



December 2016 | thebanner.org

# BANNER

150 YEARS



# Year-End Giving Guide

## Denominational agencies recommended for financial support

### **CRCNA**

877.279.9994 (US)  
800.730.3490 (Canada)  
[www.crcna.org](http://www.crcna.org)

### **CRC Foundation**

877.272.6204  
[www.crcna.org/foundation](http://www.crcna.org/foundation)  
See our ads on page 46, 53

### **Back to God Ministries International**

800.879.6555 (US)  
800.730.3490 (Canada)  
[backtogod.net](http://backtogod.net)

### **Calvin College**

800.688.0122  
[www.calvin.edu](http://www.calvin.edu)

### **Calvin Institute of Christian Worship**

616.656.608  
[www.calvin.edu/worship](http://www.calvin.edu/worship)  
See our ads on pages 42, 51

### **Calvin Theological Seminary**

800.388.6036  
[www.calvinseminary.edu](http://www.calvinseminary.edu)

### **The Banner**

800.777.7270  
[www.thebanner.org](http://www.thebanner.org)

### **World Literature Ministries**

800.426.8355  
[www.librosdesafio.org](http://www.librosdesafio.org)

### **Home Missions**

800.266.2175  
[www.crhm.org](http://www.crhm.org)  
See our ad on page 50

### **World Missions**

800.346.0075 (US)  
800.730.3490 (Canada)  
[www.crwmm.org](http://www.crwmm.org)  
See our ads on pages 3, 47

### **World Renew**

800.552.7972 (US)  
800.730.3490 (Canada)  
[www.worldrenew.net](http://www.worldrenew.net)  
See our ad on back cover

## **Congregational Services**

### **Aboriginal Ministry**

1-800-730-3490  
[www.crcna.org/Aboriginal](http://www.crcna.org/Aboriginal)

### **Candidacy Committee**

616.241.1691 x2779  
[www.crcna.org/Candidacy](http://www.crcna.org/Candidacy)

### **Centre for Public Dialogue**

613.686.6298  
[www.crcna.org/PublicDialogue](http://www.crcna.org/PublicDialogue)

### **Chaplaincy and Care Ministry**

616-224-0844  
[www.crcna.org/Chaplaincy](http://www.crcna.org/Chaplaincy)

### **Disability Concerns**

616.224.0844  
[www.crcna.org/Disability](http://www.crcna.org/Disability)

### **Faith Formation Ministries**

616.241.1691 x2814  
[www.crcna.org/FaithFormation](http://www.crcna.org/FaithFormation)

### **Office of Social Justice**

877.279.9994 (US)  
905.336.2920 x4296 (Canada)  
[www.crcna.org/Justice](http://www.crcna.org/Justice)

### **Pastor Church Resources**

616.726.1152  
[www.crcna.org/pastor-church-resources](http://www.crcna.org/pastor-church-resources)

### **Race Relations**

616-224-0791  
[www.crcna.org/Race](http://www.crcna.org/Race)

### **Safe Church Ministry**

616.224.0735  
[www.crcna.org/SafeChurch](http://www.crcna.org/SafeChurch)

### **Servicelink**

800-730-3490 ext 4249  
[www.crcna.org/ServiceLink](http://www.crcna.org/ServiceLink)

### **Worship Ministries**

877.272.6202  
[www.crcna.org/Worship](http://www.crcna.org/Worship)

Use this list of organizations advertising in this issue to help plan your year-end contributions.

### Other advertisers in this issue

**Ascending Leaders**

<http://www.ascendingleaders.org>  
See our ad on page 47

**Barnabas Foundation**

[www.barnabasfoundation.com](http://www.barnabasfoundation.com)  
See our ad on page 43

**Crossroad Bible Institute**

[www.cbi.fm](http://www.cbi.fm)  
See our ad on page 42

**Dordt College**

<http://www.dordt.edu>  
See our ads on pages 41, 52

**Holland Home**

[www.hollandhome.org](http://www.hollandhome.org)  
See our ad on page 44

**Kuyper College**

[www.kuyper.edu](http://www.kuyper.edu)  
See our ad on page 52

**Luke Society**

[www.lukesociety.org](http://www.lukesociety.org)  
See our ad on page 49

**Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services**

[www.pinerest.org](http://www.pinerest.org)  
See our ad on page 48

**Providence Life Services**

[www.providencelifeservices.com](http://www.providencelifeservices.com)  
See our ad on page 51

**Redeemer University College**

[www.redeemer.ca](http://www.redeemer.ca)  
See our ads on page 40

**Talking Bibles**

[www.talkingbibles.org](http://www.talkingbibles.org)  
See our ad on page 4

**Timothy Leadership**

<http://www.tliti.org>  
See our ad on page 40

**Trinity Christian College**

<http://www.trnty.edu>  
See our ad on page 45

**Tent Schools**

[www.tentschoolsint.org](http://www.tentschoolsint.org)  
See our ad on page 48

**Witte Travel**

<http://www.wittetravel.com>  
See our ad on page 45

**Westminster Seminary California**

[www.wscal.edu](http://www.wscal.edu)  
See our ad on page 41

# Help Them GO

In 1919, at age 25, Johanna Veenstra became the CRC's first international missionary. She served among the Kuteb people in Nigeria for almost 15 years.

### Today, the Johanna Veenstra Missionary Support Fund helps to:

- increase the number of available missionary positions
- get missionaries to the field quickly when there are urgent ministry needs
- get missionaries to the field when they have a small support base

To learn more or to donate, visit:  
[www.crwmm.org/VeenstraFund](http://www.crwmm.org/VeenstraFund)



Christian Reformed  
**WORLD MISSIONS**



# A Bible for Those Who Can't Read



**TALKING  
BIBLES**

Because they need to hear



## The Solar Talking Bible

- Easy to use
- Powerful speaker
- Solar powered

## Tura has a thankful heart and radiates God's love!

**Ethiopia:** Tura has been helping to share God's message with others. When the evangelist in her village moved away, she took over the responsibility. Despite not being able to read, Tura has used her Talking Bible to start three additional Listening Bible Study Groups with almost 50 people. Tura radiates God's love!

"Both believers and nonbelievers are listening and we are seeing some people in our village changing for the better. Nine people have become believers, though many others are interested, listening and still deciding. I am so happy we have this Talking Bible to help us reach others and help us believers understand God's ways," she said.

Many more Christians like Tura are waiting to share the Gospel. This Christmas, give nonreaders the gift of evangelism with a Talking Bible they can play for friends and family.

