

# The LCF Connection

June 2023



From left: Delaney, Steve, Phyllis, Shepherd, Megan, Lance, Joseph, Kerry, Elisabeth, Maia, Jeff

## Food and Conversation

by Delaney Yutzky

Beginning in November 2022, Steve and Phyllis Swartz began hosting monthly dinners for the young people at LCF, called "Food and Conversation." Each evening begins with a delicious home-cooked meal, complete with dessert and coffee. We sit at their table, catch up on one another's lives, and watch Maia (Jeff and Elisabeth's daughter) make faces to entertain us.

After dinner, we retire to the Swartzes' living room for fellowship. Steve and Phyllis always prepare questions for each of us to answer, which leads to intentional conversation and continuing to learn about everyone else in the group.

During one of our post-dinner chats, Steve and Phyllis asked us what we would do if we had unlimited time and resources. Jeff talked about starting a community garden, where people could come and gather food for free. Steve dreamed about offering free counseling services to those in need.

This past meeting, on May 1, 2023, we gathered for pork loin, carrots, and potatoes, coleslaw, corn, Jell-O, and apple pie à la mode. At the table, we discussed the sizes of our families, learning new languages, the measurement of a bushel, and how amazing the homemade bread was. And with some apple butter on top? To die for.

When we moved into the living room, Steve and Phyllis presented their first question/topic for the night: "Introduce someone else in the room. What is something that few people know about them?" Bouncing around, we each chose someone to introduce to the others. I learned that Elisabeth likes soccer and Joseph has two sisters.

Then, Steve and Phyllis asked us a harder question: "What is an attribute of God that you see in someone else?" Someone pointed out Lance's ability to listen well. Someone else mentioned Megan's hospitality. Another person talked about Shepherd's thoughtfulness and joy. It was a great exercise, looking at people through that lens. What if we did this more often? What if we sought to see people as reflections of our Creator? As image-bearers of God? How would that change the way we treat them and speak about them?

*Note: If you are a young adult and would be interested in joining this group for future food and conversation, contact Steve or Phyllis Swartz for more information. We would love to have you join us!*

I've greatly enjoyed these monthly dinners with friends, old and new. It's been a great way to connect with the fellow young people at LCF and get to know them better. A big thank you to Steve and Phyllis for their hospitality, intentionality, and wonderful meals. I am so blessed to be a part of these special gatherings. ■

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## We Now Have Pickleball at LCF!

Randy and Martie George's small group met on Friday evening, May 5th, for a Cinco de Mayo Mexican potluck and pickleball in LCF's Fellowship Hall.

Before their meal, they worked hard at scraping the old Four Square tape off of the floor, and then afterwards, they measured and marked out the new pickleball court. Then they had fun learning and playing pickleball together!

Watch for information coming soon about how you can reserve and use the pickleball court. ■



From left: Keith, Kelvin, Clete, Lucy, Phil, Randy, Martie, John, Rosy, Shannon, Audrey



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# Celebrating LCF's Graduates

*Congratulations to the graduates among us this year! They have worked hard to get to this point, and we want to join them in celebrating this special milestone. We asked each of them to share a brief update with us and specific ways that we can be praying for them.*

## *Ethan Hostetler:*

I am graduating from West Jefferson High School. I'm planning on attending Cedarville University to major in Civil Engineering next fall. I chose Civil Engineering because I have always loved building things, and Civil Engineering matches my interests perfectly.

My favorite Bible verse has always been John 3:16. It was the first Scripture that I memorized and has been my favorite ever since. One thing to pray about for me is being ready to take the next step into college. I'm ready to finish high school, but I don't know if I'm ready to go to college. ☺



## *David Stuke:*

I am graduating from London High School and will be attending the University of Tennessee at Martin to study sports management and to run track and cross country. Please pray that I would adjust well, especially to being so far from home, and that my broken foot would heal well.

## *Chris Conte:*

I graduated on May 7 from Ohio State with a Master's degree in Social Work. I have taken a job at Crossroads Counseling Group in

Dublin, a private practice with Christian therapists and values. I am looking forward to continually learning how to best help people as a therapist and incorporate my faith into my work with clients. It is exciting to have a job that positively influences people in such a direct way.

As I begin this new chapter of life, I would appreciate prayers in a few different areas. First, you all can pray for the presence of the Holy Spirit in my work with clients, as well as personal sensitivity to the Spirit's direction. I want even the clients that are not believers to feel God's presence as we meet. Secondly, prayers for learning to balance my various responsibilities and opportunities at this time of life would be appreciated. Finally, I would welcome prayer for a deepening of my own relationship with God as I continue to seek Him.

