

The LCF Connection

November 2024

Life on the Road

BY MICAH BAKER



As most of you know, we, the Baker family, went on a trip in an RV during the whole month of September. The reason we went on the trip in the first place was so that my dad (Mike) could visit RNOC (Rosedale Network of Churches) churches all over the Midwest and West.

The whole trip started out in Chicago, Illinois for a wedding. Although the wedding wasn't technically part of the trip, it lined up perfectly for us to go. That wedding was a blast, and after it, we kicked off our long trip!

We traveled to a total of fifteen states (I might've miscounted). Some of those states were visited during our free time and were not strictly work related. We visited three national parks: Grand Canyon, Zion National Park, Mesa Verde National Park, and we went to the Four Corners. Besides visiting national parks, we also went to the Mall of America, Lambeau Stadium, Las Vegas, Old Town in Albuquerque and other little stops like Cadillac Ranch in Texas... To tell you guys about each individual place, I would have to write a book.

I will tell you about two of my favorite places we visited, though. My two favorite places were Mesa Verde and the Mall of America. Mesa Verde was so unique to see! The Ancestral Pueblo people lived in cliff dwellings which is what Mesa Verde is. The houses were carved from the sandstone wall, and it was so fun hiking back up to the plateau. Of course, at the Mall of America, I loved walking around and shopping.

On top of all the visiting of fun places, we visited many, many churches! I kid, it was only 10, but it felt like a lot. To hear more in-depth stories from our trip, I'd recommend that you read my blog over at micahsmeanderings.blogspot.com!! Just a little bit of self advertising! It was a huge blessing to be able to go on this trip. It's not every day you get to travel all over the place with your family. If anyone has questions about our trip, please feel free to find myself, Zane, Karen, or Mike, and of course we will answer them!

Inside This Issue

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Life on the Road | 1 |
| Reflecting on Thanksgiving | 1 |
| Connecting at LCF 101 | 2 |
| Anabaptism and LCF | 2 |
| Getting to Know the Troyer Family | 3 |
| An Old Rugged Cross | 4 |
| Council Update & Elders Notes | 4 |

Reflecting on Thanksgiving

BY JEREMY HISEY

Thanksgiving has taken on a new meaning to me as I have grown older. When I was a kid, I always looked forward to the festivities at school. Dressing up like Pilgrims and Indians to have a feast with my friends. As I got older, I looked forward to Thanksgiving for the family, food and football.

In 2013, Thanksgiving took on a new meaning for me. Mandy and I were separated because of my sinful behavior. Despite all the pain and hurt I had put her through, her family still invited me to their Thanksgiving dinner. I remember feeling very uncomfortable because I felt I didn't deserve to be there. As we sat around the table, her grandfather prayed a blessing over our meal. Then he went on to pray for our marriage. I believe this is when God started laying the groundwork for our reconciliation, as my heart began to soften because of the love I experienced that day.

Today, as I reminisce on that Thanksgiving, it occurs to me that it was a beautiful example of the gospel. We are all invited to the table to feast with our Heavenly Father regardless of our past. I love the parable Jesus tells in Luke 14 when the master tells the servant to go "into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame."

I was reluctant to go to that Thanksgiving dinner because of the shame I had for all the pain I caused. As I look back, I am so thankful I accepted the invitation to that dinner and later the invitation into God's kingdom through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. As a result, today I have the joy of salvation, and I can't think of anything better to be thankful for!



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



Connecting at LCF 101

BY ROB & DORIS SWARTZ

Once or twice a year, depending on interest, we host what we call LCF 101 for those who are new among us and are interested in learning more about LCF. We share about LCF's vision, beliefs, history, structure, how people can be involved, etc. and invite any questions people might have. Our most recent LCF 101 was held at our home on a warm Sunday evening, October 6, 2024.

There were 17 of us who gathered on our patio to begin with a pizza meal and a time of learning to know one another. Of those 17, 8 were children ranging from the age of 2 to 11, who ate their meal quickly because they were so eager to head down to our basement to play together and discover some "new toys"—toys that our children played with 20-30 years ago. :)

While they played, the remaining 9 of us shared things such as where we were born, what brought us to LCF, etc. and then continued with talking about Jesus and LCF—past, present, and future. There were many great questions and discussions. It was interesting to note that all of us have had some very hurtful experiences related to church; and yet we recognize that it is Christ's body, made up of ordinary, sinful people, who are very different from one another. We desire to be people of peace and unity who love and forgive one another, as we continue to seek to be a part of this beautiful body of Christ. We ended the evening by having the kids come back and join us for some fruit, brownies and ice cream.

We thank God for the way that He brings people together and are thankful for those who are new among us. If you see someone you don't recognize, or don't know very well, we encourage you to take a few minutes to initiate a conversation and learn to know them. We are so enriched by the great diversity among us and are grateful for the opportunity to worship and serve the Lord together.