Give today at [www.talkingbibles.org](http://www.talkingbibles.org)



Enhancing Trust



"Accredited for special offerings"

[www.talkingbibles.org](http://www.talkingbibles.org)

Talking Bibles International • 419 East Grand Avenue, Escondido, CA 92025 • Telephone: 855-55-BIBLE (855-552-4253) or 760-745-8105



Volume 151 | Number 11 | 2016

# BANNER



## FEATURES

- ◀ **17 Hospitable Neighborhoods** [STUDY QUESTIONS ONLINE](#)  
*How our neighborhoods shape our ability to be good neighbors.*  
by Eric O. Jacobsen
- 36 Our Lady Too**  
*Perhaps it's time for the Protestant church to rethink the place of Mary.*  
by Leonard J. Vander Zee

## DEPARTMENTS

- Editorial: Seeing Christmas with New Eyes** by Shiao Chong **6**  
*Seeing baby Jesus asleep in a feeding box should not fill us with sentimentality.*
- Catch Your Breath: Thanks a Lot, Mom and Dad** by Dean Heetderks **7**  
*What do I say when it's my turn to tell my faith story?*
- IMHO: It's Time to Seek Other Seas** by Franklin P. De Haan **8**  
*We learn God's truth from creation as well as Scripture.*
- Letters to the Editor** **8**
- News: Michigan Church Presents Live Nativity Story** **10**
- On the Journey: How to Help a Grieving Person** by Kari Poortinga **20**  
*Among the thoughtful people who offered help after my loss, some really nailed it.*
- Just for Kids: Stargazing** by Joanne De Jonge **30** ▶  
*December is a great month for stargazing!*
- Reformed Matters: The Truth about Fiction** by Bryant Russ **32** [STUDY QUESTIONS ONLINE](#)  
*There is a great and nourishing power in stories that tell the truth.*
- Tuned In: Hymns for All Ages** by Robert J. Keeley **34**  
*Modern hymn writers Keith and Kristyn Getty bring their talents to children's worship.*
- Discipleship: Moses, Deuteronomy, and New Year's Eve** by Burton VanderLaan **38**  
*As we look back at the year gone by and ahead to the new year, Moses reminds us that one constant remains.*



The Banner staff wishes all of our readers a blessed Christmas.



Cover: *Madonna & Child Provincial 1* by Wayne Forte. For more on the artist, see [wayneforte.com](http://wayneforte.com).

© EYEKONS.COM

- Frequently Asked Questions** **39**  
*Our assemblies and congregations must be bold in proclaiming the gospel.*
- Punch Lines** **55**

## TOGETHER DOING MORE

- Learning to Lead** by Nathan Bierma **22**  
*Calvin Seminary integrates leadership throughout the curriculum.*
- The View from Here: Faithful Waiting** by Steven Timmermans **26**

# Seeing Christmas with New Eyes

**YEARS AGO**, as a campus minister, I took a group of students on a “homeless ministry” nighttime walking tour of downtown Toronto. Our guide, who had ministered to people living on the streets of Toronto for years, exposed us to the harsh realities that people who are homeless face. I learned many things that night that no textbook or classroom could teach me. I learned not to define people who are homeless by their homelessness: they are not “the homeless” but are people, first and foremost, who happen to be homeless. I also learned to identify them by where they sleep. Someone who is homeless often sleeps in places that aren’t designed for sleeping: by a doorstep, on a park bench, in a car.

That experience made me look at the Christmas nativity scene with new eyes. Nativity scenes often produce warm fuzzy feelings as we gaze on the serenity of baby Jesus lying in a manger. Our culture has domesticated the biblical story so much that we are no longer shocked by what we see or read. The manger was a box meant to hold animal feed, not babies. Jesus slept where babies were not supposed to sleep. Jesus was homeless.

His parents, Mary and Joseph, were temporarily displaced from their home by the Roman Empire’s census decree forcing them to travel afar. If we get angry at people for not offering their seats to a pregnant woman on a crowded bus, then we should get angry at the folks in Bethlehem who failed to offer their beds to a young mother about to go into labor. Instead, they collectively passed the buck until someone gave Mary shelter in the ancient equivalent of a garage.

## Christmas reminds us that God is on a mission to reconcile all things to himself through Christ Jesus.

Seeing baby Jesus asleep in a feeding box should not fill us with warm sentimentality. We don’t feel that way when we see a person sleeping in a doorway, after all. Rather, it should make us sad and mad. Sad at the suffering of others, and mad that we live in a world where this is happening, and happening often—so often that we may have become numb to it. Have we become numb to the suffering of baby Jesus and Mary?

We often equate Jesus’ sufferings with his crucifixion on the cross. But if we really see the nativity for what it is, we should recognize that Jesus’ suffering began at birth. Jesus did not only suffer on the cross. Jesus suffered his disciples’ failures. He suffered the Pharisees’ opposition. He suffered the crowds and their demands. He suffered the Romans’ oppression. He suffered the loss of “equality with God” when he came in human flesh (Phil. 2:6). Jesus suffered his entire life, from birth to death.

Christmas reminds us that God is on a mission to reconcile all things to himself through Christ Jesus (Col. 1:20). The Almighty God, who could have chosen any number of ways to accomplish his mission, chose the way of suffering—in birth, life, and death. As we join in God’s mission, are we willing to suffer loss of privilege and power in order to truly serve the communities to whom God has sent us? Or do we fall into the worldly patterns of control, authority, and dominance, even as we seek to serve others?

This Christmas, may we see the nativity with new eyes and be transformed. ■



**Shiao Chong** is editor-in-chief of *The Banner*. He attends Fellowship Christian Reformed Church in Toronto, Ont.

**Shiao Chong** *Editor*

**Judith Claire Hardy** *Associate Editor*

**Gayla R. Postma** *News Editor*

**Kristen deRoo VanderBerg** *Editor,*  
*Together Doing More*

**Kristy Quist** *Tuned In Editor*

**Dean R. Heetderks** *Art Director*

**Pete Euwema** *Graphic Design*

**Frank Gutbrod** *Graphic Design*

### Contact Us

1700 28th Street SE, Grand Rapids,  
Michigan 49508-1407

**Address Changes and Subscriptions**  
800-777-7270 or visit our website at  
thebanner.org

**Classified Advertising**  
616-224-0725 [classifieds@thebanner.org](mailto:classifieds@thebanner.org)

**Display Advertising**  
616-224-5882 [ads@thebanner.org](mailto:ads@thebanner.org)

**Editorial**  
616-224-0824 [editorial@thebanner.org](mailto:editorial@thebanner.org)

**News**  
613-330-3145 [news@thebanner.org](mailto:news@thebanner.org)

Published monthly (except August).  
Periodicals postage paid at Grand Rapids,  
Mich. Postmaster, send address changes  
to: The Banner, 1700 28th Street SE,  
Grand Rapids MI 49508-1407. Canadian  
publications mail agreement #40063614.  
Return undeliverable Canadian addresses  
to: The Banner, 3475 Mainway, PO Box  
5070, STN LCD 1, Burlington ON L7R 3Y8.

