

# The LCF Connection

January 2024

## A New App for the New Year

by Doris Swartz

We are always looking for ways to better connect with and care for one another as a church family, as well as to communicate and keep everyone up-to-date with what's happening at LCF. We are currently trying out a new app called BAND in hopes that it will simplify our communication and enhance our connection with one another.

Rob has been observing BAND for about a year with Olentangy Community Church (the church in Columbus where he serves as Overseer), and our elders team has been using it for the past several months. Here are some of the things we like about it:

- It keeps all our communication and information in one central place.
- It allows everyone (who is part of the group) the opportunity to be able to post directly to it themselves (make announcements, schedule events, share prayer requests, needs, etc.).
- It allows those in the group the opportunity to reply and interact with posts made.
- It provides a way for quick and easy feedback through surveys and polls.
- It keeps all of the posts/replies in its own string of conversation.
- It gives an easy way for people to RSVP to events and to add them to their personal calendar.
- You can use it on your phone, tablet, and/or your computer.



Those are just some of the reasons why we think it could be a helpful app for us as a church. We'd like to hear what you think! We would love to have as many of you as possible join us to try it over the next several months and give us your feedback. If you are an active part of our LCF family, see the email that you received recently for more details and instructions on how to get started. If there are some of you who don't want to try it out yet, we will continue to send the main church information out by email, for the time being.

If you have any questions or trouble, feel free to reach out to anyone on LCF's tech team, and we will be glad to help you get it installed and navigate the app. We realize that some of us enjoy new things more than others and that learning something new can be challenging and uncomfortable to begin with, so we want to give ourselves several months to adjust. We are looking forward to this new opportunity and are hopeful that it will help us BAND together a bit more, as a church family! ■

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## Christmas Highlights at LCF

by Jeff Gates

Music was definitely in the air at LCF during the month of December. Three special musical events helped to prepare our hearts for Christmas.

During the December 3rd Sunday morning service, the Rosedale Bible College Choir took on the role of the worship team. Led by Director Ken Miller, the young musicians sang and played instruments—sharing in a beautiful variety of musical styles.

On Monday evening, December 11, LCF once again hosted the annual Christmas Cabaret presented by individuals served by Madison County Board of Developmental Disabilities (and community members). A packed house enjoyed robust performances of songs ranging from 'Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer' to 'Mary, Did You Know.' The night ended with the audience joining all of the participants in the singing of 'White Christmas.' Among the community members helping with the event were Jesse Diller, Shepherd Ndungu, Reid Gates, and Aaron Gates.

The Advent season ended with a beautifully poignant candlelight service on Christmas Eve morning. With Jesse Diller and Chris Conte as the Worship Team and Keith Scheffel as the Moderator, those on hand were led in a meaningful celebration of Christ's birth. Rob shared a practical message, and Linda Pratt sang a thought-provoking, a cappella version of 'Sweet Little Jesus Boy.' The children were adorable with their leading of 'Silent Night.' ■



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## Becoming a New Person

A Message from the Pastor  
by Reuben Sairs

Sometimes we fall into the trap of thinking that Christian discipleship—following Christ, is two long lists—things we ought to do and things we ought not do. We walk through each day hoping that the balance sheet looks right by bedtime or at least sometimes. This is a trap because it makes our life in Jesus a question of our moral energy. We must keep things moving, but our frequent failures probably result in unhappiness, or at least in us having to overlook a lot to preserve our balance.

Our discipleship should be measured in what kind of people we are or are becoming. What we do flows from the work Jesus does in us through his Holy Spirit. Transformation is the key to discipleship—growth from the inside, change, formation, becoming. Real repentance happens when we have a change of heart, mind, and will. It is that internal process led and fed by God that results in actual changes in what we do or step back from doing.

Of course, we measure these changes in ourselves by examining our behavior, but some of our most worthy opponents (in our sinful nature) fight in sneaky ways. What are the corrupting sins of our nature? Consider our greed, our anger, our violence, our superiority and entitlement, our selfishness and self-absorption, our frequent dullness about loving God. These things have to change from within. They are too much a part of us to yield to our intentions to change.

One passage describing the character that Christ is forming in us comes to my mind fairly often. Maybe I'm in special need of it? The passage offers nothing specific in terms of applications, and a shallow citing of the verses makes it sound like a platitude. You know platitudes—those wise-old pieces of moral advice that are often heard but have lost their energy—frequently cited but usually not getting us anywhere. The passage comes from James 1:19-20.

*“So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.”*

This is the person I want to be, at least in my better moments. I assume that wanting it is the first step in the right direction. I admit that my natural inclinations all seem to run in the opposite direction. How often am I already formulating my response, before another person is finished talking? Am I really even listening to them much at all?

