



**NEW
MEMBER
CANDIDATES**

**MAY
2024**



LEFC

LANCASTER EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH



NEW MEMBER CANDIDATES – May 2024

Josh and Hannah Carr
Nathan and Lauren Eakin
Keith and Sarah Evans
Harley Foster
Daniel and Megan Gallagher
Jeff and Amanda Groff
David and Amanda Hershey
Paul and Tammy Jones

Kyle and Rebecca Kutz
Morgan Meadows
Kevin and Erin Perigo
Gary and Ellen Poorman
Maddison Reapsome
Travis and Kristin Reardon
John and Wilma Roberts
Brian and Shannon Roland

Andy and Erika Schell
Zane and Kathryn Seitz
Brian and Sarah Sell
Ken and Dawn Siegrist
Anthony and Kayley Stoner
Dylan Weaver
John and Nancy Wentworth
Nathan and Catherine
Woodcock



JOSH CARR

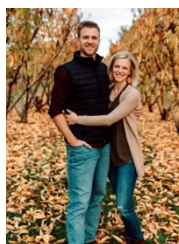
Hello everyone! My testimony probably sounds like a lot of others. I grew up in a loving Christian family. I can remember when I was maybe four or five sitting around the table with my dad and him asking me if I wanted to pray to accept Jesus into my heart, and I did that. Growing up only knowing about life as a Christian, I definitely did not make my relationship with Christ my own in my younger years. However, when I was 12, I went to summer camp for the first time, and one of the nights there they had a Gospel presentation with an experience for the campers, which had different stations of what Jesus went through before and during his death on the cross. I remember this vividly being a moment that I realized what Jesus really did for me and decided going forward I would follow him and make my relationship with him my own.

I went back to work at that camp for many years, and those station experience nights always stand out and served as a great reminder of Christ's love. I later graduated from Lancaster Bible College and used my education for six years serving as a Children & Family Ministry Director for a local church. When I decided to step away from working in full-time ministry, we made the decision to come to LEFC. This church has been very welcoming, and my family and I are looking forward to growing our relationship with the Lord, as well as fellow believers.

HANNAH CARR

I grew up in a Christian household and accepted Christ when I was five years old. I grew up knowing about God, but not really knowing him or having a relationship with him. When I was 14, I remember looking around during the worship service at church and noticing two women in particular from the church (who I looked up to) who were worshipping and very evidently loved the Lord. I saw them, and I realized that I did not love the Lord that much. That evening, I wept and asked God to help me love him.

A month later, I tore several ligaments in my knee playing summer league basketball. At this point, I was a three-sport athlete, and sports were a huge part of my life and identity. With my injury, I was unable to participate in sports for over a year. For the next several months, I became angry and frustrated with God, I made different friends, and quickly became a person I did not recognize. That following Spring, there was a moment that God revealed Himself to me, and I realized the person I had become and how desperately I needed him. I recommitted my life to the Lord and was baptized. Since then, the Lord has continued to work in my life through many seasons of joys and trials. I am so grateful for His word and the people He has surrounded me with to encourage me in my faith.



NATHAN EAKIN

My wife and I are approaching 15 years of marriage this summer and are blessed with three kiddos, Harper (8), Joshua (6) and Bryson (4).

My parents are from Franklin, Pa. After Med School at Temple, Dad joined the Navy, and we moved around the east coast before settling for the vast majority of my childhood in rural southern Virginia. Both parents were heavily involved in our local Baptist church, and Dad led our high school Sunday School, as well as helped with the youth group. Mom helped steady our southern Virginia family, and I was raised with 4 siblings in a nuclear, Christ-centered home. I feel very blessed to have had the parents and upbringing that I experienced.

Despite these ideal circumstances, Jesus did not have my heart. After an up and down freshman year at James Madison University, culminating with a humiliating experience, I knew I was at a pivotal place in life. Thankfully, on the last evening of freshman year, awaiting my parents to pick me up for the summer, a godly friend sat with me,

and the heartfelt conversation stirred my spirit as part of the watering process of the seed planted by many along the way. The next year, I broke away from negative influences and joined InterVarsity and CRU, two Christian campus ministries. The next several steps were God-ordained, including when the Lord led me to an opportunity in Summer '05 to serve as camp counselor at Summer's Best Two Weeks, outside Ligonier, PA. It was there, despite not being able to mingle with female staff, where I met my wife, Lauren. That summer was critical for the work God was doing in my heart in so many ways. He has been so gracious to place Godly men throughout my journey.

After a year in the workforce in Tyson's Corner (DC), God gently tugged to shift careers into teaching/coaching. Once married, we both landed jobs in Lancaster (I taught 1st grade, then 3rd grade, then 5th grade teacher at Ephrata Area School District) and joined Ephrata Church of the Brethren, where we were involved in the young adult ministry, among other ways of serving. We both sat at the feet of godly mentors and a pastor that helped deepen our love for our Creator and Savior. After ten years at Ephrata, I feel blessed to teach 6th grade at Lititz Elementary where our two oldest kids attend, and I get to embrace them in the hallways.

Along the bumpy and sobering moments of life, God anchored my spirit to the Scripture of Psalm 18:2: "The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold." This verse has emboldened me in weak moments and served as a critical reminder of the solid foundation, strength, and steadfastness of God.

We are excited and thankful to call LEFC our church home.

LAUREN EAKIN

My name is Lauren Eakin. My husband Nate and I met at James Madison University and have been married for 15 years this July. We have three children: Harper (8), Joshua (6) and Bryson (4). We moved to Lititz in 2011, and I work locally as an Employee Benefits Consultant with AssuredPartners.

We began attending LEFC in 2019 and felt very welcomed by friends and others we had previous connections with. Bill & Becki Thomas took us under their wing and grafted us right into the LEFC community along with many couples in Roots and our Life Group.

Growing up I attended a Christian summer camp, Summers Best Two Weeks, which had a profound impact on my relationship with Christ. It was there that I accepted Christ and in middle school began to get more involved in a local church. I lived quite a double standard throughout high school, and it wasn't until college when my relationship with the Lord ignited to a deeply personal level. I moved into a house with my Bible study led by a professor's wife at JMU who disciplined me as well. I became heavily involved in IV & CRU (campus ministries) and was blessed by the relationships I made there. It was during my 4 years at JMU (and at that point working summers at the camp SB2W) that I truly got to know the Lord on a personal level.

Coming from a lifestyle where I was "double-minded, unstable in all my ways (James 1:8)" the peace I experienced surrendering all of who I was trying to be and accomplish was so freeing. I hope to always live out the "I'm Third" motto, "God 1st, Others 2nd & Myself 3rd", and in doing so draw others to know the freedom and peace that comes with the acceptance of Christ as your Lord and Savior.



KEITH EVANS

My name is Keith Evans. I was born and raised in Pine Grove, PA in a Christian home. I attended public school and later graduated from East Stroudsburg University in 2013. Though I was raised in the church, I would say that I actively started following Christ in college. Coming into college I was this kid who appeared to have it all together. In high school, I got straight A's, was captain of the football team, hung out with all the cool kids, went to church every Sunday, and never got into trouble. Things looked pretty good. But appearances can be deceiving.

In college the true desires of my heart were revealed. For 2 years I lived a double life. While I was partying away my weekends, I was also putting on my church clothes and going to church every Sunday. I was neither hot nor cold for Jesus, rather I was what the Bible calls "lukewarm," in Rev 3:16, and a good friend of mine helped me realize that. I had spent my whole life seeking satisfaction and comfort through accomplishments and cheap thrills, but it was only when God changed my heart, and I was "all in" that I found true satisfaction and fulfillment in Christ.

My time working in full-time college ministry with DiscipleMakers is what brought me to Lancaster County and is also how I met my wife, Sarah. Our desire to start a family is one of the reasons we chose LEFC as it is both close

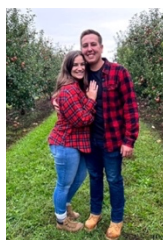
to home and has so many other young families and children. We desire to be a part of a church that is in our local community so that we can serve, be edified, and invite our neighbors. LEFC has been our church home for about 3 years now and we are excited about the potential to be part of its body of members.

SARAH EVANS

My name is Sarah Evans. I grew up on a dairy farm north of Scranton, PA. I grew up in a gospel preaching church, but some of what went on at home was very different than what was preached on Sunday. It left me feeling like church was a place to hide your sins and make sure you looked like a good Christian on the outside. I believed all Christians were hypocrites. I knew there was a God and believed in him but thought he either saw what was happening in my home and wasn't strong enough to change it, or that he didn't care. I left high school very bitter towards God and went to Gettysburg College fully planning to be a Jonah and run from God, turning my back on him.

But God had other plans. On my freshman floor, I was surrounded by people going to this group called DiscipleMakers Christian Fellowship on campus. I was surprised and angry they were there; this was supposed to be a liberal college; I did not plan to meet Christians. They faithfully and gently invited me repeatedly to their Bible studies. As I got to know them and read the Bible with them, it was the first time I saw Christians live like they actually believed the Bible was true. In a college dorm, it is quickly revealed who is a hypocrite. There was no incentive to live for Christ on this campus. And yet, these people exhibited faith, repentance, and obedience to Jesus like I'd never seen before. I harbored so much secret sin in my own life, and as the school year progressed, I realized I could not serve two masters. I could not follow Jesus and follow my own path. In a Bible study in James 5, we came to the verse "Remember, it is sin to know what you ought to do and then not do it." Gut punched, I realized I had become the Christian hypocrite I hated so much. Jesus graciously humbled me and led me to confess my sin and turn back to him.

I graduated from Gettysburg College in 2015 with a degree in History & Civil War Studies. For the last eight years I have served on staff with DiscipleMakers at Lebanon Valley College sharing the gospel with the next generation of students at a pivotal point in their lives.



HARLEY FOSTER

I was born on December 28 to Tammy Bell and Dan Foster. My biological father left my mom when I was three months old, and my mom struggled to keep a job and take care of me. When I was three, I was put into the foster care system and was placed in the home of Sandy and Larry Breneman. They took me to church, and that is where I heard the name Jesus for the first time. Although it is not what the church was teaching me, I thought faith and a relationship with Jesus was nothing more than going to church and going through the motions. My parents took me to church with them and I continued to go in my 20's because I didn't want to disappoint them or for them to see me as

a failure.

One of those churches that I began to attend was Calvary Church for about a year in 2020 and 2021. I got into an unhealthy relationship and had some men who love the Lord speak into my life. They exhorted and encouraged me to walk with the Lord. One of those men invited me to a men's Bible study at the beginning of 2021. I ended up buying a Bible. I broke up with the woman that I was dating as she had become my idol and was the object of much of my worship. I had nothing left.

