



**NEW
MEMBER
CANDIDATES**

**MAY
2026**



LEFC

LANCASTER EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH



NEW MEMBER CANDIDATES // May 2026

Danyel Brunsch
Caleb & Lizz Cagno
Scott & Victoria Cagno
John & Brenda Clark
Sam & Lynette Fasnacht
Gregg & Kris Hershey
Justin & Sarah Hertzog
Robert Hoffman

Keith & Tammy Kratzer
Austin & Amy Martin
Michael & Alicia Martin
Scott & Erin Martin
Matthew & Nicole Motyka
Michael & Katie Myers
Jon & Sarahbeth Norton
Steve & Sheri Oberholtzer

Barbara Rennix
Dave & Lori Schlotter
Sean & Kayla Schreckengast
Larry & Jessica Schweers
Ben & Lauren Sheard
Steve & Pamela Weber
Raymond & Madelyn Yates
Holly Yaw



Danyel Brunsch

DANYEL BRUNSCH //

I was raised in northern Wisconsin in a Christian home with a wonderful extended family. I accepted Jesus Christ as my personal Savior at age 9 at my grandparents' house while my grandpa was giving a message. (While we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but by His mercy He saved us. We are sealed to the day of redemption. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.)

I was in Awana during the year and Awana camp in the summers. Then in high school, I drifted a bit and did things my way all the way through college. After college, I came back to the Lord and broke up with my boyfriend, but then he got saved.

We ended up getting married. We had 5 children. I stayed home and homeschooled for 18 years. I was involved in my church and homeschool groups. We were small group leaders. I led parenting classes with my friend. At that time, we had been living in Wisconsin for 17 years, close to family and friends.

My husband started going on trips with a ministry in Haiti with a group of people. For three years he went multiple times. He then felt led to sell our house and become missionaries for this ministry. We eventually sold everything in northern Wisconsin and moved to Haiti with all the kids as missionaries. We were there for 18 months. We then moved to Pennsylvania with the kids because my husband was going to work for the ministry here. There was a connection in PA with the ministry, so we moved here.

Our marriage was hard. After moving to PA, it was getting worse. My kids noticed things and started to speak up. Eventually he confessed to being unfaithful, and after 24 years of marriage, we divorced. We had only lived in PA for a year when all this happened. I lost my home and was alone. I turned to sin instead of to the Lord and started doing my own thing to mask the pain.

After 5 years, the Holy Spirit kept pounding at my heart and I knew I needed help. I started coming to LEFC but was having much trouble stopping what I was doing. All my family and friends were in Wisconsin, and I chose not to cling to Jesus. I was hurt in so many ways. I ended up asking to speak with Jeff Travis for a meeting and told him I needed help. I got hooked up with Janet as my mentor. I read a book she gave me called "Freedom Starts Today." I went back to reading my Bible every day and stopping the things that were robbing my life of joy.

I had a lot of bitterness over the man that treated me badly for years and cheated on me, and yet he got the house and the kids. I know I fell apart, and I felt so much shame and guilt.

But I repented and confessed everything to my family and friends. I'm still healing. I am attending re:gen. I have been attending ABFs and services every Sunday morning. I am and have always been close to my children but now feel sad and lonely not living life always with my kids. They are older now, but I send a daily devotion to them every morning. I sometimes can't believe this is my life but am trusting God will work this is out to His glory.

I know God isn't done with me yet. He is my rock and my fortress, my salvation, and my hope. The last 5 years of my life isn't what defines me, He defines me. My identity is in Him. I am His child and I am resurrected with Him. I am no longer a slave to sin but have freedom in a living God that loves me and He is faithful to me always!



Lizz & Caleb Cagno

CALEB CAGNO //

I grew up in a loving Christian home and have attended LEFC since I was a young kid. Church was always a consistent part of my life, and my faith has been present for as long as I can remember. I remember being baptized behind the Mill in the creek across from the church, being part of the Bible quiz team, and being involved in just about every church event there was. LEFC played a major role in shaping me into the person I am today.

While I've never struggled with believing in Christ, I have struggled at times to prioritize Him over my own selfish and worldly desires. As I've grown, I've become more aware of my need to continually surrender control, put Christ first in my daily life, and allow Him to shape my choices and character.

After being away from LEFC for a short number of years, Elizabeth and I returned as we looked for a church home together. Coming back, we quickly found a church family. Our life group and close

friendships have become incredibly important to us and to our growing family. Having a home church for our children is a priority for us, just as it was for me growing up.

I'm grateful for the role LEFC has played in my life and for the opportunity to continue growing in my faith, serving alongside this church family, and following Christ in the years ahead.

LIZZ CAGNO //

I grew up going to church in Lititz, but it was just me, my mom, and sisters. My father didn't go, which caused a divide in our family. Eventually, we started going to my grandparents' church (where my mom grew up) in Lewistown, which started a strong foundation for my faith.

I developed anorexia from a young age. My earliest memory of it started at age 8. Soon after that, I developed severe depression and anxiety. I hid most of it from my family, delaying any kind of intervention until I was much older. Due to these diseases, I started to drift from the church, especially once my grandparents had passed and we stopped going to church.

Once I began treatment for my eating disorder, I found God again in the Psalms. I prayed He would send me some sign that I would have a future past the bleak one I had pictured. There, I found Psalms 71:14, which built the foundation I based my recovery on. He gave me my future back and something I could believe in.

Since then, I have slowly been immersing myself in church life. My husband and I started to go to LCBC but decided we wanted more for ourselves and our faith. In that, we decided LEFC was a good

fit for us. My husband grew up coming to LEFC, so it seemed like a good place for us to raise the family we wanted to start.

Due to my anorexia and past health issues, I had been told by health professionals I wouldn't be able to conceive children. Once our daughter Avery was born, it was from there that I took my faith even more seriously because I knew I was raising the future generation of God's people.

I involved myself in LEFC by becoming a Shepherd to first grade students. It became such a blessing to be involved in the lives of children, setting their foundation the way mine had been set. God then brought me to Him even closer through the way of a part time job at the church as Assistant Director of Children's Ministry. I don't see this as a job, but instead, more as a way God can guide and direct me to further His Kingdom in a way I know how: through children. I truly feel blessed that God called me to this.



Scott & Victoria Cagno

SCOTT CAGNO //

I was raised in a Christian home and grew up in the church. From an early age, I learned about the love of Christ and accepted Jesus as my Savior. I genuinely enjoyed being part of the church and was shaped by youth group, retreats, and mission trips throughout my childhood and teenage years. Those experiences formed an early foundation for my faith and instilled in me a deep sense of God's presence in my life.

Like many young people, I experienced seasons of rebellion during my teenage years. My faith was never lost, but over time it became something more personal and grounded as I approached adulthood. Rather than a single defining moment, my relationship with God matured gradually. I was baptized in 2005, marking a growing desire to follow Christ more intentionally and to make my faith my own.

Many of the most difficult trials of my life came later, during my late twenties and early thirties. My first wife and I endured eight years of infertility before our marriage ultimately ended after her infidelity. That season was deeply painful and disorienting, yet even then, God remained near. Not long after, God brought a new woman into my life: my wife, who would become one of His greatest gifts to me. Through her faithfulness, strength, and love, I experienced God's grace and restoration in a tangible way.

Our life together has not been without hardship. A few years into our marriage, I suffered a severe back injury that left me bed-ridden for a year and eventually required spinal surgery. We later walked through infertility together, along with ongoing health challenges. In every season, my wife has been a steady source of encouragement and faith, continually pointing me back to God's goodness and presence. Through her, I have seen what it looks like to love faithfully and trust God even when the path is uncertain.

Becoming a father has been one of the greatest joys and shaping experiences of my life. Fatherhood has taught me more about love, patience, and sacrifice than I could have imagined, and it has deepened my understanding of God's love for me as His child. Together, my wife and I have seen God's faithfulness in building our family in His timing and according to His purposes.

I was raised at LEFC, and after more than fifteen years attending other churches, my family and I felt clearly led to return. We came back shortly after COVID, and it has been evident that this is where God has called us to be. I am deeply grateful for our pastor, for the privilege of worshipping and growing

together with a congregation that genuinely loves Christ, and for the church's strong commitment to sound biblical teaching. I look forward to becoming a member at LEFC, investing more fully in this church family, and serving alongside others as we pursue Christ together.

VICTORIA CAGNO //

I was born in Sweden, the daughter of missionaries. My parents taught me about the love of Christ early, and I asked Jesus into my heart at age 4. We immigrated to the USA in 1993, and I continued to travel extensively with my family. Witnessing so many cultures really helped to expand my worldview. However, it wasn't until I went on a month-long mission trip to Thailand at age 14 that my faith in God really became my own. I was alone with God for what seemed like the first time, and that's when my journey with Him really began. I learned that though all else may fail, I can trust in God's presence and His faithfulness. He will never leave me, no matter where I am or what my life will bring.

That belief would be tested many times throughout my journey. I met my first husband at a Bible study shortly before I left for college. We got married during my senior year of college, and a few years later, I gave birth to our daughter. Shortly after she was born, I discovered that my husband had been living a double life, including infidelity and addiction for more than half of our marriage. His whole life had essentially been a lie, and he eventually walked away from me and from the church. After ten years together, this marriage ended in divorce.

As a single mother, I found myself trying to reconcile what felt like injustice and suffering with what I had learned of a compassionate and loving God. Jesus provided for me in so many different ways in that season and was present with me in my suffering. As I re-learned what my relationship with God looked like, and as I continued to heal, God brought a new man into my life. I met my husband, Scott, a man who I know will always be faithful to me and to Jesus. We married the same year, and the first thing he did was adopt my (now our) daughter.

Our marriage has not been easy. We experienced infertility and three miscarriages before God gave us our little boy. Scott severely injured his back and was bed-ridden for a year before requiring invasive surgery. We have navigated a host of health issues and challenges ever since. But one thing has never faltered: God's faithfulness and presence in every season of our lives.

We were drawn to LEFC shortly after COVID. I know without a doubt that this is where we are supposed to be. I am so grateful for the sound theological teaching and the gift of worshipping with others who deeply love God.



John & Brenda Clark

JOHN CLARK //

I was born and grew up on a dairy farm in Lititz, where my parents and grandparents provided me with a Christian upbringing. I accepted Christ and was baptized at the Christian Missionary Alliance Church at the age of 13. I attended Sunday school and church on a regular basis throughout high school, but my attendance became more sporadic in college.

After marrying my high school sweetheart, we attended her church in Lititz; however, over time, we became less and less involved. We drifted away from tending to our spiritual needs until I began going to a barber I had gone to as a child. We talked about Christ, church and religion. Eventually, he persuaded me to attend church with him, and I came to realize how much I had been missing. I

rededicated myself by attending regularly, joining the choir and becoming a trustee.

