

# The LCF Connection

May 2024

## Changing Seasons

BY DORIS SWARTZ



I love experiencing the beauty and variety of the changing seasons! Springtime is my favorite with all of the blooming flowers and budding trees; although I look forward to the warm days of summer—to relaxing on our patio or hanging out by water somewhere. After that, I'll be ready for the crispness of fall with its colorful changing leaves—a reminder that things which are dying can be beautiful. Of course, by the end of the year, I love to watch the snow fall and transform our world into a winter wonderland! As one season comes, another one goes—each bringing its own beauty, as well as its discomforts and challenges. That happens in our personal lives, as well. Currently, I am saying goodbye to a season of life I have enjoyed for many years, and entering a new and unknown season.

I wrote an article in [The August LCF Connection](#) about the blessing my secretary job has been to me for over 30 years. I ended by saying how Rob and I believe in the value of equipping the next generation to give leadership and that I was praying for God's provision and His guidance for when that should happen. I had no idea how quickly things would change!

Soon after that, I began to hear God speak a consistent message to me in various ways. There were devotionals, gifts, podcasts, songs, etc. that kept popping up with 2 basic themes: "Let Go" and "Trust God." I began to seek God for clarity as I prayed and talked with others. As I did, it became clear that it was time to relinquish my job as administrative assistant so that I would be able to embrace the new things God has in store for me.

It has become more challenging lately, for me to balance the many things that are on my plate: assisting Rob with pastoral responsibilities and caring for/mentoring many different people—at LCF, but also, in our neighborhood, Olentangy Church (where Rob is the Overseer), in the Checking-In cohort we lead (of new pastoral couples in our conference), etc.—on top of my ever-present secretary work. I knew that we would be adding a grandbaby to the mix in March, and that we have a sabbatical coming next year (which requires time to plan for). I remembered that after we finished our sabbatical 7 years ago, that I had told Rob I wanted to be finished with my administrative responsibilities before we would take our next one.

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seeks to develop authentic and  
passionate followers of  
Jesus Christ.*

## Blessed by Books

BY BECKY HOSTETLER

I can frequently be found in our church library checking out or returning multiple books at a time. While I love to read, most of the books I've checked out within the last couple of years have been for my grandmother. Affectionately referred to as Grandma Ball, she is a 99-year-old like no other.

Four years ago, Grandma Ball made the decision to sell her home of 60 years and move into an assisted living facility in Hilliard. While many people begrudgingly make a move like this, Grandma willingly embraced it as a new stage of life. In fact, before Covid brought everything to a stop, Grandma kept herself so busy at her residence that I had to call to schedule a visit. Between meal times, bingo, and riding the little white bus to go on field trips, she was a busy lady!

She has made many friends at her residence (but sadly has lost many as well). She is friendly and welcoming to everyone she meets. Most, if not all, of the residents in her facility are mentally or physically challenged in some manner. Grandma sees each individual as a valuable image-bearer of God and treats them as such.



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# Flourishing in Old Age

*A Message from the Pastor*

BY REUBEN SAIRS

I'm mildly unsettled as a message from the Psalms becomes more relevant. Psalm 71:18:

*Now also when I am old and gray-headed,  
O God, do not forsake me,  
Until I declare Your strength to this generation,  
Your power to everyone who is to come.*

I'm getting older, and so are you. Bodies change, minds change. I've lost some powers, but I've gained some others. I've acquired some beliefs, but I've changed and surrendered some, too. I suppose in some ways I've become weaker, but in others I'm much stronger.

The soul, the real true me, may reflect but is not restricted by my mortal existence. Hopefully, as we grow in wisdom; we will exhibit the fruit of the Holy Spirit; we will speak from experience that will stabilize and control perspectives, opinions and passions. Be that as it may, the earthly part of us will have to wind down, and appear pretty weak to those who will have to care for us. But the soul has a different trajectory, and even though it is often mysterious, the soul is undoubtedly getting us ready...

Psalm 92 is what I will try to make the window into my future:

*The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree,  
He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.  
Those who are planted in the house of the Lord  
Shall flourish in the courts of our God.  
They shall still bear fruit in old age;  
They shall be fresh and flourishing,  
To declare that the Lord is upright;  
He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.*

A lot will depend on how I invest myself now. As a pastor, I've seen older people finish their years differently. Some didn't handle it so well, and I think this was partly a factor of how they had invested themselves earlier. Two inspiring examples stand out to me. They were both men who, in so many words, said that their goal was to get old without getting cranky. I've tried to take their advice and admire their examples.

I imagine you've seen the types. Some older people become embittered, unhappy, dissatisfied with life. They shrink. Others seem to maintain joy, wonder, and not become overly-delicate. They grow.