Copyright 2016, Christian Reformed  
Church in North America. Printed in U.S.A.  
The Banner (ISSN0005-5557). Vol. 151,  
No. 11, 2016.

Member of Associated Church Press and  
Evangelical Press Association.

# Thanks a Lot, Mom and Dad

**I** **KNOW IT'S COMING**—the call for volunteers to tell their faith story at the next elders' meeting. Many have already told theirs, and those of us who haven't are conspicuously looking down at the table. By now we've heard amazing stories of grace and redemption, tales of miraculous healings and forgiveness in the most unlikely circumstances.

But my faith story simply isn't very interesting.

Oh, I could talk about my struggles with discontentment and desire and impatience. About pride and vanity. And my need to be right all the time. About fearing—okay, knowing—that I'm not always the husband or father I should be. About my need to please everyone at all cost.

A chapter in my faith story I *do* feel comfortable talking about is the one about doubt. The part where I envy those who believe the first time. Those people who, once on the wagon, never fall off—or in my case, don't deliberately *jump* off. At best, I am wary; at worst, suspicious and cynical.

I'm going to blame my mom and dad.

Research supports me in this: faith is formed under the influence of our parents—or parent substitutes like grandpas or grandmas. Not peers or environment or education. Or even church. We're looking at you, mom and pop.

I'll start by blaming my dad. He was the one who was more awed by a God who could create something that could recreate itself in new and mind-boggling ways than a God who, in a single work week, created everything just as it would be forever. He was the one to say "I don't know why, but isn't it great . . . or beautiful . . . or amazing?" He left me—figuratively and literally by dying a few years back—with few absolutes about God. Dad's life was an example of letting God be who God is, not one who fit his view of who God should be. I loved that about him.

Mom saddled us with a strong sense of justice. With a gavel-like slap of her hand on the kitchen table, she would declare, "Well, that's just not right!" This judgment was applied to all kinds of situations: after she'd read a story in the newspaper, or come back from the grocery store where she'd talked to someone,

and sometimes after hearing my dad's report of a congregational meeting she didn't attend. None of us got away with a conversation-stopper like, "Isn't it great that we're all different?" or "To each his own." And even when you thought the debate was over, it was never over. I love that about her.

Is it any wonder I doubt? That I have a problem taking sides of arguments that seem to be based on too little information—especially when it comes to the ways of God? To call God my friend seems a hair pretentious. And why God—if he is as just as they say—hasn't wiped the global slate clean is a mystery to me.

Fellow wonderer Dennis Covington once said, "Mystery is not the absence of meaning, but the presence of more meaning than we can comprehend." I think he might be onto something. Maybe my questions are, in their own twisted way, a gift I was given to honor God. ■



Dean Heetderks is co-director of Ministry Support Services of the Christian Reformed Church. He attends Covenant Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Mich.



PHOTO BY RYAN HUTTON/UNSPASH

**Mystery** is not the absence  
of meaning, but the  
presence of more meaning  
than we can comprehend.

— DENNIS COVINGTON

# It's Time to Seek Other Seas



IT'S TIME

By insisting that Scripture have the final word with respect to science, we miss out on the obvious.



**"O LORD,** you have looked into my eyes; kindly smiling, you've called out my name. On the sand I have abandoned my small boat; now with you, I will seek other seas."  
—Cesario Gabarain, 1979

In 2018 many of us will celebrate the 400th anniversary of the adoption of the Belgic Confession, Heidelberg Catechism, and Canons of Dort by the 1618 Synod of Dort as doctrinal standards for the Reformed faith.

Clearly the Heidelberg Catechism has served us well. The other two confessions, however, remain in relative obscurity.

Article 2 of the Belgic Confession states how we know God:

First, by the creation, preservation, and government of the universe, since that universe is before our eyes like a beautiful book in which all creatures, great and small, are as letters to make us ponder the invisible things of God. . . .

Second, he makes himself known to us more openly by his holy and divine Word. . . .

Most of us would agree that God's revelation of himself through his creation must agree with scriptural revelation. After all, God does not contradict himself.

Yet many believers continue to insist that Scripture must ultimately be our science guide, following the error of the Catholic church in excommunicating Galileo.

Why is this so?

I suggest it is partly due to misinterpretation of evolution as being godless. For years the National Academy of Sciences and others defined evolution as an "unsupervised, impersonal, unpredictable and natural process." However, after being challenged by Christian groups, including the American Scientific Affiliation, in 1998 the National Academy of Science changed their definition of evolution as follows: "The diversity of life on earth is the outcome of evolution; an unsupervised, impersonal, unpredictable and natural process. . . ." By leaving out the words *unsupervised* and *impersonal*, adjectives that imply randomness, evolution by definition clearly leaves room for Intelligent Design, a Creator. In other words, it leaves room for God.

Shouldn't Christians be open to what modern science teaches about origins, the age of the earth, Adam and Eve? What could be more appropriate for Christian Reformed lay members, theologians, and scientists than to put their biases aside and be open to learning truths from God's other great book, his universe?

We won't be alone; some 2 million U.S. scientists identify as evangelical. Can we, with Christ, sail into this sea? ■



**Franklin De Haan, a retired chemistry professor, is an active member at Bethel Christian Reformed Church, Sun Valley, Calif.**



## God's Dropped Stitches

As a retired teacher, I pray that I did not embarrass students, but I'm ashamed to say I probably did ("God's Dropped Stitches," Oct. 2016). Your story makes me realize how important it is to treat all students with respect and love. God certainly used you mightily and you are a great example of forgiveness and determination. Thank you for sharing your story.

—Norma Eck, online comment

## Ten Commandments

I am a lifelong member of the Christian Reformed Church. Not only do I miss the Ten Commandments ("Whatever Happened to the Ten Commandments?" Oct. 2016) but a host of other practices that have been deleted from our liturgy. Just to name some, these include preaching from our Heidelberg Catechism, having a preparatory service prior to the Lord's Supper celebration, and reciting our creeds and confessions (including the contemporary testimony "Our World Belongs to God.")

All of these are as relevant today as they were in the past, so why get rid of them? I have yet to hear a satisfying answer; only "It's a generational thing." I'm looking forward to some positive changes.

—Dick Berentschot  
Whitby, Ont.



# TTERS

The summary of the law is the blueprint that should shape our Christian walk (“Whatever Happened to the Ten Commandments?”) But an overemphasis on the commandments can lead to them becoming a formality rather than a thankful response.

It has been a journey in the CRC to discover the implications of Pentecost. The Spirit of God dwells within each believer. The law of God has become internalized. We live with much higher demands than the limitations of the Ten Commandments; our love and passion for God’s kingdom should be evident to all. The Ten Commandments can be an instrument of self-examination, but thankfully the church has moved on to encourage spiritual maturity on all levels.