Over time, I felt I needed more than I was getting from that church. My wife and I visited LEFC and found that the experience returned me to the church of my childhood with its scripture-based sermons and emphasis on the Word. I have had challenges in my spiritual walk. However, 1 Corinthians 10:13 and Philippians 4:6 have always reminded me how great my God is:

No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. God is faithful, He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. (Philippians 4:6)

BRENDA CLARK //

I grew up attending Sunday school and church and singing in choir with my mother into my early thirties; however, I never really knew Jesus or invited Him into my heart. After the birth of our second son in my late thirties, I made sure he attended Sunday school, but I stopped going to church. For the next thirteen years, Jesus was not a part of my life.

After fruitlessly looking in all the wrong places to fill the hole in my heart, I finally came to the realization that what I had been missing most of my life was having Jesus at its core. I started attending church again, got back to singing in the choir and even began going to women's Bible studies.

Now, almost twenty-five years later, I can't imagine my life without the personal relationship I've developed with Jesus and the Father. The debt that I owe Him for going to the cross I can never repay; however, I try to honor Him daily by spending time in the Word and trying to live according to His law of love. When I fall short of living as He would have me live, I know He will forgive me when I bring my sin before Him.

Over the past two and a half years, my husband and I have found an amazing church and church family at LEFC, and we would be honored to be accepted into the membership of God's family of believers here at LEFC.



Sam & Lynette Fasnacht

SAM FASNACHT //

I accepted the Lord as my savior many years ago at the age of 12. It was during a revival service at the small conservative Church of the Brethren I grew up in. My parents took us to church every Sunday and most Wednesday evenings.

During that week of revival services, I was challenged to consider, as was often stated, to "join the church." I definitely felt the calling and knew it was the right thing to do, to stand and be recognized. I was baptized, as I recall, a couple months later.

Some years later, I really began to think about faith and church and what it meant for me personally. One event that challenged my faith but ultimately caused it to grow happened when I was 17 years old. My sister passed away at age 26 after a few years of dealing with a physical ailment.

I wrestled with God over this. I didn't want to accept the fact that God would let her die when she was married to a devoted husband and had a little 6-year-old girl that she loved so dearly! But over time, I came to realize that God is the author of life, and ultimately our time on earth, and that He is sovereign.

My wife and I were married young, and like most folks, we faced some difficult struggles and circumstances. My wife helped me to grow my faith, and to look to God in times of need. There have been times over the years that because of God's grace, we have been granted the ability to rise above, receive patience, or find answers for things that we would have not been able to do on our own.

Being aware of God's presence in the ways He has aided and supported us has helped my faith to grow. I feel I still have a lot of potential for growth, but knowing that we have the Lord to call on when we don't have answers is a blessing!

LYNETTE FASNACHT //

I grew up in an independent Bible church. I asked Jesus to come into my heart at around 7 years of age and was baptized in my teens.

My home life was dysfunctional and emotionally abusive, mostly from my father. God's kindness during my teenage years was being a part of our church's youth group. We had loving, caring youth directors and I could really see God through them.

I learned how to forgive my dad and grow in my young faith. I had always loved when our church's missionaries would return on furlough and talk about their life serving and show slides.

To this day, I have always felt like I wanted to do more for the Lord, especially through missions. My husband and I have been on various mission trips together in our married life, and I went to Thailand with LEFC in October of 2024. These experiences have shaped who I am today.

I take my Christian faith very seriously and desire to grow in Him. There are times when I get stuck, but I just remember all that Christ has done for me and that He loves me unconditionally. I want to spend the rest of my life serving Him.



Kris & Gregg Hershey

GREGG HERSHEY //

Born and raised in Lancaster County, I cannot remember a time in my life that I did not attend church. I prayed to receive Christ as a child at summer camp and was baptized at a young age. Yet with all that, I really did not know what it meant to follow Christ.

In my early 20's, Jesus became real to me and I began my walk with the Lord Jesus. He revealed to me through a series of events that he was in control and the anxiety I was feeling was not helping my walk with him. Understanding that I did not need to come up with the final answers and decisions was a huge relief. Knowing that Jesus has already gone before and directed my steps changed my approach to life and my walk in faith.

Several years later, I felt the call to attend Word of Life Bible institute and then Lancaster Bible College where I trained for youth ministry. After that, I met and married my wife, Kris. I returned to LBC several years later to complete a master's degree in mental health working as a mental health and drug and alcohol counselor.

Currently, I find myself in the autumn of my life with retirement only several years away. As I focus on what it means to be a good husband, grandfather, uncle, brother, son, and so on, my desire is to disciple and mentor those closest to me and those the Lord brings across my path. As I enter this season of my life, I find the verses Paul records in 2 Timothy 4:7-8 becoming real to me and challenging me for the future. I am striving to continue running the good race, fighting the good fight

and keeping the faith, not resting on what I have done in the past, but looking to what lies ahead and the plans the Lord has for me.

KRIS HERSHEY //

I grew up in a home where my mom was a believer, but my dad was not. He would later come to know the Lord when I was in college. I am eternally grateful that Jesus saved him. Mom took me and my sisters to Sunday school and church where I first prayed to receive Christ as my Savior. When I was 12, I got baptized at my church. I would later re-dedicate my life to the Lord as a teenager at summer church camp. After high school, I went to Bible College and got married two years later.

Twelve years into our marriage, my husband confessed to several affairs and was, at that time, in the midst of one. We attempted to work things out over the next 5 years, but he fell into sin again, this time leaving me and our 2 teenage boys.

Little did I know that my faith in the Lord would take on a whole new meaning. I felt very alone as I tried to navigate life with without a husband and a father for my sons.

Shortly after this happened, I attended a ladies retreat with my church. The speaker quoted a verse found in Isaiah that reads “For your Maker is your husband — the LORD Almighty is his name — the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; he is called the God of all the earth.” (*Isaiah 54:5*)

It was then that I realized that I was not alone and the Lord would always be with me no matter what happened. Two years after my divorce, I met my husband Gregg, and we will be married 18 years in June. The Lord has certainly redeemed those years and has strengthened my faith in Him. I am forever grateful to the Lord for his goodness and mercy over the years.

One of my favorite verses is Colossians 1:13: “For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves.”



Justin & Sarah Hertzog

JUSTIN HERTZOG //

Like many who grew up in the church, I was raised in a Christian household but didn't really have my own faith for a while. Going to church every Sunday was just something I did with my family every week. I was involved with my youth group, but truthfully, I went because I enjoyed hanging out with my friends. It wasn't until my senior year of high school that I began to realize that something needed to change. The Lord convicted my heart and showed me that I wasn't always treating others in a way that was honoring Him. I still tried to be a good person, but I did it to gain approval in their eyes so they would like me, not out of obedience to the Lord. It hit me one day that if I wanted a real and personal relationship with God, treating others with grace and not judgment was something that I would have to change, as well as my motivations. I can remember sitting on my bed one night, repenting of my sins, inviting God into my heart, and asking for the guidance and strength to change. That moment began my

journey of my faith becoming genuine and my own.

I had a couple of “good years” after that of trying to follow God, reading my Bible more, and being aware of how I treated those around me, but my relationship with God was still kind of stagnant. I really only saw God as someone to turn to if things were hard. After getting out of a relationship I was in at the time, I fell into a depression and began to turn to alcohol to cope instead of to Christ. I felt

unworthy, unloved by God, and not good enough in every aspect of my life. This led to me attempting to take my own life in my darkest moment, but by the grace of God, He had different plans for my life. What was truly the turning point was a friendship that God had placed in my life that became more of a mentorship for me. Our time together was full of conversations about faith and life in general, and one summer we took a trip to hike a waterfall where our conversation led to him baptizing me. The Lord took away my depression that day, and my faith in Him was renewed.

Going to church became exciting, and I looked forward to spending time in His presence. I prioritized devotional time and prayed about everything, even the little things, and not just when times were hard. I relied on God instead of worldly things and trusted him with my money, my future, and how I viewed myself - all things I had once thought I was in control of. He gave me a peace I had never experienced before. I still deeply desired to be in a serious, God-honoring relationship, and it was when I surrendered my desires to God that he brought my now-wife into my life. When I realized that she was the person I wanted to commit my life to, whom God had specifically and intentionally designed for me, I felt God's love and care for me in a real and big way through this provision. I learned that His will and His timing will always be better than my own. I know that God will never stop showing up for me, and He is working in my life now through bringing me peace in the midst of the anxiety that wants to convince me that I am in control again. I have witnessed Him completely take away my anxious thoughts, feelings, and fears in a way that surpasses all understanding. The work that God has done in my life has allowed me to be a light in the lives of those around me and speak truth to them, the same way that my friend once did for me.

SARAH HERTZOG //

My story starts with growing up going to church every Sunday, VBS every summer, and being raised by parents with a genuine faith in Christ who led my siblings and I by example. I can remember one summer afternoon when I was about 6 years old at a VBS program, praying the prayer of confessing my sin and giving my heart to Jesus, even though I didn't fully understand what it meant at the time. But through my youth group, mentors, and various church camps and mission trips, my faith started to become my own, and I began to learn what it actually meant to be a follower of Christ. I learned that God didn't love me more or less based on how well I obeyed Him or all of the "good Christian things" I did or sins I didn't do.

Up until college, I can fortunately say that I really didn't face much difficulty in my life. I chose a small, Christian college and just assumed I would grow in my faith and find a solid Christian community. I quickly realized that wasn't the case and struggled greatly throughout those next four years. I had always been an anxious person growing up, but I began to deal with social anxiety, depression, and felt more alone than I ever had before, and challenges that hadn't resurfaced since my childhood began to overwhelm me. I never lost faith in the Lord or His plan for my life, but I wasn't really living for Him or acting in obedience.

Then came the summer of 2020, when the internship I had planned on doing didn't happen due to COVID, and I found myself on the other side of the country, working as a counselor at a camp in Montana. I was surrounded by solid Christian mentors and friends, removed from the distractions and temptations at school, and truly sought the Lord for the first time in a while. I learned about His sovereignty and that obedience to Him could be joyful rather than burdensome. I also realized my need for daily time spent reading the Bible and in prayer.

After that summer, part-way through my junior year, I was in my first long-term relationship that morphed into one of extreme emotional highs and lows, separation from my friendships, control, and abuse, and my anxiety got to the point where every day was a struggle. Once again, I learned to rely on the Lord and His peace more than I ever had before. He met me at my lowest and gave me the strength to endure each day and the wisdom to leave that relationship.

