

The LCF Connection

February 2023



The Miracle of Church

by *Martie George*

Celebrate the Church Sunday, held at LCF on January 15th, was the perfect time for reflection. I was reminded by Rob's message from Ephesians 2 that the Church is a miracle! I will reflect upon the Church as that diverse and global bride of Christ.

Six people committed themselves to London Christian Fellowship through membership. I will reflect upon what it means to me to be part of the Church. Romans 12:10 instructs me to be devoted to my brothers and sisters in Christ with brotherly love. Honoring them above myself.



We were all asked to consider opportunities where we can serve at LCF. We are one body with many parts and different gifts. I will reflect and ask God in prayer what my part is as a co-worker in His Church—God's service; God's field; God's building. 1 Corinthians 3:9.

I had to miss the food and fellowship that followed the service. Hopefully next time I can enjoy that part. Christian fellowship is a wonderful blessing. I am sure everyone enjoyed the food and connecting with one another.

It was my great pleasure to be in attendance for Celebrate the Church Sunday. To be instructed and spurred on to good deeds. To hear of all the workers and the work going on at LCF. I was encouraged to reflect upon my part in God's miracle: the Church. ■

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An Invaluable Investment

by *Kelli Dean*

About this time two years ago, I was in a hard place. I was a mother of four little ones struggling to get through and enjoy daily life and my numerous blessings, because up until that point, I had been unable to process and simply "deal with" some trauma from my past. I had allowed fear, guilt, and shame to grow where hope, forgiveness, and identity in Christ should have. I had become someone who struggled greatly with anxiety, and often had more hard days than good ones. It was affecting my marriage and my parenting.

I came to the realization that I couldn't process and heal from my past trauma on my own. Through the guidance and care of my pastor and his wife, I was introduced to a biblical counselor and began counseling with him.

It has taken a lot of time and work, but biblical counseling has changed everything for me. Through it, I have begun to heal and am learning my true identity in Christ. I am growing to understand who God really is—without filtering everything through the lens of my trauma. Biblical counseling has restored my faith that as Paul says in Philippians 1:6: "...He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ." I am learning how to do a better job of taking my thoughts captive and replacing them with God's truths.



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



Do Not Judge

A Message from the Pastor
by Reuben Sairs

The Bible is clear—do not judge.

- “Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.” Luke 6:37
- “Who are you to judge the servant of another?” Romans 14:4
- “Judge nothing before the time.” 1 Corinthians 4:5

These passages don’t mean you should suspend your brain, they only suspend your personal judgment of others. We can certainly disagree, and of course we have to make choices and decisions, but we must be very objective and careful and you might say somewhat ironically “nonjudgmental,” even in disagreement with others.

I want to combine two thoughts—being nonjudgmental and how that should be one important way that we practice nonconformity with the unbelieving world.

LCF stands in the historic tradition of Mennonites. We can call this the Anabaptist tradition. It has a long history of emphasizing nonconformity to the world; Jesus shapes us so we’re not like the unbelieving world. Although we have in fact been a very judgmental group historically, nonconformity should have led us out of that problem. It’s certainly not too late!

As an extreme example of judgment, it is not my job, and in fact it would be a sin for me, to declare who is or is not a real Christian. It might be one thing to ask someone who says they are, “Are you a Christian?” out of concern. It would be another matter to ask it implying, “No, I don’t think so.” Less dramatically, it’s still improper for me to declare who is a Christian who counts, or is worthy of the name, or deserves my fellowship and should get my unqualified affection.

It’s always a temptation to judge others. I look around and there are so-called Christians who apparently think they can believe anything they want, and do whatever they want and still somehow claim to be authentic. I look for the fruit of the Spirit, and all I see is a jumble of thinking and behavior that I can’t square with the Bible. But I am not allowed to judge. It would be wrong to close my heart and walk away. We should all remember the tax collector and the Pharisee in prayer in Luke 18:11. I’m sure there is much in my own life that is inconsistent, and this gives me plenty to work on without trying to straighten out someone else.

History demonstrates how hard this is. Christians disfellowship other Christians. Many new churches are started blatantly that way. It sounds more noble, but even in church planting, new churches can be started with an implied judgment: all of God’s other churches are not quite right or up to the task. No judgment there?