Times do change. My grandfather stormed out of church when hymns were added to a steady diet of singing psalms. Church liturgy and worship styles are changing. And yes, the reading of the Law has declined. Is this a bad thing?

—Peter Reedyk  
Belleville, Ont.

## Drama of Doctrine

Amen! There is no greater investment we can make than catechizing our youth (“The Drama of Doctrine,” Oct. 2016). I’ve had the blessing of teaching doctrine to 14-year-olds for the last 20 years. The kids are hungry for the truth, eager to learn, quick to discuss, and consistent in applying the solid Reformed worldview they gain in their lives.

The greatest assets we have as a denomination are the Three Forms of Unity. All three of them are incredible teaching tools, and we need to take advantage of the centuries of wisdom and biblical truth they contain.

—Chad Werkhoven, *online comment*

As one who taught Bible to high school students for 40 years, I need to say our students do not know their catechism as folks my age once did (“The Drama of Doctrine”). But they know their Bible much better. They know of the kingdom of God; they understand biblical justice and the idea of bringing shalom to chaos. I believe we need to admit the questions have changed from the 16th century. We are no longer asking how we are different from the Catholic faith or our Mennonite brothers and sisters. We no longer need a condensed version of the Bible when we all own several Bibles. I cannot lament that young people do not know their catechism as much as I lament that older “saints” have no idea what Amos, Habakkuk, and Isaiah said about caring for the hurting in the world. I am all in for teaching the doctrines of the Bible, and I would put forth we have an excellent tool for doing that: the Bible.

—Dan Wolcott, *online comment*

## A Single Story

I appreciated reading this, Heidi (“A Single Story,” Oct. 2016). No one has ever wasted a moment by taking someone else’s story to heart.

—Michael Bentley, *online comment*

## Reconciliation

I appreciate the passion of the group to share their experiences of their visit to this First Nations community (“Youth Ambassador of Reconciliation Visits Remote Aboriginal Community,” Oct. 2016). But what have we done that requires reconciliation? This Indigenous community, like many others, has chosen a path of living off the land far removed from the municipality where medical and social services are available. In many cases they continue to live where there is no living to be had. Generations later, they

are facing devastating consequences. To pass on this legacy to the following generation is akin to abuse. Culture is important but should not replace knowledge. Is my church suggesting we are responsible for people who continue to make poor decisions for their families?

—George Kloet  
Oakville, Ont.

[MORE ONLINE](#)

# NEWS

## Michigan Church Presents Live Nativity Story

**B**rookside Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Mich., is presenting its annual Living Nativity, a retelling of the Christmas story that serves as the church's largest community outreach project.

"It's Brookside's gift to the community—to share the Christmas story," said Phyllis Moes, Brookside's spiritual foundation and care coordinator. The retelling starts with Adam and Eve through Christ's birth, death, and resurrection. "We try to share the whole gospel," said Moes.



(Above) The entire cast sings "Lord, I Lift Your Name on High" in 2015.

(Right) Wise men present gifts to Mary, Joseph, and Jesus.

(Below) Mary and Joseph



tion since its inception 21 years ago. She said the Living Nativity is a great way for members to introduce their friends to the Christmas story and share their faith.

"You can invite people who wouldn't otherwise think about going to church," said Rozeboom, whose children and grandchildren have been part of the retelling. "You plant the seed but you don't know whether it's going to grow."

—Gregory Chandler

More than 200 members of the church took part in the event last year, which was held over three nights with three viewings each night, viewed by more than 1,300 people. The outdoor portion of the retelling includes a manger scene with actors portraying Mary, Joseph, the infant Jesus, and shepherds, joined by live animals.

Inside, visitors enjoy hot chocolate and cookies. Children can visit the interactive "Neighbors

in Nazareth" set, where various shops are set up to depict what village life might have been like in Bethlehem at the time of Jesus' birth.

Despite the rain last year, Kathy Miedema, who directed the retelling, said, "My actors were real troupers and just got drenched, but no one complained."

Beth Rozeboom and her husband, Cal, have brought their farm animals to be part of the produc-

### For more news

about the churches and ministries of the Christian Reformed Church, visit [thebanner.org](http://thebanner.org).



### Follow The Banner

Magazine on Facebook and [crcbanner](https://twitter.com/crcbanner) on Twitter.



### Got a news tip?

Visit [thebanner.org/news](http://thebanner.org/news) and use the "Got a Tip" button.

**GOT A NEWS TIP?**

### Or contact the news editor

at [news@thebanner.org](mailto:news@thebanner.org) or 613-330-3145.



Volunteers at Eastern Hills Community Church's Christmas store.

## Church Spreads Joy through Christmas Toys

In a Denver suburb, one church's "Christmas Store" sometimes brings parents to tears.

"People [are] just overwhelmed because they were going to [be able to provide Christmas gifts] for their kids," said volunteer Nancy Feria. "They can't even believe it that they are able to purchase these really nice new toys."

Eastern Hills Community Christian Reformed Church in Aurora, Colo., supplied Christmas presents to 202 children at its Christmas Store last year and will run the same event this year.

Parents buy gifts for each of their children, each gift worth \$30 to \$50, for \$5 each—enough "to make their Christmas the same as everybody else's," said missions pastor Debby Tepielow.

The church started this program, replacing a program of delivering gifts to families. The store atmosphere provides more dignity, since the family chooses the gifts and pays for them. Additionally, volunteers are on hand to welcome and assist the shoppers, and after the purchase, offer

gift-wrapping, Christmas treats to snack on, and a friendly, listening ear.

"It's hard to feel the joy at this time of year if you are struggling and not knowing if you can keep your house. It is an absolute privilege to help these families," said Tepielow.

Volunteer shoppers purchase the gifts online, at Black Friday sales, and at various stores.

Before the event, volunteer coordinators ask parents "what the kids are into," without guaranteeing any specific gift, according to Tepielow. Last year, the most popular presents were Star Wars toys; an especially hot pick was the Star Wars Mr. Potato Head. Other gifts included pajamas, perfumes, cuddly toys, books, the latest Adele CD, jewelry, sports equipment, Denver Broncos and Denver Nuggets clothing, craft activities, and even bicycles.

—Roxanne Van Farowe

## Joanne De Jonge Retires from Writing for *The Banner*



Joanne De Jonge's first *Banner* article, "Mooncakes and Motorcycles," appeared in the August 16, 1968 issue. Her final one, "Stargazing," appears this month on pages 30-31.

"When I sent in my very last *Banner* article, I did a little counting," said De Jonge. "The total, after the December article, is 1,048."

