

The LCF Connection

October 2023



Reflections

My Brother and a Creek Named DARBY

by Pam Stanforth

On September 10th, a cool fall-like Sunday morning, instead of meeting as usual at our church building, our LCF church family gathered for an outdoor worship service on Dale and Sharon's property, along the beautiful Big Darby Creek. We acknowledged the presence of Jesus as we gathered in His name to celebrate through praise, worship, prayer, preaching, testimony, baptism, and ended with a bountiful shared meal. All the chairs were full because everyone brought their own chair.

Being there by Darby creek, I could not help but think of my brother, whose name was Darby. In 1988, he was 28 years old, and after choosing to make Jesus the Lord of his life, he followed Christ's example and was baptized in a Louisiana creek. How I treasure that memory of his baptism because only a short while later, he left this world for heaven, where he met his Savior face-to-face.

Although we had a nice-size group, we missed those who were not able to be there with us. We wish that you could have been there to share in the blessings we received that day! As I reflect on the day, following are some of the blessings that I recall:

- The presence of Holy Spirit was evident among us in every part of the service beginning with the beautiful time of worship Jesse led us in, as we savored the sights and sounds of God creation.
- Jeremy shared a wonderful message from God's Word about the importance of community—of gathering in small groups so that we might find a safe space to share our burdens, to pray together, and encourage one another. I was so inspired to hear his testimony of how God worked in his marriage and family—bringing about change and healing as he grew in his relationship with Christ.

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Small Group Connections

by Amie Smith

With small groups starting back up (after taking a summer break), this is a good time to reflect on how the socialization is beneficial to us. When I think of small groups the word that comes to mind is connection. In a smaller group setting people can come together to engage in discipleship and Bible study. This setting also provides a way to develop close friendships. These friendships will help you feel more comfortable when needing support in your personal or spiritual life.



This summer our small group had the opportunity to get together and connect at Zach and Julie's house. We invited people who had been a part of our small group in the past to join us. It was wonderful to catch up and reconnect with Dan & Jenn and David & Brenda and their families. For years, we have all been investing into each other's lives. We have added quite a few children to our mix, and have been there for one another through the struggles and the praises. We have watched each other develop and strengthen in our faith.

A verse comes to mind when I reflect on our small group. It is Hebrews 10:24-25: *"And let us be concerned about one another in order to promote love and good works, not staying away from our worship meetings, as some habitually do, but encouraging each other, and all the more as you see the day drawing near."*

If you are uncertain about being a part of a small group, I encourage you to take a leap of faith and join one! In my personal experience I have found more profound friendships and a deeper understanding of God's teachings through them. I promise you, the connection and growth that you will experience will benefit you in so many ways! ■



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Thankful for Our Pastors

by Amie Smith

This space is where you usually read a message from one of our pastors. This month I'd like to use it instead, to write something about our pastors.

October is typically known as Pastor Appreciation month. It is an opportunity for churches to think about the value of their pastors. It's a good time to remember the many things our pastors do for the church—time spent in prayer, meetings, discipleship, visitations, preparing sermons, and many other responsibilities.

So how can we show our appreciation to our pastors? One of the best ways is to regularly be praying for them. The work of pastoring can be mentally, emotionally, and physically exhausting at times. Lifting them up in prayer helps to strengthen and encourage them. I'm sure they would be blessed if you told them that you are praying for them.

Another way is to volunteer and help out—to do whatever you can to make their work a joy. Hebrews 13:17 says, *"Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you."*

One other way is to simply find ways to show them your support. Let our pastors know that you are with them and are following them, as they are following Christ. There are times when they need to make hard decisions or deal with difficult issues. Showing them your support will encourage them and remind them that they are not alone. We are planning to have a Pastor Appreciation potluck after the service here at LCF on Sunday, October 15th. That would be a great time for you to connect with our pastors and to express your appreciation.

I love to find ways to show Pastor Rob and Reuben how much they mean to me. Through our words and/or our actions, let us bless and affirm our pastors as we express our gratitude for their faithful service. ■



Elders' Notes

by Rob & Doris Swartz

Since Reuben & Vicki and Abraham & Naomi were just getting back from their travels to California and Kenya and continuing to grieve the recent losses they have experienced, and Keith & Shannon were preparing to leave for a family vacation to visit their son Justin in Alaska, we decided to cancel our in-person elders meeting that was scheduled for September 13th.

Rob serves as overseer at Olentangy Community Church and has been impressed with an app (called BAND) that they use to help facilitate good communication and connection in their church body. Since we didn't meet in person, and there were some things we needed to discuss, Rob proposed that we, as an elders team, use this as an opportunity to test BAND out and see how easy it is to use and determine if would work well for us.

