballast in each fixture. This will be a significant savings in energy and replacement costs. If anyone in the congregation is handy or has any experience, please consider contacting Merv to let him know. He could use an occasional helping hand for certain projects.



We, as a congregation, are saying goodbye to the Frederick family this month as they are relocating. Dan has been a valued member of the LCF Council for the past 4 years. He has also contributed a lot of time and expertise over the years with our sound, audio, and internet. His technical savvy was invaluable throughout many challenges, especially when we moved into the new church building 10 years ago and when we added livestream for online services (due to Covid) almost 3 years ago. Multiple times, Dan brought in some of his personal equipment from home and made it work until a replacement could be found.

These are just a few examples of many of you who do numerous things that seldom get recognized. It's all within our wonderful fellowship as you give yourselves by serving and connecting with one another—whether attending services, doing various activities, or working together for a common goal. Thanks so much, and may God bless each one of you! ■

Getting to Know...*Delaney Yutzy*

by Theresa Hennis



Where are you from, originally? Did you grow up in a larger or smaller family?

I'm from Plain City. I come from an average-sized family, with two older siblings. They are both married now, and my brother has two kids. I love being an aunt!

Where do you live now, and is there something in particular that you like about it?

I still live in Plain City, in an apartment on my parents' property. It's the perfect combination: a little bit of independence while still being close to them.

What is your career interest and why? Your passion?

My passion is editing. I studied Professional Writing and Information Design in college, and I've always had an eye for grammar and spelling mistakes. My dream would be to work for a publishing house, or maybe even own one someday!

Is there a special memory/incident from growing up that you feel played an important part in what you love to do today?

My family was always playing music growing up, mostly Christian and country. To this day, I play music all the time—while driving, doing chores, or hanging out with my family. My parents created a culture of loving music and going to concerts, and I'm so grateful for that! Because of my upbringing, I still love to go to concerts and play music on the piano and ukulele.

If you could pick one place in the world to live, where would it be, and why?

I'm pretty happy in Ohio, but I've always wanted to live in Nashville. I love that you can find live music so easily! It's one of my favorite places to visit, and I think it'd be super cool to live there.

Who has influenced you the most in your life, and why?

The biggest influence in my life is definitely my mom. She is the godliest woman I know, and her whole life reflects her faith. I aspire to love God as much as she does. She's also my biggest supporter and the person I can always talk to, about anything. I can't imagine my life without her.

In what way, would you say, do you feel most drawn to God?

I connect most to God through music. There's nothing like finding a worship song that speaks to me in my specific situation or season of life. It becomes my anthem, a way to worship God in the midst of hardship or joy. I always look forward to the worship time at church and love to hear everyone singing praise together. It's a little taste of what heaven will be like!

What is a gifting you believe God has given you?

I believe God has given me the gift of discernment. It's hard to explain, but there have been certain moments in my life where I have sensed a spiritual battle or felt unrest in my spirit. In those moments, I've had to remind myself that God is more powerful than the darkness, and He will overcome.

Are you a planner or more of a figure-it-out-as-you-go personality type, and how has that helped you in your pursuits?

I'm definitely more of a planner, although I've become more spontaneous this year. My tendency to plan helped me finish high school and college early, and it also comes in handy at my job as administrative assistant in the CMC office.

What does a fun day look like to you? If you have the time and could do anything you want?

A fun day would look like sleeping in, getting some good coffee, and spending most of my time with a book in hand. I'd end the day by walking my dog and having a movie night with friends.

If you could only give 1 piece of advice to younger people, what would that be?

This is a hard one. I guess I'll share what I would tell my younger self: Don't place your hope in your plans. I know it seems like you have everything figured out—you know where you want to go and what you want to do. But God might have something different in mind. Trust Him, trust the process, and try to enjoy every season for what it is. He will never leave you nor forsake you, and He will work all things together for your good.

How do you think “doing church” could be better, and how do you feel churches need to grow or evolve to reach more people?

