

The LCF Connection

February 2025



Fifteen Years for Real?

BY NAOMY NDUNGU

I find it interesting to be writing this article while our backyard is white with snow, the very weather that welcomed our family from the tropics to Ohio! As much as we have snow on top of Mt. Kenya, none of us had seen it this close! As if those who picked us up from Columbus airport knew, they brought us coats, hats, and gloves. Thank you to Reuben and Vicki, Phil and Lucy, Derek, and Phil and Twila Weber!

Our international travels had started a while back, probably true to the name of our family head! Early years while in college, Abraham first traveled to Malawi for a Christian

conference. Later, he went to the People's Republic of China for studies then attended several international conferences in Europe. I attended an educational conference in Mozambique. Travel within our country was normal, both for visiting family and for work assignments; Abraham was a pastor and a university professor and Naomi a high school teacher. Moreover, we traveled for mission work, encouraged by the "Go ye into all the world" vision of the Regions Beyond Ministry, an interdenominational organization that challenged us from our youth to be involved in ministry, even in the regions beyond us.

Travel and migration are very different. On December 13, 2009, we landed in Columbus, Ohio. It soon occurred to us that we had left our predictable contexts, family, friends, language, and familiar customs. Experiences of loss, lack of control and alienation ensued. The reality of not being able to see our

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Valentine's Date Night 2024

BY SARAH EICHORN

Upon hearing that a couples' date night was being planned at LCF for February 2024, my interest was piqued, and I knew I wanted to make an effort to attend. As the event neared, however, we were in the midst of another full week and were sleep deprived from caring for an infant. Coupled with a brewing snowstorm that evening, the introverted side of me was rationalizing that it would make more sense just to stay home. I counter-argued with myself that getting ready to go was the most difficult part and was sure I would end the evening not regretting that we attended.



Though we may have been tired and the weather outside was not ideal for an

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

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outing, the ambiance within the church was a blend of warmth and calmness, while also being uplifting. We enjoyed an array of tasty treats, then listened as Lavern and Ronda Nissley from the Encompass Connection Center shared practical tools for a marriage to thrive.

One of those tools was introducing us to a RINGS chat. RINGS is an acronym for Real (I am feeling...)

Intentions (My plans are...)

Needs (What I need from you is...)

Grateful (I am thankful for...)

Someday (Someday I would enjoy...)

These question prompts are designed to enhance communication and strengthen the connection with your spouse. We left the evening refreshed and invigorated in our marriage.

Before long, though, life intervened, and that evening became just a memory of a past event. As the weeks ticked by, we found ourselves in survival mode with our schedules and only taking time for conversations about things that needed immediate attention. I eventually told my husband that I'm feeling frustrated that we're not implementing any of the helpful marriage tips we were given that February evening.

We decided that going forward we will have a RINGS chat one weekend evening every week after the girls are in bed. Taking the time to connect personally usually leads to other conversations happening organically, and it's not uncommon for the clock to be pushing midnight before we've fully completed our chat. We have found it to be very helpful in discussing our schedules and goals for the coming week and starting a new week on the same page instead of assuming we know what the other person is thinking for the coming week. Implementing the RINGS chat has made a profound difference in our marriage and is something I look forward to every week. I'm thankful Rob and Doris followed through with their vision for this event and that I didn't let the introvert in me make the call that evening on whether or not to attend.

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aging parents over the weekends or as needed hit us hard. That we had an accent became clear during our visits to the store, library, and, worst of all, in the calls we made while looking for jobs. We answered many questions: *What brought you here and when are you leaving? Do you speak English? Where is your accent from? What foods do you have in your culture?* We also found ourselves relearning things like driving on the "wrong side" of the road, looking somebody straight in the eye when in a conversation and changing from British to American English. Our diplomas had to be authenticated to prove that our college degrees were at par with the U.S credentials. To sum it all up, the cultural change was real.

With all this, LCF played a pivotal role in helping us settle down. From the warm welcome at the airport, we enjoyed rides (to and from church, to the stores, the library, and school meetings), invitations for meals, incorporation into a small group, and much prayer. During our first Sunday in LCF, our children, Danny (15), Grace (13), and Shepherd (10) were ushered to sit with their age groups during the service and then to Sunday School classes. This gave them a lovely start that continued getting better, with the annual opportunities (funding and the rides) to attend Bethel Camp. The camp became an extension of a similar one they previously attended in Kenya every December, and has helped them make lasting friendships in Ohio and the neighboring states.

We are truly thankful for the sense of community and fellowship we have enjoyed in LCF, including many opportunities to serve. Abraham and I are very thankful when we find our children serving in different capacities in the congregations they now worship with, using the skills and gifts that were nurtured in LCF.



Today we celebrate many blessings: our family has grown from five to seven, with Danny getting married to Lydia (with a grandbaby on the way), and Grace to Davin (from Germany, which is where they currently live). Each of us in the family has spent significant time pursuing studies, and we celebrate Shepherd's recent graduation with a bachelor's degree from OSU. We are also growing in the languages we speak—Grace now speaks German, and we all have to find a way to catch up. The recent gift of a new home in Springfield is a big addition to the many blessings. We write this to honor God and to thank those who have prayed with and for us through our many seasons of life here.

Why Should I Care?

A Message from the Pastor

BY ROB SWARTZ

During the time my wife Doris was going through some health concerns last summer, I was surprised by the response of the church. We are often in the position of caring for others, and I was not exactly prepared for the outpouring of support and the understanding that we received when we needed to be cared for. It was so encouraging!

