

The LCF Connection

November 2013

A Hymn of Grateful Praise

Words of thanksgiving compiled by Candice Mast

LCF is a church that likes to give thanks. Every Sunday during our sharing time, there are reports of what God has done and prayers answered; praises for healings and provision. This year, our family is grateful to be back worshipping with our church family at LCF after seven years away.

We are especially aware of our gifts as we experience fall for the first time since returning from Thailand. We're enjoying the sweater weather, pumpkin flavored anything, pinecones, dark evenings—things we had almost forgotten about in perpetually hot and humid Thailand! Since returning to America I've rediscovered my love and thankfulness for public libraries, long phone calls with my sisters, sycamore trees, homemade pizza, and robes and slippers. Beside those little things, we thank him for his bigger provisions like housing for us and a beautiful neighborhood to live in with a river and bike trails, right in the heart of the city! We thank him for a quality public school and awesome teachers who fit our kid's personalities so well. We are grateful that our kids get to spend time with their grandparents making applesauce, learning to knit, or getting lawnmower rides. We prayed so many prayers for help as we left Thailand and he has answered every one in his beautiful, unexpected ways.

I am often reminded of how important it is to keep a grateful heart. When I open my eyes daily to consciously look for his tiny gifts (acorns) and his huge provisions (a job I enjoy), I can live in peace and contentment, even when I have circumstances in my life that are difficult. There is a Thanksgiving hymn called "For the Beauty of the Earth" that says:

*For the beauty of the earth
For the glory of the skies,
For the love which from our birth
Over and around us lies*

God, help us see the beauty and feel the love all around us and help us to accept it with gratitude each day. Recently, I asked some LCFers to share some of their gifts from God right now. As the song goes on to say: "Lord of all to thee we raise, this our hymn of grateful praise."

Robin Troyer:

The year 2013 provided positive changes in my life. In July I finally met a goal I had been working towards for a number of years...a full-time job outside the home that would provide benefits and a schedule that would allow me to complete my other full-job as a mother and wife. I enjoy my new job working at Plain City Animal Hospital where I continue to learn each day and receive lots of affection from furry four-pawed animals! August brought the blessing of our first grandchild. Lydia was born August 20th and I look forward to watching her grow and change rapidly this next year!

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





Spiritual Zombies

A Message from the Pastor

by Reuben Sairs

I don't remember the book, or if I even finished it. It was about leadership, and it gave me advice that has served me well as a pastor. I don't know if there is any science backing it up, but it is true to my experience. It goes like this, "if you want to understand why the people in your church act the way they do, figure out what they are afraid of." It was talking about the destructive or self-defeating things people do in churches. If you could dispel someone's fear, perhaps defend them, or give them a moment of courage, then their brighter side might shine through. Solve the fear and a fair amount of pain and frustration will go with it.

When people are afraid, they have predictable responses. Few of them are good for the church. I'll leave it to the counselors to map it out carefully. Just based on what I've seen, some hunker down—they seethe until they lash out at something completely unrelated. I've found that when the hunker-downers finally explode, they are very hard to reconcile. They can be as stubborn as they were patient. Others don't hunker down, instead they get aggressive. They can be hard to manage at first because they come out swinging both fists. Others might become glib. If they are afraid of something, they pretend it doesn't matter to them at all. The trouble is that they either disengage from the fellowship, or feel more hurt than they are letting on. In spite of their sarcasm they are really disappointed. Some people who are afraid have hair-triggers—they might squeeze the trigger and shoot someone by accident, or stomp away before they've heard half the story.

What are people afraid of in churches? It is often a fear of rejection, a fear of being hurt, of losing something because they've made themselves vulnerable in a relationship with the church. Most pastors will meet a herd of wounded spiritual zombies who wander from church to church and who at each stop acquire a new hurt. They can never settle or stay long, because they are afraid of being hurt again. They are delicate and getting more so at each temporary stopping place.

There is no question, if you participate in a church your feelings will be hurt at some point. You will be offended at some point. You might be treated unfairly, or be under-appreciated. Sometimes you will feel lonely in the crowd. You can't put a group of humans together in a room for any length of time and not experience this darker side of community. If you are too afraid, then you will always move on or find a way to stay out on the edge where you assume you won't get caught. But, I have found that it is those who step in and stay in congregations, even if they get hurt, who receive the greatest blessings and experience the most growth in Christ. To marginalize yourself with the church is undoubtedly to stunt your growth as a Christian and rob you of the experience of a full life in Christ.

When we belong to a church we're signing on to experience a lot of love, friendship and most of all spiritual support. It's a dynamic and complex relationship. We're signing on to give and invest ourselves, not just order from the menu. Like any relationship, though, we must be ready for the moments when it is not easy.

What does the Bible say? 1 John 4.18, "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear."

LCF is trying now to improve its membership policy. Membership might scare those who are afraid of being hurt (again). Let me just say, don't let fear stop you. If you're ever afraid of something here, please let your pastors or elders know.

"Corny" LCFers: Naomy Ndungu, Abraham Ndungu, Bob Zachrich, Marcus Freed, Tom Mast, Candice Mast, Bettyo Zachrich, Brenda Freed, Pam Shay, Kelvin Snider (and Obadiah Freed looking on).

Leadership Team Notes

Wow, we got a lot done!

by Vicki Sairs

Fueled by Naomy's good Kenyan chai, your friendly leadership team plowed through nine agenda items on October 14. We were unstoppable. Reuben started us off with reflections on the Holy Spirit and a time of prayer, and from there we did our parliamentary best. We approved the minutes, Rob shared about the pastors' conference he and Doris attended in New York City, and we updated the LCF Statement of Faith. Rob proposed forming an outreach team and we supported that idea.