De Jonge was 24 years old when she returned home in 1968 after a two-year stint as a Peace Corps volunteer in Malaysia. Her aunt, Gertrude Haan, associate editor of *The Banner*, asked her to write an article. And so began De Jonge's long writing career.

Something else began then too. "Wayne [De Jonge] was staff artist. My picture crossed his desk. He asked Aunt Gertrude about me, then called for a date. We married in 1969."

By 1975, De Jonge was writing regularly. She wrote "Young Look" (later called "Just for Kids") from 1976-1999. "It was great fun. This all started before the days of Internet. I spent summers among the stacks at the Grand Rapids Public Library looking up information, then typing the articles with a typewriter on onion-skin paper." In 1999, after writing a total of 1,000 articles, De Jonge decided to quit "while I was still having fun." Called back to *The Banner* in 2005, she agreed to write four columns a year.

For 25 of those years, De Jonge taught full-time at Christian schools all over Grand Rapids, Mich., as an orchestra director. However, her passion for writing about God's creation and giving talks about it led her to get a masters' degree in science education. With that in hand, she became a National Park ranger. For 20 summers she worked at Sleeping Bear Dunes National Park, which stretches along the shore of Lake Michigan. "Wayne and I were both really blessed by this turn of events in our lives." She remains a sought-after speaker.

"Writing for *The Banner* changed my life," said De Jonge. "I think I've written about 16 from-scratch books, and there are four collections of *Banner* articles out there. This, in my mind, was practice for writing the *Zondervan Kids' Devotional Bible*. Doing those devotions was truly a blessed experience."

De Jonge said, "If you want to hear God laugh, make a plan! I had planned to teach stringed instruments in Grand Rapids for most of my working life. God had a much better plan."

The De Jonges currently live full-time in Arizona, where they worship at West Valley Christian Fellowship. They plan to return to Grand Rapids for at least part of each year.

—Janet A. Greidanus

# NEWS

## Then and Now: Commemorating the 20th Anniversary of the Ordination of Women in the CRC

**J**ust weeks after Synod 1996 decided that women could be ordained as Ministers of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church, Rev. Ruth Hofman became the first woman in the history of the denomination to be ordained. Her ordination took place on August 25, 1996, at First CRC in Toronto, Ont. One month later, Rev. Mary Hulst was ordained at Eastern Avenue CRC in Grand Rapids, Mich. More women followed.

On the 20th anniversary of women's ordination, *The Banner* invited some of the first ordained women to reflect on their journey.



### Mary Hulst

During seminary, only one church offered Rev. Mary Hulst an internship, only one offered her a summer assignment, and only one offered her a pastoral position after seminary. But Hulst took these open doors as God's leading, and they eventually brought her to where she is today at age 46—chaplain at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Mich. "My life in ministry has been so rich," she said. "It's really everything I hoped it would be when I graduated from seminary

21 years ago. I really love preaching the gospel, caring for people, and inviting others into discipleship. There is nothing better."

Hulst continued, "I was the first woman ordained in the United States, and now we have 100 women ordained. So I think in some ways we've come very far in 20 years. But when I hear the challenges that very gifted women have in finding a job, I wonder."

Hulst believes there are still biases around gender that can prevent a search committee from even interviewing a woman. What if she gets pregnant? Can she really work full-time if she has children? Congregations need to be willing to interview women, hire women, and promote women, she said. "Women who are willing to take the risk and go to seminary tend to be very gifted—as preachers, pastors, leaders, administrators. We ignore their gifts at our peril."



### Amanda Benckhuysen

Rev. Amanda Benckhuysen, 46, is associate professor of Old Testament at Calvin Theological Seminary, also in Grand Rapids. She was ordained in 1998. "I remember

there was so much joy about synod's decision. I remember seeing the tears flow down the cheeks of those women who had been advocating for this for so long. I remember being filled with so much hope and love for the church and a deep desire to serve the church faithfully. And even though there were still significant restrictions on women's participation in the church, I remember thinking that, at the time, this was enough."

Twenty years on, she noted many good things have happened. At least 42 classes (regional groups of churches) have said yes to women in office. More and more churches are entertaining women as sole, senior, and associate pastors. Women serve in a wide array of settings and at almost every level of leadership in the denomination.

"Even so," Benckhuysen continued, "our current denominational position on women in office is an incredibly challenging and at times incoherent one to live out, leaving women pursuing ministry or in ministry incredibly vulnerable. They find themselves in environments where they simply do not know whether the people in the room are 'friendly' to women's ordination or not, will affirm them or not, will acknowledge them and their ordination or not. This creates an awkward power dynamic whereby every ecclesiastical situation needs to be carefully negotiated personally and professionally. Truthfully, women expend a tremendous amount of emotional

energy simply trying to navigate the non-position the denomination has taken on this issue."



### Michelle Gritter

Rev. Michelle Gritter, 47, graduated from seminary in 1996 and was ordained in 2000. She is currently a copastor with her husband of The Lantern, a church plant in Calgary, Alta. "God called me to the ministry," she explained. "I still feel his call rumbling in my soul as clearly as it sounded 20 years ago." Gritter addressed the same conundrum Benckhuysen raised. Clearly, there is still work to be done regarding gender equality in our denomination, she said. "In one way, Synod's 1996 decision to emphasize the ecclesiastical decision of the local church made a professional life for ministers like me possible. The same decision, however, causes a strange mix of those who both approve and disapprove of my role when I go beyond the context of my own church and into places like classis meetings. Until just a few years ago, delegates regularly registered their disapproval of the presence of women delegates at our classis."

She went on, "There are middle-school girls in our church right now who I baptized. I am grateful to think they have never known anything other than having a woman pastor. It doesn't even cross their minds that being an elder or a pastor in their church isn't a possibility. And yet, in the very same classis, there are many girls who have never heard the gospel preached through the person and voice of a woman pastor."



### **Eleanor Rietkerk**

Rev. Eleanor Rietkerk, 71 and now retired, was ordained in 1997 and pastored Mill Creek Community CRC in Washington for 16 years. "The uncertainty around women's ordination in the CRC made it a continual walk of faith," she said. "God's call on my life was so strong and so clear that even in the challenging times, I never considered saying no to that call. The only thing I was unsure of was whether I would be able to stay in the CRC. I'm so grateful to God for the final decision in 1996 that made it possible for me and many other women to stay and serve. I'm also so grateful to God for all the good

things in this journey that have far outweighed the challenging ones. My call is still so precious and amazing to me, and even though I've been asked to share it over a hundred times, the tears still roll down my cheeks as I tell it and when I think of all the people God has given me the privilege to love and serve and who have called me their pastor."

Rietkerk too believes "we have come a long way in our denomination, but it's still difficult for women to become full-time pastors. Many churches say they are all for women in ministry, but they aren't always so willing to take the next step of calling them."