I'm trying to have fewer opinions, and be less in need of sharing MY viewpoint all the time. I'm trying to shake the sin of human anger. It leads nowhere good. So often when we're angry, we're righteously angry. We're on God's side, so we don't need to listen to others--we have no time for their perspectives. They don't know. We're doing the work of God so our job is to talk and overwhelm the forces of evil and ignorance with our bold words. God's on our side, so of course we're angry, and if someone else doesn't share that anger it just shows us what a spiritual knucklehead they are. We're doing the very work of God, so righteousness will flow from our angry assertiveness. The punchline is in verse 20. No, it won't. ■

## Elders' Notes

by Rob and Doris Swartz

The elders did not have a typical meeting in December. Often we use our December meeting to take the out-going elder out to eat at a restaurant. This year, Keith and Shannon insisted that instead of doing that, they wanted to host all of the elders team at their home for a meal.

So on Friday, December 1, the elders met at the Scheffel home and had a wonderful evening together. We began with a delicious meal, including multiple kinds of soups, several different salads, homemade bread, and an awesome chocolate dessert. After the meal Keith & Shannon's daughter, Kendra, and her husband, Trevor, showed us the van they are converting to a camper. We ended the evening by playing a fun game together called Blank Slate.

The evening was a fitting reflection of how Keith and Shannon have served so graciously on the elders team for the past 4 years. Keith worked hard on helping us get the church constitution updated and also did a great job helping us to navigate the challenges of COVID-19 in 2020. Thanks so much, Keith & Shannon!! We will certainly miss having you both on the team!

That being said, we are thankful for Jeremy Hisey's willingness to serve as elder and are excited about having him and Mandy join us. We look forward to discovering what God has in store for us as an elders team and as a congregation in this coming year! ■



## Council Update

by Jim Jones

The Council met via phone on December 19th. We continue to look for ways to save money. We are looking at everything, from health care to lawn care. Our annual church meeting about budget/finances will be held on January 21 after the potluck. Rhoda, Russ, and Sarah will all be available to answer any questions.

A big thank you to Rob for purchasing and installing four used remote thermostats. He was able to find them on eBay for a total cost of only \$400. They were the same make and model of the one existing thermostat that was installed professionally by West Jeff Heating and Cooling. They can be controlled remotely by a phone app. This will be a big help to us in controlling the temperature and saving on our energy costs.

We will be joining two classrooms to accommodate our growing youth group's need for more space. Kelvin Snider will begin work on the wall demolition project in January.

Russ has agreed to serve another 3-year-term on the council. We will have a congregational affirmation vote concerning that, after the first of the year. ■



# Getting to Know...Austin Fox

by Elisabeth Yoder

Austin Fox has been attending and helping out with LCF's youth group for several years. He recently became a member here at LCF. Here is our interview with him to help us learn to know him better.

## **Tell us a little about yourself! We would love to know a brief background about your life thus far to help us get to know you better.**

I grew up in the Plain City area. When I was around nine-years-old, we moved to Mechanicsburg where my family has been living since. Growing up, my dad introduced me to fishing and model railroading, and both hobbies have stuck with me.

I grew up going to church with my parents, but it wasn't until just after my senior year of high school, when I was going through some rough times emotionally, that I realized my need for a personal relationship with Jesus. Since then, I have been involved in various children's ministries. This past summer I worked on the maintenance team at Skyview Ranch Christian Camp and Retreat Center in Millersburg, OH, and I am currently volunteering at DNA's ESL program, and I am one of the youth leaders at LCF.

## **What are three words that describe the person you want to be?**

Caring, helpful, and diligent.

## **Is there a Biblical character you particularly relate to? What is it about their story that speaks to you?**

I've been watching The Chosen series the last couple of months and that has given me a new perspective on the disciples. I can relate most to Peter and Thomas. Like Peter, I can be very passionate about things I enjoy and sometimes forget to involve others, but I can use those passions to connect with others who have the same passion. Like Thomas, I can overthink a problem and it can lead to anxiety or doubt, but I can use my problem-solving skills to help solve difficult situations on the jobsite.

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

I am very passionate about fishing. I enjoy heading out to the lake any time I am able. It doesn't matter if I'm fishing from the bank or my kayak. Even if I don't catch anything, I still enjoy being outside, enjoying God's creation.

## **What are some things you enjoy doing in your free time?**

I enjoy fishing, kayaking, model railroading, and playing board games.

## **What are a few long-term goals you have?**

I would like to have a cabin on 20 acres with a pond near Skyview Ranch, and be able to volunteer there more frequently.

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

If I had the time, I would love to try some local kayak bass fishing tournaments.

