

The LCF Connection

August 2026

My Bethel Camp Experience

By Jayce Hisey



Looking back on my time at Bethel Camp High School B this year, I realize camp wasn't just about the games, the late nights, or spending time with friends. It was about how God used every moment to help us grow closer to Him. This year's theme was "Grow In Christ" which challenged us to take the next step in our walk with Jesus.

Before camp officially began, I had an unexpected start to the week. On Sunday night, I was bitten by a copperhead. Thankfully, everything turned out okay, but it definitely wasn't how I planned to begin camp. Cody, Bethel's director for the past five years, told me it was the first snake bite he'd ever dealt with at camp. It's a memory neither of us will forget—and I'm definitely sending a signed picture of myself to his house.

Our main speaker, Mark Driskill, and our guest speaker, Mike Baker, encouraged us to grow deeper in our faith. We learned that our identity is found in Christ, God's will is rooted in His grace, and His purpose is revealed in His perfect timing. And as Mike said, "You can't grow if you don't know."

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develop authentic and passionate
followers of Jesus Christ.*

The Beauty of Unity

A Message from the Pastor

By Rob Swartz

"How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity." Psalm 133:1. In my 60 years I would have to agree that this is one of the most beautiful things to see. Jesus prays for us in John 17 that we might all be one and brought to complete unity, and He gives a reason, *"so that the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."* The unity of the church is beautiful and powerful!

The question I want to explore briefly is how we can encourage and help this unity not only to happen, but to thrive. Why is it that divisions happen in the church? We could talk about a lot of things, but I think part of the reason is that we sometimes buy into the world's way of thinking that if I can't get along with someone, I can just bail on that relationship. This really isn't an option for believers. We are brothers and sisters in Christ. We are part of the family of God. We are committed to one another for better or for worse. There is no "out" in our relationships with one another. We need to realize that division never comes from the Lord, but always from our own selfish sinful nature and from the evil one. Often and maybe always, the bigger issue between us and others is not the point of disagreement, but the division that is occurring because of it. If we feel the need to divide from another brother or sister, we must realize that this is not from God.

We must always do the hard work of figuring it out with each other. That's what it often is, just plain hard work. That's not true with everyone, but there are always some relationships that require this hard work. Paul reminds us in Ephesians 4:3 to *"Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace."* Maybe this surprises us, but I don't think it should. Good relationships always require hard work. Doris and I have been married for 38-1/2 years. They have been wonderful years, but not without a good amount of hard work to keep the commitment we made to each other years ago. We should never be surprised by the amount of work that it takes to preserve and encourage unity, and it is always worth the effort. Remember, it produces something beautiful, beautiful to God, beautiful in the church, and beautiful to the world.

Growing in Christ isn't always easy. It requires trusting God when life doesn't make sense, letting Him change us, and choosing to follow Him daily. It's a lifelong process, but one worth pursuing. If you've never been to Bethel Camp, I highly encourage you to go. However, I don't recommend the snake bite. Whether you're a student wanting to go as a camper or an adult looking to volunteer, it's an experience that can have a lasting impact on your faith, and I know I'll be looking forward to going back next summer, both as a camper and a counselor.



Junior Youth Bethel Camp Reflections

If you want to see more adventures from the week, you can check out the YouTube video by searching Bethel Camp Junior 1B 2026

Adda Wengerd

This was my second year attending Bethel Camp. During the week, the morning and evening chapels had a big impact on me. In the mornings, Tra Abshire focused on Micah 6:8, and in the evenings, Mark Driskill focused on Hebrews 12:1-2. They helped me gain a better understanding of humility and the truthfulness of the Bible. And Tra (who helped out at LCF while attending RBC a few years ago) says, "Hi!"

Cali Wengerd

This was my first year at Bethel Camp. It is a great place to learn more about Christ and to make new friendships. One of my favorite games was Cargo Chaos. I enjoyed all of the daily activities I got to sign up for, but the creek hike was my favorite. And as always, the camp food was great!

