

# The LCF Connection

June 2026

## So What Will Reuben Do Now?

By Phyllis Swartz



Reuben with the Hipsters



Reuben at the New York Public Library

In a far corner of my brain, I store a collection of characters. People I've known who belong in a book, who are larger-than-life, and who move through the world, not without notice. Reuben is one of those people.

White hair doesn't engender wisdom, but when you look at Reuben, you can't help but think there's a whole lot of perceptive intellect under his full thatch. And you'd be right. Maybe because the paths he's followed have not been ordinary.

Who else do you know who plays with the Hipsters—a rock band with a foot in the 60s and a message for the new millennium—and who serves communion at a small Mennonite church in London, Ohio? Who else learns new languages for fun and gardens experimentally? Who else is a leftover hippie and has planted a church?

And who else moves 800 miles with three young sons to teach at a small Bible college, so he can nurture students in Anabaptism, the path Reuben believes is preferred for the church?

Reuben's intellect isn't just intuitive; it's backed by a stack of credentials—a bachelor's from Pennsylvania State, an M.A. in religious studies from the University of Mobile in Alabama, and a master's in library science from Kent State University. Since being ordained 35 years ago, he's preached more than a thousand sermons in churches across the country and right here at LCF. He worked for 13 years as a librarian in Mobile. And for 24 years in the library and classrooms at Rosedale Bible College.

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

## Who Is My Neighbor?

*A Message from the Pastor*

By Corin Wenger

The story of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10 didn't originally come with that title, and we disadvantage ourselves in some ways by perpetuating that name. With how well-known and familiar this story is, and how much cultural meaning has been given to it, with an organization even known as "Good Samaritan," we lose some of the impact and meaning of what Jesus was trying to say. So what was he trying to say?

Who was Jesus's audience? It was a devout Jewish man who asked Jesus who his neighbor was, after quoting the law about loving your neighbor. The easy answer would be the people who live in your neighborhood or your town, or maybe even your fellow citizens in your country. The easy answer would be the people who go to your church, or at least follow the same tenets of faith and religion as you. As usual, Jesus did not offer an easy answer.

Jesus proceeded to tell the story that many of us know. Part of the problem with our cultural familiarity with the story is that our cultural familiarity is wrong about the main character. If you're like me, you put yourself in the shoes of the Samaritan. The organization by that name does. The given title of the story does. And it's actually reasonable that we do this. Our modern story-telling experiences draw us to identify with the hero. Our ideals have been shaped by Christ-like values of mercy and compassion, so why wouldn't we identify with the one in the story who has

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compassion and gives mercy, spending his own time and money to help the unfortunate, with no thought of reciprocity? These are some of our highest goals and callings as followers of Christ. Except that in the context of where and when this story was told, we are supposed to put ourselves in the shoes of the Jewish man who was attacked—the victim. The audience was a Jewish man, familiar with temple workers and priests and the Jewish laws for cleanliness. The main character of the story is not the Samaritan man, but the man who is attacked by robbers.

Who did the Samaritan man represent in this story if he wasn't the main character? Let's back up a little further. In the days of Solomon's son Rehoboam, the Kingdom of Israel split into two, the northern Kingdom of Israel and the southern Kingdom of Judah. From then on, the kingdoms warred many times. Israel was worse off than Judah, and they were defeated and exiled sooner by Assyria while Judah remained a little longer. While Judah experienced a return after its own exile, Israel never did. Assyria sent foreigners to live in the land, and the people living there became a mixed race, only part Hebrew. A Jewish-like monotheistic religion emerged in the region, and heritage from the twelve sons of Jacob was still held in value. These were Samaritans. They worshipped at Mount Gerizim and emphasized Moses and the Pentateuch, awaiting a Messiah. When the Judeans returned from exile and began to rebuild the temple, the Samaritans came desiring to help, but they were turned away, being told they were not part of the covenant. During the aftermath of the Maccabean Revolt, the Jews actually burned down the Samaritan temple. In Jesus's time, a group of Jews traveling through Samaria were attacked and killed by Samaritans.

The Jewish man listening to Jesus didn't just identify with the Jewish man in the story, he likely identified the Samaritan as an enemy. In the account, he doesn't even bring himself to say the word "Samaritan" when Jesus asks who was a neighbor, he identifies the Samaritan by his actions only. The New Living Translation offers a clue to all of this; the translators say "a despised Samaritan." The Amplified Bible gives us a parenthetical "foreigner." From these, using the paraphrase "despised foreigner" gives us a better idea of who the Samaritan in the story was. Perhaps there are people who come to mind in the present day who have been at war with your people, who are at religious odds with your people, who are outsiders, who prey upon your people, who sit on your border, who share a bloody and complicated history with you and your people.

