

The LCF Connection

October 2024

Why We Appreciate Our Pastors

BY PAM STANFORTH

Everyone needs times of encouragement, and this includes our pastors. Choosing to be a pastor means taking on the responsibility of guiding a congregation that needs encouragement, support, prayer, nurturing, guidance, teaching, and preaching. The hope of all this is to help each member grow in their relationship with God, ultimately leading to eternal life with Him in heaven.

“And I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding.” - Jeremiah 3:15

What a weighty, serious, and awesome responsibility for a pastor, whose calling comes with direct warnings from God.

“Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.” - James 3:1

As a member of London Christian Fellowship, I often take for granted the work of my pastor. Yet I expect him to diligently bring words from God each Sunday—words that comfort and soothe my soul. I confess that my prayers for him are often quick statements asking the Holy Spirit to lead him and give him the right words. Sometimes, I even have a specific agenda in mind for my prayers, asking God to let him speak on certain issues.

The truth is, pastors are people too! They get tired, discouraged, weary, downtrodden, stressed, sick, and overwhelmed. They try to do everything needed to keep the church functioning, growing, and fiscally sound, often filling positions and duties that should be cared for by others within the church. They counsel, advise, pray for, anoint, guide, lead, teach, preach, bury, rejoice at new births, baptize, respond to emergencies and crises, perform weddings and dedications, attend meetings, lead ministries, connect with the community and the world at large, arrange, manage, build up, plan, research, study, and share—all while taking care of their own families, with very little downtime. They are on-call 24/7 and expected to perform at all times. The word “no” is rare, but it shouldn’t be.

“The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching.” - 1 Timothy 5:17

continued on page 2...



Inside This Issue

Why We Appreciate Our Pastors	1
Small Groups	1
Elders Notes	2
Getting to Know Dwylin & Jessica	3
Council Update	4
Outdoor Service	4



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

Small Groups

BY JOEL SWAIN

This last year was our second year of leading a small group for young families at LCF. We met at the church mostly to read and discuss the book of Romans. The members of our small group all had young children, and we were able to secure childcare through a Rosedale Bible College volunteer program which worked out great for the group. Our kids loved going to small group last year and the students were awesome.

Our goal was to try and meet every week, with the foreknowledge that there would be a lot of cancellations during the school year due to sicknesses or school programs that couldn't be missed. The approach we took was that if at least two families could meet then we would have group. To wait for larger attendance prevented us from making much progress with our study.

We would also meet up at our home or at a playground on many occasions for potlucks or for our kids to play outside with no study intentions. This allowed the group to grow closer together and form a bond within the church community that sometimes is hard to achieve when only attending on Sunday morning. We plan on taking a similar approach this year and would love it if other young families joined the group. If you have any questions, please reach out to my wife Lara or myself. There are also several other small groups. If you have interest in any of those, you can contact Pastor Rob.

Pastors...continued from page 1

What better way to appreciate our pastor then to actually observe a week of life...

This is my summary from a phone interview with Pastor Rob...

Pam: "Pastor, share with me a typical day or week in your life."

Pastor Rob: "What is this about?"

Pam: "Well, it is not anything against you...LOL..."

Pastor Rob: "I trust that it isn't, but let me think now... nothing is typical, that's for sure. Plan, pray, plan, expect the unexpected, and end in prayer.

"Monday: Our declared Sabbath. Sunday marks the end of a pastor's week, and I am usually exhausted, ready to focus on rest and time with Doris. We avoid chores, try not to think about church events, and often go out to eat. Most Mondays, we get to rest, but not always. Emergencies, loss of life, or critical issues can arise, requiring my attention.

"Tuesday: If I am scheduled to preach the following Sunday, I begin preparing my next sermon. I usually have a few ideas and start studying, waiting to see where God leads. There are calls to take and make. I also meet with pastors from our conference monthly as well as with a multi-denominational pastor group from the London area.

"Thursday: By this day, I need to have most of my sermon written and the title sent to our secretary so the rest of the Sunday leaders know the theme. Truthfully, I am often still finishing up well into Saturday afternoon. Many times, I get bits and pieces of my sermon in the middle of the night. Doris and I also do marital counseling. Weddings, while fun, can be a bit stressful due to planning details, locations, and pictures.

"Since we currently don't have a Worship Coordinator or a Children's Ministry Coordinator, I spend quite a bit of time assisting with making those schedules. Sammy, Jesse, and I all work together to come up with the tech and worship team schedules. Currently, I also line up the teachers for our Sunday School classes.