Cassidy Troyer

I really, really enjoyed Bethel Camp. One of my favorite things was chapel. I also enjoyed the hayride. The view was really pretty. I am very much hoping to go back next year. In chapel we talked a lot about Hebrews 12:1 which says, *"Therefore since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, Let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us."* The picture is of all the people from my cabin. From left to right: Stephanie, Adda, Tay, Cassidy, Haylie, Kenslee, and Olivia. If you have any questions, I would be happy to answer them.

Sabrina Troyer

It was enough fun that I would go back. We did a lot of fun activities. I had nice counselors and good cabin mates. I played with friends at the playground. Some verses I liked were Micah 6:8 and John 8. Mark and Tra were the chapel directors. They taught good things in chapel. It was my first year at Bethel Camp. The camp was cool. The food was good. The people who were in charge of games were fun.



Council Update

By Russ Hauge

While there was no formal meeting during July, the following is a quick update since our last meeting during mid-June.

June income was \$15,675, which was more than our expenses of \$12,599 by +\$3,076. Our YTD income is \$123,186, compared to our YTD expenses of \$90,766, which leaves a YTD balance of +\$32,420.

As a result of working with the Grounds Team, the following items were completed:

- The church sign near US 42 was repaired.
- The old playground climbing dome was dismantled, hauled away, and replaced with a new climbing dome.
- The tree stump near the new parking lot light was pulled out. Thanks to the men attending the breakfast on July 11th for hauling it back to the burn pile.

With the recent expenditures, the council continues to work with the grounds team to stay on top of our expenses and determine the appropriate timing to replace the damaged tree and add mulch to the playground area among other maintenance items.

The next meeting will be held Tuesday, August 4th.

High Sierra Expedition

By Jeremy Troyer

First of all, before I jump into the details of my recent trip. I want to say a huge thank you to all of you for your support. So many of you prayed for me and my family while I was gone. God answered those prayers in very real ways! Many of you gave financially to help make this trip happen; thank you! Many of you watched out and checked in with Rachel and the girls while I was gone. It was

such a blessing knowing that they were surrounded by a loving church family. That fact brings a man lots of peace when he is in the middle of the wilderness with no access to communication. So, thank you!

A quick background so this all makes more sense. I met a man named Tyler Young in 2022. Our company did a bunch of work on his house. While working on his home I had the opportunity to get to know him a little better. After the project was completed, Tyler and I went out for dinner one evening. From that night on a great friendship has grown. Tyler owns and runs a ministry called The Chase. His primary focus is helping men in their 20s and 30s. The focus is to help them find their way in life and most importantly introduce them to Jesus and grow their faith, whether new or old. For some time now, Tyler has been after me to join him on a trip called the High Sierra Expedition.

That leads us to the present. I finally went on the trip, and, wow, am I ever glad that I did. The High Sierra Expedition was a 17-day 150+ mile backpacking trip in the High Sierra Mountains in California. We flew into Fresno, California. From there we drove straight east into the mountains. We were gone a total of nineteen days (June 23rd to July 11th). Everything we needed for the trip



we carried in our packs on our back. We did receive a food resupply half-way through the trip. Our packs averaged around 60 pounds. After our resupply we were closer to 70-75 pounds. Going was generally slow. We averaged a little over 10 miles a day. We enjoyed two "zero days" with no hiking. Those days were glorious. I will not begin to be able to get all the stories and different ways God spoke into this article.

The trip was so much more than just a backpacking trip. God was so incredibly good and answered so many prayers. God answered my prayers for revival in my heart. Prayers for safety were answered. While we sometimes say those prayers halfheartedly and take them for granted, God answered them. We made our way into what is considered the "high country." This country was very rugged, powerful, and majestic and included unforgiving, very narrow rock trails beside sheer cliffs. At times we lost the trail and had to backtrack and try again.

I began the trip with a lot of preconceived ideas about myself and how I would handle the trip. God shattered all those ideas in the first three days. I was so determined to not be the slowest guy in the group. I spent months training in a gym and carrying a 60-pound backpack for two miles a day. My pride was determined to not be the weak link and slow the group



Brady, Mark, Conner, Tyler, Jeremy

down. My goal was to be able to be out front leading the other guys along and cheering for them when they made it to the top of a mountain. Well, God had other plans for me. Something about being thirteen years older than two college athletes was not a good math equation for my pride. It was so wonderful how God took and reshaped who I was and spoke so much to my heart. I had gone into the trip with several specific prayers for myself. Before God could answer those, He needed to remove the pride and just completely break me down to begin reshaping me. I became very comfortable with the back of the group and honestly by the end of the trip it became my favorite spot. In fact, they forced me to lead a couple times, and I missed my spot of being dead last.