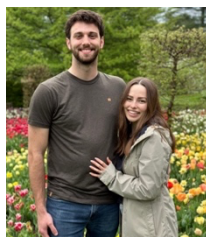
After ending that relationship, I had a lot of free time and a lot of hurt from the relationship that needed healing. I had no hope, but I did have that Bible that I just bought for that Bible study. I asked the Lord to show me that he was real and that he loved me. I began to read and understand the word. I opened the Lord's word, and the Lord opened my eyes. It was 2 Corinthians 3:16 becoming true in my life (But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed). He began to show me the ways that I had been missing the mark and walking according to my flesh. He also showed me that there was a better, more fulfilling way. I gave my life to Jesus that night.

After giving my life to Christ, I asked the Lord to lead me where he wants me and to show me what church he wanted me to get plugged in at. Boy did he lead. I ran into an old coworker, from when I was 16 years old, at the Sheetz north of Lititz. We got to talking, and he invited me to attend the church and Life Group he was a part of. That church was LEFC! Two days later, I attended LEFC for the first time, and that next Thursday I went to a cookout that his Life Group was having. To say that the Lord made his will clear would be an understatement.

The Lord has continued to reveal his will and to show the love that he has for me during my time at LEFC. He placed me in a community of believers who welcomed me with open arms and are actively the hands and feet of God in my life. The Lord used them to help grow and mature in my faith, as well as to grow and mature me in

other ways. The Lord has used them to speak encouraging words into my life, as well as exhort me in times when I fall short. The Lord has used people like Tyler Morris and Phil True, as well as other brothers in Christ, to speak truth into my life when he saw fit. Proverbs 27:6 says, “Faithful are the wounds of a friend; profuse are the kisses of an enemy.” Some of the ways the Lord has worked in my life that I am most grateful for are those “wounds of a friend”.

Six months after I became a believer, the Lord led Maddison Reapsome to the Life Group that he had led me to just six months before. A year and a half after that, we went on our first official date, and in the fall of 2023 we got engaged! The Lord has used her to grow my affections for him and to continue to walk according to his Spirit. He is continuing to sanctify me in gentleness and in thinking about how my words may come across or affect someone else. I continue to pray that the Lord would give me a humble heart that is submissive to his will.



DANIEL GALLAGHER

I was born and raised in a Christian household, being baptized as an infant as my parents wanted to state their intent to pass Christian values into my life. Through a lot of my childhood, we attended church, and I began to gather a surface-level understanding of God, who Christ is, and what the Bible says. For quite some time, that superficial understanding was as deep as my faith went. I knew I believed in God and had asked Christ into my heart, but my foundation was not solid; I had been building my house upon the sand.

As I progressed through high school, at age 16, a particularly challenging season began which constantly tested my faith and my trust in God, as well as my understanding of His promises for me. Due to the weak foundations of my faith to that point, my belief was shaken. In little time, as I began to feel rejected by those around me, I in turn rejected God – looking for anything or anyone to shift the blame to instead of my own broken, sinful patterns. Of the struggles and challenges that arose, some were a direct result of my own sin, others were the result of others’ sin which impacted me. All were a result of the brokenness of a world in need of a Savior.

Shortly after, I realized the Lord’s continued pursuit of me despite my rejection of Him. After roughly 6 months from turning away from faith, I re-dedicated my life to pursuing the Lord, choosing to be baptized and intent to dig deeper into my beliefs and discover a faith that would not be shaken.

The Lord continued to bless me through college, placing me into solid community with fellow believers and growing my relationship with Him. Through all four years of college, I was able to grow alongside the same brothers in Christ, growing in fellowship with them and in relationship with the Lord. I have been extremely blessed by these deep friendships which continue to this day. During my senior year, shortly after more intentionally committing and submitting to the Lord’s plan and timing for my life, I met my wife, Megan.

After college, Megan and I got married and we re-located to the Lancaster area. We found LEFC and wanted to get more plugged in shortly before Covid started. We continued to attend virtually but had not been able to get into any form of community. Through our first year of marriage, I struggled in returning to many old sin patterns that caused difficulty and division within our marriage. Due to the depth of some of the hurts, we sought input from the church, where I was introduced to Matt Sowada, and we got plugged in to a life group.

Through more active involvement in church and building community, partnered with Christian counseling for each of us, the Lord provided healing for each of us individually and our marriage. Looking back through my life, the Lord’s faithfulness has been proven time and time again. The Lord has revealed to me the areas of my life where my worship has been misplaced on people and things other than Him. He has also shown many areas where the identity I have seen myself with was based in what the world told me, rather than in all that He says I am. I used to only see myself in the guilt and shame of my sin, but I have learned to see that it is not my sin that defines who I am, or my status, or my value, but it is His forgiveness, mercy, and grace - made perfect through Christ - freely given to me that washes me clean and blameless, giving me an entirely new identity in Christ. I have learned that I have a new life in Christ and seek to grow more deeply in relationship with Him and to walk in step with the Spirit.

MEGAN GALLAGHER

My walk with Christ began when I was young. I cannot recall my exact age, but I remember reciting a prayer one Sunday during Sunday school accepting Christ as my Lord and Savior and feeling a sense of peace that I had not felt before.

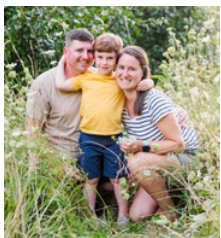
Though I accepted Christ when I was young, my family dynamics made growing in my faith challenging at times. My parents divorced when I was younger, so I grew up in two households who approached Christianity very differently. At my Dad’s house, we regularly attended church, prayed, and had conversations about faith. At my

mom's house, we only attended church on Christmas and Easter. My faith at times felt like a source of contention between me and my closest family members, who often felt at odds with my beliefs and convictions and shared as much. My stepfather often refused to attend any Sunday church services, and my half-sister outright rejected the existence of God. Faith felt like it should be an integral part of my identity but also felt like something I needed to mask or 'tone-down'.

All through middle school and high school, I would have called myself a Christian. I attended church with my family, participated in Sunday night youth group events, attended mission trips over the summer, and prayed. I was baptized in middle school, attended youth group throughout high school, and went to a Christian college. I believed in the Lord and recognized Jesus Christ as my Savior, but I had not made my faith my own at that point in time. By my junior year in college, I reached a crisis of faith. I was studying abroad, and everything was falling apart. Back home, I learned that my dad and my stepmom were leaving the church that I had grown up attending for my whole life. A few weeks later, I was told that my mom and my stepdad were separating. Abroad, I felt completely alone and cut off from my entire support system. I felt distant from God, anxious almost constantly, and plagued by recurring nightmares. Because everything felt like it was going wrong when I was supposed to be walking with God, I questioned whether or not he was truly there. I reasoned that since everything was falling apart with him, maybe he wasn't the answer. Though I never outright rejected God in this season, my actions certainly didn't reflect a right relationship with him. It wasn't until I returned home in the summer that I truly realized how broken I had become and how desperately in need of a Savior I was.

The Lord spent that summer refining me, breaking down the walls I had built, and rebuilding them in his likeness. It was an incredibly painful yet joyful process. That summer was when I truly experienced the love of Christ and felt the weight and depth of that love. I would count that summer as the true marker of when I became a follower of Christ. I felt passion and a deep sense of love towards my Lord and Savior. I started to become emotional during church services and worship songs, or in conversations in talking about the Lord - things I had witnessed others do but had never experienced before myself.

Though I grew up with a decent amount of head knowledge about the Lord, I was ultimately missing the heart affection. I realized that my obedience growing up had been out fear and terror of God, not an awe-fearing reverence of his character and a desire to abide with a loving father. The Lord worked (and is continuing to work) in my heart and my mind to reveal His true character in all of His righteousness and abounding mercy. Since then, my relationship with the Lord has gone through many seasons. I know I am quick to forget and to stumble, but I have repeatedly experienced grace-filled correction and steadfast love of the Father. He has carried me through harrowing seasons of grief and hurt, and softened my heart when it has desired to become hard and calloused. He has restored and strengthened things that I had thought broken and beyond repair - familial relationships, my marriage, and myself. He is my redeemer and my salvation, and I owe everything I have to Him.



JEFF GROFF

My name is Jeff Groff and even though my wife, Mandy, has been attending LEFC for roughly 10 years, it took me until December of 2022 for me to finally join her. We have been married since 2012 and have one son named Lane.

I grew up attending church on Saturday nights/Sunday morning and youth group Sunday evenings through high school. After starting college at Virginia Tech, some guys in my hall started telling me about this ministry they attended called CRU. This sounded interesting to me because I was trying to figure out where to connect and grow some friendships, so it sounded like a good place to start. This is where I began to learn about how many people had more of a personal relationship with Jesus and would read actually read the Bible and study what it meant. I attended CRU for a while and even led a Bible study for a period of time until I was playing dodgeball and met my now wife at the BCM (Baptist Collegiate Ministries). I started attending BCM regularly with their large group meetings on Tuesdays at 6:33pm (Matthew 6:33) and their weekly small group Bible studies and felt more connected and developed many close friendships and grew my relationship with Christ.

After college, Mandy and I moved back home to Ephrata, starting our new jobs and life as a married couple. We struggled to connect with any local churches and with me starting to work Sunday mornings in the restaurant business, church and my relationship with Christ took a back seat. I started to turn to alcohol to help numb my mind and deal with the anxiety that I was experiencing and using that to fill the void, bring me joy, and build "friendships" with those around me. In 2018, after we welcomed Lane, I could tell I was spiraling down the wrong path, but I wasn't feeling convicted enough to change my drinking, and I started to believe that I couldn't change. My drinking went from something that I didn't want to change to something I didn't think I could change.

February 9th, 2022 I woke up scared and in new territory. I had dumped the rest of my alcohol stash down the drain the night before and finally decided I wanted and needed more. I started to pray some and hope that God would finally help me to kick my habit and help me change my ways. It felt like God had flipped a switch overnight. I started to realize how many people were praying for me including my wife and how God had meant so much more for my life and that He wasn't finished with me yet. It still took me a few months to attend our small group again and until December to come to church, but I immediately felt right at home and welcomed. I started reading the Bible again, clinging to Proverbs 16:3, "Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and He will establish your plans." Knowing God is in control and where he has brought me has changed my faith, marriage, and fatherhood, and I'm excited to continue my growth here at LEFC.

