

seeds

MARCH 2021 | ISSUE 9



STRENGTHENING, EQUIPPING, ENFOLDING, DISCIPLING, AND SERVING WOMEN



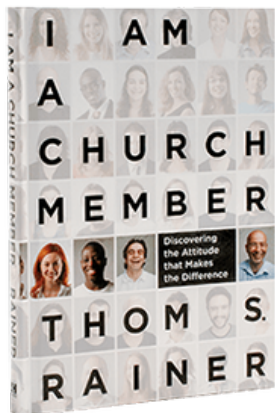
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I AM A CHURCH MEMBER BOOK REVIEW

BY PASTOR BEN LEE

Our theme for Oakwood in 2021 is "Commit to Connect." After such a strange year in 2020 with COVID restrictions having so severely limited ministry here at Oakwood, our Session wants the church to think critically about what it looks like to reconnect with one another in 2021. To that end, every member is being encouraged to read Thom Rainer's book *I Am A Church Member*.

Don't worry! It's short and sweet. At less than 100 pages it will take you no time to work your way through, and I think you'll be encouraged and challenged. The purpose of the book is to remind us about what it means to be a church member. But this is no high-in-the-sky theological treatise. It is meant to be an extremely practical look at how the Bible calls us to live in the church. I am sure this book will serve you well both in the women's ministry, and as part of the Body of Christ.

Also, you'll probably be seeing more from me in the newsletter in the future as part of my new job description is to work closely with EQUIP. I won't be directly involved in women's ministry events, but I'll be behind the scenes to encourage and pray.



WHERE DO YOU FIND YOUR IDENTITY?

BY LINDA BONNESS

During COVID, many of us have had to face the challenge of finding contentment in uncertain circumstances, especially when our usual "work" was interrupted in a variety of ways. Whether our work is outside the home or not, we have all faced a year of tremendous change in how we work. Carolyn McCulley states "When your work is your identity, change can shake that sense of identity... We all feel it: it is a longing for significance, to be known and recognized, to be validated for our labors and achievements." You can read more about weathering identity shift in McCulley's article "Women, Work and Our Crisis of Identity" at bit.ly/dg_identity.

ADOPTION UPDATE

BY PETE AND AMBER ROY



We have been active and presenting to expecting mothers now for a few months. While there are many unknowns I'll explain (the best I can) what that means.

We have a family profile book that includes photographs and a very comprehensive description of our family, extended family, and community. Pete and I receive emails that provide various levels of information about an expecting mother, her pregnancy, and overall life situation. Due dates range from baby already being born to several months out. We decide whether or not we are willing and able to be a potential match. If we say 'Yes,' our profile is presented to the mother (along with any other families who said Yes) as an option for a family willing to adopt her child. Expecting mothers choose the family they want and we can hear back within a few days to several weeks. About 30% of the cases we have seen up to this point have been "stork drops." These are cases in which a child has already been born and obviously move very fast! At this point we have said yes to 21 cases although our agency has told us 40-60 'Yes' responses is a common range before we'd be selected by a birth mother.

Praise that we are greatly appreciative of the financial support we have received from family, friends & the church. We are very close to our fundraising goal which is very encouraging. There have also been blessings recently at Pete's work and with my Mom soon moving into town that have been unexpected. While recently reading through my prayer journal from last year I could clearly see God's work in our lives over the last year which is helpful during this time of waiting.

Prayers for our hearts as we go through this process are greatly appreciated. The women are in very difficult life circumstances and it can be so heavy to hear their stories yet guard against becoming too connected. Some cases that are moving quickly (like the stork drops) require very immediate responses from us when they come in. This can be hard on our kids as it interrupts our day unexpectedly. There have been several cases recently that I have been more attached to for various reasons so prayers also for us to continue to trust God in his plan for us.



A LIFETIME OF FRIENDSHIP AND FOOD

BY EVELYN ADAM AND LILLIAN GARBRICK



Lillian and Evelyn met at Spring Creek Presbyterian Church in Lemont. The Adam family came to that church as a new family.