We are the wounded man, waylaid by a gang on the street. Our own people, maybe even an usher from the church down the road or a conference pastor pass us by, looking the other way. They are so focused on the rules and regulations of what it means to be one of us that they aren't willing to stop and help. And then this despised foreigner, someone we thought was our enemy, comes along and helps us, shows us mercy, takes us to the hospital, and even foots our medical bills. When Jesus tells the Jewish man to "go and do likewise," he has a double meaning. He does mean to go and show mercy to others. We got that part right! But he also means that we should expand our definition of who our neighbor is, just like he challenged the Jewish man to do. If the despised foreigner is our neighbor, is there anyone who isn't? Are we willing to be a neighbor to someone we think hates us? Are we willing to accept a neighbor whom our people hate? In the midst of a world that still feels obsessively tribalistic, put yourself in the shoes of the dying man, not the hero, and ask yourself "Who is my neighbor?"

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## Getting to Know LCF's 2026 Graduates

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### *Derek Elfrink*

#### **Where are you graduating from?**

I am graduating from Rosedale Bible College, and the degree that I will be obtaining is a degree in biblical studies.

#### **What are some of your favorite memories of school?**

Some of my personal favorite memories were the cross-cultural trip where a group of second-year students got to travel to Europe for three weeks. Another fun memory is that I got to shower one of my best friends because at Rosedale, tradition is that if you date another girl on campus, you get showered. If you get engaged, you get thrown in the pond.

#### **What were some of your favorite classes?**

It's a toss-up between Jesus and the Ethics of the Kingdom, Revelation, and Preaching the Biblical Text. All these courses were so fun and I really learned quite a bit from these classes, but it's a toss-up.

#### **What advice would you give someone starting college?**

Buckle in because it's a rough ride, but don't let anything discourage you. There will be obstacles in your path that you will go through, but remember this: the Lord will guide you; He will not let you stumble. Hold on to what is true, and you will succeed, I promise you that.

#### **What long-term goal do you have?**

Honestly, I don't know. It's still a toss-up, but what I would really like to do is become a pastor. I found out that I have a really natural gift for preaching and talking about the word of God because of the preaching class that I am in at RBC. Or another one is to become a worship leader at some church in the near future.

## Jamison Miller



### Where are you graduating from?

I am graduating from Indiana Wesleyan with a Bachelor's Degree in Biblical Studies. I did 2 years at Rosedale Bible College and then finished at IWU.

### What are some of your favorite memories of school?

I enjoyed interacting with all the different students and writing papers (crazy, I know).

### What were some of your favorite classes?

My favorite classes were called Advanced Soteriology (IWU) and Core Christian Beliefs (RBC). Soteriology is the study of salvation. I also enjoyed all the specific book classes I took, such as Romans.

### What long-term dream do you have?

I want to build my own house some day.

### If you could vacation (or move) anywhere, where would you choose?

Hawaii and Alaska are atop my bucket list of places to vacation. If I could move anywhere, I would move out West to Arizona or California.

## Kaylena Meadows



### Where are you graduating from?

I'm graduating from West Jefferson High School and my CNA (Certified Nursing Assistant) class at Tolles.

### What are some of your favorite memories of school?

Some of my favorite memories from school were me and my friends singing in the hallways or talking to my favorite staff member.

### Where do you plan to work after graduation?

After graduation I plan to try to work at either Madison Health or the London Health and Rehab Center.

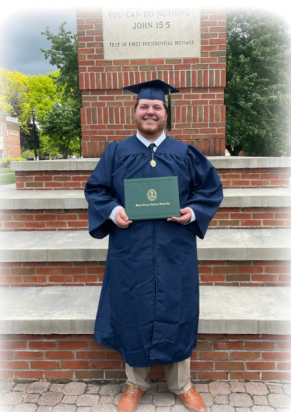
### If you could vacation (or move) anywhere, where would you choose?

I would probably choose Texas or Florida just because I've always wanted to go to Florida, and I've been to Texas and know it's pretty nice there.

### What advice would you give someone starting high school/college?

Don't care so much about what people think and just make sure you're making memories for yourself and just have fun. High school is a one-time experience so have fun while it lasts!

## Reid Gates



### Where are you graduating from?

I am graduating from Mount Vernon Nazarene University with a Christian Ministries degree with two concentrations in Youth and Family Ministry and Urban Ministry.

### Where do you plan to work after graduation?

Starting on May 31st, I will be the Youth and Young Adult Pastor at The Well Church of the Nazarene in Marysville.

### What career would you choose if money were not part of the equation?

Youth baseball coach.