AMANDA GROFF

My name is Amanda Groff. My husband is Jeff, and we have one son, Lane, who is in kindergarten. I am a Civil Engineer. I grew up going to church, attending several different churches over the years. I gave my life to Christ when I was in youth group in high school, but looking back, it wasn't a deep connection or a close personal relationship with God. At college, my faith increased as I was more involved with a campus ministry and surrounded by fellow Christians that challenged and encouraged me. After college, Jeff and I got married and moved back to Lancaster County.

I started coming to LEFC about 9 years ago, shortly after I changed jobs since my new commute went right by the church, and I felt called to see what LEFC had to offer. I hadn't found a church that I attended regularly after college, and I missed that, but I was also looking for a place to make friends. I was fortunate to get plugged into a life group right away and have been blessed by the friendships and spiritual growth that I have experienced.

God has blessed me and our family and has been there with us through struggles and challenges. He sustained me and supported me as I came to church alone for a while, and I was fortunate to be welcomed into a community that accepted me and prayed for me and my family. There are many times that I doubted God and struggled to pray, wondering if Jeff would ever come to church. Through God's grace, Jeff made many changes, and God changed my heart and my understanding of His love in the process. I have also seen that He works when we don't expect it and in His timing, which is a much greater plan than I could have imagined. He is regularly reminding me to be patient and to seek Him first when I get overwhelmed. He also reminded me that no temptation is greater than I can bear and that He will help me endure it (1 Cor 10:13).



DAVID HERSHEY

I was born the elder of two sons and lived in the small town of Hanover, Pennsylvania for most of my life. I lived with both of my parents in the household who worked to support the family Monday through Friday. Saturday was time with us and family, and Sunday we all went to church most of my life. Every Sunday my parents would attend different churches than each other. My father would attend a Baptist church, in which he was raised, and my mother would attend a Catholic mass every week. My brother and I would go with our mother every Sunday and were brought up in the Catholic church.

My parents would always pray with us before bedtime, making sure that prayer was incorporated in our lives. We would recite the Lord's Prayer often, and we memorized every night before bed. We also learned Bible stories through our parents and were each given a kids Bible of our own to read. In 1992 my mother started reading her Bible more intently. When doing so, she decided that she did not agree with the doctrines of the Catholic church, and after talking with my father, they decided that the family should attend services together. However, finding the church that we would attend as a family would take a two-year search to find.

It was after a suggestion from my father's two younger brothers that we started to attend Faith Evangelical Fellowship. It was there that I learned more in-depth how God's love worked. I went to Sunday school and attended a group called Pioneer clubs every Wednesday evening. There I met the one best friend that would change my entire thinking about God. Devon was passionate about Jesus and on multiple occasions asked me if I knew Jesus as my savior. He was constantly concerned about my salvation and shared with me the verse John 3:16. I was conflicted with how I was raised growing up in the Catholic faith, but he continued to tell me what salvation truly meant. I listened but had the mindset that I was still ok. I believed that God was good and as long as I attended church and prayed to God, I was being a good Christian. I told myself I was young, and I did not need to be concerned with dying yet. Devon would just tell me that he was praying for me.

Over the next four years, friendships formed, not just with Devon and me, but also with the other teens in the church. As I attended Sunday School, I had doubts about what I believed. There I learned that Christ is the only way to salvation and to an eternal life in heaven, and that although attending church was something a Christian should do, it would not be what would get me eternal life in Heaven. Unsure of which was the right way to

salvation, I began to have doubts in the way that I had been previously taught and started to fear death and my eternal life.

On October 17, 1999, my entire world was shaken when Devon was shot and murdered at the age of 15. I remember walking into the church and seeing him in a coffin, only one year older than I. My fear intensified, and the youth group members took me into another room, and we all prayed. That night I accepted Jesus as my Lord and Savior, trusting that Jesus died on the cross for my sins, his sacrifice was the only justification for my sins, and I no longer had to worry about condemnation. I became strong in my faith, even after graduating from high school, watching my youth group do the same. As we all moved on to other things and churches, our church dwindled in numbers. We lost our pastor and merged with another church to form Community Evangelical Free Church.

In 2004, my faith was taken to an extreme point when my grandmother was diagnosed with Acute Leukemia. Watching her suffering through treatments and nothing working was devastating. We prayed often as a family for a treatment to put her into remission and had faith that God would provide. Even with a small hope of a 99.9 percent bone marrow match, no miracle came. For months we slowly watched her suffer as the effects of the cancer took over her. I tried to see her often while juggling going for my associate degree and working full time. There was no doubt that my grandmother was proud of me; she told me this often. I questioned why God would allow a woman who is so devoted to Christ to suffer as she did. The night that she passed away, I prayed that he would just take her home so that her suffering here on earth would end.

I became angry at God for not answering our prayer to allow her to go into remission. I just didn't understand why He would not intervene. Although I did not lose my salvation, I began to question my faith in Him. I abandoned reading my Bible, praying, and attending church. I tried to live without Christ by trying to find happiness in tangible things and other people. After two years of dealing with fear and depression, I felt alone. I realized that I needed Him more than anything else in this world and could feel God pulling me back to Him even through everything that I had done. But I felt ashamed and that there was no way that I could go back to him. I pulled out my Bible once again, and I stumbled upon Matthew 18:10-14. I had wandered away from Him, but no matter what, God was looking for me. I made the decision to change my heart. I confessed that I was disobedient and asked Him for forgiveness for all that I had done, fully giving him my life once again, wanting his will to be done.

God has proved faithful over and over, even when he has not given me everything that I ask him to provide. He has allowed me to go back to school to continue my education in business, and one of the reasons that I choose LBC is so that I could learn how I can proclaim Christ in the business world. He has provided a blessing in meeting Amanda, who is now my wife. She is a godly woman, and we have two girls, Rosalie and Elise. I have also been able to witness to people in my neighborhood and at work on multiple occasions and have grown spiritually enough to answer the questions that they have.

Although I am not really sure what journey God has for me. I know that he will be there with me even when I struggle to obey what He commands me to do, that tomorrow is no guarantee, that I need the wonderful gift of Christ's sacrifice every day, and that my salvation can never be taken away. I trust in God's will and will go wherever He takes me.

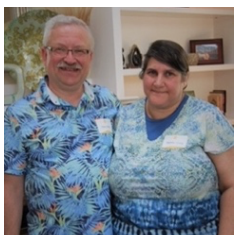
AMANDA HERSHEY

Growing up, my father was a pastor and my mother a nurse. My parents ensured we prayed at night and attended all services. At a young age, about 6 or 7, I committed my life to Jesus and was promptly baptized. I have an older brother who is almost 10 years older than I. Being so much older, he was virtually uninvolved in my life. While I was 6 and 7, he was 16 and 17 and cultivating different interests.

As I grew, it became apparent my family was splitting. Not in the normal ways, where parents go their separate ways, but my elder brother had decided that he no longer wanted to do what my parents said. This became a frightening reality when a police officer knocked on our front door asking for my brother who had already been kicked out of our house. The police officer was told he no longer lived there. I struggled with why God would allow my good, fun-loving brother to be so far gone.

Fast forward a couple of years, my brother now has entered Teen Challenge of his own free will and I am entering high school. There, in my junior year, I fell in with some kindred souls who were interested in talking about the big questions of the universe. The leader was a moralistic humanist who was "as moral as the majority, the majority of the time," joined by an anarchist, a pantheist, and me. The problem was I still had all these questions about God rolling around in the back of my mind, and while I knew the trite Christian responses, somehow that wasn't good enough. Those answers weren't satisfying. Ironically, it was the humanist of the group who kept pointing me back to God and the great fathers of the faith. It was then I personally affirmed my faith in God and knew that I believed in Christ alone for my salvation.

Fast forward again a few more years and you can see God guiding me toward the college I attended, the church I first found there, finding my husband, and settling us there. We have so much to praise God for!



PAUL JONES

I was raised to be a Christian (follower of Jesus) by my mother and father throughout my adolescent years, but because we moved so much and we had experienced so many different churches throughout my young life, I did not feel like I “belonged” to any church, and I did not have a solid foundation on which I could rely.

My mother was a strong follower of Jesus (she was a missionary to India before I was born), and my father did his best with a limited 5th grade education to help us survive as a hard worker in factories, etc., but having to move around 15+ times growing up (due to not having enough funds to stay long in trailers, houses, a barn, etc.), this caused quite a bit of friction between my parents. The churches we attended were primarily based on how close they were to where we lived, and some of them may not have totally lined up with God’s Word, which caused me to question who this Jesus really was and if He was real because of so many different ways they said we had to act, dress, sing and live in order to “properly” follow Him.

This being said, I greatly respected and loved my mother and father for what they did to keep us fed, clothed and sheltered, to the best of their ability, and I had a good understanding of how God could take care of our needs, but I was very upset that so many that were supposed to be Christians (especially on TV) were causing my parents to give money to causes that I saw as ministries that were not following Jesus’s example (Jim Bakker who promised if they gave money they would have a nice place to stay if they came down to visit, etc.). This caused a tremendous conflict in my heart and mind that could have turned me away from God after I left my home, but when I was 17, God mercifully sent a pastor into my life that explained things so clearly to me, and I accepted Jesus into my heart. I acknowledged that His sacrifice was real, I committed my life to Him as my risen Savior, and I promised to live my life for God and to follow His will for my life, not pursue the ways of the world.

After I graduated from high school, I went into the Air Force at age 18, and everyone in my “Flight” clearly knew what I believed since I guess I shared a lot about Jesus and how much He loves us. I was assigned as the “Chaplain Guide” by our Training Instructor for those that wanted to attend church, so we marched to church every Sunday morning in Basic Training. Most went to the Protestant Church, but a couple guys from my Flight and I marched a bit further down the road to the Evangelical Free Church, where the Spirit moved so powerfully and guided and comforted us as we went through Basic. As some may say, we were “on fire” for Jesus and we witnessed, and many believed in Him.

There are so many wonderful things that God did for me through my life that I could share here, but the most important thing He did was bring my wife into my life while I was in the Air Force, and He showed me just how much He loved me by allowing me to share life with such a wonderful woman. He then brought more joy into our lives by providing us with two wonderful children that we cared for and raised to love and follow Him. I continually pray that they will fully commit their lives to God one day and refuse to listen to the world that has currently pulled them away from how they were raised. My son is very close to turning his life over to God, but my daughter was convinced while attending the University of Pittsburgh that our belief in Jesus as God’s Son is just another belief that fits into the “world religions”, which she respects equally, and she is not yet convinced that Jesus is the only way to salvation (since you cannot “earn” your way into heaven). I am hoping and praying that one day soon she will see that my belief in Jesus is not just a “religion” but the ultimate truth that God loved us so much that He sent his only Son to die for all of us, that if we only accept His truth and follow Him down the narrow path, we shall be saved. Also, I know that the Holy Spirit will never leave us nor forsake us, even if we sin after believing in Jesus. He may be grieved by our actions and by not following God’s will for our lives, but He will never abandon us. Praise be to Jesus for the love He has shown us, so that we can be part of his flock, and be able to live our lives for Him here on earth, and ultimately in heaven, where we will be together forever. Amen.