During the worst week of my life when that relationship came to an end, the college touring choir I was in performed at a church in Lancaster. That connection led me to where I am now at Veritas Academy, where the Lord uses the talents he blessed me with every day. My job also led me to meet my wonderful husband, who reminds me of God's unconditional love for me every day. As I look back on all the stages of my life the Lord has walked me through, I can see the work of His hands so clearly. His presence was a comfort when I felt alone, He provided the friends, mentors, and wisdom when I needed them most, and He showed me time and time again that He is in control when everything feels out of control. The story of my testimony won't reach its conclusion on this side of heaven, but I have found a peace that surpasses understanding and rest in knowing that the Lord is always sovereign and working all things for my good.



Robert Hoffman

ROBERT HOFFMAN //

My name is Rob Hoffman and I am a true believer and follower of the Lord Jesus. In the past, I have struggled with gambling (over 2 years of freedom in recovery), anger, obsessive thoughts (especially in attempting to prove myself to others), lack of confidence, and a desire to control.

I was extremely shy as a child to the point of potentially having a social anxiety disorder. I did not "fit in" since I was so shy and socially awkward, and I was bullied incessantly by groups of kids in school for over ten years on a daily basis. I was also verbally attacked by my father for many years as he stated he was trying to toughen and build me up. I attempted suicide at the age of 16 by overdose and was hospitalized for depression. By the age of 18, I was still deeply hurting and went to a racetrack that I had thought would be fun. This terrible choice led to a several-decade gambling stronghold that I have only recently overcome with the Lord's power and my surrender. In my past, I would always return to this as a way to numb and attempt to forget about my pain from all the hurts I experienced as a child. For quite some time now, I have had great accountability in my life - my mentor Steve, who has been such a blessing to me. In 2008, I believed on the Lord and finally understood the reason the Lord of Lords and King of Kings had to suffer and die on the cross.

I relocated to Lancaster in 2016 from where I was raised in central New Jersey after getting married in 2015. I am a girl dad with two beautiful and precious girls; 17 and 7 years old. Sadly, after a long process, my marriage ended in the spring of this year. I am, however, standing for my ex-spouse and our family with the hopes of another chance with God at the center this time. During this season in my life, Jesus has been refining and changing me into the new Godly man that He had always intended me to be, with complete, radical transformation and genuine repentance. It is only by His grace and that still, small voice that leads us to repentance.

I would like to become a member of LEFC, as I have finally come to the end of myself and am living my life in true freedom. My former life of being a slave to bondage is in my rear-view mirror; now I am a slave to righteousness and doing the right thing. I often contemplate how far He came to willingly suffer for my horrendous sin. Baptism for me was an outward sign that I am dead to the world and alive in Christ. I hope this relationship will be evident in how I treat all people in the rest of my sojourn here: only with dignity and respect, no matter who they are or their story. I now seek ways to bless others instead of seeking to be blessed. The Lord has humbled me as I am continually dying to my selfish desires as I live my life that is being sanctified. I desire to be obedient to Him because I love Him with all my heart (John 14:15). Knowing Him has changed my life completely and trusting Him with everything will provide true meaning and purpose for my remaining years.



Tammy & Keith Kratzer

KEITH KRATZER //

Early in our marriage, we were somewhat of a typical young couple thrilled to be exploring life's adventures together. We were what I would define as "occasional church goers" but, in part because of several career geographic relocations, we couldn't seem to settle in on a specific church or find that church family that is so important in spiritual growth.

We eventually had three children, and were living in Salisbury, MD. Our oldest was in grade school and struggling to fit in socially. He was constantly in trouble with the teachers and staff, and we became extremely frustrated. One very memorable day, our child came home and said he wished he were dead. My wife literally dropped to the floor in tears and started to pray for help, for strength, and for guidance. The school staff's best answer was that "he would grow out of it." Prior to this event, I was never much into prayer. I didn't give it a lot of thought. This was the point in my

life that I clearly started to see God's answer to prayer. We desperately needed His guidance for a solution and where to find help.

Shortly thereafter, I was contacted by a recruiter about a job opportunity with a company in Minnesota. I wasn't interested. They kept calling as our struggles with our son continued. Finally, after much debate, interviews, and most importantly, praying about it, I accepted. Within the first week of having our child enrolled in the local school, we were contacted by the district asking if we ever had our child evaluated for ADD. We had no idea what it was, but they established a team to work with our child, and we truly believe it saved his life. This is where I began to realize the strength of prayer and leaning on God for direction and answers. My wife was diligently chasing the Lord, asking of him. I observed but wasn't totally invested, hesitant to "go all in." Christ has been in my life since childhood, but I wasn't leaning on him as I should have been. We found a small local church that immediately felt like home, teaching from the bible, sharing His word. It's quite fascinating that even the smallest of requests to God are answered in His way. This church opened my eyes, teaching me that He must be a part of our daily lives and that it is our duty as parents to bring our children up in a Christian home. (Ephesians 6:4 says, "Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.")

After two and a half years at this position, I was again recruited by another company for a job in Missouri with higher pay, more responsibility, and career growth. The day before I was going to give notice to my current employer, I was offered a transfer back to the northeast, essentially back home near our families. I prayed, asking God for a sign. Career vs. closer to family. God responded in such an odd way, but I received the answer to my prayer. We moved back to Pennsylvania in 1994. Our kids were blessed with spending time with family - holidays, vacations, hunting, fishing - so many things we had missed previously, having lived so far away. I soon learned why God guided us to this decision, as unfortunately, my father-in-law passed away totally unexpectedly at the age of 60. Our kids would never have known their grandfather, and he would have missed witnessing so much of their lives and the growth and success they demonstrated.

We have been in Lititz for almost 32 years, have tried a number of different churches and can honestly say with LEFC that we are home. I've learned through prayer, even little ones that would seem insignificant, that He can make a difference if you just ask. I'm blessed to be surrounded by fellow worshipers and to feel motivated to learn more about our Father. I'll be the first to admit that I have so much more room to grow, to learn, and to better understand, and I pray that through this ongoing learning process I can effectively share God's word and bring more light and perspective to others.

Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone. (Colossians 4:4-6)

I have many flaws. I am a sinner. I have grown to be more patient, less judgmental and constantly self-reflecting. God must be my guide.

TAMMY KRATZER //

I literally grew up in St. John Lutheran Church, from kindergarten to my marriage vows to Keith in September of 1980. Thinking back on those years as an acolyte, with attendance in Sunday School, Luther League, and youth group activities, St. John was secondary to my family. I loved going to church and all the activities St. John had for the youth. I have fond memories standing on the corner of the church with my siblings after Sunday School, waiting for my mom and dad to walk up the street hand in hand, mom in a dress and dad in a suit, as we all went in together for worship.

Keith and I moved to Arkansas the day after our wedding. There were no Lutheran churches in Arkansas, which forced us to try other denominations. The first church we were invited to was a Southern Baptist Church. They scared the living life out of us, with all the “Hallelujahs,” “Amens,” and whatever else moved them to yell.

With realistically not knowing Him personally as my Savior (unaware as I was of the need to have Him as my personal Savior), Jesus, unbeknownst to me, was always there for me. After four and a half years in Arkansas as Yankees, we needed to get out of Arkansas. It was stressing our marriage. I got a brilliant idea – How about I pray about it? Truly the second time ever in my life I got on my knees at 3:30 p.m., and I prayed for Jesus to get us out of Arkansas or our marriage was not going to make it. Around 8:00 that night I came home from Bingo at a Catholic church and Keith said, “I got a call for a job with Purdue Chicken in North Carolina.” I was completely dumbfounded. “Holy cow, Jesus, that was fast.” I discovered with all of our moves and as naïve as I was about Jesus as a personal Savior (as the Lutheran church did not teach that), Jesus was with us all the time and with each move. Oh, I knew the books of the Bible, the key players of the Bible from Old to New Testament and how Jesus died on the cross for me, BUT not as a Savior or Friend.

Our move to Minnesota was when it hit me: Jesus is real, alive, and wants to be part of our daily lives. This was the third or fourth time in my life that I prayed on my knees. Desperate measures will get us on our knees. Once that realization hit me - we are in Minnesota from a prayer in Salisbury! - I thought, what would my life be like if I prayed to Him every day AND read a Bible? I went out and bought a Bible and started getting up early before everyone else to seek Him and learn more. Interestingly, the town we moved to had less than 900 people. The church was Peace Lutheran Church with three services and 1,000 members. This was definitely not a typical Lutheran Church. They had a pastor of prayer come in from Arizona and lead an “Intercessory Prayer Workshop.” This opened my eyes to so many more prayer options. I had no idea I could pray for others or even total strangers. This was taught with all Biblical principles and passages. Six months later, the same pastor from Arizona came and lead a workshop on spiritual warfare. This was intense and I learned how important it is to know our enemy and his tactics. I truly claim to be a warrior for God’s kingdom from that workshop. Jesus Christ is truly alive and with us at all times, as He promises to never leave us nor forsake us. My favorite Bible verses that literally jumped off the pages when I first read them are Joshua 1:9, Isaiah 41:10, and Jeremiah 29:11-14. God never breaks His promises, and I hold these verses and our relationship together dear to my heart and soul.



Amy & Austin Martin

AUSTIN MARTIN //

I became a Christian at a fairly young age, around the age of 8 years old. I don't recall a time in my life when I didn't believe in God. However, it wasn't until a much later age when I really started to evaluate my life and consider how much I depended upon myself rather than the Lord to meet my needs. I've made significant decisions in my life thus far without so much as a prayer asking God for discernment or wisdom. I see and recognize His ways are always higher and better than my own and I can be blessed by submitting to His will and living obediently rather than relying on my own strength.

Not long ago, my wife and I decided to leave our church of 36 years, where we were both born and raised and baptized and where our children were dedicated. This was one of the first times I can honestly say I stepped out in faith and looked to the Lord for guidance and wisdom as we did not yet know which church we were planning to attend. God showed himself faithful as we considered several different churches and visited multiple times as we determined which path to take. God answered our prayers in finding LEFC. Our time invested here thus far has been both beautiful and eye-opening. Simply stated, we did not know what we were missing in the past. We experienced a joy-filled and peaceful journey as we trusted God with our next steps.

When we trust in God rather than ourselves, we can experience a real, lasting peace. What we experienced during our year of church-searching and discernment was amazing and completely from God. What a blessing it was to share with our children that we don't have it figured out, but we are simply asking God to show us the way! Since then, we have experienced additional matters for discernment that are challenging and potentially life changing. I can say with absolute certainty that God will be faithful and continue the work he started in my wife and I as we raise our children for the Lord. I'm grateful for His grace and patience with me as He sanctifies me and as I learn to trust in Him with all things.