"Our son Don and their son Scott were about 3 and became friends. Because of the two boys, our two families became friends. When the boys were in their teens, both families left the Lemont church and came to another Presbyterian church for about 2 to 3 years. After that time, a group of people decided to start a less liberal church in the area. Thus the start of Faith Presbyterian Community Church (now Oakwood). So for the last 56 years, Evelyn and I have been friends. We have shared our lives, prayed for one another, and encouraged each other throughout our history together." -Lillian Garbrick

Evelyn's Cookies

Ingredients:

$\frac{1}{2}$ c - Butter
 $\frac{1}{2}$ c - Confectioners' sugar
 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. - Salt
1 tsp. - Vanilla extract
1 to $1\frac{1}{4}$ c - All-purpose flour

Creamy Nut Filling

Soften 3 ounce package cream cheese. Blend in 1 cup sifted confectioner's sugar, 2 TBSP flour, and 1 tsp vanilla extract; cream well. Stir in $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped Diamond Walnuts and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup flaked coconut.

Chocolate Frosting

Melt $\frac{1}{2}$ cup Nestle's Semi-Sweet Chocolate Morsels and 2 TBSP Land O'Lakes Butter with 2 TBSP water over low heat, stirring occasionally. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sifted confectioners' sugar; beat smooth.

Instructions:

Cream butter. Add sugar, salt, and vanilla; cream well. Gradually add flour. Shape by teaspoonfuls into balls. Place on ungreased cookie sheets. Press hole in center of each. Bake at 350° for 12-15 minutes until delicately browned. Fill while warm. Cool; frost.



Lillian's Empire Biscuits

Ingredients:

3 1/2 c. - Flour
1/4 t. - Baking soda
1/2 t. - Cream of tartar
1 c. - Butter
1/2 c. - Sugar
1/2 t. - Salt
1 t. - Vanilla
2 - Eggs

Icing

Can use canned icing or make your own as below

1 stick butter (or margarine)

1 t. vanilla

Powdered sugar till icing consistency (add a splash of milk to achieve consistency)

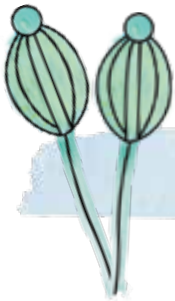
Instructions:

Cream butter, sugar, salt, vanilla then add eggs and then add above dry ingredients.

Roll out dough on a floured surface to about 1/4 inch thickness. With a round cookie cutter (1 1/2 inch in diameter similar in size to an oreo cookie). Bake in a moderate oven 350 12 to 15 minutes but watch- it will burn easily because of the butter. Should only be lightly tan.

Remove onto cooling rack or on wax paper. When cooled, spread jelly or jam (thin layer) between two cookies.

*Top off each cookie (sandwich) with 1/2 or 1/4 of a maraschino cherry.



quote corner

Imagine yourself as a living house. God comes in to rebuild that house. At first, perhaps, you can understand what He is doing. He is getting the drains right and stopping the leaks in the roof and so on; you knew that those jobs needed doing and so you are not surprised. But presently He starts knocking the house about in a way that hurts abominably and does not seem to make any sense. What on earth is He up to? The explanation is that He is building quite a different house from the one you thought of - throwing out a new wing here, putting on an extra floor there, running up towers, making courtyards. You thought you were being made into a decent little cottage: but He is building a palace. He intends to come and live in it Himself.

—C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

EXPLORING CENTRE COUNTY

BY JEANNE HOUSTON

Centre County and our Central PA region have a lot to offer in the way of outdoor recreation. While the Western Mountains have their majestic grandeur, our mountains have a friendly accessibility, inviting you to enter in.

You can find a nice adventure, or quiet get-away within 30 minutes in all directions of our town. In addition to state forest land, we have several wonderful state parks to choose from, including Whipple Dam, Greenwood Furnace, Bald Eagle and my personal favorite, Black Moshannon. Each has its particular benefits in specific seasons and for specific activities, including hiking, biking, birdwatching, fishing, backpacking, camping, kayaking, and cross-country skiing.

I would highly recommend getting a copy of the Purple Lizard map for the Rothrock Forest area at the minimum, and for the Bald Eagle and Moshannon State Forests if you really want to explore. These are available at the Appalachian Outdoors store downtown and the state park offices as well as local bookstores and online. You can also download the AllTrails app on your phone which will have lots of trails with maps of the area if you want to go digital.

Here are some of my favorites places to go!



Accessible from Rock Rd, Shiloh Rd or Fisherman's Paradise, this is a treasure of a beautiful canyon following Spring Creek for about 4 miles end to end. In May you can find wildflowers along the trail, and Ospreys and Eagles can often be spotted as they nest in the area. This is a nice trail for biking with the whole family as it is fairly flat. But you can add a climb up into the game lands among an old apple orchard and even enjoy a field of sunflowers planted for wildlife in the summer months. Note: always wear some orange when hiking in game lands and state forest in hunting seasons. Also remember to use tick protection from about April to December, especially in state game land areas.