"Additionally, I organize small groups, handle sign-ups, and work on promotion brochures with Jodi. Doris and I host LCF 101 and also meet with people individually throughout the year who are wanting to learn more about LCF, be baptized, etc. Doris is a great help and hosts participants in our home. We also hold a neighborhood Bible study for kids and an individual Bible study for a shut-in. We try to jump in and help church members move, take meals, etc. as much as possible.

"I love one-to-one conversations and guiding individuals as they prayerfully consider their service towards God. I enjoy mentoring several young men within our congregation as they explore their callings. A few years ago, Reuben held preaching classes for some young men. Many of those have preached from our pulpit. Jeremy, in particular, has continued to preach regularly. I deeply appreciate Reuben's gift to our church. He is a dedicated teacher, working full-time at Rosedale while supporting me as Associate Pastor. Often, he and Vicki have been voices of reason, sharing wisdom with the Elders Team. Reuben was instrumental in guiding us as we re-implemented a time of offerings and tithing during our Sunday Morning Services. I am thankful for both Reuben and Vicki.

"Doris and I often meet with various people in the congregation to just check in and see how they are doing. We try to schedule more of those meetings on weeks when I'm not preaching. We also provide support during difficult times of loss, for families or individuals facing critical crises, and for people who just need prayer, a listening ear, or words of hope..

Pam: Thank you for listening to the Holy Spirit, for studying to show yourself approved, for teaching us, and for listening to us. God bless you, Pastor Rob!

To bring it home, LCF and others in the community look to our pastors for guidance and support. Appreciation is rare, and we apologize. Our pastors are of immense value to each of us at LCF! We are blessed with Rob and Reuben as our pastors. They are a gift to us, and we commit to praying for them and their families.

Elders Notes

BY JEREMY HISEY

The Elders met on Wednesday, September 25th, at Rob and Doris Swartz's home. In attendance were Rob and Doris Swartz, Reuben and Vicki Sairs, Abraham Ndungu, Gideon Eichorn, and Jeremy Hisey. We kicked off our time by sharing prayer requests and praise reports among the group, as well as the prayer needs of those within the LCF congregation. Then we spent some time praying together for those things.

We then moved on to discuss some of the upcoming events at LCF. Included in the discussion were small groups starting back up, the upcoming LCF 101 class, Communion on October 20th, Gratitude Sunday and a potluck on November 17th, and our LCF Family Christmas on December 22nd. Rob also informed the group that thanks to the generous contributions made by LCF, RBC is offering LCF a free winter term again this year and asked if we had anyone in mind who might be interested.

Next, we had some preliminary discussions about potentially adding another Associate Pastor to the team that could be mentored by Rob. We kicked around some ideas as to what the role might consist of and agreed to continue the discussion in future meetings.

Lastly, we touched on a few other topics regarding ministry opportunities and the use of the church building, but upon running over our scheduled time, we decided the conversation will be continued at our next meeting. Reuben led us in prayer to close out time together. We scheduled our next meeting for October 30th.

Getting to Know Dwylin and Jessica Gingerich

BY THERESA HENNIS

How did you and Dwylin meet?

We met in 2017 as co-counselors at a youth church camp in Indiana

Is there anything special/unusual about your engagement/ wedding that you'd like to share?

Our wedding sermon was a prerecorded video by Dwylin's oldest brother. He and his family got Covid the week of the wedding while living in Canada and could not make the trip.

Are you both from small or big families?

We both are one of four siblings. Jessica is the second oldest in her family, and Dwylin is the youngest in his.

Where are you from, originally?

Both of us grew up in northern Indiana, but Jessica was born in Pennsylvania.

What careers, if any, do you have?

Jessica works at Rosedale Bible College as their graphic designer, and Dwylin works at Sommers Wood and Door.

What are your favorite hobbies/talents?

We enjoy finding new places to explore and trying unique foods. Jessica has recently taken up macrame and enjoys making items for our home. Dwylin enjoys listening to podcasts and audio books.

What is one thing in particular that you love most about each other?

Jessica - I am not a morning person, so I love that Dwylin is willing to make breakfast and coffee for me each morning.

Dwylin - After we got engaged, it became more evident to me that my wife is much more "random" than I initially realized.

Who, in your life, has inspired you the most and why?

Jessica - My aunt who exemplifies a healthy, faithful, and content life as a single Christian.

Dwylin - Probably my oldest brother. He went to seminary and got two master's degrees in his early to mid-thirties with a family to care for. He convinced me to try Rosedale out for the winter term of 2020. By May of 2023, I had graduated from a two-year Bible college.

Where would you both most like to live given the opportunity?

Dwylin - I've always had a desire to live in the state of Maine.