AMY MARTIN //

I was born and raised in Lancaster County and am the youngest of four children, having three older brothers. My parents purchased the family farm from my grandparents, and I observed firsthand the blessings and challenges of living off the land.

My family attended a local church where exposure to the Word and involvement in the congregation shaped me from a very young age – Summer VBS experiences, Bible memory, and Sunday school class were formative as I considered a relationship with Christ. For the beginning half of my life, I struggled with being a “people pleaser” and avoided conflict as much as possible. Unfortunately, there were times when I would make decisions to please others rather than to please God.

I cannot remember a time when I did not believe in Jesus Christ. At the age of 12, I publicly professed my relationship with Christ and my desire to be baptized which was a very meaningful experience! I did not fully understand the gravity of this action, but over time began to better realize my deep need for Jesus as my personal Savior due to my sinful, fallen nature.

My husband Austin and I met through our church connection and my first memory of him is from our Kindergarten Sunday school class when we were 5 years old. When we were 18, we began to date,

and I remember praising God for providing me with a Christian man who was never a stranger to me. There is something sweet and rare about a life-long relationship - God is always good to provide.

Austin and I were married in 2010 when we were 21 and experienced the highs and lows of newlywed life as well as growing and maturing both emotionally and spiritually. God proved Himself faithful time and time again as we experienced change, growth, moving, job changes, and eventually beginning our family in 2016. We now have a 9-year-old son, Maverick, and a 6-year-old daughter, Juliana, and we are often awestruck at the ways parenthood has sanctified us and deepened our walk with God and our trust in Him.

Over the years, I continue to mature in my faith and have experienced several opportunities to speak boldly for Christ in my workplace as a nurse as well as speaking into the lives of friends, family, and our children. I still struggle with people-pleasing at times, but have been praying for God to strengthen my resolve to boldly speak the name of Jesus in every sphere of my life.

I was recently challenged by the message from Kevin King sharing about Living out Loud on Sunday, February 1. Two days later, I was having diagnostic testing for a potential health scare. I learned my testing results were clear and we praised God, feeling relieved by His goodness. Later that same day I experienced a God story while in Costco: I ran into a friend and previous coworker, and I was sharing my situation with her and also mentioned a prayer request on how we believe God is moving in our lives when a stranger approached and joined our conversation. She shared her testimony with my friend and I, which happened to be the exact situation I am walking in currently. She shared of God's goodness and faithfulness and encouraged me to be obedient and patient, waiting on the Lord and trusting in Him. She sensed God nudging her to share her powerful testimony with me because she overheard me asking for prayer and using the name of Jesus. What a powerful example of living out loud! I was both humbled and moved to see the fruit of living with the same vocabulary whether in church with fellow believers or being out in the world amongst nonbelievers.

In 2025, we were obedient to a call from the Lord to leave our home church of 36 years and felt the presence of the Holy Spirit leading and guiding our next steps. It was a humbling and challenging experience that further rooted our faith and that of our children as we witnessed God provide in many ways, eventually leading us to worship at LEFC.

I continue to grow in my walk with the Lord and have true joy and delight in Him. Jesus brings real, lasting peace that defies human understanding. Austin and I desire to see our children follow the Lord and ask God to continue leading and guiding our family.

Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. (Ephesians 5:1-2)



Michael & Alicia Martin

MICHAEL MARTIN //

At a young age, I accepted Christ as my Savior. I no longer remember how old I was, but I know I was in early elementary school. I was blessed to have a stable home life, with parents who live out the example of Christ-like parenting. In addition to loving parents, I was enrolled at Lititz Area Mennonite School, now Catalyst Christian. We attended church on a regular basis. As a child, I always enjoyed bible memory, both at church and at school. In my adolescent years, I was very involved with the youth group at LEFC. I was blessed to have a solid group of friends both at school and in my small group.

Guitar has been one of my passions since I was 10 years old. When I was 14 years old, I started serving on the worship team at Crossover on Sunday nights, and on Sunday mornings under Ken Martin's leadership. Each time I played, I was blessed and honored to be able to join my hobby/passion with serving God's Kingdom.

In my later twenties, I began to experience physical health issues. During that season, I stopped serving on the worship team. I began to experience isolation and became disconnected with my church family. This was a very dry season in my life, physically and spiritually. For several years life felt unfulfilled and, at times, wasted.

However, it was during this dry season that I began to seek God's plan and will for my life. Through the encouragement and prayers of close friends and family, I began to see a renewed purpose and perspective. Though many of the trials remained, I began to understand how God had faithfully carried me and walked with me. I started to realize that his past faithfulness was true with each step I was taking. One of the hardest seasons of my life was also a time of significant growth.

As I was walking through a dark valley in my life, I had no idea the bright and beautiful things God had in store for me. I completed a year-long discipleship class at Calvary Chapel in Lebanon, PA. I was baptized in June of 2023 in an outdoor pond. I met my loving wife, Alicia, in March of 2023 and we were married in February of 2024. Aside from salvation, she is God's greatest gift to me.

I am thankful for all of my past experiences, both beautiful and ugly. I can look back on each chapter of life and know that God has faithfully walked with me. Because of His promises to us, and His faithfulness in the past, I can look forward to the future with hope. I know, without a doubt, that I want to live each day according to the plans that God has for me.

ALICIA MARTIN //

Writing out my testimony is a reminder to me of God's faithfulness in my life. I am so thankful to have grown up in a Christian home where I was taught about Jesus at a young age and my parents walked out their faith daily. I loved going to church, even as a small child. I believe I was around seven years old when I asked my parents to pray with me so that I could accept Jesus into my heart. I remember small moments from that prayer; it was summer, and we were on the back porch. What I mostly remember is the joy I felt afterwards.

After accepting Jesus into my heart, I attended a New Believer's Class at my church to be baptized. In Sunday School, I remember asking to accept Jesus many times over when asked if we had any prayer/praise requests to share. I wanted to be sure that Jesus lived in my heart! It felt too easy to say a simple prayer and have Jesus forgive me of my sins. And yet, that's what He does.

Fast forwarding, I'm now about to be thirty years old and I am still amazed and filled with joy to know that my Savior loves me. In times when I have felt unlovable, God has met me time and time again. He

gently leads me into each new season of growth. I remember being afraid of growing up. When I learned to put my trust in God and hold his hand through each change, I could not have imagined the places he has taken me. I have always seen Jesus in nature (I love plants and flowers), so seasons of growth have always resonated with me.

I have so much to learn and to yet surrender to the Lord, but I can look back at where He has taken me and trust that He truly will never leave me nor forsake me.

One of my favorite verses has always been Proverbs 3:5–6 (NIV): “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways, submit him and he will make your paths straight.” Interestingly, this is the verse that my mother-in-law writes in each of the Bibles she hands out and the one she wrote inside of the Bible she gave me soon after I met my husband.

I thank Jesus every day for calling me to be His child, and I desire for others to walk in this joy and freedom as well.



The Martin Family (Scott & Erin)

SCOTT MARTIN //

It was November 12, 1994, while attending a retreat that I received the gospel of Jesus Christ. Though my purpose for attending that retreat was not by any means spiritual in nature, it was, in the end, life changing. I returned home excited about God’s word. Alive! However, with very little guidance or spiritual mentoring, I soon slipped back into old habits. Returning to high school as a 15-year-old did not make life any easier, that’s for sure. In time, the spiritual high that was once bubbly and overflowing slowly returned to a lifestyle of complacency. I did not read God’s word and did not hunger for it. I did not pray, unless it was selfishly. Sure, I went to church, youth group, and even played in the hand bell choir. But, when it came down to it, looking back, I was merely “going through the motions,” living in sin, feeling worthless, and making poor decisions.

After graduating high school (1997), I soon stopped attending the Lutheran Church, and for months I continued living for myself and my flesh. Then, I received a rather unexpected phone call that would ultimately change my life! John Fry, Pastor of Music Ministry at Calvary Church in Lancaster, offered to pay me to come play drums for three services that Sunday. I loved to play drums and quickly said “yes” to the invitation. This continued off and on for a few months, but it marked one of the biggest turning points in my life.

Admittedly, there was something different about Calvary Church. The Pastor (unknowingly, years later a very influential mentor in my life) spoke with conviction and passion! The word of God felt real, alive, and full of truth and relevance to my life. Soon, I found myself looking forward to attending church even if I did not receive a phone call to play drums. My life was changing and the Spirit was convicting me of sin.

The following summer (1998), I re-dedicated my life to Christ and was baptized at the Creation Festival in Pennsylvania. God’s plan for my life finally started to make sense. As I surrendered, He began to lead and guide my life. The emptiness was replaced with purpose, peace, and freedom.

Surrendering my life to Christ took me all kinds of unexpected, scary, and exciting directions within the next few years. In 2005, I graduated from Lancaster Bible College and soon after, Biblical Theological Seminary in 2008. I worked part-time in the field as a sub-contracted counselor, attended

Dallas Theological Seminary (2014), and eventually served as a Pastoral Counseling Associate at Calvary Church (2016-2018). Today, I remain employed at Choice Books.

My spiritual walk was rocky and hard the past few years after losing my brother suddenly in 2019. That experience rocked my world and brought many unexpected questions and attacks from the evil one about God's goodness. It left me feeling angry, fearful, and, at times, cynical. It has been a very long road. But God was faithful during the storm and continued to remind me of his love and goodness – nudging, convicting, leading me toward repentance. While I struggle some days, I know that Grace + Truth + Time continues to bring healing. And, as I am learning to trust and surrender my life and pain to Him, He continues to lead and guide me.

ERIN MARTIN //

I am blessed to have been raised in a Christian home. I grew up attending Calvary Church of Lancaster. My parents and Sunday school teachers taught me about the gift of salvation through the death and resurrection of Jesus. The foundations of my faith were laid by the strong Christian examples of those around me. I accepted Jesus as my personal savior when I was 5 years old. I remember being in my bedroom with my mom by my side at bedtime, reading from my Bible. I was later baptized at Calvary Church when I was 8 years old.

My faith really became my own when I was in high school. I began to realize and experience His redeeming love for me. Through youth group, winter retreats, relationships with amazing leaders and my teachers at Lititz Christian, I grew tremendously in my faith. I became passionate for God's word, spreading the love of Jesus and seeing other's lives changed. During mission trips to New York City, Brazil and Mexico, I saw the power of the gospel transform lives. That deepened my faith and further cultivated a desire to love and serve God with my life.

After college, I married my husband, Scott. We continued to attend Calvary Church and serve in worship ministry together. Through the early years of our marriage, we enjoyed growing in our walk with the Lord together. We sought to serve Him wherever he had us geographically, in our careers and within our oikos.

As the years passed by, we went through challenges in our marriage, in parenting our 4 children, with our health, grief and loss, and spiritually. I began to struggle to see God in all the hardships. I walked through many valleys and turned my eyes away from Him.