TAMMY JONES

Hi, I am Tammy Jones, Shepherd of the little ones here at LEFC.

I grew up in a Brethren church where they held fun VBS’s, but I don’t recall learning of Jesus and salvation at that young age. From age 5-12, I was raised by my grandparents and dad in the same house across from a huge, beautiful park, and I had an idyllic childhood, but I had a lot of fear and bitterness when my grandparents died in ’84 and ’85. I became a “latchkey kid” with my sister, since my dad worked a lot.

I attended church 3x a week, and I had a lot of head knowledge of Scripture, but I didn’t accept Jesus into my heart until age 17, when I understood that Jesus forgives my sin and not only died to right the relationship of God

with mankind, but victoriously came back to life 3 days later. June 1990 was a scary time between high school and college, and I cried out to God one night. I felt better after His Spirit comforted me with his love and truth.

As a teen, I taught Sunday school with preschoolers, and I babysat for pastors and other church members. I felt very loved and needed. I miss my dad's friends from my old church, but they moved far away, and we did not keep in touch.

I currently am a Shepherd and I work with a great staff at LEFC. Even though some of the staff indicated that the children may not remember the lessons since they are so young, I know that the children will remember the love and the fun times that we share with them, and I pray that they will hopefully love and serve God forever. God is good, and his love endures forever. Amen.



KYLE KUTZ

My name is Kyle Kutz. My wife, Rebecca, and I have been married for 12 years. We have two children, Joanna and Harrison. Joanna is a first grader at John Beck Elementary, and Harrison attends pre-school at Manheim Brethren in Christ. I have worked for the Commonwealth for the last 16 years.

I grew up about an hour north of Lititz, attending a small EC church. My father and grandfather helped build the physical building, and it's where I called home for my entire childhood. I was raised in the community, coming to know Christ at a young age. My work eventually took me to several different counties early in my career, and I was able to attend a lot of good churches throughout southeast PA. Rebecca and I met in those early years, eventually get married, and settled in East Petersburg. We began church "shopping" and found a home at LEFC. We were drawn to the biblical teaching, "new" pastor, and its sense of community. Although both Rebecca and I were baptized as infants, we chose to be baptized again as adults at LEFC in 2016.

Shortly after, we had Joanna. After time and considering a second child, we needed to move again to fit a growing family. Our search took a while, and we were unsure where we would ultimately settle. In late 2019 we found a home north of Lititz, and Harrison was born in March of 2020.

With my childhood church background, I also wanted our children to have a church home in the area where they would be attending school. Thankfully the home God provided for us, the school district, and LEFC aligned. We are excited to know LEFC will be our home church as long as the Lord allows. We are very thankful our family will have a strong support group of peers, mentors, and friends in our community. We look forward to becoming members and walking alongside the body of other believers here at LEFC.

REBECCA KUTZ

My name is Rebecca Kutz. My husband, Kyle, and I have attended LEFC for about 12 years. We have two wonderful children, Joanna (7) and Harrison (4). I am a school psychologist at Manheim Central.

I was born and raised in Lititz, and my faith journey began as a child. I was raised in a local church, and my family and I were involved in many church activities. I came to know Jesus as my Lord and Savior at a young age. When I was a young teenager, I would also visit my friends' churches, partaking in events and youth group meetings. LEFC happened to be one of those churches! My faith grew as I witnessed others having a relationship with God, not simply practicing a religion. From there I attended college in Iowa, where I was connected to the Athletes in Action group, and my faith grew immensely. During my time away, it was clear that God was calling me back "home" when I met Kyle over Christmas break at a family gathering. We were married in 2012, and as our family grew, it was important to Kyle and me that our church was led by the living breathing Word. LEFC has felt like our church home for a long time. Kyle and I were baptized here in 2016, while I was pregnant with Joanna!

Given my experiences as a youth, I am thrilled to also have our children involved and attending a church with a strong youth program, surrounded by peers, and learning to love Jesus.

We look forward continued growth as a family and with the LEFC church family as we take this next step into church membership.



MORGAN MEADOWS

Hi, I'm Morgan Meadows. I'm originally from Altoona, PA and moved to the area and LEFC in 2020 for work (wild time to do all of that!). I studied zoology and currently work as a scientist at Eurofins Lancaster Labs. I was raised in a Christian home, so church has been a part of my life longer than I can remember. Growing up, I was the kid who went to everything "church" - Sunday mornings, evenings, VBS, AWANA, youth group, the church Christmas plays, and every Christian concert I could get tickets to.

I can't tell you an exact date I came to believe in Christ - the first time I remember praying for salvation was when I was around 3 years old. My Sunday School class had just learned how wonderful it would be to be in heaven with Jesus, and I wanted to know I would go there, too. So, on my own, in the backseat of the car as my mom drove us somewhere (the grocery store?), I silently prayed some sort of simple prayer, asking Jesus to come into my heart and save me from my sins so that I could be with Him in Heaven forever. And I believed that was good.

Until I got older and heard other people's testimonies - kids who talked about their decision for Christ with someone else, prayed with someone else, that they could remember the exact date it happened. And I didn't think that my little prayer of faith, alone, on a... rainy Tuesday, maybe?, was good enough, so I started praying along every time someone led the class in a prayer of salvation. Again, I never told anyone I was doing this, I just asked again and again, silently, that Christ would come into my heart and save me from my sins.

Eventually, I got to a lesson in AWANA where I had to share my testimony. I'm eleven at this point, and I know that I've felt both peace and conviction from the Holy Spirit in my life - I'm certain I'm saved, I just don't know when it happened. I finally talk to someone about the confusion I have, and my mom and I prayed together for my salvation. Like I said, I'm certain that this wasn't the moment that saved me from my sins, but it did erase my last doubt. So, came to Christ somewhere between the ages of 3 and 11, exact date unclear, presence of Spirit very clear, and I've continued to feel that guidance in my soul as I've matured.

Now, I'm learning to love Christ, not just know Him. Between AWANA, attending Bible college, and just being an academically minded person in general, I've too often approached the Bible as a textbook to be studied, memorized, understood - which is not a bad thing - but over the past few years (and thanks to much great teaching here at LEFC), I've come to see the greater story, the ways that this book tells us not only what God does, but who He is and how He relates to us as humans, as believers.



KEVIN PERIGO

My name is Kevin Perigo. I am married to Erin, and we have two wonderful girls, Myla (8) and Maci (7). I was born and raised in a small rural area of Western PA. I gradually moved east, attending Penn State, and finally landing in Lititz in 2004. With a degree in Electrical Engineering, I have spent my entire career in the military electronics industry and am currently the owner of Perigo Tech, providing engineering services and consulting for U.S. Department of Defense applications.

I was raised in a Catholic family of 5, attending church every Sunday, witnessing my father spend every day in the Word and applying it to his relational world (Oikos!). I was a believer in Christ as long as I can remember but hit a plateau for many years, especially in my 20's. My path was the exact opposite of Romans 12:2, "Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing, and perfect will." I was selfishly focusing on conforming to my will (career advancement, comfort, leisure) instead of my relationship with Christ and eternal life.

Then in 2010, God placed Erin in my life. Getting married in 2012 and having kids shortly after is when I came off the plateau. With the added responsibility of being a husband and father, I began to dig more into Scripture and compare the teaching of Scripture to the world around me. Romans 12:2, especially in the past 4 years, has really hit home. Now, my focus (although I fail frequently as a sinner) is on marriage as one flesh (Gen 2:24), starting our girls off on the way they should go (Pr 22:6), stop trusting in myself, walk in wisdom (Pr 28:26), and live by faith (2 Cor 5:7).

Early in our marriage, Erin and I attended the church she grew up in. We decided to visit other churches in the area and eventually landed at LEFC in 2015. We have continued to appreciate the biblical wisdom and discernment at LEFC, both the pastoral staff and the congregation, regardless of the culture around us. "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another" (Pr 27:17). We look forward to membership of LEFC and becoming a part of this church body.

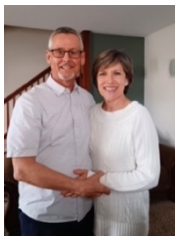
ERIN PERIGO

My name is Erin Perigo. I've been married to my husband Kevin for 12 years, and we have 2 daughters, Myla (8) and Maci (7). I grew up here in Lititz and I've been working as a Realtor for the past 16 years.

I was a member of the church I grew up in and attended for most of my life. I accepted Christ as my savior at 6 years old after attending my church VBS. Summer camp and youth conferences were highlights of my walk with God and where I felt like I would learn so much and grow in love for Him. Psalm 139 has been a chapter I go to often for encouragement. I try to make verses 23-24 a daily prayer, "Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me and lead me in the way everlasting."

I was fortunate enough to grow up in a Christian home with loving parents. One of my favorite memories was on the rare occasion that I happened to be up by 5 am. I knew I would always be able to catch a glimpse of my dad in the dining room on his knees praying before he left for work in the morning. It reminds me of how much our kids watch and pay attention to our daily habits and the impact it has on them.

Kevin and I started attending LEFC in 2015. We made the decision that it was time to move on from the church I had grown up in and where most of my family went. We lost a baby the year before to a late miscarriage and I was newly pregnant again. It was a difficult time for me, and I didn't feel like I had the time or energy to start over in a new church. After the Covid shutdown, we visited a few other churches before landing back at LEFC. With a different attitude and more willingness to get involved this time, I decided to try some of the things I had previously said no to. WBF has been one of the things that I've found to be so helpful in learning how to truly study and understand God's Word in a deeper way. We have really come to respect and appreciate the leadership here at LEFC and look forward to raising our girls here as a part of this church family.



GARY POORMAN

My name is Gary Poorman. I was born and raised in CA. My parents were followers of Christ, joining and serving local churches wherever they lived. This meant I did as well, along with my two brothers, one older and one younger.

