

# The LCF Connection

February 2024



## Celebrate the Church!

by Amie Smith

On January 21st we, at LCF, spent the day “celebrating the church!” We were thrilled to welcome Belinda Ewing, Josiah Baker, Justin and Janae Newswanger (pictured from left to right) as new members at LCF. Additionally, all those who are currently members at LCF were given the opportunity to reflect on their own membership and renew it. Everyone was asked to consider how God wants them to be involved.

We, as a church, have a yearly membership renewal, which reminds all of us what it means to be an active member. Membership signifies that we are members of one another and helps us to stay committed to the body of Christ. It gives people the opportunity to reflect on their commitment to the church body and what that means, practically. It also helps to keep our membership role current.

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

## A Free Winter Term at RBC

by Corin and Katie Wenger

In the Autumn of 2023, Corin was presented with the chance to attend Rosedale Bible College's 2024 Winter Term (January–February) on a scholarship provided by Rosedale through LCF. It did not take much time for us to decide to accept the offer.

When we received the offer Corin was in the middle of his first job back on a freighter on the Great Lakes after nearly a year away from working as a maritime engineer. It felt fitting that the offer came after Corin was no longer working a full-time programming job and was instead working a job that allowed for him to take the winter off; the freedom of Corin's schedule made our decision easy.

We're delighted to be back in Ohio for a while and to have the opportunity to reconnect with our community here. We both have family in the area, and it has been wonderful to get to regularly see the familiar faces of family and friends.

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## Wall Demolition!

On Thursday evening, January 11th, several guys met at the church and had a good time demolishing a wall!

A big thanks to Kelvin Snider for giving leadership to the project of removing the wall between classrooms # 104 and 105 (with minimal cost) so that C4 (LCF's youth group) can have a room large enough to accommodate their growing size! ■



## Elders' Notes

by Jeremy Hisey

Our January Elders' meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, January 17 at the home of Rob and Doris. However, Rob was sick, so we all agreed it best to meet via Zoom instead. Those who joined the call were Rob and Doris Swartz, Reuben and Vicki Sairs, Abraham Ndungu, Gideon Eichorn, and Jeremy Hisey.

The majority of the meeting was centered around our annual Celebrate the Church Sunday service, to be held on January 21st. Rob shared with us the passage which he would be preaching on and how that shaped his vision for the church this year. We discussed church membership, both bringing in new members, as well as having current members renewing their membership.

Other topics that were discussed pertaining to Celebrate the Church Sunday were the business meeting and the potluck.

Reuben concluded the meeting with prayer. ■

### *Celebrate the Church...continued*

Pastor Rob's message was rightly titled, "The Unattractive Church" and was based on Isaiah 53:2-3. He made the case that Jesus was intentionally unattractive. He had no majesty so that people were not drawn to him. He was not born into any socio or economic privilege that would make him stand out. God wanted people to be drawn to God alone, not from an attractive form. Thus, people were drawn to Jesus as He spoke God's words, showing the world who God is.

It's easy for church leaders to contemplate, "How can we bring people back to the church?" This causes them to question whether they need better worship, more activities or better amenities. This "attractive ministry" focuses on giving people what they want, but not necessarily what they need. The attractive model is hard to satisfy and there is no place in the church for it.

Pastor Rob concluded with 1 Peter 2:9, "*But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*" We, as the church, are being built together by God, to be a people of light. Our purpose is to give glory to God. The church is about God! We, the people, are to be a beautiful temple of praise to our God.

As the service came to a close there was a slideshow of the past year at LCF, which was a beautiful reminder of God's faithfulness to us and the many blessings He has given us. Immediately after the service we took our annual church family photo and then enjoyed a fellowship potluck meal together.

Toward the end of the potluck there was a short business meeting where Pastor Rob highlighted some of the ways people serve in ministry here at LCF as well as opportunities for others to be involved. Leaders from the various teams gave a short update. Russ Hauge represented the council in talking about LCF's financial situation and the budget process.