Here are some of the things we have been discussing via BAND and earlier WhatsApp discussions:

- Prayer requests for recent losses and difficult situations
- The importance of giving as an act of worship
- The need for additional small group leaders
- Planning for another gratitude Sunday on November 19th

We look forward to working with EJ (Evan Jenkins) as he serves as a pastoral intern with us this year.

Please be praying that God will guide the upcoming elder selection process. We are planning to take nominations for a new elder on October 8th. We would like to have the new elder be able to join us for our elder's retreat in November, if possible. ■

Young Adult Conversations

by Annika Miller

For the first time since the beginning of summer, our young adult group got together on Monday, September 11th. Instead of our typical meeting at Steve and Phyllis', we met at Los Mariachis where we were treated to tasty Mexican food. We had a great time eating our fill and catching up on the summer's happenings. This may have even been the largest gathering so far (I guess that's what happens when free Mexican cuisine is offered). Because the group was so large, we headed to the park after the meal where we could more easily hear everyone in the group for our time of discussion. The park turned out to be the perfect place where we could enjoy the beautiful evening and all gather around and hear each other.

I found it encouraging as we listened to each other's good moments of the summer as well as the summer's challenges. I was reminded of the importance of having a strong community that is there when things are good, but also, when things are hard. Altogether, the evening served as a refreshing reminder of the presence of community in the easy seasons and in the difficult seasons. ■



Getting to Know...*Evan Jenkins (aka EJ)*

by Elisabeth Yoder

Hopefully you have already met EJ since he has attended here at LCF quite a bit while he has been studying at Rosedale Bible College the past few years. This year he is participating in RBC's Bridge Program and will be serving as a pastoral intern here at LCF. We hope you'll enjoy learning to know him a bit more through this interview and that you will enjoy connecting with him as he serves among us.

We would love to get to know you better! Please give us a brief overview of your life thus far.

Yeah, of course! I was born on June 26, 2003, out of wedlock. In the first year or two of my life my mom had custody of me. At this time (and before this, as well as for a while after) she was stuck in bad things. She and her family consumed lots of drugs, as well as illegally selling them. When I was about two or three years old my dad gained custody of me, and to be honest, he hasn't had the best of influences on me, either. Both of my parents have dealt me many wounds and brokenness in my lifetime: like my mom locking me in a room with cartoons while they were out there doing their thing, and sometimes she would let me out with them. My dad had problems controlling his anger, and if I would make some small mistake, he would scream at me. As a young boy, I was powerless in situations like these. Up until this last summer I had not fully realized the extent of their harm on me and my mind. I thought my childhood was universally normal for everyone, or at least nothing out of the ordinary. But I now know that is not true. If it had not been for the Lord my God, I would probably be in prison for consuming and dealing drugs, all the while, smoking and drinking. (That's the short version. ☺)

Has there been an event or period in your life that was particularly formative? How has it impacted you?

Hands down, I have to give it to my time in Chile last winter term. I lived with a Chilean family. I had never received such love and care and admiration as what they showed to me. Every day I saw Christ through them. They always reminded me that even if my parents forsake me, the Lord will receive me and take me in. (Psalm 27:10) I am forever thankful and grateful with my whole heart for my Chilean family, and their adopting of me as their son.

When did you first feel called to ministry?

The very beginning of my senior year, in 2020, the Lord gave me a broad calling—that I'd be devoting my life to a ministry one day. Which led me to look for a bible college, in which then, I found Rosedale online, and the rest is history.

What are your future dreams in ministry?

Honestly, I am not exactly sure. I have done a bit of missions, as well as some prison ministry. At this point I'm trying out three different ministries of which I believe one could perhaps be my calling.

What are you looking forward to about this year at Rosedale and your role as an intern at LCF?

There are so many things, but I will keep it brief. I am mostly excited to see what the Lord will do this year in relation to both of those, and how He will move. But I'm really excited and ready for this internship. I am also going to be a part of three different choirs, and serve again with DNA, and the list goes on and on!

What is something you are passionate about? How do you enjoy engaging with that passion?

The greatest of my passions is to reach the unreachable, the lost, the untouched, the lepers, and to preach the Gospel to all people. Almost, but slightly less equal, would be serving others. I believe I do these things by obeying Christ and Scripture, by being available and showing compassion to the communities around me, and going the extra mile for anyone (not as a pushover, of course), as well as doing my works in secret.

What are some long-term goals you are working towards?

A physical body that is fit and able for my calling, and to preach the Gospel in every circumstance; to become marriageable; to bear more and more fruit; and to see the fulfillment of my calling . . .