Let’s start with some self-examination. We can rejoice in the work of nonconformity that the Spirit is doing in the Church through our lives. We can get to that point where we can say we have been changed by Jesus. Let the world be judgmental, critical, defensive. Let the world be full of insults and threats. These things have no place in Christian fellowship. We root our nonconformity in the character that God is creating in us and leave judgment where it belongs—with Jesus. ■

Elders’ Notes

by Keith Scheffel

The Elders met on January 11th and welcomed Gideon and Sarah Eichorn to the Elders’ Team.

A summary of our meeting:

- We spent time praying for the various needs within the LCF family.
- We talked about ways to shepherd the flock God has put under our care.
- We approved the 2023 Budget Proposal we received from the Council.
- We discussed details for Celebrate the Church Sunday, which will be held on January 15th. We are looking forward to receiving six new members.
- We reviewed our annual renewal process for membership at LCF.
- We concluded our time in prayer. ■

Council Update

by Jim Jones

Thanks to you as a congregation for approving the proposed 2023 budget with your vote on Sunday, January 22 and for your continued generous giving throughout the year.

We were blessed to end 2022 with a surplus balance of \$14,151.92. We decided to apply \$5,000 of that surplus toward our mortgage principle. That reduces the amount that we currently owe on our loan for this building to just under \$51,000. The remaining amount of the surplus was kept back to cover anticipated church maintenance costs.

Sarah received 2023 budget requests from the Audio/Visual Team, Benevolence Team, and Decor Team. The other teams were good to repeat with the same allocations as they had in 2022. Some increases were made—mainly supplies for fellowship, trash pick-up (due to increased fuel costs) and other budget items that were affected due to inflation.

In 2022, the Council increased the salaries for Rob, Reuben, and Doris by 5%. For 2023, they were increased by an additional 2%. Dale and Sharon Headings, who clean the church every week, received a 5% increase in 2023. Even though Sarah disagreed, the other council members agreed that an increase was in order for the church treasurer position, as well. Russ did the calculations. For the average hours that Sarah puts in each month, at a modest rate of \$15 per hour, an additional \$28.25 per month increase was given to her.

We decided to allocate mileage reimbursement funds for Mike and Karen Baker for the miles that they drive each week for youth group meetings (an estimated 134 miles each month).

We are thankful to God for His faithful provision to meet our needs here at LCF—both in providing the people needed and funds necessary to carry out the task He has given us! If you ever have any questions, feel free to contact us.

Our next meeting will be on February 21st. ■

Getting to Know...

Richard & Cynthia Troyer

Interviewed by Elisabeth Yoder

Our story:

Our first contact was when Cynthia “waved” at Richard on a Christian dating app last January. Both of us were very reluctant to join an online dating platform. Looking back, as it is a move so far out of both of our comfort zones or personalities, it was definitely a “God thing.” Cynthia very quickly pulled her profile, but not before we had exchanged email addresses. We “talked” online and soon moved to texting and then phone calls.

Richard asked to come to Rockford to meet, but Cynthia, busy with the sale of her farm in Illinois, purchase of another home, two boys at home, and plans for a cross-country move to be a Literacy Coach at a Fort Myers high school, put this meeting on hold until July when she was driving to Florida. Finally alone, and with some of the busyness behind her, Cynthia told Richard she was off work for five days and asked if he wanted to meet her at Venice Beach, thinking he would probably not want to come because she had pushed it off for so long. But to her surprise, he called the next morning to say he had found flights!

We first met in person on Venice Beach in July and spent time getting to know each other. Then Richard agreed to return over Labor Day weekend, as long as Cynthia didn’t mind watching an Ohio State game on Saturday night! We had a great time exploring the border islands off the Gulf coast and finding over 160 sand dollars on Captiva Island! Richard made plans to return to Fort Myers in November to meet a friend for a fishing trip, and Cynthia would tag along with them after work. Little did we know that this trip would never take place.

Later that month, however, Cynthia’s children held a birthday party for her in Illinois and invited Richard. But with hurricane Ian raging and Fort Myers dead in its path, her family urged her not to fly back. Instead, since Richard had met Cynthia’s family, and she could not return to Florida, we decided to return to Ohio so Cynthia could meet Richard’s family. Two days later, Ian caused damage to both Cynthia’s rental home and the one she was purchasing. Richard met Cynthia back in Florida in early October to help her gather her belongings from the rental and reclaim her car at the airport. During a break in the work, Richard suggested we stop at Venice beach, and after a walk on the sand, Richard pulled from his pocket a sand dollar ring and a post-it with a poem of a marriage proposal! Obviously, Cynthia said yes. We could not think of a better place for a wedding than Venice Beach, and were married barefoot in the sand on November 7, 2022.