### **Ruth Hofman**

Hofman is currently a copastor with her husband, Steve Venhuizen, serving Friendship Community CRC in Toronto and working part-time in the CRC campus ministry at York University. She still expresses gratitude for those who went before her. "In seminary," she said, "I was privileged to have others champion the ordination of women to all offices of the church while I concentrated on studies that really energized me.

What was true for me was, I believe, true of other women students—our calling had been tested, was made sure by the testimony of the Spirit of God and was being affirmed by the church. Humble and deeply spiritual women were instruments of God's purposes in furthering the kingdom at that time."

"The same is true today," she continued, "including the barriers that still remain for women seeking ordained ministry positions. I think women and men in the church and its training institutions will have to look at ministry with fresh eyes. More are needed in the marketplace, and 'extending a call' may mean ordaining women and men to their communities—neighborhood, apartment building, school, factory—in other words, to places where they have the most investment of time and passion to extend the love of Christ and to live out his gospel."

These five pioneers offered some advice to women entering the ministry today. "The one piece of advice I have," said Rietkerk, "is that arguing the issue of women in the ministry doesn't usually result in changing anyone's mind. What changes minds and hearts is simply doing and being who God has called us to be."

Hofman echoed that. "I've found that being genuine and warm, respectful and outgoing—along with having a sense of calling and the validation of God's Spirit—did more to soften hearts toward women in ministry than

any rationale or argument. Be godly."

Gritter told of people who opposed women's ordination whose opinions were changed after hearing her preach, and of the little girl who shyly approached her after a service and whispered, "I want to do what you do someday."

Hulst said, "This is the best job in the world. You have a front-row seat to what God is up to in a church, on a college campus, in a hospital, in the lives of all the people you care for. My advice is to develop life-giving Sabbath practices. The work is never-ending and can easily become 24/7."

Benckhuysen's words of advice are like a benediction on the occasion of this 20th anniversary: "Trust God's calling on your life, and live into that calling whether the church affirms it or not. There are ministry opportunities all around us, and while it would be nice to live out our callings in cooperation with the church, at times our path in ministry may look more like that of Johanna Veenstra, whose response to the call of God and ministry was only later recognized by the church. Remember God is good and God is faithful. It is ours to be faithful to the gifts and calling God gave us in return."

—Janet A. Greidanus

# NEWS

## Highlights of 2016 Fall Classis Meetings

Two or three times each year, Christian Reformed churches send representatives to their classis, a regional grouping of churches. Delegates at those meetings review and make decisions about shared ministries and practice mutual accountability for their congregations' individual ministries. Here are the highlights of some of the most recent classis meetings.

Several people were **welcomed into ministry in the Christian Reformed Church**, including seminary graduates Christopher Allen, Andrea Baas, Nicholas Baas, Yohanes Budhi, Andy Carlson, Scott Chiang, Daniel DeVries, Gareth Harker, Drew Hoekema, Brian Hofman, Michelle Kool, Brenda Kronemeijer-Heyink, Victor Laarman, Jacob Meadows, Neal Muasa, Jesse Pals, Joella Ranaivoson, Christina Rea, Peter Rockhold, Barbara Sanders, Paula Seales, Hannah Smele, Sam Sutter, Brian Tarpy, Charles Van Hoffen, and Adam Veenstra.

Ministers **transferring in from other denominations were** Ezra Jang, Nevada De Lapp, Sang J. Park, Seung K. Kang, Teuk K. Chung, Eric Sarwar, and Mani Koirala.

Daniel Jin Su Hwang, Henry Serrano, Randal Young, and Zeke Nelson were **loaned to other denominations**.

**Ministers released from their congregation:** Revs. Hector Garcia, Eric Verhulst, Tim Howerzyl, Arthur Verboon, John Luth, Ferry Yang, Martin Mobach, and Robert Sizemore (chaplaincy).

The following were **released from ministry in the CRC:** Greg Selmon, Charles Jeon, David Crump, Samuel Ng, Sun Man Kang, Kook Sung Kim, Randall Simon, Michael Van Boom, Yong Chae Shin, Seongchul Youn, Samuel Ahn, Sungil Sohn, and Won Joon Song.

Richard Vander Vaart was **dismissed** from ministry in the CRC; Brad Smith was **deposed**.

An emerging church does not have its own council and is under the care of the council of a neighboring Christian Reformed church. An organized church has its own council. The following churches were **organized:** InSpirit CRC (Byron Center, Mich.); Sanostee (N.M.) CRC; Christ Church CRC (Davis, Calif.).

West Olive (Mich.) CRC was declared **emerging**. A **church plant** was approved for Chanhassen, Minn., a suburb of Minneapolis.

The following congregations **merged:** The Tapestry (Richmond, B.C.) and Mundy Park (Coquitlam, B.C.); Missio Dei CRC (Torrance, Calif.) and Korean Community CRC (Buena Park, Calif.).

The following congregations **disbanded:** Sacred Journey CRC (Providence, R.I.); Missio Dei CRC (Omaha, Neb.); Piedras Vivas CRC (Miami, Fla.); Creekside Communities CRC (Boulder, Colo.); First CRC

(Jenison, Mich.); realTALK campus ministry (Stephen F. Austin University in Nacagdoches, Tex.); Planted Communities (Spring, Tex.); WestCoast Community Church (Delta, B.C.); Glory Christian Church (Fullerton, Calif.); Hanain CRC (Monrovia, Calif.); Joy People Church (Cypress, Calif.); Lighthouse CRC (Palmer's Print, Tex.); New Life Church (Las Vegas, Nev.); Sacramento (Calif.) Pilgrim CRC; and Jewel CRC (Denver, Colo.).

### Leadership

**Classis Toronto** stipulated that the policies regarding solemnizing and participating in same-sex marriages as they appear in the *Acts of Synod 2016*, Article 65, apply to all officebearers and to those licensed to exhort in Classis Toronto.

### Synod 2017

**Classis Toronto** sent a communication to Synod 2017 protesting "the unprecedented stipulation that Synod 2016 has placed on potential members to serve on the committee to study human sexuality, namely, that members must say in advance that they are in agreement with the church's official position on homosexuality as stated in 1973 and reiterated in 2002."

**Two classes** requested that long study committee reports include a two-page executive summary.

—Banner Staff



**Classis Wisconsin mourned the death of its stated clerk, Rev. Ken Prol, who died while riding his bicycle just days before classis met.**

## Niekerk CRC Celebrates 150 Years

Niekerk Christian Reformed Church in Holland, Mich., celebrated its 150th anniversary in September.

The church was founded when its members decided that, at five miles away, the existing church in Holland was too far away to be easily attended. The church has remained in the same location ever since, through several building renovations and one complete reconstruction after a devastating fire.