At the age of ten, while attending a small Baptist fellowship in Cambria, CA, I came under the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit (Jn 16:8-11) during a Sunday sermon on Heaven and Hell. Though I wasn't an exceptionally rotten kid, I knew in my heart that I wasn't ready to meet the Lord. This led to bowing at my bedside, confessing my sin, and receiving, by faith, the Lord Jesus as my Savior (Rom. 10:9-13). Baptism followed a short time later.

My journey with the Lord has been a rich experience. Beyond believing parents, I was blessed through Awana, Christian camps, youth ministry, touring with a singing group, attending Bible college in N.B., Canada (where I met the love of my life), short term missions trips to Canada, Thailand, and Poland, and eventually 39 years of pastoral ministry in three New England churches. Blessing: Three amazing children, married to wonderful spouses, and nine grandchildren, with #10 on the way. Through it all, my life verse has been foundational, reaffirming the Lord's faithfulness: "Commit your way to the LORD, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass" (Ps 37:5).

Some may question whether there have been difficult moments or harsh seasons during my journey. The answer is a resounding yes: sin struggles, marital hurdles, being "let go" (i.e. – told to resign from 2nd N.E. church), family counseling, and a health concern. God, however, has been faithful, sustaining by His grace, guiding through His Word, and ultimately bringing me on board as LEFC's new Care Coordinator. This unexpected but prayed for opportunity was revealed through a casual conversation one of my daughters had with the spouse of someone at LEFC. When I heard about the position, I committed it to the LORD, trusted in Him, and watched as He held the door open and brought it to pass. To God be the glory...I'm glad to be here!

ELLEN POORMAN

"You will seek Me and find Me when you seek Me with all your heart." Jer. 29:3

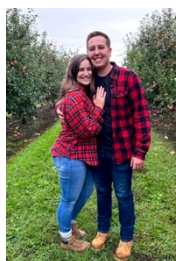
I was not raised in a Christian home until I was 12 years old. I do remember as a child lying in bed thinking of what would happen to a person after they died. Did they just stop existing? Did they disappear? Did they go somewhere else?

I am one of four children. My parents were good and moral parents, but they had no basis for their morality. They were good people. My dad had a very unstable and troubled childhood. He did not want that for his family. My older brother, Mark, began hanging out with the wrong friends, drinking, and smoking marijuana when he was in high school. This caused a lot of turmoil in our home, but it also began a search for help and answers for our

family. During this season of life, my uncle invited my mom and dad to a free meal sponsored by Christian businessmen and women. The Gospel was shared after the meal, and my dad accepted Christ. This was the beginning step of our family's journey in coming to Christ. Within one year, we started attending a very small church with some very precious believers. They took us all under their spiritual wings. That year, at different times, each one of us chose to follow Christ. My salvation came more as a process than a date and a prayer. It was an understanding over time of who God is and his great desire to reconcile me to Himself through Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit.

After graduating from high school, I attended New Brunswick Bible Institute. I met my husband Gary there. We wanted to serve the Lord together wherever He would lead us. We were married after his graduation in 1985. He began serving in a church as an assistant pastor in Presque Isle, Maine shortly after our wedding. We were there for 7 years. Our 3 children were born there. In 1992, we moved to Southern Maine where Gary served as a senior pastor for 7 years. The last church that Gary pastored was in Bozrah, Connecticut. We served there for 25 years. That brings us up to present day and our coming to LEFC. I had been praying 8 years that God would open a door of ministry somewhere closer to our 3 children and our grandchildren. So many details had to be worked out in for us to make any kind of move from Connecticut to Pennsylvania. It seemed like an impossible situation. "But God..." It was one conversation between one of my daughters and Robyn Sowada that led to Gary applying for the role of part-time Care Coordinator for LEFC. God was working all the time behind the scenes on our behalf. I am so grateful that God has led us to this church. I am excited to see where my gifts fit in and look forward to becoming an active participant in this growing ministry.

Here are some verses that sum up my life from the age of 12 until now: "Posterity will serve Him; future generations will be told about the Lord. They will proclaim his righteousness, declaring to a people yet unborn: He has done it!" Ps. 22:30-31



MADDISON REAPSOME

I grew up in a Christian home in Carlisle, PA with my loving immediate family. We attended and were highly involved at Carlisle Brethren in Christ Church. When I was around 5, I prayed to give my life to Christ, and at 12, I was baptized by my youth pastor. Growing up, I was a high achiever and "made people happy"; that was my whole identity. I believed that I was a good Christian kid for these reasons, and yet I could not say that I had a personal relationship with the Lord. I felt like I could handle things on my own. My senior year of high school, multiple tough situations occurred and made it feel as though my world was crumbling. The entire year, I worked feverishly to pick up all the pieces and acted as if nothing was wrong. In my senior year I began to struggle with self-harm as well.

I then went off to Grove City College. I was ready for a "clean slate". The following years were full of the same efforts - excelled in school, involved, liked by everyone. This did not fix anything but rather stifled my soul. The first half of my senior year became a battle between rebellion and "high achieving Christian". I was at the darkest and lowest point of my life heading into the last semester of my college career. I had given up, but praise the Lord, He had not given up on me. Through a class, a choreographer/friend, and my counselor, He softened my heart towards Him. One day I was hit with the weight of how much I loathed myself. The Holy Spirit stirred in my heart and the Lord spoke to me: "Come to me my daughter, I AM ENOUGH." I wept, and I laid my life at the feet of God. I repented, and I felt the weight of sin and shame release from my heart. I felt the freedom of salvation in Jesus Christ. I had truly begun walking with the Lord.

The summer after graduating was a healing journey for me. I had a lot of time to be in Scripture, learning about God's character and what that truly meant for my life. I moved to Lancaster in September 2019. I faced another set of really tough situations, but this time I had the Lord. He continued to provide strength and perseverance to dive into Scripture and to learn about Him. He drew me nearer and nearer to Him through the tribulations. In the fall of 2021, the Lord was stirring in my heart to find community - the body of Christ. One Sunday, I attended LEFC, and it just so happened that they were having a Newcomers' Breakfast that following weekend. That weekend I also got plugged into a Life Group. It is through that Life Group that I met my now fiancé, Harley Foster, and we will be getting married in June! I have been attending and involved in the Life Group ever since and now co-lead the 10th grade girls.

The past 5 years have not been a breeze - actually some of the toughest years - but God is good. He has time and again shown me His sovereignty - that His will is good and greater than anything I can understand. He has brought healing in situations where I could never imagine reconciliation. He continually humbles me and shows me where I am trying to hold on to control and to rely on myself, when only He fully sustains and satisfies. He has opened my eyes to the expectations I hold for others and myself and has/is teaching me how to have grace for

others and humility for myself. I thank the Lord that He never turned from me. That He left the 99 to pursue me when I was not at all deserving of it. Praise the Lord for He is good, and He is God, and He is everlasting.

“Now the Lord is the Spirit and where the spirit of the Lord is, there is FREEDOM.” 1 Cor. 3:17



TRAVIS REARDON

My name is Travis Reardon, and I grew up in Landisville, PA. I did not grow up in a Christian home. My family and I attended a Lutheran church on a weekly basis, but that was the extent of our walk for the most part. My parents did not encourage a relationship with the Lord, and the few times as a child I asked to pray before a meal, my parents laughed.

Through high school I admittedly was pretty lost. I did not care for school and was often more concerned with girls and alcohol/drugs. My sophomore year, I got in trouble with the law. I had to spend a summer on probation and was required to perform community service. I was an angry young man and did not have a path forward. Throughout the first half of my college years, this trend continued. It was not until I was asked to attend Cru one night by a girl I had a crush on that I had my first real experience being around Christians. There was something different about these people, but I didn't know what it was. One speaker touched my heart, and after speaking with him, he became a sort of mentor for me during that time of my life. He bought me my first Bible and guided me in this first year of becoming a believer. Cru was also where I met my now wife, Kristin. God also placed her in my life at the right time, and through conversations and time spent with her, I strengthened my walk with the Lord. It was during this last year and a half of college that I gave my life to Christ and chose to follow Him.

In 2012 I graduated with a degree in history and spent the next two years working odd jobs until I was able to ask Kristin to marry me. We wanted our marriage to be rooted in the truth of the gospel. In 2014 we got married and immediately moved to Philadelphia where Kristin was attending a three-year physical therapy program. I started off working as an EMT and moved on to corporate personal training before deciding to attend an accelerated nursing program at Drexel University. During the early years of marriage, we learned a lot of what it means to be husband and wife. We failed each other often and had to learn how to love the other properly. We made it a habit of doing devotions together every morning before the day began. I was obsessed with learning all I could about the Bible and put every effort into my relationship with the Lord. The barrier I felt during this time was understanding and experiencing God's love for me. I wanted it so badly but always had a hard time grasping how God could love me. Foreshadowing, it would not be until I had children of my own that I would be able to understand what this type of unmerited love felt like. I now have two children of my own, and they are a wonderful example of the kind of love God has for his children.

Six months after my wife had our son, Hadley, we felt the Lord opening doors that led us to move back from Philadelphia to Lancaster. We spent a total of around 8 years in Philadelphia and truly cherish the time we had there. We developed strong Christian friendships and attended a church that we loved. It was during this time that I was also baptized, and we ended up leading a small group. It was very difficult leaving our church in Philly, but we knew how important it would be to get connected with a church immediately after making the move back to Lancaster. We had tried a few churches but never felt good about any of them. When we came to LEFC at the recommendation of one of our elders, we made it our home. Kristin was the one who got us connected at first because I was still traveling back to Philly for work every weekend for the first year. We have now been coming to LEFC for approximately two years and are excited to officially become members!

KRISTIN REARDON

My name is Kristin Reardon, and I grew up here in Lititz. I was born into a family of Bible-believing Christians. Both my maternal and paternal grandparents left a legacy for their children, who then carried the good news down to the next generation. I attended church for all of my life and was given the blessing of attending a private Christian school for all of my early education. I was raised with traditional faith values and was encouraged to pursue a personal walk with the Lord from an early age. I professed faith in Jesus at a very early age, around three years old, and I made the choice to be baptized when I was 11.

But my faith did not become personal to me until I left my hometown of Lititz for college. It was in my college years that I grew in my faith journey, recognizing that I needed my faith to be my own, not simply what was passed down to me from the generations that have gone before. It was in my undergraduate years that I met my now husband, Travis. After college, I went on to pursue a graduate degree and moved to Philadelphia for school. Those years tested me and my faith as I was not surrounded by a Christian community like I had been for all the years prior. Travis and I got married in 2014. I completed my doctoral program and spent the next 5 years working in

Philadelphia as a physical therapist. We got plugged into a church while in Philly and grew to love our community. My walk with the Lord continued to grow as I was positioned to disciple women and lead a group alongside my husband. It was in those years that the Lord began a stirring in my heart.