Our "Celebrate the Church Sunday" was a great time to connect with one another and to humbly reflect on how to serve Christ in and with this wonderful church family. ■

## Council Update

by Jim Jones

The Council met via phone twice in January, on the 9th and the 17th, to tackle the challenge of our 2024 budget. Our 2023 income was \$172,794.35 compared to our expenses of \$193,944.75—leaving us with a negative balance of -\$21,150.40. We are trying to create our 2024 budget based on the current giving and expense trends. Some of the changes include:

- We will be saving \$9,000 in our 2024 budget through a significant savings in health care and lawn care. Rob and Doris qualified for Medicaid health insurance for a savings of \$6200. A new lawn service provider was hired which will provide a savings of \$2,880 per year. Madison Lawn Care will continue snow removal for us this winter, but we will need to find a contractor for snow removal next winter.
- Our contributions to Rosedale International, Rosedale Network of Churches, and Rosedale Bible College will start off unfunded in 2024. The contributions will be determined month-to-month, based on the funds available. Our goal is that we will be able to fund them monthly or quarterly and be able to make up any unpaid balances later in the year.
- The Benevolence Team is going to use their 2023 carry-over balance for 2024.
- We were able to start off funding the youth group with \$3,000 for 2024, out of the \$5,000 requested. Hopefully the remainder can be funded later in the year.
- Reuben's associate pastor salary will be reduced, beginning in February.

We hope to finish up the budget and send it to the congregation for their review and approval in the next few weeks. ■

# Getting to Know...Justin & Janae Newswanger

by Annika Miller

Justin and Janae began attending LCF last year and became members on January 21st. We hope this interview will help you learn a bit more about them.

## We would love to get to know you better! Tell us a brief background about your lives so far—how did you meet? Where are you originally from? What brought you to this area?

- We both grew up in northern Indiana, Justin from Wakarusa and Janae from Middlebury. Justin's dad was an Old Order Mennonite Bishop, but he started attending Janae's church as a teenager. We started dating 10 years later when we were the only ones who could make it to an event Justin planned. We moved to this area for Janae's job.

## What are your jobs, how do your jobs play to your strengths, and how do they challenge you?

- Justin: I'm a pilot. I love connecting with new people, and as a charter pilot I'm always meeting new people. I often need to work evenings and weekends, and I find it challenging to find ways to prioritize relationships.
- Janae: I'm an analytical chemist. I enjoy analytical thinking and problem solving, which are a big part of my job. I find office politics particularly challenging. :)

## This or that? (or both?)

- Dog or Cat?.....Dog  
Coffee or Tea?.....Justin loves coffee; Janae loves both!  
Fruits or Vegetables?.....Both  
Pancakes or Waffles?.....Waffles—Justin makes the best waffles  
Soft or Hard Tacos?.....Soft  
Reading or Writing?.....Reading  
Winter or Summer?.....We both likes summer but Justin likes winter if there is lots of snow!

## What are some of your hobbies?

- Justin: airplanes
- Janae: reading
- Both: hiking and trying new restaurants

## What are some of your favorite places you have visited/traveled to?

- Split, Croatia
- Mińsk Mazowiecki, Poland
- Mt. Blanc, France

## What is your go-to date night?

- Dinner at La Tavola in Grandview or hitting the Chick-Fil-A drive through if we're pressed for time.

## What is one piece of advice or challenge someone has given you that has helped shape who you are today?

- Always do something today that tomorrow you can thank yourself for.

## What is a Bible verse or passage that has been challenging you recently?

- The sermon on the mount—the upside-down kingdom with its values are always a challenge.

## What brings you to LCF?

- We've enjoyed getting to know new people.

## What are some ways you look forward to being involved in here at LCF?

- We love coffee, so at some point you'll see us Sunday morning making the coffee for you!

## How can we support and pray for you?

- We're expecting our first child in July! Pray for us as we become parents.