In 2019, our family started attending LEFC. From the first morning we walked in the doors, I knew God was leading us to attend this church. I needed change. I needed a renewing of my faith. I needed relationships and community. I started attending WBF. This is where I experienced God in new and fresh ways. Over the next several years of more ups and downs, God continued to prove Himself faithful.

Over the past two years, I have seen God move and work in my life in new and exciting ways. I am so very thankful that God has called me to kids ministry here at LEFC. It is a joy to love and serve Him in this ministry.

I continue to grow as I study God's word, live intentionally, and pursue a life in Christ. I am so very thankful for the gift of each day.



The Motyka Family (Matthew & Nicole)

MATTHEW MOTYKA //

I was born and raised in a Catholic family, surrounded by both immediate and extended relatives deeply rooted in that tradition. I attended private Catholic grade school and high school, where my mother taught during my years there. Faith was part of my daily life. I attended Mass faithfully, served as an altar boy, and acted as sacristan for my church. From the outside, I was fully engaged.

I don't remember a time when I didn't know about Jesus. From a young age, I believed He was my Savior. Yet much of my early faith felt rooted more in tradition than in a deeply personal relationship. I was going through the motions without fully understanding the biblical foundation beneath them. I believed in God and knew I was created in His image, but something felt incomplete.

As a teenager, I would talk to God during quiet walks around our house, sharing what was on my heart. Those moments brought peace, and looking back, I see how the Lord was drawing me toward a genuine relationship with Him.

In college, I began wrestling more seriously with my faith. Practicing Catholicism no longer felt spiritually fulfilling, and I sensed the Lord leading me toward a clearer understanding of the gospel. I began pursuing a personal, Scripture-grounded relationship with Jesus Christ — one rooted not in routine, but in grace and truth.

This pursuit deepened when I met my wife, Nicole. She too had stepped away from her previous denomination seeking a more faithful walk with Christ. Together, we committed to building our marriage and future family on God's Word, authentic community, and a shared devotion to Jesus. We desired discipleship — growth in loving God, loving people well, and raising our children in biblical truth.

Over time, the gospel became clearer and more personal to me. I came to understand that salvation is not earned through works or ritual, but is a gift of grace through faith in Christ alone (Ephesians 2:8–9). I recognized my own sin and my need for forgiveness and placed my trust fully in Jesus' finished work on the cross. Christ is not simply part of my upbringing — He is my Lord and Savior.

As my faith has matured, I have grown increasingly aware of the Holy Spirit's guidance in my life — prompting me to speak, to pause, to act, or to step back. I desire to live truth daily, allowing God's Word to shape my decisions, leadership, and home.

Nicole and I are open about our faith because we believe Christ calls us to reflect His light and proclaim Jesus in everyday life — at work, in relationships, and in our community. We want our lives to demonstrate the love we have received.

We are grateful to worship at Lancaster Evangelical Free Church, where the mission to make disciples and the commitment to Love God, Love People, Live Truth, and Proclaim Jesus resonate deeply with us.

Our children, Asher (9) and Azalea (6), have both professed faith in Christ, and we are thankful they are growing up in a Christ-centered environment through church and Christian education.

Today, my faith is personal and grounded in the gospel. I trust in Christ alone for my salvation and desire to continue growing in obedience, humility, and faithfulness to Him.

NICOLE MOTYKA //

I was born into a primarily Catholic family and, as an infant, was christened into the Catholic Church. Most of my extended family were “Easter Sunday” Catholics, so I had very little understanding of who Christ truly was in my early years.

When I was five, a friend invited my parents to visit their Baptist church. It was there that my parents were genuinely introduced to Jesus and accepted Him as their Savior. Shortly afterward, they led me to Christ. I was baptized by immersion at the age of seven.

In the years that followed, I was raised in a strict Independent Fundamental Baptist environment. There was as much emphasis—if not more—placed on outward appearance, obedience to God (or to a particular interpretation of His standards), discipline, and maintaining a good reputation as there was on sharing the gospel. If those outward standards were not met, it was assumed that you had a heart problem—or perhaps were not truly saved. That atmosphere shaped me more deeply than I realized at the time.

Regarding the gospel, there was intense emphasis on the sinner’s prayer. It had to “check all the boxes.” One had to acknowledge being a sinner, that the payment for sin is death, that Jesus made that sacrifice in our place, and that we must accept His free gift of salvation. It was also drilled into us that the prayer had to be said with absolute sincerity; otherwise, you were not truly saved and would need to pray it again. As a child, that planted seeds of uncertainty in my heart that would grow later.

As I entered my teenage years, I began to seriously doubt my salvation. Because of how I was raised, I never felt that I measured up to God’s standards. I often felt as though He was perpetually disappointed in me. I was the girl who, of her own volition, completed three devotionals a day and faithfully kept a prayer journal. Many of my peers’ parents commented on how well-behaved my siblings and I were and said they wished their own children would follow our example. Outwardly, everything looked right. Inwardly, I felt exhausted and never quite enough.

Much of what I did was motivated by fear—fear of disapproval from my parents and fear that God Himself was displeased with me. I began to wonder if the Holy Spirit was truly in me because I knew I still struggled with sin and certainly had not “arrived.” I was also unhappy, and I was repeatedly told that to be happy one simply had to choose joy and remain in God’s will. That felt confusing and discouraging. I wanted real joy, not a polished façade.

I often thought back to that fidgety five-year-old girl who prayed with her mother on the couch and asked Christ to save her. What had I said? I could not remember. Was I sincere? What I did remember clearly was being told to stop wiggling because this was serious. That memory haunted me.

There I was—a girl attending teen soul-winning every Saturday and leading others to Christ—while privately doubting my own salvation. I felt deeply inadequate. In order to quiet the fear, I secretly asked Christ to come into my heart again and again, hoping that one of those prayers would “stick.”

In my early teens, I began to question some of my parents’ personal standards (dress, music, and others) because, after reading Scripture for myself, I could not find clear biblical support for them. That questioning earned me the label of “rebellious,” and at seventeen I was sent to a Bible college that closely mirrored my parents’ standards in hopes that it would “fix” me.

College reinforced much of what I had already been taught. Again, the message was clear: God was most pleased with those who worked hardest in ministry, maintained outward composure, and smiled through trials. Vulnerability was discouraged, and isolation was normalized. Young women preparing for ministry were taught that they must get used to not having close friends, because weakness should not be shared and reputation was everything. I learned how to look strong while quietly feeling very alone.

It took reaching a place of deep loneliness to begin truly seeing who Jesus is. I was surrounded by people and yet felt completely alone. I had wonderful, loving grandparents—some of the greatest gifts of my life—but they had no idea what I was carrying, and I had been trained not to tell them.

I remember crying and praying, asking Jesus that if He truly loved me, He would send even a small sign. None came. Eventually, I reached a breaking point. I needed to be alone, and women were not permitted to leave the campus without a chaperone and pre-approved pass. In my mind, I had one option. I grabbed my KJV Bible—the only version we were allowed to read—and my concordance and walked to the woods at the edge of the property. We were not supposed to be there, but in that moment, the fear of demerits felt insignificant compared to the ache in my heart and my need to be away from prying eyes.

There, I looked up “love” in the concordance and read verse after verse about God’s love. I knew many of them. I had memorized countless verses as a child. But this time, something shifted. I allowed myself to truly hear them. They were no longer just verses to recite—they were promises. They were personal. They were real. Jesus changed my lens.

That was the beginning of a long journey towards understanding that Jesus was not waiting for me to fail so He could respond with disapproval. He already knew I would fail—and He loved me completely anyway. Over time, the image of a constantly disappointed God began to fade.

I understand this more deeply now as a mother. No matter what my children do, my love for them does not waver. It is constant. Nothing changes that. In the same way, I began to see that God’s love for me was not fragile or performance-based. My fear of Him was gradually replaced with genuine affection and trust. I now seek to obey Him because I love Him—not because I am afraid of losing His approval.

My understanding of salvation has also matured. I am still a work in progress and continue to process past trauma and abuse, but I now see clearly that salvation is not about perfectly recited words—it is about the posture of the heart. Yes, we call on Jesus to save us, but it is not magic language that secures us; it is faith in Christ and the turning of our heart toward Him.

I am deeply grateful that Jesus held on to me through every season of confusion and doubt. He never let me abandon my faith. Even when my understanding of Him was distorted, He never let me go. He carried me gently and patiently. By His grace, I am here seeking membership in a Bible-believing church, trusting fully in Christ alone for my salvation.



Katie & Michael Myers

MICHAEL MYERS //

I was born into a Christian family and came to know Christ at a very young age; however, I learned later in life that was not a decision I was making for myself. I spent a majority of my life walking the walk and talking the talk. I went to a Christian school and would always go to church every Sunday. It was like I lived in a protective Christian bubble. Because I went to a Christian school, I had a lot of head knowledge about God and the Bible. The problem was, I could not get that knowledge to apply to my life, and I was not living out my faith. I started to realize that I was going to church not because I wanted to, but because my parents wanted me to and I did not want to disappoint them. I was reading my Bible not to spend personal time with the Lord, but because I needed to complete an assignment for class. I was surrounded by people who were being taught the same things I was and believed the same things I did.

When I was a sophomore in high school, doctors found a cancerous mass that had attached itself to my dad's spine. He was in the hospital for the better part of the year, and my mom was always driving back and forth to Philly to be with him, which left my sisters and I alone a lot of the time. Because of my lack of personal relationship with the Lord, my faith completely fell apart. I felt angry at God for doing this to my family, and I turned to other things to distract myself from the brokenness in my heart. Once my dad was able to come home, I went back to playing the part of a Sunday morning Christian. I went on living that way for the next few years. I knew that I needed to make my faith my own and stop just living out my parent's faith and making decisions just to make them happy, but I didn't know how.

God led me to attend Lancaster Bible College, which is where I would be challenged to make my faith my own. My freshman year was during the height of COVID, so we were not allowed to leave our dorms unless we were going to class. The Lord placed men in my section who saw right through my Christian facade. There were many late nights where we would read through books of the Bible together and answer the tough questions. They taught me the importance of having a personal relationship with God and how to live that out, not because I wanted to look like a Christian doing the right things, but because I wanted to out of my love for the Lord and desire to follow His commands. My faith truly became my own and I have spent the following years deepening my relationship with the Lord and trying my best to live my life to honor and glorify him with all that I do.

KATIE MYERS //

I was blessed to be born and raised in a Bible-believing Christian family. From a young age, my parents taught my brothers and I the grace, beauty, and love all encapsulated in the gospel. I came to know the Lord at a young age, and I was baptized in my childhood church (Community Evangelical Free Church, now Brick Lane Community Church) when I was only 8 years old.