One of my goals even as I age is to live in a bigger world, and not a smaller and smaller world. I want my views to expand not contract. I want to grow broader, not more narrow. I don't see any merit in pulling back into a tinier existence. It is unrealistic to think this all happens on a physical plane. The day will come for all of us when our strength will be a question of what is happening inside our skulls, in that thing called a mind. But that really matters! Get older and as you do, let your mind soar with our Lord.

I'm sure countless generations have found inspiration in Isaiah 40.

*Even the youths shall faint and be weary,  
And the young men shall utterly fall,  
But those who wait on the Lord  
Shall renew their strength;  
They shall mount up with wings like eagles,  
They shall run and not be weary,  
They shall walk and not faint.*

## Elders' Notes

BY JEREMY HISEY

The Elders April meeting was held at the home of Rob and Doris Swartz on Wednesday, April 17. In attendance were Rob and Doris, Reuben and Vicki, Abraham, Gideon, and Jeremy. We opened our time discussing and praying for the needs of individuals in our congregation. Afterwards, we enjoyed the premiere of the LCF 40-year anniversary video that Doris put together.

Our next order of business was reviewing the updated Constitution that Keith Scheffel has been working on. We all agreed on a couple minor changes that are needed before final approval. Next, we discussed the use of the LCF building for fundraisers put on by individual members of the church. We were all in agreement that some guidelines are needed to ensure these are not mistaken as official LCF events.

Other topics discussed were positions we still need filled at LCF, an update on Jodi's training from Doris, and Rob's plan for a Sabbatical next year which was originally scheduled for this summer. Reuben closed out our time with prayer.

## Council Update

BY JIM JONES

The Council met on April 16th. In attendance were Sarah Eichorn, Rhoda Sommers, Russ Hauge, and Jim Jones by phone conference.

The Council approved payments to Rosedale International, the Masts, and Rosedale Bible College for April.

Reuben will be taking an eight-week mini Sabbatical from RBC in June and July to attend a Biblical Hebrew Course with Harvard Divinity School. He is requesting his accrued continuing education funds that have been set aside for him.

To offset our high energy costs, the LCF Premise use policy has been updated as noted on page 4 and will go into effect June 1, 2024. LCF building usage is available to members and regular attenders provided it is used under the condition that the usage aligns with LCF's mission and Biblical stance (doctrine). Sandy Gregg will continue to do the master scheduling.

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# Getting to Know ...Belinda Ewing

BY THERESA HENNIS

*Belinda became a member at LCF this past January. Many of you have been connecting with and praying for her concerning the prayer requests she has shared on BAND recently. Here is an interview to help us learn to know her a bit better.*

## **Where are you from originally? Did you grow up in a big or small family?**

I was born in Alice, Texas and raised in El Paso. My father was stationed at Ft. Bliss. At the age of 20 I moved to Dallas and then in my 40s, I moved to Ohio.

## **Are you married and have children? What are their ages?**

### **Any grandchildren? Ages?**

I have been married to Jeff for 40 years. Our daughter Lena, is 36. I also have a 55-year-old daughter, Denise, from my first marriage. We have 6 grandchildren: James (17), Austin (16), Kaylena (15), Noah (15), Sofia (13), and Lucy (11).

## **When and how did you come to know Jesus?**

My dad had an art gallery and frame shop. One of the artists was a Baptist pastor. It was through him and his church that I became a Christian and was baptized.



## **What has been a life-changing discovery in your life? Like something that might have happened that changed your whole life path or career path? Or anything that was a special aha! moment that changed you?**

Becoming a mother for the 2nd time and then, becoming a grandma.

## **What do you do or have you done as far as work/career?**

I have lots of interests and have done a variety of different things.

- I have been an artist since I was a child. I was a nurse's aid for 7 years and worked in hospitals and with doctors.
- I worked at a Print Shop running a press.
- I went to truck-driving school in my 30s and drove truck with my husband on the road for 1 year. We worked for a company out of Dallas.
- I used to belong to the Hispanic organization here in Columbus. I was their secretary and did their newsletter for 11 years.
- I had a cleaning business for 20 years that I started in Columbus when I was in my 40s.
- I had an antique shop in West Jefferson for 7 years.
- I now belong to Jeffersonian Senior Center in West Jefferson. I do all their announcements and organize various events.
- I have organized many car shows and craft shows here in West Jeff raising money for the food pantry, animal shelter, and Christmas in the Park.
- There are many more things I have done, but I think this list has gotten long enough. :)
- I am retired now—but still help out with some fundraising and events.

## **What has been something you feel is the biggest blessing in your life?**

My children and grandchildren.