You can take a short loop walk complete with some bridges over streams that pass through some old growth and virgin hemlock forest. It is magical with its rhododendrons arching over the trail. It tends to be wet so choose dry or frozen times. End of June and early July will give you a show of rhododendrons along with the mountain laurel in full bloom! Access it from either Bear Meadows Rd. or McAlevy's Fort. Here is where a map is good as there are many turns of forest roads back in there.



Starting at Greenwood Furnace State Park off Rt 305: you can get maps at the park office. This hike takes you along the Stone Mountain Ridge. Also near there is the Stone Mountain Hawk Watch platform. From August to December there will often be someone manning the platform to collect hawk migration data. Access it by driving on Turkey Hill Rd to Allensville Rd. There is a parking place at the top and a short 10 min walk over very rocky terrain. Again, Purple Lizard map shows the way.

A wide-angle landscape photograph of a mountain ridge under a hazy sky, with some green foliage visible in the upper right corner.

tussey ridge

Speaking of bird watching, in March you can check out one of the biggest spring migration sites east of the Mississippi for Golden Eagles on Tussey Ridge. Park at Jo Hays Vista off Rt 26 South, and walk on the trail about a mile to the power cut. They follow the ridge north on either side depending on wind direction. There is usually one or more birdwatchers with scopes collecting data who can alert you to spotting them. You will have a nice view down into Belleville and "Big Valley."

A photograph of a stone archway or bridge structure, possibly a dam or part of a historic site, surrounded by trees and vegetation.

greenwood furnace state park

This park has numerous hikes which you can find on the park map. There is a swimming lake and seasonal tent camping. Whipple Dam State Park, not far from there, is a nice little park tucked away in the forest. It will be nice once the lake is filled again. It is great in winter for ice skating and there is a 3-mile trail around the lake. Close by, Stone Valley Recreation Area with Lake Perez offers boating and hiking and picnicking, but no swimming. Also there, Shaver's Creek Environmental Center is a wonderful place to visit, especially with kids.

A photograph of a stone bridge or walkway crossing a stream, surrounded by dense green foliage and trees.

black moshannon

Out in Black Moshannon area, you can take various hikes in the park and there is a nice boardwalk off of Westside Rd to follow. Another short hike is the blueberry trail by the airport there. Stop in at the park office for a park map and for recommendations. Black Moshannon is a winter play ground as it gets more snow than State College, as it is colder up on the Allegheny Plateau. There is regularly ice fishing and ice skating on the lake and cross-country skiing and snowmobiling on various trails there. In warmer weather, there are a lot of gravel roads and trails you can explore by bike. There is also tent camping and cabin rental all year. The Allegheny Plateau has a boreal feel to it and makes me think I have entered a remote northern wilderness

A photograph of a sandy beach area next to a body of water, with a wooden bench and some trees in the background.

rothrock state forest

Rothrock is a gold mine of trails to hike and bike. Bear Meadows Natural area is a must see. Acres and acres filled with wild blueberries, it is one of the southernmost bogs in North America. There is a 3-mile trail around the bog, which can be wet in spring. If you want to drive for vistas, take Bear Meadows Rd to Laurel Run Rd and take Bear Gap Rd where you will see a vista as you near the top. Then take Greenlee down to Whipple Dam and back Laurel Run for a loop.

A wide-angle landscape photograph of a valley with rolling hills and mountains in the distance under a clear sky.

poe valley & poe paddy state parks

Venturing a little farther away, off of 322 past Potter's Mills, you can visit both Poe Valley and Poe Paddy State Parks. Poe Valley has both camping and a swimming lake and Poe Paddy has the unique advantage of being on Penns Creek where you can put in your tube, float for a couple of miles, get out and walk through an old railroad tunnel, come out on the upstream side and float back to where you started. This is great fun on a hot June or July day when the water is high enough. There are so many more places I could mention but am having to leave out due to space. I hope you will enjoy some of what our area has to offer!



The following is a transcript of Laura's podcast, Expect Something Beautiful.

You can listen or subscribe on any podcast platform or visit this site for more information: <https://www.reviveourhearts.com/podcast/expect-something-beautiful/>.

Imagine that you're at a conference—a big tech conference in a big fancy facility. It's early morning and people are showing up for their first session of the day.

Professional women are sipping their jade leaf matcha latte drinks at the complimentary tea and coffee bar, while they select a couple of strawberries and a cream cheese filled danish. They're greeting one another and making plans to meet up for lunch. And everyone looks great.