Growing up in a small Christian community, I was not exposed to the sin, darkness, and evil in the world until I moved to Philadelphia for college to attend Temple University. Feeling like I was constantly swimming upstream to try and uphold my beliefs, I fell short many times. I became apathetic to doing what everyone else was doing because it was easier than standing out or going against the grain.

At the end of my freshman year, I was lost, and I met Jesus in a way I never had before. For the first time in my life, my faith was a choice that arose from the deepest part of my soul — not because my parents told me to, but because I realized I was a sinner who needed a Savior. Going back to college my sophomore year, my habits, friends, and lifestyle took a 180. I ended up joining a Christian group

(Every Nation Campus) which became my family. I became a student leader in ENC my junior and senior year, in which I led a Bible study and evangelized on campus weekly.

I am thankful that the Lord drew me near in such a personal, gracious way, taking hold of not only my heart, but my whole life. Now, I am excited to continue serving the Lord and learning more about His goodness with my husband, Michael, as we plug into LEFC and became members of such a solid body of Christ.



The Norton Family (Jon & Sarahbeth)

JON NORTON //

I was blessed to grow up in a God-fearing, Christ-centered home where the teachings of the Bible were integrated into our daily lives. At a young age, around 8 years old, I accepted Jesus into my heart, shaping the foundation of my faith.

However, as I entered my high school years, my enthusiasm for church waned. Surrounded by friends who didn't share my beliefs, I found myself drifting into the wrong crowd, prioritizing acceptance over my walk with the Lord.

It wasn't until I went away to college that I recognized my need for support and guidance. During this pivotal time, God surrounded me with a group of Christian friends who reinvigorated my faith and taught me the importance of relying on Him.

Now, as a husband and father of four, my dependence on God has deepened more than ever. I navigate the challenges of my job, which can be demanding, while leading my family with the assurance that He is by my side every step of the way.

SARAHBETH NORTON //

I was blessed to grow up in a strong Christian household. My two sisters, my brother, and myself were homeschooled our entire lives and loved it! We grew up attending a Presbyterian church where I was blessed by its strong Reformed Theology. My parents were always there to encourage and pray for us - I have strong memories of finding both parents reading their Bibles throughout the day, or on their knees praying. Between the influence of this church and the example of my parents, I accepted Christ as my Savior at a young age and was baptized shortly thereafter.

Sadly, when I went to college, my strong desire to be liked by others and "fit in" was exposed, causing me to de-prioritize my faith. I sporadically went to church but didn't go regularly. I felt very empty and distant. One day, I remember feeling that emptiness and wanting to cry. I desired to get married and have a family one day, but I knew the path I was following would only lead to more emptiness and ultimately destruction and death. I prayed for the first time in a long time and felt the presence of the Lord like never before. The Lord gave me so much grace in that moment and pulled me back to Him and I will forever be thankful.



Steve & Sheri Oberholtzer

STEVE OBERHOLTZER //

I was raised in a Christian home and attended Lititz Mennonite Church with my family. My personal journey with Christ began at age 9 when I answered an altar call. At that time, I gave all that I knew of myself to all that I knew of God.

Over the years, as I have learned more about my own nature and more about God's character, I have found myself frequently returning to that place of surrender. My faith has not been a single moment in time, but a repeated process of repentance and acceptance of Christ's lordship as I have matured.

In my teen years, my friends and I would attend various different churches. My mother gave me a piece of advice that I took to heart for the next 60 years: "Attend different churches, but take the good in what you see there and bring it back to Lititz." While the Mennonite community will always be a foundational part of who I am, I have come to realize that my salvation and faith are

found in Jesus Christ alone, independent of any specific denomination. My identity is rooted in Him.

My walk has seen seasons of drifting, yet I have never once questioned God's existence. Each time I return to Him, I am met with the necessary reminder: I am not God. Through decades of prayer, I have seen God's power firsthand. I have learned that:

- God's Timing is Sovereign: I have had prayers answered instantly and others that took over ten years. I believe God is always answering; it simply takes time for me to quiet myself and listen.
- God's Work is Providential: I know that God will work through me—or in spite of me. If I do not answer His call, I know someone else will, but I miss the blessing of being used by Him.

By nature, I struggle with selfishness and a lack of humility. To correct this, I often overcompensate by giving in private. However, I recognize that sharing this story is not about my own glory, but about God's faithfulness.

I want to be a person who is ready and available for His work. When the Lord asks, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" I want my heart to be in a place where I can truly say: "Here am I. Send me" (Isaiah 6:8). I look forward to answering that call alongside this church family.

SHERI OBERHOLTZER //

I was raised in a loving Christian home. I asked Jesus into my heart at the age of 7 and was baptized at 13. They were very simple but very real events in my young life and through family and church I was nurtured in the ways of Kingdom living and grew spiritually.

In college, I found freedom to try more worldly experiences, but remained true to my faith in Jesus. When Steve and I married, we chose to attend his small, close-knit church because all his family was there. I was given many opportunities to participate in church life: to serve, to teach, to lead - sometimes to the point of exhaustion (it can be difficult to say 'no' sometimes!). My careers were threefold: a teacher, then a stay-at-home mom, and finally a court clerk. In each phase, I sought to display Christ in my words and deeds, and to live pleasing to Him.

In recent years, we were starved for Scripture-based preaching and teaching and felt called to find a new church home. Thank you LEFC for your commitment to the Word as the source of truth and to the Holy Spirit as the revealer of that truth. I am happy to now call LEFC 'my' church.



Barbara Rennix

BARBARA RENNIX //

I was raised in a church where they talked about being good and helping others. In my teen years I attended Young Life and heard about being born again and trusting Jesus as your personal Savior. I did that at age 15. In my twenties, I was baptized by immersion. My husband was saved as a teen. We always attended bible-believing churches. Most of our lives we were involved in Christian ministry. We lived and served at a children's Christian camp and later served as house parents at a House of His Creation maternity home in Florida. Jesus means everything to me, and I am assured of a home in heaven!



Dave Schlotter

DAVE SCHLOTTER //

I was born and raised in Bucks County, PA, baptized in a Lutheran church. We stopped attending when, at age 7, our family of five moved further into the countryside. By 13, I was the product of a divorced couple, an absent father and both siblings starting their own families far from us. Life seemed purposeless, a feeling that stayed with me for the better part of two decades. I can't say all things were bad, there was just no personal joy. I had a full-time job, attended college and was in a semi-committed relationship. The burning question inside me, "What do I want to do with my life?" caused frustration when the answer constantly alluded me. I disliked school, work was easy, and my relationship had its ups and downs.

Jesus was trying to get through, but I was not listening. I was not in tune with him. My boss, an ex-minister, would talk at length about scripture and the saving grace of Jesus. This was my first real exposure to the Word. I remember him telling me that Jesus told his disciples in Matthew 10:14, "If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, leave that home or town and shake the dust off your feet," as he stood there demonstrating. At age 24, I did not understand this passage, but it came to mind when an opportunity was offered to me. I could attend the University of New Mexico under the following conditions: 1.) Caretake a home rent free and 2.) Get married. As my girlfriend told me of this opportunity laid out by her father, she asked what I thought. I said, "okay," without knowing the ramifications.

Before I left Pennsylvania, I met a ministering couples counselor at my sister's home. I prayed for Jesus to come into my life and was laid hands upon for baptism. Although I was a new Christian, I left for New Mexico with no ministering to help me grow. I was the proverbial seed that was sown in poor soil. The saving grace from this encounter was that the gentleman asked me to commit to reading two chapters of the bible each night. I kept that promise! Thank you, Mr. West!

I left Pennsylvania as the prodigal son only to return five years later with my tail between my legs. I was received as the returning prodigal son, not the recently divorced son that should have never married that girl in the first place. There were signs, I just was not in tune with Jesus. I had hit rock bottom, but he picked me up, dusted the dirt off my feet and set me on a new path. I came to Lancaster to live with my sister and her family. My brother-in-law became a mentor. We helped each other sort things out as we were both at a crossroads in life. Two years later, I was asking a man I admire if he would allow me the privilege of asking his daughter to marry me. I found myself on a knee asking a wonderful Christian woman for her hand to which she said "yes." Praise God!

Twenty-four years ago, we became members of the United Methodist church. We rescinded that membership when the church body voted to change direction philosophically. I feel we were led to LEFC and I make my oikos aware of this change. My understanding of the word has never been clearer. I have read at least ten different bibles multiple times. I have grown so much in my understanding through all the reading I have done. I find that this church breaks down the message and brings clarity to it. When I meet non-believers, I share with them more than what I have here and ask them to read "The Case for Christ" by Lee Strobel. It's a beautiful place to start.



Lori Schlotter

LORI SCHLOTTER //

My name is Lori Schlotter. I can't say I had a pre-Christ time in my life. I was brought up in a loving Christian family and went to Sunday School and Church throughout childhood. I grew up in a small Lutheran Church in Spring Grove, PA. I loved my early Sunday school teachers, two young Christian women who were wonderful teachers. I loved them, and I would have believed anything they told me. I was baptized, an acolyte, and attended and participated in church events. Bible school, youth group, and confirmation classes were all included in my childhood. Was I the perfect child growing up? No. Ask my mom and dad. Their memories are fading, but they have reminded me of stories of a child who, along with younger brothers, tested their patience many times (yes, I was paddled a "few" times).

As I grew older, I was given many opportunities to stray from my faith. Some opportunities I rejected, remembering my Lord, and some I seemed to forget about Him. In college, I seemed to forget Christ a lot. I graduated and was hired as a teacher, coach, and athletic trainer at Ramsey High School in Ramsey, New Jersey. I worked there for ten years. There, I was engaged to a man I did not love, but I thought I needed to get married because I was getting older. My sister-in-law called me about a teaching position she had seen. It was at Warwick High School. I interviewed and was hired, moving back to PA in a few months. This was a surprise to my fiancé, as I put my ring on the table and left.

I met Dave through his nieces, who were on the volleyball team I coached. By then, I was in my mid-thirties and learned that God doesn't intervene until you give it ALL up to Him. I had come to terms that God may have plans for me that did not include love and marriage. Enter David.

After trying to have children for two years, we realized that it may not happen as I was pushing the age limits for a healthy pregnancy. I received a fertility drug from my doctor but put it in the drawer, telling Dave that God must have another plan. If we were supposed to have children, it would be His way. I found out I was pregnant two weeks later. Enter Jessica.

Jessica is now 26. Jessica's medical condition tested my faith, but I always (eventually) turned it over to Christ. She has grown up to be a beautiful, healthy young woman. She has a full-time job and a fiancé and is doing well.

