

The Power of Godly Compassion

Sam Gingerich, Administrator



Compassion. *Com* means “with”; *passion* means “suffering” – “We suffer with.”

Grappling with all the dynamics of losing two sons in the last five years has brought me face to face with inexplicable groanings of living in a fallen world, yet at the same time experiencing

deep moments of God’s goodness. Numerous times, in the darkest months of grief, one component of God’s care cut through my turmoil and sorrow and allowed me to experience the presence of Jesus – *compassion*. Individuals sat quietly with me on my mourning bench or asked me how I was really doing and waited until I was ready to share. A friend sent a praying emoji every morning for three years letting me know, “I’m on your team. You are not alone. I am with you.”

As I pondered the impact of this compassion on my own heart and how it reflects the life and teachings of Jesus while He was on this earth, I’ve come to believe it is one of the best gifts we have to offer others. It is in this posture of “being with” that the heart of the other person opens up to hear, to receive, and to see.

We humans have the capacity to offer basic compassion of sympathy or concern for others. It is good and necessary, but it is not enough. Godly compassion goes much further. Jesus asked the blind man in Mark 10:51, “What will you that I should do to you?” If we want our compassion to touch someone, a good place to start is by asking the question, “What does this person need from me?”

This takes us to the next level – the compassion of understanding: “*I know you are suffering and I feel bad about that, but I also want to understand what it’s like for you.*” In Luke 24, shortly after the crucifixion, Jesus modeled this. Two disciples were walking to Emmaus when Jesus came alongside and asked, “Why are you

looking so sad?” When Cleopas asked Jesus if He knew all the things that had recently transpired, Jesus simply asked, “What things?” He lingered and listened.

The process of listening and trying to understand is more important than having experienced the same thing. In our compassion to understand, we move from the facts of a story, whatever it may be – the diagnosis of cancer, a business imploding, a relationship break-up, losing our home, the death of a loved one – to, “*How is this impacting you?*” or “*How are you doing in the midst of all this?*” As we enter this level of understanding, we show our care. We listen to the story of their heart.

As we listen and care, inevitably we come face to face with our own story. Moments will come into focus when we have wrestled with God, been aware of our own brokenness, and struggled with doubts or fears. This reflects our constant need for Jesus and reminds us that on this side of eternity, we journey together and the playing field is even.

Then there is the compassion of truth. This includes the truth of God’s promises for us. *He is with us* and *He will never leave us nor forsake us*. When people feel loved and cared for and understood, they will be more open to the truth. Even though the truth may be painful, it will set us free. (John 7:37) Bringing truth is crucial in the healing story, but it is only effective *after* we have listened, understood, and walked alongside. To short-circuit this process and launch into truthful statements prematurely leaves the other person feeling missed, isolated, lonely, and sometimes wishing for a sock to insert into our mouth.

Only when compassion of understanding is present can the compassion of truth be heard.

I take this moment to express, from the core of my heart, my deep gratitude to so many who have modeled these levels of compassion to me on my journey, enabling me to see the goodness of God and His promises. Thank you.

Meet Our New Staff

Mary Petersheim



“One step He leads and one step I’ll follow; God knows my needs, and He will supply. I don’t know the future and all that’s in store, so I’ll take one step, one step, to follow my Lord”
The words to this song by Pepper Choplin became a theme for my husband Mark and myself a year ago

when we heard them. At that point we were preparing to move from Northwestern Ontario where we had been serving with Northern Youth Programs for 23+ years (and where I had been raised). It was a significant life transition for our family, yet God was leading, step by step.

While living in Ontario and the Canadian Arctic, Mark and I had a desire for more tools as we listened to people’s stories. In 2007, I graduated from Providence Theological Seminary in Otterburne, MB, with a Masters in Counseling. In the following years, I worked part-time with my husband in the counseling ministry.

Since coming to the Conestoga area, Mark has enjoyed working “hands on” in construction as a change from counseling and administration, but I knew that I wanted to get back into the counseling role part-time. I am grateful to be part of the team here at Life Counseling Ministries.

I am a mother to six children, ages 6 to 24, and one wonderful son-in-law. My role as a wife and mother is my highest calling, and I am grateful for those who have been willing to invest in listening, guiding and teaching me. I feel honored to offer this to others.

My own life events have included loss and grief, and those who have walked alongside me in those times have listened, cared, and pointed me to Jesus. Even though the stories I hear in the counseling room are often heavy, I find it fulfilling to journey with people, to see the work of God in their lives, and to see hope come out of pain and darkness.