They're tailored and well rested and focused as they casually check their phones for the conference schedule and find the location of their first session.

They are heading into a week of professional development, networking, good food, stimulating ideas, and getting paid for it all. And the only thing that stands in their way is . . . me.

Yup, I'm standing there in the middle of the conference center with my double stroller flanked by my kids and snacks and water bottles. My hair is in a messy bun. I'm wearing sweatpants and the world's largest diaper bag backpack. I've got baby drool on my shoulder, and I'm just standing there, lost in thought. Watching these fabulous women sling their computer bags over their shoulders and head off to work, there are tears in my eyes, and I kind of want to run away.

For several winters in a row our whole family trekked out to Ohio for a week-long technology conference. It was just one of those rare occasions where our whole family could participate. So while my husband connected with people and ideas that helped him grow professionally, our older kids could attend classes on robotics and 3-D printing and electronics. As if that wasn't cool enough, the conference was also held at an indoor waterpark.

So in-between classes we bobbed in the wave pool and slid down the waterslides. Now, my role in the whole experience was to support the troops. During the day my husband attended the conference while I took care of the kids. Every year I wholeheartedly agreed to the arrangement, but I'll tell you what, it was not easy.

It was not easy to feed a family of seven out of a mini-microwave for a week or to keep track of five spunky kiddos in a waterpark as a ginormous water bucket dumped water from the sky every three minutes.

It wasn't easy to dry bathing suits and help with showers and keep the peace, usher big kids to classes, and guide the little kids from snacks to meltdowns to naps and back around again—all while making sure that none of them pulled the fire alarm. Was it privileged, yes. Full of happy memories, maybe. But was it easy, no.

Maybe that's why as I was hauling an overstuffed diaper bag and careening through the conference center I just stopped in my tracks. I watched the women fill their coffee mugs and head off to their next session, and I wished God had called me to do the work they were doing.

To be honest, there was a time when I dreamed of making it big professionally. When I was in college, I thought I could really go far. But instead, here I was doling out snacks and folding pool towels. But in that moment, God made my calling very clear. I could almost hear Him saying, keep your hands on the stroller and stay the course.

I needed help beyond myself. I needed God's gift of self-control.

The question was, Would I obey? Well, one thing was certain. If I was going to persist in this career-compromising, dream-altering, counter-cultural work, I needed help beyond myself. I needed God's gift of self-control.

We tend to define self-control as the determination to do the ab workout or to not eat the cookie. Most of us hear the word "self-control" and immediately cringe with guilt about body image. Well sure, self-control helps us to make wise choices about how we care for our bodies, but it is so much more than the secret to weight loss.

I mean, self-control is the game changer in our walk of faith. Without self-control, Christ-like virtues are only good ideas that never actually happen. But with self-control, every other aspect of the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness—they come to life.

We see the makings of self-control when Jesus took His disciples to Gethsemane to pray. He needed time and space to surrender His personal desires to His heavenly Father and affirm that He would do His Father's will, no matter what the cost. But it took some time to wrestle it out.

The Bible says that He prayed three times, "My Father if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will but

as You will." (Matt. 26:29). The spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak.

And finally, Jesus got up. He turned His face towards His betrayer. He could have appealed to His Father, who would have at once sent more than twelve legions of angels to rescue Him, but He didn't. Instead, He chose to be crucified, to fulfill the Scriptures and to save His people from their sin.

Without self-control, Christ-like virtues are only good ideas that never actually happen.

Although soldiers nailed Jesus' hands and feet to the cross, the nails didn't hold Him there; He held Himself there. He could have indulged His flesh and abandoned us, but He did not. After centuries of heart stirring promises, epic foreshadowing,

show-stopping miracles, and wondrous prophecies, Jesus completed our redemption through one humble act of self-control.

Even on our worst day, God looks at us and sees Jesus' gritty self-determined self-control. He hears Jesus resolve, "Not as I will but as You will." He sees Jesus weep and sweat and set His face towards the cross and stay there in love. And because of that, the Holy Spirit moves in you and in me so that we too may die to sin and live for Him. We too may set our faces toward His will . . . and do it. Self-control may feel limiting, but it actually takes us farther than we would go without it.



One time when Jesus was talking about the cost of following Him. He said, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62). This always makes me think of the farmer who plows the nearby fields. I would love to know how many miles that man puts on his tractor as he drives back and forth to plow, and then to fertilize, and plant, and finally harvest the same few acres of ground year after year.