## **If you could do anything differently in life, what would that be?**

Not a thing. I am blessed with so much!

## **What brings you the most joy in your life?**

Spending time with my family and friends

## **What piece of advice would you give others that you feel really helped you on your life journey?**

Not to worry because God is in control. Also, to love and forgive others.

## **Who inspired/inspires you the most?**

My father and my mother.

## **What would you love to be able to do if money/time, etc. were not an issue?**

Nothing different—just enjoy my life and time with family.

## **Is there anything unusual or interesting about you that you don't think people already know about you and that you'd like to share?**

I am very creative with art and sewing. I like to make dolls, sew various crafts, and make cats out of sweaters.

*We are thankful to God for bringing you and your granddaughters to LCF. We look forward to sharing life together.*

# Undeserved Blessings

BY JODI TRAVERSE

I often wonder why I have been handed such a blessed life while others around me have to work twice as hard for everything they get. I grew up in a stable home with two loving parents. I coasted through school and got good grades without putting in much effort. My parents were able to give me a solid financial start before I left their home. Since getting my first job, I've never struggled with even a short period of unemployment. My husband is doing his best to provide for our family so I can be a stay-at-home mom even in this current economy. I've just started this administrative assistant position that seems to be a perfect way for me to contribute to our family financially while staying home. All of these things are mostly out of my control.

Many people around me have grown up in single parent homes. Many people leave home with hardly anything to their name. Many people have to put a lot of hard work into their schoolwork if they want to get good grades. Layoffs are unfortunately common, and it can be really difficult to find a job that pays well right now. Many marriages end up broken which gets especially complicated when children are involved.

In the end, I know my life has been blessed far beyond anything I deserve. Luke 12:48b says, "When someone has been given much, much will be required in return; and when someone has been entrusted with much, even more will be required." I don't know why I've been handed the life I have, but I do know that I want to use my blessings to help others who have been given much less.

## Council Update...continued from page 2

- No charge: funerals, weddings, showers and recognized LCF regular and infrequently held events and community service/outreach as approved by LCF Leadership Team.
- Fees will be assessed for **one-time non-church sponsored** family events such as birthday parties, reunions, graduation parties, and anniversaries.
- \$100.00 for groups up to 20 people, \$150.00 for groups larger than 20 people.
- Additional possible fee for Technician Services (Audio, Visual...) as needed, based on availability. **Only qualified members of the LCF sound/audio team may operate the audio and visual equipment.**

## Seasons...continued from page 1

So Rob and I agreed that it seemed like it was time for me to "retire" from my administrative responsibilities. I knew that it would not be easy to give up the job I have loved for so many years and that it would require a great step of faith for me. I would need to trust that God would: provide a suitable, available, and willing replacement for me, take care of the church and its needs, (especially, my pastor-husband, who has been my "boss" for 24 years), provide for us financially (since it would mean giving up my monthly paycheck), and give me grace for the transition and adjustments.

God has graciously proven faithful and allowed me to see Him at work in many different ways. He gave me a great sense of peace as I turned in my resignation and pondered the upcoming changes. He provided Jodi Traverse right away, to apply for, and accept the position. He reminded me in tangible ways that He sees our needs and that He will be faithful to care for us. He has given me an excitement about this upcoming season of life, and the desire to embrace new joys, even as I grieve the losses. There are many things I will miss greatly (such as putting together this newsletter each month) but I am looking forward to being able to balance life and ministry in a more healthy way—and to having time to spend with our new grandson, Micah!



I want to thank you as a church for giving me the opportunity to serve you in this way for these last 30 years. Thanks for your grace and your support, and for your words of appreciation. The job has been such a joy to me through many seasons of life. I hope and pray that Jodi will experience the same. May God help each one of us to obey His voice, continue to see Him at work in and among us, and to trust Him as we embrace the changing seasons of life!

## Books...continued from page 1

In fact, the facility gave her the honor of being an "ambassador," complete with her own badge. Her job is to welcome and befriend each new resident. She is a beautiful example of Jesus' love to others.

While Grandma Ball has slowed down physically (she now uses a wheelchair), her mind is still sharp. She is so much fun to visit with; there is rarely a dull moment. While she no longer goes on the little white bus field trips or plays bingo, she still enjoys the company of her family and other residents. She likes to do word searches, and she LOVES to read. Thanks to wonderful resources from LCF's library, I have been supplying her with uplifting and entertaining Christian books to fill some of her time.

## The LCF Connection

A monthly newsletter designed to enhance communication at London Christian Fellowship.

We would love to hear your feedback. Email us at [secretary@lcfweb.org](mailto:secretary@lcfweb.org).

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