-Mary Petersheim, Counselor



Bettina Yoder



I grew up in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia and in the early 1990s spent time living in Romania. As a young adult, I volunteered at a facility for intellectually disabled children and then began a career in teaching. During my 13 years in education, I worked as a homeroom

teacher, tutor, taught music, and developed a studio art program for elementary and middle school students. As I witnessed children engaging in creative experiences, my curiosity grew in how beauty and creativity invite a broken world back to wholeness. This interest prompted me to work at a residential facility for teen girls where I taught creative expression classes and led the educational program.

During my work in education, I met incredibly brave children and teens who demonstrated courage and resilience in the face of overwhelming odds. They prompted me towards a deeper respect for the complexity of human brokenness and I decided to pursue a degree in counseling.

After studying at Eastern University, I earned a master’s degree in clinical counseling with a concentration in trauma studies. I delight in walking with clients of all ages towards hope and healing. The supportive staff and Christ-centered worldview at LCM attracted me to join the team. Outside of work, I enjoy finding a new trail to bike, crocheting, listening to audio books, hiking, and singing with a choral ensemble. My mother and I live together in New Holland where we both enjoy puzzles and the occasional Scrabble game.

-Bettina Yoder, Counselor

God bless you, Amy!



In December, we bid farewell to Amy Wagler who served with us as a counselor for four years. She has chosen to switch careers to the honorable role of being a mommy. Sweet Darci Joan was born on January 24, 2024 and we couldn’t be happier for Amy and Brandon! We will miss Amy’s sweet spirit and thoughtful contributions to the team.

Life Counseling Ministries

Annual Banquet

Monday, March 25, 2024

Shady Maple Banquet Center | 129 Toddy Dr, East Earl, PA 17519
Doors open at 5:30pm | Music: 6:00pm | Dinner/Program: 6:15pm

Registration Required by March 18, 2024

717-871-0540 | info@life-ministries.com
www.life-ministries.com/events



OCD, Scrupulosity, and the Word Fitly Spoken

Speaker: Joshua Strickler, PsyD

A free-will offering will be taken.



Music by the Beachy family



Lakewood Cabin Giveaway:

Three gift certificates \$300
each for a cabin get-away!

LETTING GO:

A Portrait of a Woman at Rest

This course offers married women practical Biblical tips on how to be happy, respectful, empowered wives. This online, six-week, intensive course involves daily interactive emails, one group Zoom call per week, and journaling homework.

Coaches: Cathie Gingerich and Sharon Kuepfer

NEXT COURSE DATES:

MARCH 11 – APRIL 22, 2024

MAY 20 – JULY 1, 2024

JULY 29 – SEPTEMBER 9, 2024

For more information, contact Lorinda at
lorindan@life-ministries.com
Phone: 717.871.0540

Rocky Mountain Men's Retreat August 3-7, 2024

The week includes:

- Horseback riding to base camp
- Daily trail riding
- Discussions surrounding issues men face
- Personal solitude time
- Sharing how our stories are part of God's larger story

Contact the office for more information.

Phone: 717.871.0540 or

Email: info@life-ministries.com

PRAYER & PRAISE

Praise God for...

- Two new counselors who have joined our team
 - The healthy birth of Darci Joan to Amy and Brandon Wagler
 - Our faithful prayer warriors and financial supporters.
- We could not do it without you!

Pray for...

- The Mental Health Seminar coming up in April
- Physical, spiritual, and emotional stamina for the staff
- The board and administration directing the ministry
- The teens and children coming for therapy

Father/Son Retreat July 11-13, 2024

250 Meadow Lane, Conestoga, PA 17516

Held at Life Counseling Ministries

Cost: \$200 per family. Limited to 12 fathers with a maximum of two sons (ages 7-16) per dad.

Contact the office for an application.

Phone: 717.871.0540 or

Email: info@life-ministries.com

Upcoming Events

Annual Banquet

March 25, 2024. *See inside ad.*

"Understanding Mental Health Issues" Seminar

April 11-13, 2024; *Registration required*

Father/Son Retreat

July 11-13, 2024; *Registration Open*

Rocky Mountain Men's Retreat

August 3-7, 2024; *Registration Open*

To register for any of these events, please call the office at 717.871.0540 or Email info@life-ministries.com

TEN-COURSE SUBJECTS

Counseling the Sexually Abused Seminar

Early Fall

Core1/Lab 1

November 7-9, 2024

January 9-11, 2025

March 6-8, 2025

Registration opens April 1, 2024

To register, please call the office at 717-871-0540 or Email info@life-ministries.com.



CONTACT US

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(GPS Only. Do not mail to this address.)

Life Counseling Ministries is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization established to provide counseling for individuals, marriages, families, and church leaders. LCM also offers training and teaching through workshops and seminars. This newsletter is published quarterly and is available to interested persons at no cost.

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