We are glad to have you as part of our LCF family and will certainly be praying for you as you begin this new journey of parenthood! ■



Attention Couples: We hope you will join us for this special evening!

## Valentine's Date Night

"Tools and Tips for Your Marriage" by Lavern & Ronda Nissley

- Childcare provided
- Special snacks and drinks
- Door prizes
- Fun icebreaker
- And more!

Friday, February 16th  
6:30-8:30 p.m.  
at LCF

Please RSVP by Feb. 4.



## The Master Storyteller

by Sarah Eichorn

I like to think of each of our lives as a book with God being the author and us being a coauthor. The chapters in our book are all part of a more complete story that is still being written. Some chapters may bring a feeling of warmth and happiness when reflected upon while others may be hard to revisit. Others may feel mundane, and still others may be mixed with adventure and uncertainty as the unknowns play out. For me, the chapter with the story of my family has been filled with one unexpected happening after another.



Two years ago, we were in the middle of navigating some crazy twists and turns of another adoption we had secretly been pursuing for months. Through circumstances beyond our control, we thought the door to adopting the little girl we had fallen in love with had permanently shut, but it

miraculously opened up again two days later, and we felt a glimmer of hope as we moved forward.

We completed our home study in a record 17 days, and our papers were submitted to the county one day before they said is the absolute latest they will accept them. The next week we participated in the matching conference, and four days later, we finally heard that they deliberated most of the day before ultimately deciding to place the little girl with the other family that had unexpectedly entered the scene. We came out of that experience without adding to our family but now as licensed foster parents. Isn't that interesting?

On December 27th, I was on my annual day out where I spend time reflecting on the past year and looking forward to the coming one. As I looked back on 2023, I wrote that I was disappointed that we didn't add to our family in the last year. Within a half hour of writing that, I got a referral call from our foster agency about a little baby needing a home. I said yes but assumed that, like many times before, I would soon hear that placement was made elsewhere. Nevertheless, before I came home, I prayed that God would put our names right in front of their eyes if we're the best family for this baby.

You can imagine the shock when I got a call the next morning saying our home was selected. Even our agency was shocked and concluded that this was meant to be, as she is from a county that rarely places in a home outside of that county. The next day we brought our little bundle of joy home!

She is such a gift and has brought so much joy to our lives. The future is uncertain, but we believe God brought her to us in His perfect timing.

If you find yourself in a chapter filled with uncertainty, my challenge to you is to play your part as coauthor while leaving the pen in the hands of the Author, who is the Master Storyteller. ■



RBC...continued

Neither the scholarship nor childcare allowed both of us to take classes, so while Katie spends lots of quality time with Cor (who turned two in December and is loving the wide-open campus, student center, and a plethora of new friends), Corin is taking seven credits over the six-week term:

- Spiritual Formation (a one-credit class which is a part of the core curriculum at RBC),
- Spiritual Formation: Disciplines of the Christian Life, and
- Gospel of John (taught by Reuben!).

We are both quite busy in our own ways. God has certainly been using our time here to mature our marriage, our faith, and to develop us into the likeness of Christ, and we are confident that he will continue to do so.

It has been a blessing to share daily meals with the faculty and students. We often spend our evenings discussing intriguing topics heard throughout the day over mealtimes or during lectures.

Easy access to an exercise room has been a surprising bonus for both of us. Relief from the one-thousand-and-one tasks at home has been refreshing. In brief, the time at Rosedale is proving to be rejuvenating, thought provoking, spiritually enriching, and deeply encouraging.

As we go through our time here and already think about going back home to International Falls, Minnesota, we would appreciate prayers for peace and joy in all the transitions. We are excited by the possibilities that lay ahead of us and would also appreciate prayers for wisdom in decision making. Please join us as we not only pray to the Father that we will continue to honor and glorify God and follow where He leads, but also join us as we pray to the Holy Spirit that He would set our feet on an anointed and definite path.

Thank you all for your prayers and support! (And for the scholarship!!)

~ Corin, Katie, and Cor Wenger ■

## 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