I sometimes wonder if he ever wants to leave the dirt and sweat and limitations of farm life and drive across the country instead, heading to the beach for a well-earned vacation. I mean, can you imagine how far he could travel if he logged those miles straight down the highway and not back and forth over the same spot of land?

But when a farmer commits to feeding his family, livestock, and community, he keeps his hand to the plow—mile after mile and season after season. At harvest time when the silos, wagons, wheelbarrows, freezers, and canning jars are stocked with good wholesome food, and when a plot of God's good earth has been lovingly tended for yet another year, the farmer sees how far he has traveled, and he's glad he stayed the course.

expect something *Beautiful*

Listen, if you've put your hand to the plow of faith, don't look back. Don't let anything distract you from your walk with Christ, or the work He's called you to do. Don't grow weary in doing good. Keep at the work God has called you to do. What you're doing matters. You will reap a harvest—a full satisfying, beautiful, God-glorifying harvest—if you don't give up.

These were some of my thoughts as I stood in the middle of the conference center, torn between God's calling to support my husband and kids for the week and my momentary desire for a different path. By God's grace, I gripped the handle bar, leaned my weight into the stroller, and wheeled it towards the room where Ryan was actually preparing to teach one of the kids' track sessions.

If I hadn't stayed, if I hadn't surrendered to the will of God for me, I wouldn't have been standing in the back of the room with a squirmy toddler to hear my husband teach a room full of enthusiastic future techies about digital sound. I wouldn't have encouraged our children to help their daddy with his class. I wouldn't have seen our tween daughters eyes light up about 3-D printing, or high fived our four-year-old when she slid down her first water slide, or walked hand in hand with our toddler as he explored the baby pool. My relationship with my family grew. God entered in when I least expected it. It was in those moments when I wrapped warm towels around my kids shivering shoulders and served them countless bags of microwavable

popcorn. To be with them, to help them to thrive was wonderful. As always, a glimpse of how God must feel about being with us.

And surprisingly, even though I wasn't attending any thought-provoking sessions or networking or having stimulating conversations over lunch, I grew that week. I grew in character, maturity, and commitment. Mostly, I grew in awe of Jesus, who given the choice between laying His life down for us or doing something less costly, picks us every time.

So here's the thing, whether God calls us to build a career, a ministry, a home, or all of the above; whether He asks us to carry a diaper bag, a computer bag, or a tool bag; whether He asks us to keep our hand to the stroller or the microphone or the plow; whether He calls us to say the right thing, do the right thing, or think the right thing; we'll all wrestle with obedience from time to time. We won't always see the benefit of doing things His way. We'll need His help to pray, "Not my will but Thine be done." And we will need to remember that no matter what, He will never leave us or forsake us.

For the record, any woman who's committed to loving God and people is never going to go as far as she thought she could go in life. None of us will achieve self-actualization or maximize our potential, not the way we define it anyway. I say, let the tears fall, because the truth of the matter is that when we say "yes" to God, we may go half the distance but we'll go twice as far.

*You will reap a harvest—a
full satisfying, beautiful,
God-glorifying harvest—if
you don't give up.*





I love being a part of a denomination that always reminds us to place God's inerrant Word as the authority in our lives and to encourage each other with it as we walk through this life together. "Commit to Connect" is the theme that our Pastors are promoting to the entire church this year. The Women's Ministry Team would like to carry that theme into our retreat by focusing on what it means to be godly women sharing life side by side and connecting generations. Part of our time will include listening to teaching sessions by Susan Hunt, the author of many resources created for PCA women over the last 50 years. Susan's recordings will cast a vision for us to be life-givers as we seek to cultivate community life among God's people. The retreat will be at Oakwood on Friday evening, April 16 from 6:00 pm to 9:30 pm and all day Saturday, April 17 from 8:30 am to 4:00 pm. We hope you will come for this time of rest, fun, and connection with our fellow sisters in Christ, being fed physically and spiritually. There will be a zoom option as well.

Tricia Sharp

WMT Coordinator





**Do you want to get involved with or have a question about
Women's Ministry at Oakwood?**

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Do you have feedback or an idea for the newsletter?

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Interested in our Titus 2 Mentoring Program?

Jeanne Walsh - jw19006@hotmail.com | Kaylah Olshefsky - kaylayolshefsky@gmail.com

Not on Facebook, but want to receive church-wide prayer requests?

Pam Reed - pjreed66@gmail.com

**Did you know the Women of Oakwood have Facebook and Instagram pages
where we share resources and encouragement?**

facebook.com/groups/womenofoakwood | instagram.com/seeds_womenofoakwood