

The LCF Connection

June 2011



Benefit Dinner and Auction a Success

All the hard work for the LCF benefit dinner and auction paid off on Saturday, May 21, when the event raised \$14,886 after expenses. About 250 people were able to attend the event, held at Maranatha Community Church between London and Plain City. The evening started out with a silent auction and a grilled chicken meal. Background music was provided by Pure Nard, a men's a cappella singing group made up of Jesse Diller, Bryant Gingerich, Ryan Freed, Ken Miller, Tim Miller, and Jared Stutzman.

Some of the auction items that went for the highest prices included a sofa table made by Kelvin Snider (\$700), a 3-4 night stay at Snowshoe Mountain, West Virginia (\$650), and a "Jewel Box" quilt made by Cora Miller (\$475).

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Breakdown of Proceeds

Restaurant raffle – cash: \$350
 Restaurant raffle – tickets recorded: \$165
 Donations for centerpieces: \$120
 Other donations: \$476
 Silent auction: \$2,216
 Live auction: \$8,315
 Meal tickets: \$4,418

Gross: \$16,060
 Expenses: \$1,173.94

Net: \$14,886

Thanks so much to each one who helped out!



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When We All (Don't) Work Together

A Message from the Pastor
By Rob Swartz

What can we do when we don't get along? It happens. There are disagreements and misunderstandings. We offend one another, often unintentionally. These are normal occurrences in the church. The fact is, wherever there are people there will be challenges in getting along. The beautiful testimony of the church is not that conflict doesn't exist, but that it's possible to work through it and live in love and unity.

Many Christians are tempted not to deal directly with conflict. They think the Christian attitude is simply to act like no conflict exists. They may disagree on an issue, but never give any indication when someone asks for their opinion. They may be offended by someone, but never approach that person to resolve the issue.

This approach almost always leads to another negative response—grumbling or complaining. When there is no positive outlet for the conflict to be resolved, it leaks out in complaints and comments to others. Depending on how those who hear these words respond, an undercurrent of discontent can spread through parts of the church.

If people in a community don't deal with issues or problems constructively, they begin to drift apart. They distance themselves from those who disagree with them or have offended them. Others apart from the situation often have no idea that any problem exists. As the distance increases, distrust and misunderstandings also increase. Without resolution, people in this kind of conflict may reach the point of leaving the church, in search of a place where they don't have to face these kinds of unresolved tensions.

How does Jesus tell us to respond to conflict? For one, he tells us to be honest—"Let your 'Yes' be 'Yes' and your 'No' be 'No.'" We need to be honest—with discretion—about how we feel. Holding in unresolved anger and resentment is being dishonest. Jesus also tells us to talk directly to individuals we have issues with. Over the years I have come to greatly appreciate those who graciously disagree with me or challenge me. I can be confident that our relationship is in good standing, and if it isn't that they will let me know and give me the opportunity to work things out.

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Leadership Team Notes

Ideas and thoughts from recent meetings

Building Project

The leadership team is waiting for Weaver Construction to get back with them with architectural drawings, and then will schedule a congregational meeting, possibly sometime in June or July.

New NIV Translation

Many who use the New International Version are probably not aware that a new version was released in March, replacing the 1984 version. Rob asked the leadership team to do some research on the new translation. The team read from a variety of translations and discussed their thoughts. They recognized the challenge of translation, and that any translation will have its weaknesses since it's done by imperfect humans. The team is more concerned that people at LCF are reading the Bible than they are with which translation they are reading.

Discipleship

The team would like to provide some more structure to help people grow in their walks with God. They are looking at existing materials and considering the possibility of developing new materials. Considering the size of LCF, the team concluded that it might be most beneficial to encourage people to disciple others one-on-one rather than having an organized class structure. However, Reuben has considered the idea of offering a mid-week Bible study as a way of providing more opportunity for study.

The team would like to get some feedback on how the current Adult Discipleship Class is working as a tool for people in the congregation. They plan to give out a short questionnaire to the congregation sometime in the near future.

Pastoral Responsibilities

Rob feels the need to focus a significant amount of energy on discipleship development and is requesting assistance in preaching over the remainder of the year. The associate pastors have each agreed to preach about five times instead of the originally scheduled three to four.

Other Updates

Danielle Call has asked for a transfer of membership, and that request has been granted. The leadership team wishes Mark and Danielle God's blessing as they participate at Newport United Methodist Church.

The leadership team is praying specifically for the following people this month:

- Jesse Diller (Ryan and Kris)
- Kevin and Kristen Duncan (Richard and Robin)
- Phil and Lucy Elfrink (Reuben and Vicki)
- Dan and Sarah Frederick (Keith and Shannon)
- Marcus and Brenda Freed (Rob and Doris)

From London They Say You Are Going

An interview with *Hans Stutzman*



Hans is planning to leave the Buckeye State and move back to his home state of Illinois this summer, as he and Kimberly Miller prepare for their October wedding. He answered a few questions about his plans.

