

The LCF Connection

November/December 2011

From the Editor

There are many things to love about the Christmas season—feasting on odd combinations of seasonal foods, consuming large quantities of chocolate, spending fleeting hours with friends we never see these days, getting presents, and even giving presents.

I could write about the more spiritual reasons to like Christmas, like gratefulness for God's sacrifice and awe at the miracle of the incarnation. All worthy topics, if a little dog-eared from past seasonal musings. But there's another thing about Christmas to be very grateful for.



Too often, the arena of faith has been a place to belittle each other over denominational disagreements or cast one another aside over prideful personality differences. But Christmas is a time when Christians can all look around, smile a little, and realize that we all think this coming-of-Jesus event is a Pretty Great Thing and one worth commemorating.

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215 US Rt. 42 NE
London, OH 43140
(740) 852-4268

www.lcfweb.org

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

"A Dwyer's Hardware Kind of Church"

A Message from the Pastor

By Rob Swartz

I love Dwyer's Hardware. It has that old-time hardware store feel and smell with the creaky wood floors, creating a wave of nostalgia when you step in the front door. And the shelves are stocked with almost any kind of hardware part you might need.

I went in there this past year looking for a spring for my washing machine. I figured I could use any old spring, but they kindly instructed me that I needed the original spring for the washing machine to spin correctly. They didn't have the part, but had a phone number for a place I could get it. You see, Dwyer's isn't just interested in selling you stuff. They genuinely want to help you fix your problem.

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My Take

What stands out to you about the Christmas story?

Marcus Freed

I am always amazed that foreign kings were led to see the Savior of the world.



Jack Rosati

His decision to start his incarnation under the most humble of circumstances.



Molly Rosati

I think the Magi may have been from a group of people who studied documents (scriptures like Jeremiah and Isaiah) collected and written by Daniel. They kept the faith and passed it along for 600 years in Babylon. They worshipped the King. I wonder what happened when the Magi got home?



Goldie Rosati

God's sacrifice of his only Son.

Elizabeth Yoder

This year I'm wondering if Mary had morning sickness. Also, seeing the way a first time dad looks out for a throwing up pregnant wife makes me wonder how freaked out Joseph must have been to let Mary have a baby in a barn!





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The people at Dwyer's are knowledgeable and can give advice on all manner of things. They won't try to sell you something you don't need and often will recommend a cheaper solution than what you originally were considering.

Probably the biggest thing that sets Dwyer's apart from other stores is that they notice you. Generally within the minute you step in the door, someone is asking you "How can I help you today?" Just the other week my son Bryce and I stopped in to take advantage of a sale. We weren't sure exactly what we wanted, so we immediately snuck down a side aisle to look at things and see if we could justify a purchase. Wouldn't you know it, a Dwyer's employee saw us flit past the end of an aisle and he was onto us; not in an obtrusive way, but he was not going to let us get by without an offer to help. I was once again impressed. We did not get out of that store without several people asking "What can we do to help you today?"



I'd like us at LCF to be like Dwyer's! When new people come to our church, I want them to know we care about them and sincerely want to help them. I want us to always be looking for those people and ready to welcome them and make them a part of our LCF family if they are so inclined. I loved the Christmas cookie deliveries to the homes surrounding

LCF this past week. It was a simple reminder to our neighbors that we care about them and God cares about them.

This Sunday, I encourage you not to make a beeline for the door, or just settle for talking to the friends you are comfortable with. Look for that person you don't know. You may have to be quick before they slip out the door. Don't be obtrusive, but introduce yourself. Ask them questions. Listen to them and look for opportunities to serve them in the name of Jesus. Jesus was continually looking for new people to minister to from all walks of life and we should be too.

I believe God will bring many new people across our path this next year and we will need all hands on deck so those new people can know the love of Christ through us—a Dwyer's kind of church.

Leadership Team Notes

Ideas and thoughts from recent meetings

Elders

The leadership team has been processing the elder nominations and hopes to put names before the congregation for final affirmation soon.

Building Project

The team will wait until final figures are in for the cost of the building project before asking the church to make pledges for support. They feel it is important for people to know what they are investing in and what the needs are before making a decision on contributing. The team will provide information on how much has already been brought in, how much will be needed per month, and when the project can start. They hope to have projected numbers before the end of the year, recognizing that the building project vision has been a very long process.

Route 40 and 42 Interchange

The Ohio Department of Transportation is planning a new interchange at Route 40 and 42. With the new setup, the church would lose access to Route 42, which would reduce the property value. It appears ODOT is only willing to pay about a quarter of the estimated loss in property value. A team from LCF is looking into further negotiation for a higher payment.

Charley Gregg Memorial Fund

The church received donations given in memory of Charley Gregg. The leadership team unanimously agreed to these funds to purchase something special in memory of Charley like a tree, landscaping, or some other kind of memorial, to be purchased once the new church building is completed.