I am currently retired but working a part-time job to help stay active. I have also been a volunteer at the LUMC clothing bank for many years. I have two elderly parents who will soon be unable to live on their own.

Hindsight is always 20/20. I would have done many things and treated many people differently, but I know my sins have been forgiven because of His grace. I know that Jesus Christ is my foundation, my strength, and my Savior. I need Him to guide me through every day of my life.



Sean & Kayla Schreckengast

SEAN SCHRECKENGAST //

My wife Kayla and I have been going to LEFC for about a year now. We just got married in June and are looking to make LEFC our first church home as a new family. I personally grew up in the Lutheran church and was baptized as a baby. I count myself fortunate that I had great parents who loved the Lord and were intentional about growing my faith. As I grew older, I continued to pursue God through things like youth group and worship teams. When it came time for me to go to college, I opted for a faith-based education at Messiah University where I studied biochemistry. Messiah was a great experience for me to learn and grow academically and spiritually and was also where I met my wife! We are now both graduated and working and very excited to become members of the LEFC family!

KAYLA SCHRECKENGAST //

My husband Sean and I have been attending LEFC regularly for almost a year. When Sean moved to the area before our wedding in June of 2025, we were intentional about finding a church that felt like home for the both of us. We tried LEFC one day and never stopped going after that! We're very excited to join the church community here.

I've grown up in the church and was baptized as a young teenager, but never really found true community and connection in the church. When I wound up at Messiah University, I finally found myself developing strong relationships with people who shared my beliefs. Plus, this was where I met Sean! College truly jumpstarted my faith journey, and Sean and I have been working intently ever since to deepen our connection to God and others together and individually. We're so excited to become members of LEFC!



Larry & Jessica Schweers

LARRY SCHWEERS //

I was born in 1980 in Lancaster PA. My upbringing has many holes in it, many quirks and a lot of obstacles that many would never ever overcome or see the other side of. Growing up in the streets of Lancaster, homeless shelters, living in tents under the bridges, drug and alcohol abuse and prostitution within the confines of our home became part of the norm. Food scarcity and instability became part of the norm.

The above is a simplistic synopsis of my upbringing, but people wonder "how did you get to here?" That's a one-in-a-million question, but saying it takes a village to raise a child is correct. Sometimes people being the hands and feet of Jesus to a person

or child is just what is needed for redemption and new paths for the vulnerable.

In 1990, as I was living in a homeless shelter with my mom and siblings, I found myself feeling empty, outcast and undeserving. One day as I made my way downtown to look for food, I was approached by a balloon vendor and clown asking if I wanted an animal balloon. My response was "no, I don't have any money." Not knowing what was to come next, he gave me a balloon and a coupon to go to Burger King downtown for a free meal. He also asked me if I wanted to come back and help him sell them and he would pay me. 'How did this guy know I was hungry and we needed money for food?' was my thought. Over the next few weeks or months, I went down there to help sell balloons because that got

me food to eat and money to get food for my siblings and mother. Within a few months, he invited me to his house to go to church with him and his family. My first time stepping into a church for anything other than a meal was late fall 1990 or 1991 when I was asked if I wanted to be involved in a Christmas drama. I remember my first time being there as the new kid of how welcoming they were to me. It was the first time I felt like I mattered, felt loved and cared for by people that didn't even know me. Going out for church became a regular occurrence for me because it brought some comfort, some peace. Over the next year or two, the balloon/clown vendor and his wife were going through a divorce and other families in the church stepped in and took over where they left off, inviting me into their homes every weekend. During the week I was returned to the same old normal mentioned above.

I knew at a very young age that what I needed to do in life was not how I was raised. The church and the families I stayed with on weekends were the models of what I longed for. Lloyd and Elaine Hoover invited me to stay with them on weekends along with their kids and a list of other families. Their children became like siblings to me. I really watched the family dynamic and interactions amongst them and knew that's what I needed in my life. They had Jesus and I needed that. I don't remember what year it was exactly but in the bedroom with my "brothers" I accepted Jesus into my Life. A year or so later, I got baptized in the family pond with my "sister" and a few others from church. Over the years, I attended that church regularly until a career change pushed me on the road.

In 2010 while sitting at a truck stop somewhere in America, I met my wife online. I realized in order to make it work I needed to shift my life on the road to a life at home, so I quit my job to do local work and moved back to the area. We got married in 2011 in Oxford, PA at her childhood church. We decided to attend my church for stability. In 2013, we started our journey of foster care/adoption. We moved our son into our home at 5 years old in March from a bad situation and would later adopt him in January of 2015.

In 2020, in the midst of COVID, we felt like we needed to leave the church we had been heavily involved in to look for something that had a children/teens ministry, something that wasn't as taxing and would fit what we needed over what we had. Jenny and Nate Hoover invited us to come visit LEFC, so we did. We took time to be still, not involved, time to reflect and seek direction for what is next. We ultimately felt led over the course of a few years to stay put, get involved and get connected.

In closing, my testimony is this: God is bigger than my circumstances. My desire to be in charge of my life is still there, but I know God ultimately is in charge. I know He created me, I know I went through these situations as a child to make me who I am today. I know my past doesn't define me and where I am at now isn't my end goal. I believe God gives redemption and redemption stories to people to tell others of what He has done in their life. My life is always a work in progress and my relationship with Him continues to be at the forefront of my life. I want to continue serving Him and be the hands and feet of Jesus and serve how He has called me.

JESSICA SCHWEERS //

"I am not enough. I will never be good enough. Where is God when I need Him? Why doesn't He stop these things from happening? I am in control of my own life, right?"

These are the questions I carried for most of my life. But looking back, I can see God woven through every chapter — even the ones I never would have chosen.

I grew up the youngest of my household, navigating loss early. My grandfather died of a sudden heart attack. A month later, my grandmother was diagnosed with cancer and passed away when I was eight. Around that same time, I was being so severely bullied that my parents pulled me from public school. When I returned to public school years later, my mother fought hard for answers about my struggles in the classroom. In fifth grade, I was finally diagnosed with dyslexia and a learning disability. I was held back in sixth grade, placed in special education, and the bullying only got worse. I was quiet, shy, and felt invisible in all the wrong ways.

In middle school, my family went through upheaval — my parents' marriage fell apart, we moved, and my brother spent nearly a month in a coma following surgery. Through all of it, my parents eventually reconciled. But by high school, I had hit my lowest point. I was isolated, still being bullied, addicted to sleeping medication, and I attempted to take my own life.

But something was shifting. I started attending youth group, then Young Life. At a camp, I gave my heart to Jesus and became a believer. For the first time, I had real friends — and school became bearable.

I enrolled in a vo-tech floral design program and earned a spot in a college-level program at Longwood Gardens. Of four students who started, I was the only one who finished. When I said I wanted to go to college, my principal told me that wasn't a good idea for a dyslexic student. I applied to three schools. I got into one: Temple University. It took me five years and five major changes — but I graduated.

After college, I found my way into a career supporting adults with disabilities — a field I never planned for, yet here I am, twenty-one years later, still in it and loving every bit of it.

I also carried a deep wound about love. *No one will want to marry me. I'm not pretty enough.* I prayed specifically for a husband who would love the Lord and treat me like a princess. I tried to make it work with the wrong men. Then I surrendered it to God — and He sent me a man in a t-shirt and sweatpants, four hours late. My two best friends called me out: "You've been praying for this man, and just because God didn't wrap him in a pretty box, you're going to say no?" I went on a second date. In September of 2011, I married Larry. For the first time in my life, I truly felt like a princess.

Motherhood was another dream I had quietly grieved. At sixteen, I was diagnosed with PCOS and told pregnancy would be very difficult. I told Larry on our fourth date that if he wanted to be a father, I wasn't his girl — I was broken. He said, "We are all broken. But with Jesus, we are whole." We explored every option, but sensed adoption was where God was leading us. After a private adoption fell through in a painful way, we received a call about a four-year-old third cousin in foster care who needed a home. It took a year to bring him across state lines through every legal hurdle imaginable. When he was seven, we adopted him. His name is Landen — and he is one of the greatest gifts of my life.

The hard chapters didn't stop there. In 2018, Larry had surgery and didn't wake from anesthesia for days. He later collapsed on our bathroom floor, and our son found him unconscious in a pool of blood. I thought God was taking my husband home. In 2022, my parents lost their home in a hurricane. In 2025, my mother suffered two heart attacks and multiple strokes, and my parents moved in with us — stirring up wounds I thought had long since healed.

So — where is Jesus in all of this?

He is everywhere in it. Every single step.

He was there when a cruel prediction about me never came true. He was there in the friends who made high school survivable, in the camp where I met Him, and in the program that launched my confidence. He was in the college that said yes. He sent me a husband I almost walked away from. He gave me a son not through the door I expected, but through the one He had prepared. He kept Larry alive. He keeps writing chapters I could never write myself.

The lie I believed my whole life was: *I am not enough.* But here is what I know now: I am enough — because I am His. My dyslexia gave me compassion for every person I serve. My infertility gave me Landen. Every hardship I tried to control only softened into something beautiful when I finally let go.

I trust that God has written my story — and that He will keep writing it for His glory. And I am more than okay with that.



Ben & Lauren Sheard

BEN SHEARD //

I grew up in a missionary family. My parents were missionaries in South America and in the Caribbean, so I grew up going to church and very much being involved in a local church. I played the part that I was expected to, and I did what my parents wanted me to, but I didn't have a real relationship with Jesus. I went through the motions, but God wasn't Lord of my life. And so, I was baptized at a young age, not truly understanding the full extent of what it meant to be a Christian and to be a follower of Jesus, but because I knew that that's what I was supposed to do at that time.

After going through the motions for many, many years, I came to the end of my time in high school, prepared to play college sports at a school in Los Angeles. But God spoke to me and said that I wasn't right with him, and an opportunity presented itself to go to Cedarville University and play sports there. It must have been a God thing that I went to the middle of a cornfield in Ohio to encounter God, because looking back, Los Angeles and sunny, beachy California doesn't really compare to the cornfields of Ohio. And so, I went to Cedarville. There, my freshman year, God

brought me to my knees, and at that moment, I became aware of my insufficiency and the sufficiency of Christ. We had chapel every day at Cedarville, and through these chapels, I became aware of my standing with Jesus and how I wasn't right with Him. And when God told me to go to Cedarville because I wasn't right with Him, I knew in one of these chapels that this was the reason. It wasn't to be educated, and it wasn't to play sports, but it was to know Jesus. Which is ironic, because you usually go to college to learn, but actually, the beginning of knowledge is the fear of the Lord. And He tore me down and humbled me, and then He began to build me back up on the rock of Jesus.