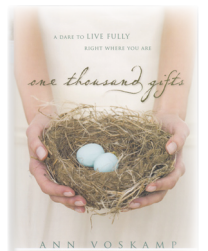
We reviewed elder nominations and approved a timeline for rolling out our new membership plan. We also discussed small groups briefly, but decided to take the topic up again at our next meeting because we had more pressing issues—namely, the budget!

This was pressing in a good way: the finance team wanted our feedback on some budget categories, so we went over them line by line. Because we've consistently been ending our years with a surplus, we recommended increasing our giving in a number of categories. We are really thankful for this dilemma!

Counting God's Gifts

by Doris Swartz

Many times in the Bible, we are instructed to be thankful. Often it's hard for us to remember to give thanks in the midst of life's business, or to find joy through thankfulness in life's difficult circumstances. Two years ago a friend gave me the book, "One Thousand Gifts" by Ann Voskamp. Reading it helped me to develop the daily habit of counting (and recording) the many gifts that God gives me. I need to be reminded that regardless of my circumstances, God is good and that he always loves me. God showers us with His grace in so many ways, giving us thousands of gifts for which to be thankful for!



If you would like to be challenged to give thanks regularly and to "live fully right where you are" check out this great book in our church library.



Grateful Praise continued...



Keith and Lisa Miller:

We are thankful for an upcoming trip to Florida as a family which we are really looking forward to! We are thankful for good jobs that provide for needs. As parents, we are so thankful for our kids' health and safety.



Ashlie LeGrand:

I am thankful that my Dad moved back from Seattle. He's been a big help in so many big and little ways. I'm thankful that my husband just got a new job with the London Police department!



Lucy Elfrink:

I'm grateful for God's grace, protection, and favor. I'm thankful for the body of believers at LCF. My own family is thousands of miles away so I'm grateful for my brothers and sisters in this community.



Janelle Schlabach:

I'm thankful for a loving family and for a God that cares for everybody.



Danny Ndungu:

I'm thankful for people who keep me accountable—keep me on my toes.



Kris Freed:

I am thankful for my health and the new baby coming in May. I have lots of questions about God's timing and our family's future, but I am so thankful for God's peace and direction.

Benevolence Team Update

by Jennifer Cooper

The LCF Benevolence Team is currently composed of four members: Cletus Yoder, Levi Miller, Jennifer Cooper, and David Stewart. During the last three months, we have had two meetings and have also communicated frequently by email. Over that time, we have reviewed and revised the policies and forms used by the LCF Benevolence Team. We have also made contact with other members of the community regarding potential needs and opportunities for service. In particular, the team discussed a desire to get to know and serve the families in the trailer community beside the former location of LCF, and we hope to work with members of the newly forming outreach team on this.

The primary task of the benevolence team is to manage the benevolence fund, which is used to help with the needs of the church and community. The fund is a way for LCF as a body to show love through financial assistance to those in need both inside and outside the church. It is intended for urgent needs. Our team evaluates each case and makes a decision about how best to help, which may include financial or material assistance, counseling, or referral to a local agency that may be able to help. We also share the gospel with individuals making external requests. You can complete a request for help for yourself or on behalf of someone else and give it to one of our team members.



There are two types of requests, internal requests and external requests. Internal requests are requests made for yourself or another LCF attendee. External requests are requests made for or by individuals outside of LCF. Each type of request has its own form. Please ask any of us on the team if you need a form. We currently use both paper and electronic forms, but all data is entered into electronic Google forms in order for all team members to have access to the same information.

At least one of us will always be present after Sunday services to discuss any needs that you or those whom you know may have. You may also feel free to call or email us with any questions or issues, or to acquire an electronic request form. Overall, the team's goal is to be a blessing, both spiritually and materially, to those truly in need both within and outside of LCF. We ask for your prayers and support in accomplishing this goal, and we welcome any input you may have.

Looking Ahead...

- November 23 LCF 101, 10 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. (Lunch is provided so please RSVP to Doris if you plan to attend.)
- December 2 Caroling at London's Old Fashioned Christmas
- December 8 RBC Chorus sings at LCF
- December 14 Dress rehearsal, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.
- December 15 Christmas Program, 6:30 p.m.
- December 22 LCF Family Christmas

Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.

Psalm 100:4-5



LCF Harvest Party

by Candice Mast



LCF's annual harvest party took place on Saturday, October 26, in the barn of Dale and Sharon Headings. It was a chilly, windy evening, so we were thankful for the shelter of the barn and for the toasty fire built by Tim Shay.

The kids had a great time running around with wind-chapped cheeks, bouncing on the trampoline, painting pumpkins with Karla Knief and playing pumpkin ring toss. The adults stayed mostly in the barn and focused on good conversation and staying warm by huddling around the fire and sipping hot drinks. Everyone enjoyed a delicious supper of chili and all kinds of delicious fall treats. Unsupervised children got away with eating multiple cookies and donuts! We took "corny" photos and enjoyed an after-dark hayride through the fields.

Many thanks to the Fellowship Team (Abraham & Naomy Ndungu, Sharon Headings, Brenda Freed, Karla Knief and Pam Shay) for planning such a fun and festive evening! Happy Fall everyone!



Can you name these "corny" LCFer's? (Answers on page 2)



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A monthly newsletter designed to enhance communication at London Christian Fellowship

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. Editors: Doris Swartz and Trish Eaton

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.