The congregation still includes many families related to the char-



ter members of Niekerk, and the anniversary was an opportunity to relive the church's history. From the time the congregation hosted a Laotian refugee family to the time the church ceiling fell in, members enjoyed sharing stories of life at Niekerk.

Since Niekerk has long considered itself "a singing church," music was a significant part of the celebrations. Some services featured family musical groups comprised of multiple generations of Niekerk members.

—Leah Luyk

## Ontario Family Celebrates Heritage with Baptism Gown



Ethan Mark Heerema

When Ethan Mark Heerema was baptized at Talbot Street Christian Reformed Church in London, Ont., he was the most recent family member to wear what has become a family heirloom. The baptismal gown dates back to 1946. The fabric came from a silk parachute attached to food supplies dropped by the Allied forces just before the liberation of the Netherlands from Nazi occupation.

Ethan's great-grandfather, Bert Lubberts, found the dropped supplies in a field on his family farm in the spring of 1945. He ran to share the good news about the food and the hope for liberation with his family. Long after the food was gone, he kept the parachute as a reminder of the joy of that morning.

Within a year, Lubberts was married. Expecting their first child, the young couple were surprised in May 1946 when their first child turned out to be their first children. Tiena gave birth to twin girls, Jane and Janie.

With fabric scarce in post-war Europe, a friend made baptismal gowns for the girls out of that silk parachute, a symbol of even greater promise and joy.

Since then, the baptism gowns have been used in over 30 family baptisms, including Jane's and Janie's younger siblings and many of their children, grandchildren, and even great-grandchildren. Ethan is Jane's grandson, son of Bart and Allison Heerema.

"It truly is awesome," said Jane Heerema, reflecting on the story of her baptism gown and the meaning it has in her family.

"God is always faithful. My parents were always totally unashamed of their faith, and that legacy has carried on through to our children and our grandchildren," said Jane.

—Anita Brinkman

## IN MEMORIAM



### Rev. Henry Bouma

1925-2016

Henry Bouma will be remembered as a man with a natural passion for boldly sharing his faith, a legacy he passed on to his children. "My dad trained me to always be willing to share the reason for the hope within me," said his daughter Lisa. "He had me write and memorize a one-minute, a three-minute, and a 10-minute testimony." Bouma died on September 15. He was 90.

After serving in the U.S. Army during World War II, Bouma graduated from Calvin Theological Seminary in 1956 and received his *doctorandus* in 1959 from the Free University in Amsterdam. He served Christian Reformed congregations in Alberta, California, Washington, and Indiana. He was passionate about prison ministry and served in correctional facilities in Illinois. After retiring in 1996, he continued to volunteer into his 80s.

Bouma loved reading and spending time with extended family. He was a loving and affirming grandfather.

He is survived by Mary, his wife of 59 years, by four daughters and their spouses, and by eight grandchildren and a newborn great-grandson.

—Janet A. Greidanus

# NEWS

## More Online

If you haven't checked *thebanner.org* lately, you've missed these stories!



### Retired Pastor Builds Sailboat from Church Pews

"No new trees will be cut for my boat" is the slogan Rev. Anthony Schweitzer, a retired Christian Reformed pastor, has chosen for the 17-foot (5.2 meter) sailboat he is constructing. He is using a vari-

ety of wood sources, including old church pews.

### Caring for People Who Are LGBTQ

Around 90 people showed up for a classis conversation to, among other things, get up close and personal with a wider group of Edmonton (Alta.) area church members who are living with the reality of LGBTQ orientation—either personally or indirectly through the lives of family members or friends.

### Loving Sunnyside Completes 100th Home

Nine years and 16,320 volunteer hours later, the Loving Sunnyside Initiative started by members of Sunnyside (Wash.) CRC celebrated the completion of its 100th home.



### New Affordable Housing Opens in Ontario

The doors were officially opened at the newly renovated Hambleton Hall in Simcoe, Ont., which includes 35 permanent units and five transitional units. Members of Simcoe's Immanuel CRC assembled furniture and moved tenants into their new homes. This is Indwell's latest affordable housing development.

### Wolterstorff: Biblical Justice and Same-Sex Marriage

Dr. Nicholas Wolterstorff spoke about same-sex marriage for the first time publicly, laying out how he came to his conclusion that biblical justice requires that people of homosexual orientation be granted "the great good of civil and ecclesial marriage." The event was held at Neland Avenue CRC in Grand Rapids, Mich., on October 13.

### New Friendship Curriculum Expands Inclusiveness

Friendship Ministries' new curriculum, *Together*, has expanded beyond its usual audience of people with intellectual disabilities to include all adults, such as ESL learners. *Together* has a two-track system, one for traditional Friendship groups and a second for adult small groups learning together.

## IN MEMORIAM



### Rev. Clarence Van Ens 1919-2016

Clarence Van Ens was a person to whom people were drawn as to a magnet. For more than 50 years, he served Christian Reformed congregations around the world. Van Ens died on August 16 at the age of 96.

After studies at Calvin Theological Seminary and Westminster Theological Seminary, Van Ens served ministries in New Jersey, Michigan, and Florida. He also served Box Hill Reformed Church in Australia.

In 1952, Van Ens and his twin brother, John, copastored the Dutch Reformed Church (now the Christian Reformed Church) of Sri Lanka. Van Ens served several churches, taught Old Testament Studies, and edited the denominational publication, *The Herald*. During retirement he served congregations in Florida. "For him there was no retirement in the kingdom of God," said his wife, Theresa.

Van Ens was an avid fan of the University of Michigan Wolverines and the Detroit Tigers, both of which he eagerly watched on television.

Van Ens will be lovingly remembered by Theresa and by two children and eight grandchildren. He was predeceased by his first wife, Margaret.

—Janet A. Greidanus

## Grow Deep, Live Tall: Iowa Church Celebrates 125 Years

Grow Deep, Live Tall was the theme for the 125th anniversary of First Christian Reformed Church in Rock Valley, Iowa.

Special choirs, mementos, and sharing of memories were all part of the celebration that culminated in worship on September 18. Rev. Roger Bultman, pastor from 1979 to 1985, led the morning service.

Reflecting on First CRC's 125 years, current pastor Rev. Matthew Haan said that God's faithfulness is longer than anyone else's.

"That is why we have the tree as the symbol of the church," he said. "The roots run deep into God's Word; the branches multiply with his goodness so that [all can] bear fruit."

—Kyle Hoogendoorn

Grow Deep, Live Tall was the theme for First CRC's 125th anniversary.