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

- Andrew and Stephanie Sharp (Ryan and Kris)
- Kelvin Snider (Richard and Robin)
- Rob and Doris Swartz (Reuben and Vicki)
- Steve and Phyllis Swartz (Keith and Shannon)
- Richard and Robin Troyer (Rob and Doris)

Need Some Benevolence?

The church has funds set aside in a "Benevolence Fund" to help people with financial emergencies. If you have a financial emergency or know someone who does, please contact a Benevolence Team member or one of the pastors to find out if your need qualifies for assistance from the fund. Benevolence Team members are Ryan Freed, Levi Miller, Andrew and Stephanie Sharp, and Bob Zachrich.

An interview with *Audrey Maust*



Where are you from?

I grew up in Accident, Maryland.

How did you end up in Ohio?

I was at camp Hebron in Pennsylvania when I decided I wanted to become a teacher. I didn't see a whole lot of future in staying at the camp. I wanted to work with children, so I decided to continue my education. I came to Rosedale first of all, and then I transferred to Cedarville. After Cedarville I went to Ecuador for two years and taught English at a Christian school in voluntary service with RMM. Then I accepted a position as a teacher at Shekinah [Christian School] and I've been here ever since.

If you were in Ecuador for two years, do you know Spanish?

Um, no. I got by, by the time I left I felt like I was just on the verge of becoming a lot more fluent but I feel like I've lost a lot. That makes me sad. I tried so hard to keep it, but after a while I got too busy. It was nice while it lasted.

What are some of your favorite Christmas traditions?

I like making Christmas cookies, that's always fun. I like soft molasses cookies dipped in white chocolate. And just being with family, kicking back and relaxing and reading books—those are my favorite traditions. Another Christmas tradition I do with my class is to give out candy canes to my students and then read them the story called *The Legend of the Candy Cane*. They are allowed to eat their candy throughout the whole day. This is a big deal for fourth and fifth graders. We also make a Christmas village made out of milk cartons, icing, pretzels sticks for the logs on the cabins and frosted mini wheats for the roof.

What would be your ideal way to spend a day?

You ask me when I'm really busy, so I would love to just do nothing, with no agenda. I'd have my house all cleaned up my wash cleaned and have nothing to do but read a good book.

What do you like to do for fun?

I like playing board games or card games, and spending time with my nieces and nephews. I like biking a lot. I love hiking, Frisbee golf, and volleyball, although I have not played that for a long time. Reading, of course. In the summer I really enjoy playing tennis.

What is something people may not know about you?

If my parents had known this I would have gotten in trouble, but in the barn I used to climb up to the beams and walk across them. They were probably two stories high. When we got to a certain place we could actually jump off into the corn, but before that there was nothing underneath but boards. I was pretty daring back then; I didn't think I could die. Right now I would be much more fearful of heights but back then I would climb all the way up the ladder on the silo.

What is something you have never done, but would like to someday?

I think it would be fun to take a hot air balloon ride in Switzerland. I think that would be the coolest thing to see the Alps from a hot air balloon. That's a dream that probably won't come true but it would be awesome to see.

Tea or coffee?

Coffee with the flavored creamer. You have to have flavored creamer.

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That's the one thing that should bring followers of Jesus of all stripes together the rest of the year—a common focus on our Reason for being a church in the first place. We could make our differences—theological and otherwise—into discussions about how to best please our Favorite Person instead of turning them into ego-driven religious brawls or simmering personal resentments.

Christmas, in fact, is a steady compass needle turning our wildly zig-zagging course toward the Person who is not the reason for the season, but the reason for *everything*. If we follow that needle, maybe people will start to tell each other, “Look, it's the kingdom!” instead of “Look at that religion stuff...”

Merry Christmas!





LCF carolers earned their hot chocolate with some Christmas melodies at 53 South Main Street in London during the Old Fashioned Christmas celebration. Afterward, Steve and Phyllis Swartz served refreshments at their home.



After the December 11 service, the church celebrated the recent wedding of Hans and Kim Stutzman with a potluck meal. Here, Hans and Kim appear to be attempting to make off with the entire cake.



On December 14, about a dozen people brought cookies to LCF and assembled cookie plates, which they delivered to homes in the surrounding community. They came back to the church afterward to run some tests on how the cookies tasted with hot drinks.



The women of LCF met at the home of Colleen Wolford on December 19 for a Christmas celebration and an abundance of delicious food. They had a \$5 gift exchange—with some re-exchanging—and played Dutch Blitz and Apples to Apples.

Upcoming Events

- December 4-February 26: winter quarter for Sunday school
- December 25: LCF Family Christmas beginning with a light brunch at 10:00 a.m.
- December 30: New Year's Eve party at the church, 7:00 p.m. until...
- February 11: church social at RBC

The LCF Connection

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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
 If you prefer that we do not use photos of you in the Connection, you may opt out by emailing us at connection@lcfweb.org.