What drew us together:

Richard: Love for Jesus and the beach

Cynthia: Spiritual commitment, dark brown eyes, and Venice Beach

What has been special about beginning our journey together at this stage of life:

Being empty nesters allows us more time to focus on each other and on our relationship.

A few details of Cynthia’s life:

- Mother of 8
- Teacher of English and music for 35 years
- Reading specialist and literacy coach
- Played violin for over 50 years
- Loves warm weather

Most interesting facts:

Richard: founded and developed cabinet business

Cynthia: earned two master’s degrees and working on a doctorate

Love to do if time and money permitted: Travel often to see the world and visit family

Passions we share: Fish tacos and an interest in writing children’s books

Goal we are working on together: Developing a rental property business

What three words would describe each other:

Richard of Cynthia: strong, active, intelligent

Cynthia of Richard: authentic, passionate, funny

Prayer: Pray that we can blend two complicated lives together into one less complicated life!

Thanks, Richard & Cynthia, for sharing your story with us! We are happy for you and are glad to have you at LCF! We look forward to seeing what all God has in store for the two of you. ■



A Foggy Morning

by Delaney Yutzy

As I drove to work one morning, I could see only a small section of the road in front of me. The rest of my view was shrouded in fog. Signs seemed to appear out of nowhere, and bends in the road caught me by surprise. It was scary to drive with so little visibility.

But as I peered into the fog in front of me, I was struck with a spiritual truth. Following Jesus is often like driving through the fog. We can only see the road immediately in front of us. Beyond that, the terrain is clouded and unclear. It's unsettling! How I wish I could see the future. But I can't. I can only follow His path that's marked out for me, one step at a time.

While I was driving through that fog, it required a lot of focus. I had to be alert, zeroed in on the little bit of the road I could see. And isn't that like life, too? We may not know the future or what's ahead, but we know God. If we focus on Him, He will lead us step by step. I've been memorizing Psalm 25, and it has been such a blessing to me. If you have a moment, take the time to read the whole chapter. Here are some of my favorite verses from it.

Psalm 25:4-5: "Show me Your ways, Lord, teach me Your paths. Guide me in Your truth and teach me, for You are God my Savior, and my hope is in You all day long" (NIV).

Having such a limited view of the future is frustrating sometimes. I wish I knew what God has in store for me. Does He have someone for me to marry someday? Are there kids in my future? Will I move away from the only town I've ever known? Will I ever get to pursue my dream job? These are big questions, and God cares about all of them, more than even I do.

As much as I want to know the future, daily trust and surrender are more valuable. If I knew the future already, it would be tempting to disregard God and pursue it in my own strength. Why would I need Him? But when I'm faced with uncertainty, I must trust Him. I must seek Him and allow Him to show me His ways, teach me His paths, and guide me in His truth. For He is God my Savior, and my hope is in Him all day long.

Even when the road ahead is a foggy mystery. ■



This year, we are starting a new series in the LCF Connection! It's called "Reflections" and will feature articles from people in our congregation. These articles will focus on what God has been teaching us, scriptures that have spoken to us, or life lessons we've been learning. If you have a desire to contribute to this series, please contact Delaney Yutzy. We're excited to hear about what God's doing in your life.



Puzzle Pieces

by Lance Beachy

You may have seen a puzzle on the left side of the foyer. I saw the idea online and thought it might be nice for those of us who may not know who to talk to after church or just want to wake up our brains a bit more with some coffee before church.



If you think hard enough, I'm sure there's some analogy about how we're all different and can build something beautiful with other people; but in the meantime, feel free to drop a few pieces in while you walk past, or have a seat and learn to know someone else who enjoys puzzles as you work together on it. Perhaps I'll see you there! ■

Investment...continued

Biblical counseling has changed my life in more ways than I could have ever imagined. Not only has it helped me begin to process and heal from a few really hard life experiences, it has helped me become a better wife and mother. I have been able to better manage the anxiety that comes and rest more in God's truths.

Biblical counseling has also been a wonderful investment in my marriage. By working through the hard things, it has allowed me to build better relationships, especially with my husband and children. I am so grateful for that blessing.

If you are someone who is struggling, or if you need help processing life's hardships, please consider biblical counseling as an option. I believe God will meet you where you are and be faithful to continue and finish the good work He has started in you, as well. ■

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