



News from Virginia

By Jared Stutzman

Hi, folks at LCF!

Few days pass here in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley without Rebekah and me remembering and being grateful for the fellowship and friendships we shared with you all over the past few years. We miss you. You mean a lot to us.

What we're up to: Rebekah will graduate in May from Eastern Mennonite University with a degree in elementary education, but first she has to "run the gauntlet" of student teaching. Right now she is putting in a lot of long and stressful hours for the 4th grade class she is teaching. Soon she will switch to a new placement, where she will teach 2nd grade. In her "spare" time, she has been working on her resume and playing mini ping-pong with me. We love ping-pong. I bought Rebekah a full-size table tennis table for her birthday in January. Unfortunately, it hadn't yet arrived when an epic blizzard

dumped two feet of snow on the Harrisonburg area. Snowed in with a set of ping-pong paddles and no table, we soon found we could play on our tiny kitchen table using a makeshift net. It is fun—addictive, even. Rebekah's family came over to play a game of round robin with us one evening—can you picture five people (all adults) dashing around a 3-foot table in our living room?

I have three part-time jobs. I teach strings classes—violin, viola, cello, and upright bass—at Eastern Mennonite High School. I have classes in 6th, 7th, and 8th grades and a high school string orchestra. I also teach private violin lessons at Eastern Mennonite University in the evening, and I'm a choir director/worship ministry coordinator at West Side Baptist Church. It can be pretty challenging to deal with three different work schedules, but most of the time I can find a way to fit things in.

If you're ever in the Valley, stop in and see us!

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

Greek Word of the Month

By Reuben Sairs

δικαιος (dikaïos) – righteous

What does it mean to be righteous? The English word tends to give us the idea of a person with no vices—someone who doesn't curse, smoke, drink, play cards or dance (depending on your Christian background). It says upright, but maybe even uptight. We don't picture a righteous person at a party, but Jesus went to parties!

Our idea isn't all wrong, but it can be prissy. The biblical word deserves a little better. In Greek, the language of the New Testament, the word for "righteous" is dikaïos. That word and similar words like righteousness and righteously appear close to 200 times in the New Testament. The Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament says dikaïos means "acting in accordance with the requirements of the law and custom toward one's fellow human being and in accordance with the demands of God."

Righteousness speaks of several qualities that we don't want to neglect, including fairness and justice. We need to keep in mind that being righteous doesn't only mean keeping oneself pure, but treating other people well.

Where are We Going?

Notes on Elders' Meeting, Part 2

By Rob Swartz

[Editor's note: this month Rob continues his review of the meeting the elders had after the "Where are We Going?" session January 10 at the church.]

Sunday school

There is considerable interest in having an adult class throughout the year. We will plan to run Adult Discipleship Class during the school year (September 2010 to May 2011) if there are enough volunteers for childcare and teaching positions.

- Fall Quarter (September-November) – Reuben will teach a longer, 12-week class.
- Winter Quarter (December-February) – We will have a variety of teachers. Possible options include prayer time, sermon discussion, or multiple classes.
- Spring Quarter (March-May) – Reuben will teach another 12-week class.

There was support for a consistent starting time. We thought it worked well to have Sunday school after the morning service this past fall, and so we will continue with that format. The Sunday service will always begin at 10:00 a.m., followed by Adult Discipleship Class and Sunday school at 11:00 a.m.

As long as there is someone to facilitate it, we will try to have coffee and hot drinks (not food) available before and during the adult class time. The youth would do "Java Hut" during fall and spring quarters as a fundraiser. If we find a volunteer for the winter quarter we would have free coffee available.

During the summer quarter we want to give both adult and children's teachers a break. This summer Shannon may try to do something similar to what we did last summer with the children's singing time.



Worship

We recognize that worship style and music preference are a matter of personal taste. We want to try and keep a balance of both hymns and contemporary music at LCF, recognizing that there will always be some people who would prefer more of one kind than the other.

We are glad that LCF is a place where people have the opportunity to try almost anything and that the congregation is understanding as they "learn the ropes." We want to continue to foster this kind of environment. Those who are leading and coordinating have permission to direct those they are working with, encouraging them to do their best and continue to develop and learn.

Reuben will find the document that he put together several years ago on the leadership team's view of worship. We will review it with further discussion at our next meeting and also make it available to anyone who is interested.

Rob and Keith both recognize that they have been worship leaders for quite a while and have many other responsibilities that demand their attention. They would welcome the development of new worship leaders to bring some creativity and new life to our worship times.

Rob will pass along the comments from the church and the response from the leadership team to Elizabeth for her to use as reference in giving leadership to the worship team.



Sunday Morning

Discipleship and Fellowship

Fellowship

Our church definitely likes fellowship and feels the need for it. There were many suggestions given for things to do together. We want to make sure that we are planning adequate times to be together and would like to try to use those as outreach opportunities as well (for example, the upcoming men's whitewater rafting trip).