## **Do you have a skill, accomplishment, or trait that you are particularly proud of?**

I am really skilled at targeting spawning bass. I like being able to see how the fish respond to my different bait and determine which one works best.

## **What is a Biblical truth you wish people paid more attention to?**

No matter your own personal shortcomings, God can still use you for the work he has called you to.

## **Is there a quote or piece of advice that has stuck with you and been instrumental in your life? If so, what?**

This is not a quote, but two scriptures that I really like are 1 Corinthians 13 and the second half of 1 John 4. They both show God's love toward us and how we are to express love toward others.

## **What is something you are excited about right now?**

I am excited about going to a retreat for young adults at Skyview Ranch over New Year's.

## **What aspects of community are particularly meaningful to you?**

Fellowship and sharing each other's burdens.

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

Through fellowshiping together and through prayer.

Thanks, Austin, for sharing. We are thankful to have you as part of our LCF family and look forward to learning to know you better! ■





## Connections

by Mike & Karen Baker



Wow, what a year we have had in C4! We want to take a second to highlight a few things that have happened over the year, the last quarter and a few things coming up.

We have seen growth in C4 over the past year, both in group size and in spiritual maturity. Our group has grown to an average of 14 students, with four students being baptized this year. We have outgrown our little room, which is a good problem to face. We have had a few of the students lead our teaching time and will have a few more who will lead some bible studies in the coming year.

We had a Thanksgiving feast on November 26th, with each student bringing a dish. Rob and Doris were our special guests for the evening. We had fun sharing what we were thankful for, playing volleyball and other games.

On December 18th, we had our 2nd annual Christmas party with an ugly sweater contest. We wish we would have remembered to take photos to share with all of you, but several weeks earlier, we started using a phone basket during our times together, so that all of our phones can take a sabbath from us. We forgot to keep a phone out for taking pictures.

We are thankful for Shepherd Ndungu and the wonderful job he has done leading and assisting LCF's youth group since 2018. Beginning in 2024 he will no longer be helping out in this way. His season of life has shifted, and God is calling him to some new things. For us, it is a season of mourning as Shepherd has brought so much life and fun, along with depth and spiritual teachings, to our group. He grew up in the youth group and then transitioned to helping with leadership for the past 6 years; so it feels like he has been the glue that helped hold it together. He will be missed indefinitely, but we are excited to see what God has for him next.

As we head into 2024, here are the dates for some exciting things we are looking forward to:

- Winter Jam in Columbus on January 27th
- Spring Retreat at Bethel Camp - April 12-14
- City Challenge Mission Trip - June 10-14

Please continue to pray for our youth that they will choose God in the midst of the noise of their world. Pray for them to grow in their faith and to see Jesus in their everyday. Pray for Shepherd as he steps into a new season of his life. Pray that he will feel God's presence with him and walk in His will. Pray for our youth as we adjust to youth group without Shepherd. Thanks so much for your prayers and support. If reading our updates piques your interest in C4 and our activities, we would love for you to talk with us. We are always looking for leaders. ■



## Reflections

### Denying Myself In a World of Entitlement

by Jeremy Hisey

Lately I have been thinking a lot about the series Rob preached from Philippians 2. It's fascinating how the way Jesus lived his life here on earth as an example for us, is so opposite of the way the world teaches us to live. We are bombarded with advertisements of things we "need" to entertain us and fulfill our enjoyment in life. Society tells us that we are entitled to be upset or hurt when others disagree with our beliefs. Meanwhile, we read these words about Jesus, who truly was entitled to anything He desired, *"who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant."*

Jesus came here to serve, not to be served. As believers of Jesus, He has called us to follow him. He said if *"anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."*

I don't know about you, but denying myself is an extremely difficult thing to do. I typically feel entitled to spend my free time how I want to spend it. I like to spend my time doing things I enjoy. But as I reflect on the life of Christ, and how He has called us to live, I realize that doesn't add up.

So how can I reconcile the two? As followers of Jesus, our ultimate purpose in life is to point others to Him. In John 3:30, John the Baptist said this, *"He must become greater, I must become less."* John had it figured out. How can we point others to Jesus if our focus is always on ourselves?

Jesus's way of life is at odds with the world. Most of us, at some point in our life, have probably wanted to make a name for ourselves in some area, achieving a position of importance or a title of recognition. If you can relate, you are not alone. The disciples did, as well, until Jesus set them straight in Matthew 20. Jesus said, *"whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave, just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."*

In his series, Rob shared about the Great Reversal that is to come where those who exalt themselves here on earth will be humbled and those who humble themselves will be exalted. The world tells us we are entitled to live our best life. But for us, as believers and followers of Jesus, as Rob said, it is about giving our best life now so that we can receive the best that is to come in the next life. ■

## 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, Annika Miller, and Doris Swartz