A current favorite set of verses for me is Luke 12:22-34 where Jesus admonishes us to focus primarily on the furthering of His Kingdom, not worrying about where our basic needs will come from. I feel confident that this is not exclusive to physical needs, but also emotional and spiritual needs as well. I know that I can be confident of God's provision at this time of life as I make building the Kingdom my primary goal.

*Thanks, graduates! We wish you the best and will be praying for you and your families during this time of celebration and transition. ■*

# Elders' Notes

*by Keith Scheffel*

The Elders met on Tuesday, May 16th, and were privileged to have our overseer, Roger Hazen, join us for the meeting.

Various topics were discussed. We shared prayer requests and shepherding updates and discussed a "Missions 101" proposal from Rosedale International.

Additionally, we reviewed a revised draft of the LCF Constitution, approving its progress, and plan to send it for review by the LCF Council and later to an attorney.

Other matters included discussing potential baptism locations, expressing appreciation to past and future baptism-site hosts, and brainstorming ideas to encourage prayer within the church. Our next meeting is scheduled for June 14th. ■

# Council Update

*by Jim Jones*

The Council met via phone on May 16th. Eastern Mennonite Missions notified LCF that our 3.75% mortgage rate will increase to 4.75%. We have 15 payments remaining at \$2,938.00. The church should be paid off by summer 2024.

The Council unanimously approved \$4,000 to repair our playground. For safety concerns, \$3,100 will be used to hire a fence contractor to enclose it with a chain link fence. The remaining dollars will be used for mulch, lumber, and hardware replacement. Nathaniel Smith has volunteered to take the lead on our playground repairs and will seek volunteers. He has a trailer to pick up the mulch and is going to look at what items need repair. Our next meeting will be June 20th. ■



# C4 in Action

Thanks to the youth who helped Marcus bake 80 dozen cookies to be given to the men at London Correctional Institution during the recent Kairos Prison Ministry weekend. Pictured above: Shepherd and Ella helping Marcus on Sunday, April 30th.



# Getting to Know...Joseph & Kerry Molina

by Elisabeth Yoder

*My sister Kerry and her husband, Joseph Molina, finally got to have their Ohio wedding on April 22nd. Their first wedding took place in Costa Rica on November 6, 2021, and so they had to preserve and wait for 17 long months until Joseph received his fiancé visa and was able to join Kerry here in Ohio. We hope this interview helps you learn to know them better!*

## **Please tell us a little about your backgrounds and lives thus far.**

- Joseph: I grew up in Costa Rica in the indigenous town of Shiroles with my mother and two sisters. When I was 19, I went to a discipleship training school called Vida220 in Heredia, Costa Rica. After two years at Vida220, one as a student and one as a team leader, I went back to Shiroles to work at my cousin's ministry, Esperanza. In 2018, I had the opportunity to go to Thailand as a missions intern with RI and Esperanza. In October of 2019, I had to leave Thailand and go back to Costa Rica. From that time until I came to the US, I was working at Esperanza and plantain farming.
- Kerry: I grew up in Plain City. After graduating high school in 2018, I attended Rosedale Bible College. My second year there, in January of 2020, I went on the Cross-Cultural Experience to Costa Rica. Then, in March of 2020, I was sent home from Rosedale to finish the school year online. After graduating from Rosedale, I began working, interspersed with trips to Costa Rica.

## **How did you two meet?**

- I (Kerry) went to Costa Rica on the Cross-Cultural Experience with Rosedale. My group spent three weeks at Esperanza. While we were there, Joseph was the leader for our group.

## **What was the first thing that attracted you to each other?**

- Joseph: I saw that she was a strong worker and was mature. I also thought she was pretty.
- Kerry: He was responsible and mature, but also had a fun mischievous side that made having him as our group leader really fun. But the very first thing I noticed was his hair.

## **How would you describe your spouse in 3 words?**

- Joseph: Sweet, Kind, Humble
- Kerry: Strong, Thoughtful, Creative

## **What's a fun fact about each of you and you as a couple?**

- Joseph: I like playing soccer.
- Kerry: Pennsylvania Dutch was my first language.
- We both like traveling.

## **What is a cultural difference you've encountered in your relationship?**

- Different communication styles between cultures. Less about a language barrier and more about how people in our cultures tend to communicate.

## **What's a bucket list item you would love to do together?**

- Go to Europe (Joseph wants to go to Switzerland, and Kerry would like to go to Scotland.)

## **How have you seen the hand of God in your relationship?**

- Giving us patience and support from those around us to get through the challenges and processes we have faced so far.