In the summer of 2021, we welcomed our first son, Hadley, into the world. This brought about a desire to be closer to family, and in December of 2021, we moved back to Lancaster. We wanted to get connected to a church right away and came across LEFC because one of the elders of our church in Philadelphia recommended we give it a try. Immediately, we knew it was a good fit for us and we never looked back. I have been a part of WBF for the last two years, and that has been transformative in my walk with the Lord as I surround myself with other women seeking to live a life worthy of the gospel.

In the summer of 2023, we welcomed our daughter into the world. The transition from one to two children was an opportunity for increased trust and dependence on Jesus. As I surrendered my career to the Lord in following his prompting to be home with my children, I felt the resistance to let go. I am learning to daily lay down my burdens and take up his much lighter yoke. He is sufficient for me. And I know that I get to see the goodness of God in the land of the living.

Through the years, the trials, the joys and sorrows, the Lord has been faithful to me. He has grown me and stretched me in many ways I could never imagine. I am encouraged by the truths I find in Scripture, the growing understanding that his ways are not our ways, that he is a mystery to behold. I desire to bless the Lord with all my soul for the rest of my days.



JOHN ROBERTS

I grew up Catholic with a father who claimed to be Protestant, but I never saw him in a church. My mom would take us kids. We moved a lot in the US and internationally because my dad was in the military, settling in Baltimore when I was 11 years old. My parents split up the summer of my 8th grade year. I was alone, lost, and drifting. That changed when I entered 9th grade. My football coach was a Christian and led a Young Life Ministry, and he helped bring Young Life to my high school. It was there that I heard for the first time that God was a person, knew me personally, and that Jesus died for my sins specifically. Later in high school I started dating a girl whose family were Christians, and they started taking me to church with them. At their church, I heard more about the specific call of Jesus on my life and went forward during one of the altar calls right before the start of my senior year in high school. Later that year, I was baptized and professed my faith in Christ.

My growth in Christ was growing deeper in college where I attended Bible studies and met some other Christian young men. However, it was when I felt called to work in Young Life so that I could bring Christ to my younger sisters' high school that my faith grew. As I was starting to long for a deeper walk and knowledge in Christ, I met a man who was on Navigator staff and attended a discipleship training program he led for 2 years. That program was called the 2:7 course, Based on Colossians 2:7: "Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving." It profoundly impacted me and proved to be the foundation for my life and ministry from my mid 20's until now.

Over these times, I gained more clear knowledge of my need for Christ, His sonship, the trinity, and the power of the word of God in my life. I've had the privilege to lead others to Christ. I believe only in the power of the risen Christ and forgiveness of my sins through God's grace as my only hope and source of salvation.

WILMA ROBERTS

My name is Wilma Roberts, and I have had a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as my Savior since I was a young girl. At that time, I had a basic understanding of the Gospel, as much as any 6-year-old can! I prayed the sinners' prayer many times just to be 'certain' about this relationship during my childhood years. I was raised by two parents who loved God, took us to an evangelical church, and who raised us in a home that focused on the truth of us having our own 'personal' relationship with Jesus. We were very involved with our church in tangible ways (services three times a week; my siblings and I were involved with kids' ministry and youth groups; we hosted missionaries in our home, etc.).

I was fortunate to attend Christian school from K-12 and during those childhood years; my understanding that my relationship was/is based on my faith in Jesus and His sacrifice for me on the cross to pay the penalty for my sin was solidified. My faith journey was strengthened as it was built upon a solid foundation of biblical truths, truths I learned at home, church, and school.

As I grew into a young woman, I continued to grow in my personal relationship with Jesus. I sought out friendships with others who shared this same faith and eventually moved to Baltimore, MD for a job as a nurse. It was in this city that I met and eventually married John Roberts.

Over that past 37 years of marriage and doing life with this wonderful man, my heart has grown more in love with Jesus as my own relationship with Him has deepened. Many HARD life circumstances have been catalysts for this growth, and there have definitely been times I have felt more in step with the Spirit than other seasons due to some of life's HARD....

- Our first son/child was born with a disability. Life has been and still is at times a challenge that is unique and stretching.
- We moved multiple times (8 different cities/states and 2 Asian countries) and needed to start all over with relationships/churches/schools etc.
- Losing both of my parents, one while we lived overseas.

All these life experiences and especially the HARD have produced in me a deepened relationship with Jesus Christ and for this, I am very grateful! I see my own sin and failures to live in a way that honors GOD, even more so over the years of being in close relationship with my husband and our 6 children. I am so aware of my desperate need for Jesus' sacrificial gift of dying in my place so that I can have a relationship with him both now and eternally.

I am currently taking a class at LEFC called re:generation. These past 7 months have truly been such a gift as I have had to look more deeply into my heart and soul and be reminded of my own idolatry and sinful patterns that separate me not only from God but also impact my relationships. I am so grateful for the Holy Spirit who reveals truth to me and daily pursues a deepening relationship with me as I submit to His rule in my heart. I am looking forward to being part of the LEFC family!



BRIAN ROLAND

My name is Brian Roland. I grew up in Chester County, PA. I was born and raised in a Christian home where my family attended church regularly. I currently work for the State Police as a patrol trooper.

My wife Shannon and I have attended church all our lives, and we found ourselves looking for a church that teaches Scripture clearly where we could get involved and be part of a community of believers. We had watched a few LEFC livestreams out of curiosity as we always passed “that church on the corner” on our way to Target. We visited in 2022, and we found Scripture being taught, welcoming believers, and opportunities to serve. A few weeks after our first visit, we decided LEFC was where we should be. We joined the Roots class and found an encouraging group of believers that showed genuine care. We’ve been attending ever since.

I grew up hearing the truth of Scripture and hearing about the Gospel. When I was about five years old, I said a repeat-after-me prayer, but I didn’t really grasp what it meant to repent of your sins and trust in Christ alone as your Savior. I struggled with what it meant to be saved for a few years until I reached a breaking point when I was about 11 years old. Looking back, I realize that I was trusting in the words I said during a repeat-after-me prayer more than I was trusting in what God has done. I asked my parents one night how I could settle the issue once and for all. They explained that salvation is a free gift of God and not of any works or right actions we could do (Ephesians 2:8-9). They explained that salvation comes from repenting of your sins and trusting in Christ alone and His finished work on the cross as the only basis for your salvation. They also reminded me of the truths of John 10:28 that once you are given eternal life, nobody can take you out of God’s hand. I understood it, and I made the decision to put my faith in Christ’s finished work on the Cross. I was baptized about a year later.

Since the time I became a Christian I have learned that the Christian life is not one that is free of difficulty or pain, but that God is faithful, and He is ever present in our time of need (Psalm 46:1). As my brother slowly lost his life to ALS in 2021, I was reminded of Psalm 18 where David writes: “The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.” I am learning day by day to take refuge in Him and to trust Him more. His grace is sufficient.

SHANNON ROLAND

My name is Shannon Roland. I grew up in Reading, PA in a Christian family that served diligently in local churches wherever we lived. I am married to Brian Roland, and I work as a speech-language pathologist. We started looking

for a church in 2022 and were so encouraged by what we found at LEFC. We quickly got settled in and we feel so blessed to be a part of such a great community of believers.

I came to know Christ personally at 5 years of age. My older brother asked me if I had accepted Jesus Christ as my savior one day in the kitchen. He explained to me what it meant and how I could believe in him and accept his free gift of salvation. I eagerly prayed with my brother and remember feeling so elated to know Christ and have the Holy Spirit. I was a very outgoing child, and about a year later, I remember asking my parents to take me to the pastor's office so I could ask to be baptized. My brother and I were baptized on the same day a few weeks later. My life has not been an easy journey, and I have faced many challenges throughout the years. But one thing remains constant through it all – Jesus Christ: my Rock and my Redeemer.



ANDY SCHELL

Hi, I'm Andy. I've been married to my high school sweetheart, Erika, for nearly 14 years, and we've attended LEFC for nine years. We have two daughters, Addison and Melody.

My story is a journey of 20+ years. Thankfully, I had the opportunity to grow up in a Christian home, go to a solid church, and attend Lititz Christian School. I accepted Christ at a young age and grew up doing all the things a "good" Christian should do. But in the end, things I did and "believed" were not rooted in my heart. I did not have a growing relationship with the Lord.

It wasn't until my mid-twenties that God got my attention through the challenges my wife and I faced with infertility. It was through these difficult years that I stubbornly learned that I needed a savior to rely on for strength, guidance, and comfort. It's at this point that I truly surrendered life to God and publicly proclaimed that through baptism.

It was only a few months after I was baptized that God blessed us with the news of our first daughter. The timing of this miracle only further grew my faith, as it was difficult to deny God's timing in response to my obedience.

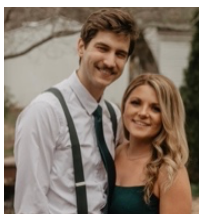
I believe that God has a reason for everything that happens. And although I often wish things could be different, I'm thankful for what God is teaching us and what he will continue to teach us through my next trial. It says in James 1:2-4, "Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything." It's this trial that brought a turning point in my life, and my dependence on the Lord has only grown as we've been blessed with two daughters and the challenges that come with parenting.

ERIKA SCHELL

Hi I'm Erika. I've been married to Andy for 13 years, and we have two daughters. Addie is 6, and Mel is 2. We have been attending LEFC for about 9 years.

I grew up in a Christian home and accepted Christ at a young age. I also attended Lititz Christian School for all of middle and high school. I would say I grew up in a bit of Christian bubble for most of my upbringing. When I got to college, my eyes were certainly opened to "worldly" living. That's the first time I really had to dig deeper and decide if I believed what I believed because that's all I had ever known or if I truly believed these things as well.

Fast forward to about 8 years ago when my husband and I began our journey with infertility. I also developed several health issues like Lyme Disease that were chronic and caused quite a few issues, and still do today. Those were very difficult years, but they were some of the biggest years of spiritual growth. God was so faithful through that journey and taught me a lot about where I put my treasure, hope, and worth. And He tested where I find my joy and contentment. He also brought about our life group, and the ladies in that group have meant so much to me. They walked beside me, encouraged me, and celebrated our miracle babies with me. That is the Body of Christ and I'm so thankful. I'm thankful for LEFC and hope to continue with this Body for a long time.