When I think about what Jesus means to me now, He is my everything. He is my life. Everything I do now revolves around my relationship with God and what Jesus has done for me. The freedom that I have in Christ allows me to have a peace that surpasses all understanding. And as a child of God, I have been adopted into His family and kingdom, and now I am an heir through the blood of Jesus. I used to be a very angry young man that would fill with rage easily, and amongst other shortcomings, that was one of the biggest. Since finding Jesus, I have been able to give those emotions to Him, and He has been able to deliver me from those emotions and anger and continues to deliver me from them today.

God used the people in my life at Cedarville to really build me up and walk with me in my faith and to lay a firm foundation for the many years to come. After that freshman year, I decided to study in Jerusalem and go all around Israel, studying the land and geography of the Bible. I knew that if this is what I truly believed, that I wanted to know as much as I could and to continue to build on that firm foundation that God gave me at Cedarville. So, I studied in Israel and I came out of that time really on fire for Jesus and having a peace from God about what it is that I believe. The foundation that was laid there is continuing to be built on today. And through the years in college and after college, moving to Pennsylvania, I've been involved in the local church and being a part of the body of Christ and serving many different bodies as I've moved through multiple states. And now at LEFC with my wife, I find great joy being involved in the kids ministry and also in a small group and being a part of the body here.

LAUREN SHEARD //

I was born and raised in Texas. My parents were divorced by the time I was 3 but raised me and my sister to know of Jesus. My mother remarried when I was 9 and by 11, they had a son, my half-brother. I

struggled as the oldest child of divorced parents. Feeling a great responsibility for my siblings caused me a lot of fear and anxiety which I've dealt with for many years. Both of my parents knew Jesus and took me to church, but I didn't know what a personal faith in Jesus really looked like. But I desired that peace that Jesus promises and wanted to pursue a relationship with Him.

I was then baptized in 8th grade to show my commitment to my faith and my love for my Savior knowing that my peace and hope were found in His presence. Upon graduating high school, I felt called to attend Point Loma Nazarene University. It was a step of faith to go somewhere unknown to me and where I was unknown, but what I've come to find is that the Lord provides where He calls. The Lord blessed me with amazing mentors and friends who still walk with me today and my faith blossomed. I was able to deepen my understanding and walk with Christ through classes, church, mentors, and friends and felt closer to God in my prayer life than I ever had before. It was there that the Lord led me towards my career in Christian non-profits. After graduation, the Lord called me to work at HOPE International based in Lancaster; again, somewhere unknown to me and a place I was unknown, but God is good. The Lord has provided life-giving friendships/community and a career I am passionate about.

I met my husband, Ben, while at a local club in Lancaster City in 2024 and knew from the start that the Lord had orchestrated our relationship. We were engaged after six months and married a little after a year of dating. While dating, we found out that we both had a heart for kids and served with the kindergarten classes at our respective churches. Now, we serve together at LEFC with the preschool class and have come to love teaching and serving together.

Christ has fully transformed my life from one of fear and anxiety to a life marked by peace, joy, and hope that can only come from Him. While there will always be times of struggle and hardship in this life, I know that the only true shelter I have is under His wing. (Isaiah 41:10) There is no way for me to deny the Lord's hand of guidance, blessing, and provision in my life and my prayer is that I can help others in my life experience the joy that I have found in Him.



Steve & Pamela Weber

STEVE WEBER //

I was brought up in a Christian home attending church regularly. I have memories of my great-aunt and grandmother reading bible stories to me. Boys Brigade activities and camp-outs had an influence on me.

At the age of 19, I prayed that I would meet a "decent" girl and two weeks later, I met my wife. We've been married forty-five years and have five grown children and ten grandkids. It hasn't always been easy, but I can definitely say God is always there through good and bad.

I continue to rely on Jesus for strength and perseverance, and He gives me answers and guidance all the time. I will continue to serve Him as I am able and as opportunities come up.

PAMELA WEBER //

I was blessed to grow up in a Christ-centered home with both my parents being Godly examples of what it meant to live as a Christian. I cannot ever remember thinking that God was not real or present in my life. That being said, however, there were many times I felt as though I could run my life my way and that I didn't need God to guide me all the time.

Looking back at my life, I totally believe that there were several events and people that God had placed in my life to remind me that I was not the one in control and self-reliance did not play a role in my life. When I began to have conversations with the Lord and to read the Bible daily to understand more of who he was to me, I was challenged to think of the place God had in my life and that was quite different than what I was living. I wanted to learn more of the power He gives us through His Holy Spirit and to see people and circumstances through His eyes and not mine.

I pray for wisdom and discernment in looking at the world and how I can bring others to Christ. Most of all, I pray that God will become real in the lives of my children and grandchildren so that they, too, will live for Him, will love Him, and can know the greatness of our God in a broken world.

My life verse has always been Psalm 46:10, “Be still and know that I am God.” It reminds me that God has ordained my life and that He sees me, but I have to take the time to listen.



Raymond & Madelyn Yates

RAYMOND YATES //

At a young age, God showed mercy on me by using my parents to bring me into His family. When I was 12, my family moved to Pennsylvania where Christ showed me His love and mercy through fellowship with believers. I was delighted to be accepted by a group of guys my age (and the three group leaders) at Calvary Church’s small group program called MPACT. I tangibly experienced the compassion, patience, and wisdom of Christ through the work of these men and fellow students. In high school, I joined Piercing Word’s discipleship team where Aaron and Emily taught a group of us how to study the Bible, pray for one another, be accountable with each other, and intentionally pursue the Lord with all that we had. I was struck by the joy and purposefulness of intentionally pursuing God alongside fellow brothers and sisters.

When I graduated from high school, I enrolled in Lancaster Bible College. Taking what I had learned about Christian community from Piercing Word and MPACT, I ached to establish intentional Christ-centered relationships with other men. The Lord used men at college and church to show me what it means to wade through the trenches of life alongside brothers.

LBC refined my understanding of how to read the Bible and filled me with a longing to know God. I learned the Bible is not a magical instrument meant to give you good spiritual days, but a source of deep wisdom and instruction meant to be studied and applied. Ephesians 2 (“you were dead in your trespasses and sins but God, being rich in mercy made you alive together with Christ”) and Romans 8 (“there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus”) help me understand that it is through no merit of my own that God loves me and has chosen me. His favor is not a reward I could earn, but a gift that Christ suffered to bestow upon my unworthy head.

In 2019, God blessed me with Madelyn, a gentle, gracious, sociable, Christ-centered wife. A few years later, we welcomed our sons Rhys and Franklin into the world. As I struggle to be the husband, father, friend, co-worker, and social worker God has called me to be, my ultimate hope rests in Romans 8:29: “For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers” (ESV). My hope for life is to be used by the Restorer to act as an agent of restoration to those around me.

MADelyn YATES //

I believed that Christ was my Savior when I was very young, but I really began to understand the life God calls us to during my high school years. I attended youth group at LEFC and the friends and leaders there were impactful in my journey of faith. I am so thankful for the people who deeply cared for me and disciplined me in those formative years as I figured out who I am in Christ.

An ebenezer in my life was the summer between high school and college. I had deep anxiety about starting college, questioned if people actually cared for me, wondered about finances, and was nervous about making friends. In God's grace, He provided an answer or solution to everything I was worried about. God has taught me that I am not alone, and that I can trust His promises. I am continuing to learn this lesson, as God shows me new areas of my life and heart that I am not fully entrusting to Him.

I married Raymond in 2019 and we have two young boys. The Lord has carried us in so many ways. Through my relationship with Raymond and our time as parents, God has shown me His faithfulness and grace over and over again. When I do not deserve it, God is still extending His grace.

One of the graces God has given us is our community, including our (literal) neighbors. My inclination is to do certain things all by myself, but I am learning that community is vital, and we need support. I want to continue to be a part of giving that support too. God's kingdom is a community that loves and cares for one another. In pride, I do not like asking for help, but God is teaching me to just ask and to lean into community.

The Lord has sustained and uplifted Raymond and I time and time again. I am excited to see where He will take us.



Holly Yaw

HOLLY YAW //

I've been attending LEFC for almost three years now. My relationship with the Lord started at a young age when I attended an afterschool Bible camp at a neighbor's house. My parents took us to church weekly, we prayed before our meals, I read my Bible sometimes, and that was the extent of my relationship with God. For a long time, it was just about checking the boxes. Growing up, I had a relatively easy life. I did well in school, participated in extracurriculars, and had a decent group of friends. I dealt with the typical middle/high school things, but I made sure to always try and do the "right" thing, because I was a Christian. Towards the end of high school, my mom's relationship with the Lord started to grow really quickly. She grew to understand that walking with the Lord wasn't just checking off boxes on a list, but rather a relationship between a loving and gracious God and His child. I saw the joy that my mom had and I wanted that! As a high schooler, I cared a lot about what other people thought, and didn't want to be considered "weird," so I put God on the back burner.

When I graduated high school, I attended Oral Roberts University. I thought that attending Christian college far away would be the perfect opportunity for me to start over and start genuinely living my life for the Lord. God used it for that exact reason and so much more! While attending ORU, I started working at a summer camp in Missouri called Kanakuk Kamps. For five summers I got to be surrounded by women who deeply loved the Lord and challenged me to grow in my walk with Him. I will forever be grateful for how God used Kanakuk to grow my relationship with Him! I graduated from ORU with a degree in communications. Shortly after graduation, I attended a year-long graduate discipleship

program through Kanakuk, called the Kanakuk Institute. In my time there, I grew in my knowledge and appreciation of Scripture and really built the foundation of my faith.

After Kanakuk, I moved to Orlando, Florida, to intern at Mosaic Church in their student ministry. Though I really enjoyed my time there and learned a lot, God used that year to show me that vocational ministry was not what He had for me at that time. Shortly after that, I began teaching middle school physical education. I finally felt like I had found what I was meant to do in life! When COVID hit, everything changed for me with my job, and I felt really lost. I didn't really know who I was if I wasn't teaching. Even after we went back to school, it wasn't the same. I ended up moving back to Pennsylvania and taking a non-teaching position at a private school. I moved in with some dear friends who would eventually become a second family to me. After two years at that school, I became a 5th grade teacher, which is where I currently am.

God has been SO faithful throughout my life. There have been countless moments in the past twenty years that I have asked God over and over again for wisdom, clarity, direction, or provision, and He has come through every single time. It hasn't always looked like what I expected, but it's been right. I've tried to put my identity in so many different things - being a friend, coach, teacher, daughter, roommate, and more - and every time, God is patient with me, and gently guides me back to Him. Life certainly has not been easy and there are still things I don't understand about the Lord and His plan for my life, but I trust Him and I know He will be with me always.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. (Ephesians 3:20-21)