Anabaptism and LCF

A Message from the Pastor

BY REUBEN SAIRS

All Christians are downstream from decisions that define their group. Even independent groups, even individuals, can pretty easily be classified historically. LCF is downstream from the movement called Anabaptism, specifically the Amish and Mennonite channels. The movement called Anabaptism still shapes who we are and what we are doing at LCF, and could probably explain anything that you might find different about us.

Anabaptism (it's *ana*, not *anti*) during the Reformation in the 16th century was thought of as radical. Reading the scriptures, and putting strong emphasis on the New Testament, they rejected the idea of church and state union, and beyond that the whole package of merging the church with the culture or civilization. They held the conviction that the Christendom created in the early Middle Ages was a big mistake, and a bigger problem than the other Protestants were seeing.

For Anabaptists, the world was the world, and the church was called out and away from it. The New Testament didn't speak in terms of empires, nations or even Christian cultures. The New Testament only knew of Christians saved out of the world and placed in congregations. Their primary identity was discipleship based on the Sermon on the Mount, and this would show up in nonconformity to the world and society.

One of the ways this exhibited itself was in voluntary participation in the church (that wasn't allowed in their day—you were a Christian by default by living in a so-called Christian land). They held instead to free, adult decisions to follow Christ and join his people through baptism. They only practiced believers' baptism and rejected infant baptism as unbiblical. Believers' baptism made it easy for their opponents to identify them, and they were persecuted—martyrs' deaths numbering in thousands. They were persecuted by Roman Catholic and Protestant rulers.

The 500-year history has twists and turns, successes and failures, triumphs and flops. We're still here, but who are we today? There are numerous attempts to tell the world who we are. They don't all agree, but there is an identity here that we still embrace for the sole reason that we think it is Biblical and what it means to follow Jesus Christ.

We hold that the church is a people of God called out of the world—our relationship to the world is to be one of good works and witness, but we should expect deep misunderstanding. We can thank God that in the US and other western nations we are now more than tolerated. That acceptance can be a temptation to lose ourselves!

We hold that the church is a brotherhood/sisterhood, and it is together as a congregation that we are a community. At best there is a non-hierarchical church life—not to be dominated by priestly or pastoral roles, nor by academics.

We hold that discipleship is about following Christ. There has always been a tendency to step past abstract theological discussion, and measure our faith by our lives not our doctrines—how well do we love one another and show that love to the world? How consistent are we? How willing are we to practice a rigorous faith that calls for self-sacrifice? One strong emphasis in Anabaptist history is a commitment to peace and nonviolence. That emphasis is still in us.

If you are watching us closely, I think you will see this approach comes through in what we preach and teach. If you ever have questions about any of it, please ask one of us. Ask me if you want. We don't like our Anabaptist roots to dominate our presentation, so we are likely to emphasize our unity with other Christians and the basic message of finding a new life in Christ. However, you may hear all of it presented a little differently than it is by bigger voices in the church world.

Getting to Know the Troyer Family

BY THERESA HENNIS

Many of you have gotten to know a little bit about Jeremy and Rachel Troyer and their family. We hope this interview offers a little more insight into who they are. Thank you for sharing with us, and we look forward to getting to know you better!

Where are you both from, originally?

Jeremy – Milford, Nebraska

Rachel – I grew up in Plain City, Ohio.

Do you come from a large or small family?

Jeremy – I have 1 brother and 3 sisters. I am the middle sibling.

Rachel – I am the middle daughter of 3 girls.

How did you both meet?

We met at Elnora Bible Institute in southern Indiana.

Anything unusual about how you met?

Jeremy – It took Rachel a while to notice me.

Was your engagement/wedding unusual in any way? Anything special about those that you'd like to share?

Jeremy – I got sick on our wedding day.

Rachel – Jeremy was very sick on our wedding day. I got to practice my vows immediately about “in sickness and in health.” I gave Jeremy the chance 2 days later when I got sick on our honeymoon.



Pictured above: Rachel, Natalie, Cassidy, Sabrina, Jeremy and Holly

What are your professions?

Jeremy – I am co-owner & exterior project manager for On The Mark Pro Services.

Rachel – I am a stay-at-home-mom for our 4 girls.

If you could live anywhere you liked, where would that be?

Jeremy – Anywhere out west, probably Wyoming. Less people, more horses and cattle

Rachel – On a ranch in Wyoming

Do you have any unusual hobbies/interests?

Jeremy – I enjoy driving coach buses.

Rachel – An unusual interest (or non-interest I guess) is that I do not care for anything chocolate. And yes, I am fully female.

If you could describe an ideal day in which you were doing anything you pleased, what would that day look like for you?

Jeremy – A sunny 70-degree day riding horses with my family and camping

Rachel – I'm sure it's due to my busy current season of motherhood, but I would love a personal day off to go spend in solitude outdoors somewhere.

What is a favorite hobby/pastime you enjoy?

Jeremy – I enjoy riding motorcycle and working my hobby farm.