We could do church better by being involved in one another's everyday lives. I think of the believers in Acts 2 and how they truly did life together. Being part of the church body is about more than meeting on Sunday mornings; we should be a faithful and consistent community. Churches should be involved in the local community and show people that they care for them, whether they attend church or not. And then, when new people do visit church, we need to make them feel welcome and included, rather than always staying in our comfort zones.

Thanks for sharing, Delaney! We are glad to have you at LCF and are so thankful that you are willing to use your writing and editing skills to help with the LCF Connection! ■

An Incredible Resource

by Doris Swartz

January is here with cold temperatures and long, dark evenings—providing the perfect opportunity to curl up and read a great book or watch a good movie! LCF's library has lots of wonderful options to keep you well-stocked (including all 9 books in *The Hawk and the Dove* series that Phyllis wrote about). In fact, there are over 3,000 items! There is a wide variety of books for all ages, music CDs, DVDs, Bibles and various Bible study series, and so much more! Take a few minutes to explore and see what you can find to check out and take home with you.

You can visit LCF's library in person at the church or online from home or wherever you are. The online library (which you can access from the Resource tab of LCF's website) allows you to search for and reserve items, comment on library material, renew borrowed items, and more from wherever you are. To check out library items all you need is a username and password (barcode number).

Books for children (preschool through junior high age) are located in Sunday School classrooms #104 and #105 (located on the north side of the Fellowship Hall). They can be checked out either via traditional library cards or by scanning the LCF Library barcode stickers.

Thanks so much to our librarian, Linda Schlabach, for all the hard work and many hours that she puts into LCF's library, as well as to Sammy Waweru for his technical assistance. If you do not yet have a username and barcode, if you need help with checking items out, or have any questions, feel free to contact either of them. Be sure to make use of this incredible free resource and all that it provides to help you learn and grow! ■



Hawks and Doves...continued

Something about these books makes me feel like being good. But not in a gritty, I've-got-to-grow-up-and-do-this kind of way. Maybe it's because over and over, the characters who see the wounds of God become willing to be wounded for one another. And from this wounding a beauty arises . . . a strong, joy-filled beauty.

I finish each book knowing that I am one of the impossible ones. But also knowing that, for me, there is great love—from God and from other wounded, impossible people. All of us, at the same time, both hawks and doves. ■

A Festive Saturday Morning

by Lisa Miller

In the midst of the busy Christmas season, a group of ladies gathered for a Christmas brunch on Saturday, December 10th, at the beautifully decorated home of Russ and Sandy Hauge. We enjoyed a relaxing time together and so much delicious food!



A lot of fun was had with the white elephant gift exchange, which included some good-natured stealing! There were lots of good fellowship and conversations all around. We do, after all, need one another, don't we? Oh, and would the thief/winner of the "With God All Things Are Possible" notepad please speak up? You accidentally left it at Sandy's house. She might be thinking of a new rule for the white elephant gift exchange, one called "finders keepers!" ☺ ■

Sharing God's Love

by Sandy Hauge, Benevolence Team Leader

This Christmas, we at LCF were able to provide Christmas gifts and filled stockings for 37 young children and babies and their teenage parents from Buckeye Alternative School. Imagine their joy and excitement at their school Christmas party on December 15th!!

A huge thank you to everyone who participated in this project from shopping for the many gifts, to staying after church on December 11th to help sort and wrap them, to giving generously of your finances!

Be watching for future benevolence outreach projects as we aim to expand our outreach beyond the LCF walls. As always, if you have a need that we can help with, please don't hesitate to reach out to anyone on the Benevolence Team. ■



Join us on January 15th for

Celebrate the Church Sunday!

It will include our worship service, annual membership commitment (including bringing in new members), reflecting on God's faithfulness this past year, anticipating what He has in store for 2023, and a delicious potluck meal, followed by a short business meeting.

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, Delaney Yutzy, and Doris Swartz