ZANE SEITZ

My name is Zane Seitz, and I was born and raised in Lancaster County, in a relatively conservative church. My wife Kathryn and I met in high school and got married before I had graduated from college with a degree in Meteorology. After getting married we lived in Lancaster County for a year, then moved to New York City in 2021, then moved back to Lancaster County in 2023. I currently work from home as a noise, air, and traffic analyst.

My wife attended LEFC prior to our move back to Lancaster County and only had positive things to say about the church. After attending for a few months and seeing all the Christ-centered brothers and sisters at LEFC, the provided resources, and the pouring into the community that the elders and leaders of the church commit themselves to, we decided to make LEFC the church we call “our church”.

I’ve known Christ from a young age; I was baptized at 12, and I fully understood the commitment I was making. But even that understanding didn’t keep me from chasing a lifestyle of sin, one that led to a depression in my life that was then undone by recommitting myself to Christ and taking Christ and His sacrifice seriously. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life.” John 3:16 is the one Bible verse I memorized at a young age and the one that reminded me during my depression that Christ shed blood for even me, and the sin that I was in. But through this I knew that I am made clean through Jesus’ sacrifice and that I as a believer should fully commit myself to Him who cleanses me before God. So, in early high school I recommitted myself to Christ.

Life on earth isn’t easy, but our triune God makes it easy, because our reward above is better than any earthly reward. Any momentary suffering we endure on this earth will be a miniscule amount of time compared to eternity with God in Heaven. And a body of believers helps us all stay grounded in Christ and God’s Word. I look forward to joining LEFC and its strong body of believers.

KATHRYN SEITZ

I live in the Manheim area and currently work for ELIC, an organization that sends English teachers to the unreached regions of the world. I was not raised within the church and had no personal relationship with Christ growing up. Due to family difficulties and the complete lack of Christ in my life, I developed a deep, empty hole in my heart that I attempted to fill with many earthly things. In my teens, I developed some sinful habits and surrounded myself with people who were a poor influence in my life. These choices brought on a season of despair and hopelessness. I had felt completely alone and lost.

I began to experience a lot of spiritual darkness during this season. Eventually, I reached a point of extreme fear, loneliness and emptiness. God worked through a family friend to lead me towards Jesus. Despite my weak faith, I found immediate peace from the darkness that had been covering my life. While this experience began shaping my faith, I still remained in a place of emptiness. A few weeks later, a childhood friend invited me to her youth group. In this space, I found a place of belonging, people who deeply cared for me, and a God who loves at all times. It was evident that God’s hand had always been present in my life, pursuing me and lifting me out of my sin.

Since then, it has been a joy to deeply know and experience the Lord and his character. I’ve learned to cherish the word of God, abide in His presence, and grew in a passion for evangelism. It has been a theme throughout my life to continue to return to the Lord’s truth, presence, and purpose for His people. Over the past few years, I experienced many large transitions and painful losses. When things became very difficult, I came to a crossroad and realized that I had to make a choice to trust – in the Lord’s promises through Scripture and evidence of God’s work in my life. These choices have shaped my faith, allowing me to trust in God’s character despite my circumstances. In each season of life, I am continually in awe of God’s faithfulness to me in spite of me. What a blessing it is to serve a faithful Messiah.

“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.” – Hebrews 10:23



BRIAN SELL

Hello Everyone! My name is Brian Sell. I have been attending LEFC for about 4 years now and have decided that membership is the right choice for me. I have three children: Lily (16), Levi (14), and Sadie (10).

My faith journey began in the Woodbury Church of the Brethren. I loved Camp Blue Diamond, VBS, and missions trips to Ecuador, Kenya, and Columbia through the church and Wycliffe Bible translators. I was baptized by my pastor (and my best friend's father) Larry Graybill in 1991, after I felt Jesus move in my soul during a revival service at our church. I had a strong friend group in church that made a positive impact in our junior high and high school through service projects and community service.

I went on to Messiah College and was a member of the cross country and track teams and found my faith growing through daily Bible study, attending chapel weekly, and interacting with friends in the faith at Messiah. Being a

runner, one of my favorite Bible verses is Hebrews 12:1, "Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race that is marked out for us".

I transferred to St. Francis University for an athletic scholarship, and although my faith didn't grow as much there, I did learn much about the Catholic denomination and namesake of our school, the patron saint of animals. After graduation, I became a professional runner, focusing on the marathon and training with an elite group of runners in Rochester, MI. I consistently attended church in Michigan and back in PA, as it gave me a solid faith foundation and interaction with believers.

I moved back to Lititz in 2012. I immediately began attending my wife's home church and worked hard at growing in my faith through Sunday school with a peer group, consistent attendance, participation in missions trips, and teaching kids Sunday school classes

Unfortunately, during Covid, like so many congregations, meeting in-person came to an abrupt halt. Although I tried to attend virtual services with my family, I felt idle in my walk with God, and our kids were becoming disengaged. I learned that LEFC continued meeting in-person, and our family decided to visit based on positive reviews we had heard from other members.

I immediately felt part of something special: from the praise music, the sermons, and the welcoming congregation, everything just felt right. I began teaching Sunday school in the children's department and currently continue to do so in the fourth-grade classroom (following my youngest daughter Sadie in her spiritual growth).

I feel like I have grown closer to God through more in-depth study of the Bible, interaction with like-minded friends and LEFC members, and through ministry in the children's wing (I often feel like they are teaching me!). I constantly receive compliments on my positivity at work, and I am certain it is because of my closer walk with God and my growth at LEFC.

SARAH SELL

My name is Sarah Sell. I'm a wife, mother of three, school nurse at Lititz Elementary, Warwick girls' wrestling coach, proud Warwick graduate (class of 1997), and lifelong member of the Lititz community. I was raised by parents who are faithful servants and devout followers of Jesus, with deep roots in the Church of the Brethren. I have many wonderful and vivid memories as an active participant at Vacation Bible School, summer church camp at Camp Swatara, youth club, youth work trips, and National Youth Conference. My Brethren upbringing immersed me in the lessons and teachings of Jesus.

Perhaps the most influential Brethren tradition, however, was celebrating Love Feast and Communion on Maundy Thursdays, a simple re-enactment of the agape supper when Jesus lovingly and humbly washed the feet of his disciples. I'll never forget the moment when I unexpectedly realized the true significance of feet washing as an 11-year-old child, an understanding that would greatly impact my life. With men on one side of the church gymnasium, and women on the other, I can recall singing the hymn, "Lord Please Make Me A Sanctuary". The warm smell of beef rice soup permeated the air, and the pastor's message presented a clear picture of Jesus kneeling before the men who would betray and deny him to wash their feet. This is when Jesus commanded, "Love one another. As I have loved you, so must you love one another" (John 13:34).

Suddenly, it wasn't a funny or awkward experience that I begrudgingly endured because my parents made me. Suddenly, I didn't snicker back and forth with my sisters and cousins about washing each other's feet. Instead, I teared up as it hit me: such a simple, humble act of servanthood by Jesus demonstrated that love is not about status or position, but about loving others unconditionally, even when we feel hurt or broken.

That particular evening of worship led to a more mature appreciation of the magnitude of Jesus' love for us, what He's done for us, and a desire to glorify Him in my daily actions and encounters. Matthew 5:16 reminds us to "let your light shine before others so that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven". Over the next few months, I developed a genuine relationship with Jesus Christ and accepted him as my Lord and Savior which led to baptism at age twelve. Since then, this particular verse has served as a gentle yet powerful reminder during all phases and situations of my life.

Fast forward to about four years ago, our family stepped away from our home church, a difficult and heart-wrenching decision for all of us. We found ourselves drawn to the vibrant and uplifting services here at LEFC and immediately expanded our Oikos. To our delight, our kids became engaged and involved in the children's and youth ministries. In fact, two of our children want to be baptized soon! My values are consistent with the Mission and Statement of Faith here at LEFC, and I am eager to become a member of this amazing body of believers.



KEN SIEGRIST

I am Ken Siegrist, husband of Dawn Siegrist for 38 years. We live in Clay Township, PA. We are parents of 3 daughters, 2 of which are married and have gifted us with 3 grandchildren.

I sell commercial mowing equipment wholesale, covering the eastern half of PA. I was raised in a Christian home in upstate New York, our family moving there as part of Lancaster Conference of the Mennonite Church, when they planted 20+ churches in northern Pennsylvania and the southern tier of New York State in the 1950s.

At the age of 12, I was convicted that I needed Jesus Christ as my personal Savior (John 14:6: Jesus answered: “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No man comes to the Father, except through Me.”). I attended the 12-week course regarding baptism and was baptized (Acts 2:38: Peter said to them: “Repent and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ because of the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”).

Dawn and I recently attended a large church for 30+ years, being involved with youth, going on mission trips, and being part of Adult Bible Fellowships, however, we wanted to be more intentional in our lives in our local community. We started attending LEFC in November 2021, and we attended Starting Point, Connect Group, and have become part of a Life Group. We also help with facilitating Starting Point classes.

The Bible verse I claim as my life verse, is Romans 10:9-10: “If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus Christ and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, You will be saved.”

The verse I strive to live out daily is 1 Peter 3:15 “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give a reason for the Hope that you have.

DAWN SIEGRIST

My name is Dawn Siegrist. I grew up in a rural area of southwestern New York state. After college, I moved to Lancaster County Pennsylvania to find a job. I currently work at Penske Truck Leasing, in the IT department, as a Senior Software Engineer.

My husband and I attended a church in the area for about 30 years. However, after churches opened for in-person services again after Covid, we decided we wanted to find a church that was a bit closer to home. We wanted to get plugged in with a church that had clear biblical teaching and that had opportunities to get connected with others. We knew that one of our daughter’s friends had started attending LEFC and really liked it. So, in November of 2021, we decided to visit. We were immediately welcomed and met several people who quickly became friends. We loved the different ways we found to get connected and especially enjoyed the summer events, like backyard gatherings and game nights.

Growing up, we attended a church that was one of a group of churches that were of the same denomination. These were small churches. We often attended special events at one of the other churches. One of these events was a week-long revival meeting at a neighboring church. We would attend each evening. The one that I remember was when I was about 12 years old. We had been going all week and towards the end of the week, I was really feeling convicted, and knew that I did not want to go to hell. I wanted to be in heaven with Jesus. So, on the last night of meetings, I went forward during the altar call. After that, those of us that went forward were in a room where they could talk to us some more and pray with us to accept Jesus into our hearts. I remember some friends wanting me to come and play with them, but I stayed put because I wanted Jesus in my heart. A verse that really stuck out to me was Romans 6:23, “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

I still feel I have much to learn in my journey of faith. One thing I am becoming more aware of is that I may not always understand the calling that others may have in the way they follow Christ. But I need to understand that God is not in a box and will often do things that may not seem logical to me. I just need to have faith and do my part to support His work.