Seating

It can be hard to find a seat if you come late to the Sunday morning service. Doris will add a slide that encourages people to sit near the front. We want to be sure everyone can easily find a seat.



Childcare seems to be going well. We will encourage the sound technicians to be sure to check to make sure that the speaker in the nursery is on and working so that those who are in the nursery can hear the service.

Community Connection

We already have many people at LCF who are reaching out to our community in various ways. We do not feel the need to add additional group activities but will continue to encourage people in the ways they are serving.

We would like to highlight the people at LCF who are currently involved in service and outreach opportunities, noting what those activities are and how others can be involved if they would like. It would be good to hear regular reports from them. We will suggest using the Connection to interview one of these people each month, asking them what they do, how others could be involved, how we can pray specifically for them, etc. Another suggestion was to recognize these people at the Fall service fair and give others an opportunity to join them or to commit to praying for them.

We like the suggestion that was given of having prayer partners within the church. One idea we'd like to try is to have people who would like to have a prayer partner sign up on the communication card on the first Sunday of the month. They would complete the bottom portion with their name and specific prayer requests and put it in the offering bag. Later we could pass the bag back around and anyone who had put in a card could take one out and pray for that person.

Finances

We shared concerns about those at LCF who are struggling financially. We want to respond quickly to needs as we become aware of them, and hope to form a benevolence team to help evaluate and respond to needs both inside and outside our congregation.

Small Group Update

By Keith Scheffel

The "small" group Shannon and I lead consists of the Abraham and Naomy Ndungu family, Rich and Robin Troyer family, Dave and Colleen Wolford family, Phil and Lucy Elfrink family, Kelvin Snider, Twila Snider and Audrey Maust.

Our normal pattern is to meet every other Sunday evening in order to alternate with the Junior Youth schedule. Every other time we meet we have a simple meal together, with sandwiches, veggies or something salty, and something sweet.

Initially we've been using John Ortberg's DVD teaching series entitled "When the Game is Over It All Goes Back in the Box." Our typical format is to open with an "icebreaker" question, watch the DVD, discuss the lesson and then break into guys and gals groups for prayer. We've been blessed by our times of fellowship and praying for each other.



Getting to Know... *Roger Hazen*

Roger is pastor of Pineview Mennonite Church in Vassar, Michigan and serves as overseer for LCF. He and his wife Sharon have three children: Emily, 25; Caleb, 22; Thomas, 19.

Where are you from? Where do you live now?

I was born in Council Grove, Kansas in 1961. As I was growing up my dad worked in construction, so we moved around a lot. I've lived in Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, Michigan (this is my second time here), Kentucky, Alabama, Wisconsin, Nebraska, Colorado, and of course three years in Ohio while attending RBI.

We currently reside about a mile south of Vassar, Michigan. Our subdivision is very quiet and peaceful, with the only real disturbance happening when the farmer who owns the field behind our home decides to combine corn or beans in the middle of the night.



How long have you been a pastor? What did you do before that?

I was ordained in 1992, but began as a pastor in Beemer, Nebraska in the summer of 1991, immediately after graduating from RBI. I served as an elder at Zion Mennonite Church in Pryor, Oklahoma for a couple of years before leaving to attend RBI in 1988. Before that I worked for about five years as an aircraft instrument technician at a small shop near the Tulsa, Oklahoma airport.

What are some of your hobbies?

I enjoy three main hobbies: reading (I especially enjoy non-fiction historical books), cycling (pedal power!), and roasting, grinding, and drinking coffee.

What kind of music do you like to listen to?

I'm skewed pretty heavily toward classical music, mostly from the classical and romantic periods. But I also enjoy a little Johnny Cash once in a while, a little bluegrass now and then, some Celtic, and have even been known to listen to some Scottish bagpipes every so often. I can only enjoy modern Christian music when it is theologically solid!

If you could learn any new skill, what would it be?

I dabble with the guitar, but it really isn't my thing. I'd love to be able to pilot a hot air balloon, and have enough money to own one!

If there were no speed limits, how fast would you drive?

Depends on the terrain, but I usually find 65 to be comfortable on normal roads. I try to maintain at least 20+ when riding my bike! On a motorcycle—as fast as possible! (Which is why I don't own one.)

What's your favorite food?

Hmm—that's a tough question. I have a real soft spot for donuts, but I'm not sure that could be considered food. I guess I'd have to go with my Southern upbringing and say it is Mom's fried chicken, fried potatoes with onions, and a slice of bread smothered in milk gravy and corn. When I think my stomach can handle the grease I still whip that meal up from time to time!

The LCF Connection

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If you'd like to make comments on any of the stories or "LCF Connection" in general, email us at: connection@lcfweb.org.

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