Before the trip I had asked God to help me find peace again. In the hustle of life, I had started to get lost in work and keeping all the family plans going. To be honest, I was burned out. I spent way too many hours at work trying to keep my part of the business running. Another prayer I had prayed was that I would learn to find my emotions. As a man I was never

really given the space to feel things and learn to cry. Now that may seem like a weird prayer request from a man, but I knew God was working on me, and I just wanted to feel Him. God answered my prayers and so much more. I can almost count the times I cried in my life before this trip. God opened my heart to a new level and I am learning to listen and feel my emotions. The beauty of the mountains was so rugged and massive. At the top of the first pass as we finally entered the

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high country, the view was awesome. Only God can create that vast beauty! Yet standing on top of a mountain and watching the sun set, I was weeping because the same God that created all this vast beauty saw me right there, a little speck, and loved me. God saw and cared about me while I was in a wilderness so rugged and powerful that it can literally kill you if you are not careful.

As men we often try to hold onto a tough front and not tell others when we are struggling. Guys, find someone you trust, and let it out. We are only damaging ourselves and our family. God has so much more in store for us. We have to get the baggage and the hurts out and let Jesus fill that space. As our driver told me on the way back out of the mountains, "Leave the baggage out there. Don't carry it with you; let God take care of it." God helped me to leave the baggage in the high country. I carried around a lot of hurt and pain from past experiences. Ranging from family and friends to past church hurt. God helped me leave all that somewhere in the high country.

In short, not everyone can take a trip like this; however, everyone can find somewhere to get alone with God. This trip was exactly what I needed. My favorite times were the quiet times with God all alone in a wilderness that will swallow me, yet talking to the Creator of it all. Find your quiet place and let your soul find the peace that passes all understanding. That quiet place can be your favorite recliner in your living room. However, the ultimate quiet time killer is not to be included. Our cell phones are destroying our quiet time with God. They are a great tool, but they are also a great distraction that the enemy will use to keep us from that quiet time. So, my advice: death to the cell phone, and head out and find some quiet time with God. Listen for God with your heart.

If you would like to hear more about the trip or are even interested in a future trip, come talk to me. God provided many stories and a vast beauty. While I tried, pictures don't do it justice; however I would be happy to share my pictures and experiences with you.



Elders Notes

By Brandon Wengerd

The elders gathered together on July 15th at Rob and Doris's home. We opened our time with prayer. Similar to last month, we enjoyed eating a potluck meal together and fellowshiping. Next, we spent time in prayer and praise for the church body and giving thanks to our Heavenly Father for what He is doing.

Upcoming Schedule - we are looking forward to the following upcoming events:

- Our church network's annual Multiply Conference in Huntington, PA, July 31st-August 2nd. Next year's conference will be held locally at Rosedale Bible College on August 6th-8th.
- Potluck August 16th
- Elder's retreat August 21st-22nd
- Outdoor service with baptism and potluck afterward
- Missions Sunday on September 27th
- A series on sexuality that Rob is beginning to put together

Small Groups - Small groups will be starting up again in the fall. We see these groups as valuable ways that we can encourage one another and strengthen our faith. Look for more details to come.

Prayer After Service - We are striving to be a church that values the power of prayer. One newer opportunity that has started is a prayer team that is willing to pray with anyone who has a prayer or praise after the church service on Sunday mornings.

New Council Chair - We are thankful for Russ Hague serving on the council for two terms and for being the council chair. We will be working through the process of appointing a new council member as well as a new chair in place of Russ.

Worship In Music - We are grateful for the diverse musical gifts that our church has and the leadership that Annika brings to worship. We continue to seek ways to grow in authentic worship and joyful expression.

We closed our time with prayer. Our August meeting will be at our elders retreat in Hocking Hills.

As usual, we welcome your thoughts and concerns to be shared with any of us on the elders team.



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We would love to hear your feedback. Email us at secretary@lcfweb.org.

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