People volunteered to hang out with me during her surgery. They sent cards and flowers. They texted us, emailed us, and called us, checking in to see how we were doing. They brought meals and sent gift cards. They offered to take some of our responsibilities or simply gave the permission for us to let some of them go for a while.

Frankly, I was overwhelmed. I consider myself to be a pretty independent person, and sometimes I can easily dismiss the need for such things. "I'll be alright. We'll be okay." But during that time, I came to understand in a new way, how much we really need each other.

This is the way Jesus meant for the church to function; not to be in each other's business or step past proper boundaries, but to truly care for one another. Paul tells us in Romans 12 verses 10 and 13 to "*be devoted to one another in love...share with the Lord's people who are in need and practice hospitality.*"

It seems to me that the church, as a whole, is losing some of that, and I'd like to encourage us all to help stem the tide. How can we care for one another? It will likely look different for each of us. For many years, I have helped people in the church with technical things, since that is an area I can help in. How can you help a brother or sister in the church? I can't really carry heavy furniture anymore, but those younger and stronger can. I'm not much of a cook, but I could send a gift card to someone to use at their favorite restaurant.

I think it will happen by simply noticing, caring, and doing what we can. There are lots of needs in the church, but someone needs to notice. We will need to get to know people before they may even give us a clue as to what they need.

And then there's the issue of letting people care for you. Doris and I had a discussion when she was beginning to deal with her health issues about how we would inform the church. I wanted to just keep things quiet until we knew more, but she wanted to allow you to share the journey with us. She was right. It was important to let others walk with us and to even be willing to let them know what we needed. It's okay to do that. In fact, many will say, "Let me know if there is anything I can do to help," but they probably won't know what that is unless you tell them. It's important to give people practical ways that they can support you.

I titled this article, "Why Should I Care?" and I think it's an important question for us as believers to be honest about. Why should we get involved? Why should we take the meal or send the card or help with the move or simply listen to someone else's struggle and to pray with and/or for them? The answer is really simple. Because it's what Jesus did and what He calls us to do. We can't say what it looks like for each of us practically, but we can say with confidence and conviction that we are called to be devoted to one another, to share with the Lord's people who are in need and to practice hospitality. Let's each one do our part so every person in our fellowship experiences the love of Christ through the body of Christ.

Council Update

BY RUSS HAUGE

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

December income was \$18,833 which was more than our expenses of \$11,880 by \$6,953. Our YTD income is \$211,631 compared to our YTD expenses of \$166,290, which leaves a YTD balance of +\$45,341.

As stated in the December minutes, we finished the year on schedule with all payments for 2024 being made to RNOC, Rosedale International, and Rosedale Bible College. A huge THANK-YOU goes out to the congregation for assistance in securing an individual to perform snow removal at the church. The parking lot has been plowed a couple times during January, and my hope is that the worst winter month is behind us.

An AED Unit and a child choking rescue device was ordered and is currently at the church and ready to be installed. The next step that the council is looking in to is obtaining both AED and CPR training. At the present time, we are looking for general CPR training and not specifically Red Cross certification unless there is a

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specific request from the congregation for Red Cross certification.

With the elders team performing the actual interview process for the Associate Pastor/Internship position, the council, as part of the 2025 budget process, is working on what type of compensation package can be offered both during 2025 and beyond. The plan is to have that completed during February along with the 2025 church budget.

A majority of time was spent reviewing the draft church budget for 2025. While all standard operational items have been completed, the final amount of time was focused on salaries. Good progress was made, and further review/discussion will take place during early February with the goal to finish the budget prior to the next scheduled council meeting.

The Premise Use Policy was updated in draft form by incorporating church usage vision statements from the elders along with clarifying ambiguous statements in an attempt to provide a clear usage policy. The draft usage document was distributed to the council members for further review after the conclusion of the January council meeting.

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday, February 18th, at 6:30 pm by Zoom conference.

Elders Notes

BY DORIS SWARTZ

The elders gathered at the home of Rob and Doris on January 8th. Present were Gideon Eichorn, Jeremy Hisey, Reuben & Vicki Sairs, Rob & Doris Swartz, and our new elder, Brandon & Megan Wengerd.

We began by sharing updates, concerns, and praises; then spent time thanking God and praying together about them.

Rob and Doris met with Corin and Katie on December 31st and were encouraged about their excitement concerning this intern possibility. We talked about highlights from that discussion and questions that we'd like to discuss with them. The next step in the process is for the elders team (and any council members who would like to join us) to have a Zoom interview with Corin and Katie on January 12th.

We had our annual Celebrate the Church Sunday on January 19th. This year, instead of having the congregational meeting in the fellowship hall after the potluck, we had it in the sanctuary at the end of the service and before the potluck. We did our best to keep the meeting short and interesting. :)

We discussed possible dates that would suit our various schedules to have an elder's retreat this spring (if we can find a suitable meeting place over that time). Rob would like for us to have some extended time to talk about the specific role of our elders team and its individuals, especially as we prepare to add an associate pastor intern to our team.

Reuben and Vicki and Rob and Doris plan to attend RNOC's annual Pastor's Conference which will be held in Sarasota, FL, February 17-20. Rob and Doris plan to take some vacation time before and after the conference to enjoy the warm weather and visit with friends and family. The elders will fill in as needed while the pastors are away.

Rob and Russ are working on putting together the new building usage policy and will get a proposal to the council and elders for their feedback. The goal is to try and keep things clear and simple since we do not have a building manager.

Reuben closed our meeting with prayer. Our next meeting will be on February 5th. As always, we welcome you to share your thoughts and concerns with us.



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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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