Rachel – I love getting together with a friend for a one-on-one authentic chat.

Where would you most like to visit in this world?

Jeremy – Alaska

Rachel – Alaska

Who has been your inspiration in life?

Jeremy – Brice Kauffman. He was my camp counselor when I was in 6th grade, and we are still in contact today.

Rachel – Jeremy's grandma. She went to be with Jesus in 2020, but in the 9 years I knew her, she inspired me to authentically love all people and showed selfless hospitality to many, well into her 80's.

What is something you would do as an outreach if time and money weren't a hindrance?

Jeremy – I would love to drive bus and take youth on work-week trips or other outings.

Rachel – I am passionate about authentic connection among women. I would love to facilitate weekend-away retreats for women to be refreshed, spiritually fed, and (if you haven't guessed by now) have a lot of authentic conversations with each other.

A little bit about our girls:

We have four girls. Cassidy is 10, Sabrina is 9, Holly is 6, and Natalie is 4. Since I (Rachel) grew up in a family of only girls, and now have only girls of my own, girls are pretty much all I know! But we love our girls, and Jeremy does a fantastic job holding his own and is a great dad to them.

Council Update

BY RUSS HAUGE

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

September income was \$21,631 which was more than our expenses of \$14,435 by \$7,196. Our YTD income is \$159,576 compared to our YTD expenses of \$132,885, which leaves a YTD balance of +\$26,691.

The quarterly payment to RNOC as well as payments to Rosedale International and Rosedale Bible College were made in September. These payments will continue to keep us on schedule during the remaining months of 2024.

Sarah contacted Precision Hardscapes to obtain an estimate for snow removal at the church. No response has been received after multiple calls by Sarah. Similar to last month, messages to Allscapes have also gone with no response. Other suggestions are welcome. Please send those to Russ Hauge.

The Premise Use Policy was briefly reviewed/discussed with the need for further updates to remove ambiguous language resulting in almost every request being an exception. The proposed next steps are to have the Elders team define the underlying vision on how the church should be used. Once that has been defined, a joint meeting with the Elders team and council will be held to discuss potential usage options.

The council unanimously approved the upgrade/migration of the very old accounting software currently being used. Sarah will lead the migration effort with a target to start 2025 with the new software.

Additional topics that were introduced for future discussion: Re-investigate the cost impact of installing lights in the church parking lot and the need to develop an investment policy to address how non-budgeted funds are held.

The next meeting will be held Tuesday, November 19th, at 6:30 pm by phone conference.



An Old Rugged Cross

BY LINDA PRATT

I wonder if you noticed and thought about the cross that was sitting on the front table with the bread and juice when we shared in communion at LCF on October 20th? Several weeks earlier, Doris Swartz had talked with my husband, Rich, about the possibility of it. She said that the Decor Team wanted to have a table-top cross to use at LCF, and they wondered if he would have interest in making one. She said they wanted something that would serve as a reminder of Christ's love that He showed to us on the cross—so they would like for it to be rugged and not polished (like one they had considered purchasing on Amazon). Rich told her he would be glad to come up with something.

He told me that he had some old barn wood out in our pole barn that he thought would work well. The pastor at the church that we attended before coming to LCF had given Rich a chunk of wood from a house built around 1900. That is what Rich used for the base. The wood that he used to make the cross came from a piece of wood that was from an old house (from around that same time period) that had been torn down near us (about 3 miles down the road from the other house). Rich and I were amazed at how closely the wood from the two houses matches!

We are thankful for the opportunity to use our gifts and serve the church however we can. We hope that whenever you see this old, rugged cross that you will realize our hope for eternal life began the day that Jesus gave his life for the whole world on that rugged cross so many years ago.

Elders Notes

BY ROB & DORIS SWARTZ

The elders met on Wednesday, October 30th, and had a good time of sharing, prayer and discussion together. We continued our discussion about the vision to have a young associate pastor at LCF. We will be sharing this vision with the congregation in the near future.

Abraham's 1st 3-year-term as elder ends in December. He has declined to be considered to serve a 2nd term since his job prevents him from being at LCF on a regular basis. We will be asking the congregation to submit names to be considered for a new elder. Please be praying for God's guidance and provision concerning both of these processes.

We discussed the use of our building as the Council asked for our input. We will put together a list of criteria for what we would like to see the building used for.

As we usually do, we discussed how best to provide pastoral care to various members in our congregation.

From time to time we receive requests from individuals or ministries asking to come and share at LCF on a Sunday morning. We put together a policy to help us know how to respond fairly consistently to these requests. We desire to keep our Sunday morning service focused on worship and proclamation of the gospel but will be generous with other options that they are welcome to use.

RBC is offering a free winter term to one person in our congregation. We will make this known to our church in hopes that someone will take advantage of this offer.

We briefly touched on ideas for encouraging scripture reading in 2025 and if we would like to recognize the 500th anniversary of anabaptism which is coming up in January. Our next meeting will be November 20th.



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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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