ANTHONY STONER

My name is Anthony Stoner. I live in Manheim with my wife, Kayley, and 3 children Jackson, Carter and Everly. I work doing commercial refrigeration service for Brubaker refrigeration.

I was born and raised on a dairy farm in Lititz, I attended Manheim Christian Day School for K-8 and Manheim Central High School for 9-12. I grew up in a Christian home. My dad's family was Mennonite and my mom's was Brethren. I attended and was a member of Middle Creek Church of the Brethren for most of my life. I remember kneeling in front of our farmhouse window with my mom and asking Jesus into my heart at a young age. When I was a little older, around 11, I was baptized and became a member at Middle Creek. Through the youth group there I had many opportunities to learn and grow in faith with retreats, service projects, and short mission trips.

I first started regularly attending LEFC around when Kayley and I got engaged at the end of 2012. My walk with the Lord has not been a straight upward path; it has been filled with mountain top highs and low valleys, but through it all Christ has been with me. A verse I've always tried to live out is Galatians 2:20.

KAYLEY STONER

My name is Kayley Stoner. I've been married to my husband Anthony for almost 11 years. We live in Manheim, and I stay at home with our 3 kids, Everly who is 3, Carter who is 6, and Jackson who is 8. I grew up in Lititz and attended LAMS K-8 and Warwick for high school. I have gone to church my whole life, attending Midway Church in Lebanon until I was in middle school and then came to LEFC around the age of 14 and have been attending ever since. I accepted Jesus into my life in 3rd grade and was then baptized. Growing up in church and going to a private Christian school greatly helped to build a firm biblical foundation in my early years.

Transitioning from a private Christian school to a public school in high school opened my eyes to a whole new world where I eventually fell into a worldly way of living for myself and not for God. My relationship with Jesus had a lot of ups and downs through high school and for many years after. After getting married and having kids, my need for Him and desire to have a relationship with him became more evident in those years. Thinking often that I can accomplish things on my own and do things my way was my go-to thinking. I quickly came to realize that I couldn't do it on my own, and I needed Him to lead and guide me through everyday life. Proverbs 3:5-6 is a verse I have looked at often over the past few years. I'm thankful for the role LEFC and the different ministries have played in my life as a believer starting all the way back in high school at Crossover up until now with WBF, small groups, and mentors/teachers.



DYLAN WEAVER

I am Dylan Weaver. I've been attending here at LEFC for my whole life. And now I've decided to become a member.

Raised in a Christian household, I accepted Christ at a young age. Through the course of Sunday school, summer camps, and youth group that faith was strengthened and began to become my own. In summer of 2016, I was baptized in the Lititz Springs Park.

The year that followed that baptism was a difficult one. Changes happened to and around me that forced me to reckon with who I am and where my hope lies. Through it all Christ was faithful, and I forged and strengthened a lot of relationships that I still hold dear.

On the other side of that year was an incredible season of the Lord's provision. I interned with Kathy Bewley here at the church before taking a job with the School District of Lancaster, where I still work. I also joined Crossover as a leader for the 7th grade guys. Leading those guys for the past 6 years has been an incredible blessing. They spur me to live out my faith.

I'm also extremely grateful for the community I have in my life group, 5 AM prayer group, and the Synago ABF. Having people from each of those groups walk beside me over the past few years has strengthened my faith in more ways than I can count. I feel so privileged to have relationships with people throughout the church, extending far beyond the groups mentioned above.

I may have been born into the LEFC family, but I choose to be here each week because of the amazing community of believers. And I am so excited to become a member.



JOHN WENTWORTH

Sunday was a Holy Day of obligation, I rarely missed going to mass on Sunday. I fulfilled my obligation. But what about the rest of the week? I began to question if I was living a life that reflected the image of God, but I must admit, I continued as I had done through the years, going through the motions, with no changes.

One of the wonderful benefits of being a dad is the blessing of learning from your children. Dads are supposed to have all the answers, right? I was on one of my many conference calls not long ago and received a text from my daughter Emily Anne. The message was clear, it was concise. It was direct (but with love) as only Ms. Emily can deliver with the sole intent to provoke thought -- an assessment, a look in the mirror -- Dad, what is your faith in God?

Fast forward, a change to attending LEFC, Pastor Tony's messages about reading Scripture. The desire to follow Jesus and lead a godly life.

My training/background is in Science and Medicine, and we use a guiding principle that is "evidence based." It took me awhile, but I have come to the conclusion. Where do I find the "evidence" to base my faith on? It's the Bible. It's Scripture.

I have learned the importance of your Oikos. My family and their influence. Nancy, my wife of 40 years, the example of how she leads each day with her faith in the Lord. Her grace, her kindness.

My friend, Mr. Charles, I am convinced God placed next door to share his faith in the Lord with me. He has been kind enough to take time to talk and to guide me.

I often listen to Christian music. There is a song by Brandon Lake that resonates with me, called Gratitude. Part of the Song says, "I throw up my hands and praise you again and again cause all that I have is a Hallelujah. I know it's not much, but I have nothing left fit for a king except my heart singing, Hallelujah. I've got just one response, I've got just one move, with my arms stretched wide, I will worship you." A beautiful song with a beautiful message.

I have given myself completely to Christ. I want to be the light of Christ through my example, my thoughts, my actions, my words, and my kindness to others. Through the grace that God has offered me, I live one day at a time, one interaction at a time. I realize now it is not I, but through Christ in me.

NANCY WENTWORTH

Hello, I am Nancy Wentworth. My husband John and I will celebrate 40 years of marriage in September of this year. We are blessed with 4 grown children, 3 daughters and a son, as well as 23 grandchildren.

I was raised in a Christian home in Northwestern PA by loving, Christian parents who consistently took me to church and introduced me to God and the Bible. This experience prompted me to accept Jesus Christ as my personal Savior at an early age. Though I am embarrassed to say, I have on a couple of occasions fallen away from an active pursuit of my faith, I can honestly say God never left my side nor stopped pursuing me, even during those "dry" seasons. Over my 60+ years, I have experienced several difficult seasons, whether alongside my grown children or during times of personal loss and grief. During those times, the one constant has been Scripture, God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit always at work calling me back to my fortress and strength in the loving arms of Jesus. I have found great comfort in Scripture reading and active prayer.

I know those who have been most influential and supportive of my faith journey were indeed placed in my life at different points by the power of the Holy Spirit. One very wise second grade Sunday school teacher prompted me to memorize 23rd Psalm in its entirety. To this day, I call upon this Scripture memory to remind me just who my God is and what he does for me daily. Also, John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall have eternal life." Another verse that I carry in my heart is Proverbs 3:5-6, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight."

Our second daughter and her husband have attended LEFC since before their marriage. They invited us to join them on several occasions. It was during those times that I realized the impact of powerful Scriptural teachings within the sermons here at LEFC, and we began attending regularly.



NATHAN WOODCOCK

My wife and I have been attending LEFC for roughly three years. I grew up in York County and Catherine, my loving wife, grew up in Bucks County. We met in college in 2011 at Cairn University and ended up getting married in 2016. We have a little bundle of joy, James Woodcock, who is 14 months old. He is an amazing gift from God!

We moved out to Lititz in 2018 and had some trouble finding a church to regularly attend. After finding LEFC, we were plugged into the Mosaic ABF and a Life Group. We love the welcomeness that we felt when we walked through the doors of LEFC and the intentionality of getting people involved in small groups and ministries so no one feels like another number but can make meaningful relationships in a Christ-centered community.

I am the youngest of 4 siblings and was born into a Christian home. I realized very early in life that I was a sinner in need of a savior and the wages of my sin was death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord. I did not want to go to hell. A couple of years later I was baptized in front of the congregation as an outward sign of an internal change that had occurred in my life.

A couple of years ago there was a very trying time in my life where I was not trusting in the Lord. Long story short, a horrible motorcycle accident changed my walk with Christ for the better. I now use that story as part of my testimony of how God has restored what the locusts have eaten. If you would like to hear more about what happened, just ask; they said my 14-page single-spaced testimony was too long for the bulletin!

Becoming a member of LEFC is very important to us for fellowship, encouragement, ministry, and community where we can challenge and uplift each other in a Christ-honoring way according to the Scriptures. We look forward to raising James in a solid church and pray that he will come to know the Lord. We know that the body of believers will also help assist him in growing with the Lord.

CATHERINE WOODCOCK

My husband and I began attending LEFC during COVID-19 but really began to get connected in the last 2 years through our ABF and Life Group. We've been tremendously blessed by the friendships we've made and the way the communities we are in rallied around us when we brought our son, James into the world. It's important to us to raise him in a Christ-focused community, and that's a big reason why we're pursuing membership at LEFC!

I knew of the Lord as a child, often singing made-up songs to Him out my bedroom window when I was supposed to be napping. I was homeschooled and raised in the Catholic church. In homeschool groups, I gravitated toward kids who were Christian. I had a young friend who showed me Christian music when I was about 7 or 8. I remember her family and home feeling like such a safe and peaceful place; meanwhile, mine was filled with fighting, chasing, verbal and physical violence, and negativity. I was starting to notice where things I was being taught didn't add up with the God I was learning about from Christian friends.

I studied hard through my schooling and was able to start school early at the age of 3 and quickly developed a desire to be praised for my grades, good deeds, etc., wanting to earn my own righteousness. I frequently ran into situations as a young woman where I would be 2-3 years younger than those in my grade, so I never truly felt I was able to fit in with my peers. A regular outsider looking in, I desperately longed for love and companionship. I began attending a youth group with a girl I met at a homeschool event. Around that time, I developed an intense form of insomnia triggered by anxiety. I didn't sleep for 3 months straight. In the night I felt tormented by the enemy but didn't know how to break free from it. I would cry out to the God I thought I knew, but the torment wouldn't end. I went to a youth camp one weekend. I met Jesus there. They did an altar call, and for the first time, I felt Him draw me to Himself. I confessed my self-righteousness and anxiety. I immediately felt the anxiety, rage, and insecurity I had been carrying for so many years lift away. I started to sleep again afterwards.

Since my conversion to following Christ, I have seen the Lord do amazing things in my life and the lives of those around me. He has answered many prayers, changed my heart, my perception of self, and brought me community when I had previously felt so isolated. I'm excited to develop deeper relationships at LEFC and grow in the body of Christ.