Jessica - Anywhere that has warmer winters than Indiana or Ohio

What is one thing that you both do to encourage each other every day to strengthen your relationship?

Dwylin - While there is nothing that we do every day, one of my favorite moments came last fall. From September through February, I had a strict calorie count which helped me lose 60 pounds. I came home one evening, sometime in November, and Jessica surprised me by making one of my favorite things, a pasta meal with white sauce. I nearly cried.

Jessica - We both enjoy surprising the other with something unexpected. For example, I was once surprised by Dwylin when we drove up to Freddy's Frozen Custard in Michigan after watching a movie on IMAX. We both first went to a Freddy's in Tennessee before this and loved it. I was very surprised that Dwylin found one in central Michigan.

What is something unusual or significant about you that people might not be aware of?

Jessica was born with a birthmark on her right thumb and had surgery on it when she was 16. Since surgery, she has needed to wear a compression garment and her arm and thumb and will probably need to wear it for the rest of her life.

Dwylin - By the age of 12, I had bifocal lenses in my glasses. In the spring of 2015, I was able to have eye surgery to correct them.

What is your favorite scripture or devotional that gives you hope?

Dwylin - I do not really have a favorite scripture, but some may be surprised to know that the book of Revelation is bursting with hope if read properly.

Jessica - Philipians 2 is a great reminder of how we are to live like Christ and put others over ourselves.

What can we, as your church, do to support you and encourage you on your walk?

One of our shortcomings is that we both have a hard time jumping into relationships with new people. Don't be afraid to come talk to us if you see us, because we have a hard time approaching others.



Council Update

BY RUSS HAUGE

Attendance: Sarah Eichorn, Rhoda Sommers, Zach Freer, and Russ Hauge by phone conference.

August income was \$15,149 which was more than our expenses of \$12,464 by \$2,685.

Our YTD income is \$137,945 compared to our YTD expenses of \$117,185, which leaves a YTD balance of +\$20,760.

The quarterly payment to RNOC as well as payments to Rosedale International and Rosedale Bible College will be made yet in September. These payments will continue to keep us on schedule during 2024.

Sarah contacted Precision Hardscapes to obtain an estimate for snow removal at the church. She is still waiting on a response and will follow up with another call. Messages to Allscapes have also gone with no response. Other suggestions are welcome and please send those to Russ Hauge.

The Premise Use Policy continued to be reviewed and discussed with the need for further updates to remove ambiguous language resulting in almost every request being an exception. Potential changes were exchanged in writing for further review and updates during the next Council meeting. Once an updated document is created, it will be sent to the Elders Team for review and any additional suggestions.

Keith Scheffel has agreed to assist Sarah as “a second set of eyes” on our financial reporting on a quarterly basis. As stated previously, there are no current issues and we are just attempting to take the pressure off our sole Treasurer in the future.

There was a short discussion on the weekly in-person offering process. Specifically related to control/ placement of the offering and the follow-up process to ensure that it is counted and securely forwarded to the Treasurer. A discussion with the lead ushers is the next step to document this process.

Next meeting will be on Tuesday, October 15th at 6:30 pm by phone conference.



Outdoor Service

BY JODI TRAVERSE

On Sunday, September 22nd, we gathered together beside the creek on Dale and Sharon's property for our annual outdoor service. I have always looked forward to events like this where we do something a little different from normal.

Even though we normally watch the weather and really hope it won't rain for an outdoor event like this, we didn't seem to care about that as much this year due to an extreme lack of rain recently. The weather ended up working out perfectly. There were a few times it got breezy enough to blow some papers off music stands, and the sun shone a bit warmer than I would have preferred, but we were able to enjoy the morning and afternoon together before getting some highly anticipated rain later in the afternoon.

In the past, I've always arrived for the outdoor service right around the time that it would start. This year, I was one of the first people there to help make sure everything was ready. I loved seeing first-hand how well everything was organized. People came with assigned tasks and got them done. The tech team got all the sound equipment set up while the Fellowship Team organized all the food for the potluck. As far as I know, the only thing that was overlooked was a drone for some aerial photos. I know it helps to have a similar event every year, but it still amazes me to see how things like this come together when there is good organization, and everyone does their assigned part.

After the service, we enjoyed a wonderful potluck meal and a time of games. Rob Devlin brought supplies for some group activities and games. The water in the creek was much lower than normal, so some of the younger kids spent quite a bit of time exploring in there. I hope this annual tradition will continue on for many more years!



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A monthly newsletter designed to enhance communication at London Christian Fellowship. We would love to hear your feedback. Email us at secretary@lcfweb.org.
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