### What long-term goal do you have?

Start a non-profit compassionate ministry.

### If you could vacation anywhere, where would you choose?

Greece.

## Zane Baker



### Where are you graduating from?

I graduated from being homeschooled this year and look forward to going to Ohio Christian University (OCU). At OCU I will be playing soccer and getting my major in Biblical studies.

### What is your plan for the next few years?

Over the next few years I plan to do college, play soccer, and work at Trapper John's in the summer. After that is done, my plans are as simple as "wherever the Lord leads me I will follow; whatever He feeds me I will swallow."

### What are some of your favorite memories of school?

My favorite memories from school are just spending time with my siblings.

### What advice would you give someone starting high school/college?

If I were to give advice to someone just starting high school I would say don't overthink it. Good or bad, it came from the Lord, so to the Lord give it. Meaning, leave it His hands once you complete a task. Overthinking won't help.

### If you could remove any word from the English language, what would it be and why?

I would pick something like "the" because people speaking would be funny without a word that is so important to our language.



No wonder he's got wild, white hair!

When students first heard about Reuben's plans to retire, they were surprised and aghast.

"But what will you do?" they asked.

And it was Reuben's turn to be dumbfounded. To a guy like Reuben, the idea of nothing to do is impossible. Having spent a lifetime on roads less traveled, he's

learned that one of life's splendid treasures is to stand curious before the great mystery into which we all are born.

And so he's set to travel and study Hebrew and play with his band. He'll continue preaching to us here at LCF, and hopefully have more time to dedicate to the church. He'll continue to bake breads of all kinds. And expand his repertoire of ethnic cuisines. For Reuben, retirement is not the end of the road. It's the beginning.

## Elders Notes

By Brandon Wengerd

The elders gathered together on May 5th at Rob and Doris's home. We spent the first part of our time reflecting on Psalm 15, sharing prayer requests and praises of the church family and our own, and bringing them to the Lord.

Over the past month, we have been excited to celebrate with families that have had babies. We look forward to celebrating upcoming events including students who are graduating from high school or college, the youth leading worship at the end of the month, and a baptism service in the near future.

We will be providing an update on the pastoral internship and the pastoral leadership at LCF soon.

We discussed the importance of standing on scriptural truth to guide us as we navigate what is happening in the community and world around us. We acknowledge the need to care for all people with prayer being a key component.

We closed our time with prayer and plan to meet again in June. We value input from you and welcome your thoughts and concerns to be shared with any of us on the elders team.

## Children's Ministry Update

By Becky Hostetler

If you have a child or grandchild in LCF's Sunday School program, you might have noticed some new activity sheets coming home this quarter. That's because this past spring quarter the Children's Ministry Team decided to pilot a new curriculum called The Gospel Project. One unique element of this curriculum includes Bible lessons taught in chronological order. We began in the New Testament and have learned that Jesus came to earth, Jesus' ministry began, and Jesus' ministry continues.

Because the curriculum has received positive reviews from the current teachers, we plan to continue using it for the foreseeable future. This summer we will continue learning about Jesus the Healer, Jesus the Teacher, and Jesus the Promised One. It will take three years to complete our study of the entire Bible.

Another great feature of The Gospel Project is that each lesson brings us back to Jesus. While this seems easy enough when studying the New Testament, every Old Testament lesson also has a Christ Connection. In addition, there is a Big Picture Question and a Memory Verse for every unit.

Another change to our Sunday School program is that we are implementing a children's church format for grades K-8 during the summer quarter. Preschoolers will go to their regular classroom, but the K-8 grade students will head to the youth room to continue our study of Jesus this summer.

## Council Update

By Russ Hauge

Attendance: Sarah Eichorn, Rhoda Sommers, Zach Freer, and Russ Hauge by Google Meet video conference.

April income was \$18,984 which was less than our expenses of \$25,529 by -\$6,545 which was due to our purchase of the new playground equipment. Our YTD income is \$73,321 compared to our YTD expenses of \$64,146, which leaves a YTD balance of +\$9,175.

With the previous approval and purchase of a new tower, slide, and swings made out of poly-wood for low maintenance, we will ultimately need help from those that can assist with the removal of the old playground equipment and clearing the existing mulch for the new playground placement. Timing for delivery is estimated to be towards the end of May. We will post additional information on BAND when a delivery date is set.

Dave King is working with the Summerford Fire Department to schedule CPR and AED training for those that may be interested. Additional information will be posted on BAND.

The remainder of the meeting focused on additional projects that need to be scheduled in the future such as church carpet cleaning along with painting. Russ will reach out to the Building and Grounds Team to begin work on estimates and timing.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 23rd, at 7 pm by video conference.



## 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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