What are three items on your bucket list?

1. See Jesus face to face
2. Get married and have a family
3. Visit my Chilean family every now and then (and drive the Autobahn)

How do you enjoy spending your free time?

I would say my favorite thing to do in my free time is hanging out with the Rosedale community (friends). I also love commentating on Scripture, singing, playing basketball, lifting, and having long one-on-one conversations.

With unlimited time and resources, what is something you would love to try?

I would love to learn some hands-on skills—such as construction, woodworking, and car mechanics.

Is there a Biblical character you relate to in particular? What about their story speaks to you?

I love thinking of the prophet Elijah and the prophet Habakkuk. With Elijah, the Lord used him in awesome ways. The boldness and courage he had in the Lord is awesome. With Habakkuk, it is about the conversation between him and God. He essentially complains to what he sees as an inactive God who lets evil go unpunished and injustice to run rampant. But the Lord's response tells it all—that He is actually always working and active, even when we cannot see it.



Darby...continued

- Jeremy's message dove-tailed perfectly with Pastor Rob's introduction to new small groups that are starting up this fall.
- Jeremy and Mandy's son, Jayce, gave his testimony and shared why he was choosing to be baptized. Jayce's simplistic message reminded me of Jesus' call to: "suffer the little ones to come to me..." Again, I reflected on my younger brother's testimony of Christ's presence in his heart on the day he was baptized. At the close of the service, we all walked over to the creek, where we witnessed Jayce's baptism.
- And then, there was food and great fellowship! As I mentioned earlier, there was an abundance of wonderful food for the potluck meal that we shared together.
- While we were eating and children were playing, Jayce was jumping on one of the trampolines. He landed wrong and broke his foot. I was near the trampoline as we all waited for the ambulance to arrive—praying silently and giving support as needed. I was so touched to watch Jayce, who was obviously in quite a bit of pain, work his hand under the edge of the trampoline netting to find Pastor Rob's hand, saying, "Pray for me Rob, please?" Of course Rob prayed, as did we all. Jayce's mom, Mandy, later commented that she felt Satan was already at work trying to test Jayce's commitment to Christ, but that this experience only made him stronger. It is certainly a baptism day that he will never forget!

My thoughts returned once again to my brother, Darby, who lived only a few months after his conversion and baptism. He left an indelible mark in that short time on hundreds of lives. As I pray for Jayce, I am trusting that God will use his life and testimony, as well, to reach hundreds, and maybe even thousands.

I pray also for our small groups as they begin meeting again. I hope that Jeremy's testimony will be a reminder to small group leaders that they may never know how God will use their small group, and the times of prayer and Bible study, to change lives for eternity! It has been ten years since Jeremy and Mandy first attended a small group Bible study at the home of Rob and Doris. Jeremy admitted he first attended it with much skepticism and with ulterior motives, never expecting to be impacted in such an incredible way. What a blessing to hear the powerful sermon that he preached and to see that his son also chose to follow Christ and demonstrate his faith through water baptism in the Big DARBY Creek. Wow! Isn't our God good? Yes, He is—each and every day! ■



Evan Jenkins...continued

Is there an aspect of faith that you've been focused on nurturing & developing recently? How have you seen the fruit of it?

One of the biggest things I have been trying to focus on, currently, is doing things in secret when no one sees, and the Father who sees in secret will reward me openly. I love to serve. That is a great passion of mine—serving, whether in the presence of others or not.

What is something you are excited about right now?

Right now, I am really excited to be in my third year at Rosedale and doing this internship at LCF!

What aspect of community is particularly meaningful to you?

I would say communal prayer, worship, love, and service. As well as enjoyment of each other's presence and fellowship.

How can we, as your church community, best love and support you?

For me, I am very action-oriented. Meaning that, actions speak so much more than words ever can. Action is the proof of your words. If someone would say they love me, and they do not back it up by showing it and acting it out, I may question if they really mean it. So many have left when the going gets tough. When the rubber meets the road, many have shrunk away, and left. I ask this, just out of a surety. Because of my past, it can be hard for me to truly trust sometimes. Just be yourselves, and allow me to be your servant, just as Christ himself has shown us to serve. But my love is not conditional upon whether I am loved or not, or whether someone has my back no-matter-what, or not. Pray that I will be faithful to grow in Christ and serve Him well.

Thanks, EJ, for your openness and vulnerability and for your desire to serve and be a part of our church family here at LCF. We look forward to learning to know you better and to seeing what all God has in store for you! ■



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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, Annika Miller, and Doris Swartz