You just graduated from Ohio State. What did you get your degree in?

A bachelor's in business administration, with a specialization in operations management. I would like to apply it to farming or agriculture somehow. Using the operations part of it to improve agriculture processes would probably be the best way to put it, a farm manager.

What are you doing right now?

The job I'm taking is with Precision Planting. It's a company that makes the aftermarket products for planters, like corn planters and bean planters. I am

working in their technical support department. So if customers have questions about their products or if their products aren't working correctly, they're going to call me and I'm going to tell them over the phone what the problem is and how they can fix it. That's part of what we do, but another part is going out and training farmers in the products. It's more office work than I want, but it is something that I will enjoy.

Where is Precision Planting based?

The company is in Tremont, Illinois, about 40 minutes west of Bloomington.

Where you going to live?

Lexington, Illinois. It's a small town another 15 minutes east of Bloomington. So I'll have about an hour to drive to work. I wouldn't be happy about the commute, except that the rent I got was less than anything else that I was going to find. I got a house for \$200 less than an apartment was going to be. It has a yard, although not a large yard. It is two bedrooms, two baths, and a two car garage.

What are you doing this summer beyond working?

I start right away on June 15. Other than wedding planning and a couple of trips to other peoples' weddings, that's the majority of what I'm going to do.

Do you have a church you're going to attend?

Yes, there's a church called East White Oak Bible Church. There are probably about 800 members, with two services of around 400 people each. It's where my brother David attends. I've been there before and been part of the church, but never for a long period of time.

Are you going to miss Ohio?

There are some things I will miss, but mostly it's the people I'm going to miss.

Working Together continued...

Consider practicing these things:

- Respond graciously and honestly. Don't hide conflicting opinions unless the matter really isn't important to you. Either share it or drop it.
- Go directly to the source. Speak directly to people with whom you have conflict and work it out. Don't talk about it with others.
- Challenge each other. When someone begins to complain to you about a situation, gently stop them and encourage them to go to the source.

The beauty of the church is that this diverse group of people can live closely together, experiencing conflict, disagreement, and hurt, but still love each other and live in unity.



"Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you." (Ephesians 4:32)

My Take

*What does it mean to love your enemy?
Could you do it?*



Kris Freed

To treat ALL people the way I want to be treated. Hopefully, I'd be able to see enemies like Jesus does and put their interests above mine. Since I know that I'm going to heaven, it's okay if bad things happen to me.



Aaron Biscup

If you have someone who is really your enemy, it is no easy thing to love or forgive them. Without God, I think it is not possible. I do love them, but it is only through God that I can. I believe that it has to do with what Paul says in 2 Corinthians 10:5 about taking every thought captive and making it obedient to Christ.

Congrats to Ross Kauffman,

who has been hired to head up a new public health program at Bluffton University in Bluffton, Ohio. Ross attended LCF in 2008 and 2009 while he was earning his doctorate in epidemiology from Ohio State. According to Bluffton University, the public health program, which will begin fall 2011, is the first of its kind at a Mennonite institution.



Bluffton University photo

Who is the Enemy?

By Reuben Sairs

Enemies don't want their victims to succeed, prosper, or experience God's blessing. Enemies might do big and evil things against you, like national enemies do, but more likely enmity is played out on a small scale. Enemies are in your family, church, and neighborhood. They do little things that are intended to hurt, damage, limit, pay back. Enemies want to take you down a notch. It might be with a glance, a word, some gossip, or—what I have seen mostly in churches—by simply withholding blessing and offering silence, withdrawal, and gloominess.

I might have enemies, but far more troubling, I might be an enemy. Why do we become enemies? We are jealous. We are threatened. We are unhappy with our own lives.

In Christ I want to be no one's enemy. If I have an enemy I have to try to love them. This love means trying to reverse the process—to seek my enemy's well-being, happiness, advancement, and blessing. It can be a very hard thing to do, and doesn't get enough attention in our churches. By understanding our own roles as enemies, we might learn how to love our enemies.

Why am I jealous? Why am I threatened? What am I trying to protect? Why can't I rejoice to see someone else prosper? Why don't I want to be part of that person's advancement in life? I think the answer to these questions will often show that it's not really about the other person, it's about our Lord! In fact, we don't trust God or believe in his love or his will. We think that blessings, opportunities and joy are part of a finite pool of resources that needs to be distributed fairly according to our own ideas. But in Christ, in a Biblical faith, we have nothing to lose. We can love our enemies because God knows how to run his world, and how to love each of us.



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What did you think? If any of the stories in this Connection sparked an idea or opinion you'd like to share, email us at connection@lcfweb.org. *Editor: Andrew Sharp; Layout: Doris Swartz*