## **What are a few things you like doing for fun, individually and together?**

- Joseph: driving motorcycle, playing soccer, drinking coffee
- Kerry: knitting, reading, some baking
- Together: riding motorcycle in Talamanca, playing soccer, drinking coffee, playing pool (basically what Joseph also does individually)

## **For each of you, is there a Bible character you particularly relate to? If so, why?**

- Joseph: David—Even though he made so many mistakes he kept on pursuing God and moving forward toward his goals.
- Kerry: Ruth—I admire her dedication and strength to go into the unknown but always continue to do her best despite the struggles.

## **What are some long-term goals you're working toward together?**

- Buying a house and building a family.

## **What is an obstacle you have overcome together?**

- Being in a long-distance relationship (dating, engaged, and then married) while also going through the immigration process for Joseph to come to the US.

## **How can we, as your church family, best support you?**

- Pray for wisdom and patience as we continue to navigate the next steps of the immigration process.



*We rejoice with you that you are finally able to be together and look forward to seeing how God is going to use you as a couple. ■*

# What God Has Been Teaching Me

by Zach Freer

A little over four weeks ago, our son, Isaac, was born. In addition to all the well-wishes, I was asked what God had been teaching me through being a dad. Isaac is our second child, so I've already had three years of practice at the job with Clara. And while I instinctively know I've learned a lot from it, I quickly realized that I hadn't taken the time to slow down and reflect on what, specifically, God has been teaching me lately. However, I did understand that the question inherently sought a more spiritual answer than simply that God has used the experience of becoming a dad to teach me how to change diapers.



Our recent family addition has prompted Julie and I to work on our wills. As I looked around our house to see what things my kids and other family members might want bequeathed to them, I quickly realized that it was not a very long list. Yet, I have a lot of things in my house that I would have a difficult time letting go of. When I finally came to that conclusion, I found the juxtaposition striking, and even maybe a little unsettling. And while we live in a very materialistic society, maybe the physical things that I hold onto—things that take my time, energy, and finances to own—really aren't worth much to anyone else. If that's already the case while I'm here on earth, how much greater will that realization be from the perspective of eternity in heaven?

Matthew chapters 5 through 7 contain Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. In Matthew 6:19-21, Jesus commands us to not store up treasures on earth, but rather treasures in heaven... *"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."*

I grew up knowing of this verse from a young age. For the longest time, I equated earthly treasures with heavenly treasures. Instead of spending money on something earthly, I figured that to spend money for God or to give it away is kind of like depositing money into the Third Heavenly Bank. After you die, you'll have saved up treasure in heaven to use to decorate your heavenly mansion, because, you know, it's important to save up money for "retirement" while you're still "working." Or something like that. I might be exaggerating my past thought process a little bit, but it's not too far off.

So, being a dad and working on a will has recently prompted me to ask, "What is this treasure that Jesus says we are to gather up while we are here on earth, but treasure which we can still simultaneously store up in heaven? And what is the purpose of storing up this treasure in heaven?"

I'm still working all this out myself, but in part, I have some observations of my own as well as from some other people:

- People are forever and will be in one of two places for eternity. (Matthew 25:46)
- Love will not pass away. (1 Corinthians 13:13)
- The acts of being rich in good works and generosity store up treasure. (1 Timothy 6:17-19)
- The work that we do in this life and what we choose to build upon will be tested. The person whose work remains after testing will receive a reward. (1 Corinthians 3:10-15)
- There are several crowns mentioned in the Bible: The Imperishable Crown (1 Corinthians 9:24-25), The Crown of Rejoicing (1 Thessalonians 2:19), The Crown of Righteousness (2 Timothy 4:8), The Crown of Glory (1 Peter 5:4), and The Crown of Life. (Revelation 2:10)
- Crowns will be cast before God, sitting on His throne in heaven. (Revelation 4:10)

So what has God been teaching me through being a dad? Similar to how I want to give my best earthly treasures to my kids, God wants to give His children even better treasures. He intimately knows His children and doesn't want us to set our hearts on earthly possessions that will one day pass away. Heavenly treasure is what I most want to be able to share with my two kids and wife. This is what He's taught me through my recent life changes... Oh, and also that changing baby boy diapers can be a little scary at times. ☺ ■



## Dedicated to God

On Mother's Day, May 14th, we at LCF rejoiced with these 4 couples as they dedicated themselves and their precious little ones to God! Pictured from left: Zach & Julie with Isaac, Jeff & Jodi with Theodore, Sammy & Rosanna with Shayne, and Joel & Lara with Peter (along with Mira and Jack). There were a few families who were not able to participate this time, so we will have another dedication in a few months. Please keep these young families in your prayers and look for ways you can help and support them. ■

## 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, Delaney Yutzy, and Doris Swartz