GROW DEEP LIVE TALL  
Jeremiah 17:7-8





*Hospitable.*  
**NEIGHBORHOODS**

**“AND WHO IS  
MY NEIGHBOR?”**

(LUKE 10:29)

**T**his question, which becomes the impetus for the parable of the Good Samaritan, is perhaps even more relevant today than when it was first asked. The expert in the law who asked Jesus was concerned with fulfilling the law in a technical sense. But as Jesus’ response made clear, the man had very little interest in fulfilling the intent of the law.

The man knew that he had a God-given obligation to love his neighbor, but he thought that if he could define the concept of “neighbor” narrowly enough—say, someone who lives immediately next door—he could be exempt from the messy reality of actually caring for others.

Jesus turned this man’s query on its head by reminding him that the neighbor relationship is reciprocal. At the end of the parable, the one who is identified as neighbor is not the victim in need of help but the one who offers help. That is to say, loving my neighbor isn’t about who is or who is not my neighbor, but rather it’s about my willingness to engage with and perhaps help anyone with whom I interact on any given day.

Those in the parable who fail the “neighbor” test are those who choose to “pass by on the other side” rather than engage with the man in need. They see the man in need and they cross the street to avoid him.

Two millennia later, we who live in North America have created a more effective—albeit more subtle—strategy for avoiding our obligation to act neighborly toward our fellow citizens. And it’s a strategy we might not even be aware of.

**Inhospitable Neighborhoods**

This strategy involves a few simple steps. First, design a society that encourages everyone to remain hermetically sealed in their automobiles when traveling from point A to point B. Second, allow most people to access their homes directly from their cars through enclosed garages. And third, orient private residences toward the back of their property and encourage everyone to spend all of their discretionary time at home either inside the house or in the backyard.

These simple steps make it easy for people to virtually eliminate contact with strangers in their day-to-day life. And if we can eliminate contact with strangers, we can absolve ourselves from any pesky obligation that we may feel from God to act neighborly toward anyone we don’t already know. But as was the case with the expert in the law who asked Jesus about his neighbor, such logic bears »

little connection to what God actually requires of us.

During the second half of the 20th century, North America developed a cultural habit for creating what I call “inhospitable neighborhoods”—those that have been designed to keep residents insulated from direct contact with strangers or anyone outside of one’s circle of friends and family.

Not everyone who happens to live in an inhospitable neighborhood is motivated to shun the stranger. In fact, many people who live in these kinds of neighborhoods, motivated by Christian conviction or otherwise, would gladly help a stranger in need. But in reality, the way their neighborhood is designed makes it more difficult to have meaningful engagement with others outside of their homes.

Fortunately, inhospitable neighborhoods are not the only type of neighborhood in North America. Lots of neighborhoods built prior to World War II are significantly more hospitable. And today there is a lot of new interest around building more hospitable neighborhoods in urban areas.

Hospitable neighborhoods provide opportunities for strangers to become familiar with one another. And they encourage new relationships—even friendships—to be formed.

### **Hospitable Places to Hang Out**

Three attributes that can have a significant impact on the hospitality of a neighborhood include “third places,” walkability, and sociable front yards.

We’ll start by looking at the role of “third place” in a neighborhood. This term was coined by Roy Oldenburg in his book *The Great Good Place: Cafés, Coffee Shops, Community Centers, Beauty Parlors, General Stores, Bars, Hangouts, and How They Get You through the Day* to describe a neighborhood hangout spot. The idea is that our homes function as our “first place,” and, for many of us, our places of work function as our “second place.” Homes and places of work are necessary and good, but they also may bring us stress because of the obligations that we find housed within them. The “third place” is a relaxing place where we

can spend time releasing some of the pressure that builds up in our first and second places.

Third places—coffee shops, pubs, barber shops, corner groceries, to name a few—are open to everyone, but no one is obligated to be there at any particular time. They exist in urban and rural environments. But whatever form they take, third places provide opportunities for us to get to know our neighbors and visitors to our neighborhood a little better.

We don’t even have to explicitly interact with another person to gain some familiarity with them at a third place. For instance, we might know someone only as “the man who sits at that corner table with a bagel and a journal most mornings.”

### **Hospitable Streets**

A second attribute that can help make a neighborhood more hospitable is the existence of streets that encourage people to walk for recreation and transportation. During the latter half of the 20th century, streets were built primarily for the purpose of moving cars quickly and efficiently. And while many of these streets included places for pedestrians, they were generally not the kinds of places that anyone who had any other options would choose to walk. Picture a seemingly endless sidewalk with a parking lot fronting a strip mall on one side and an eight-lane arterial on the other, with no trees to offer protection from the elements or amenities such as benches to offer a place of rest.

**CONSIDER *the variety of things* YOU  
COULD ACCESS WITHIN A FIVE-MINUTE  
WALK FROM YOUR FRONT DOOR.**

but even that makes a stranger feel less threatening to us in our neighborhood.

Third places can also play a vital role in fostering new friendships in a neighborhood. While inviting someone into your home for the first time can represent a significant risk for both parties involved, sharing a table at a local coffee shop to discuss last night’s game is a much easier way to get a relationship started.

As many of us discover in adulthood, it can be difficult to see friends as often as we would like to. Finding a time that works on both calendars is a challenge, and even when we can find a time, the hassle of cleaning our home for company can discourage us from taking the initiative to invite someone over. But in the context of a chance meeting at the corner grocery store, we can have short conversations with our neighbors on an almost daily basis.

Fortunately, it’s not too difficult to make a street walkable. Prior to the advent of automobile-oriented development, walkability was an implied goal in the multiple decisions involved in developing a town. And it is making a significant comeback today. Walkability is a simple function of enclosure, visual interest, and meaningful destinations.

Enclosure has to do with the feeling of shelter that we get from the buildings that flank the streets. It feels a bit like walking in an outdoor hallway and can be achieved on a variety of scales: from the main street in a typical small town to a street of residential brownstones in midtown Manhattan. A relatively wide residential street flanked by single-family homes can achieve a sense of enclosure through a well-placed line of street trees. What kills enclosure are streets that are too wide (think multi-lane arterials) and buildings that are too low (single-story strip malls). The scale of generic big box

retail clusters with oceanic parking lots also fails to achieve enclosure.

Visual interest is enhanced by a streetscape that offers lots of things to engage the eye of pedestrians—such as interesting textures and architectural features of buildings as well as benches, lampposts, and planting strips. But the most effective kind of visual involves watching other people. Retail stores with windows and doors that come right up to the sidewalk add a lot of visual interest, as do restaurants and cafes that include windows that open to the outside.

It is very important to gauge visual interest at the pedestrian level. An iconic building or the tall buildings that contribute to a city's impressive skyline often don't offer much visual interest at the pedestrian level. But it is the way parking is handled that can have the most negative impact on visual interest. Stores that are set back from the sidewalk with parking lots in front offer very little for the pedestrian to look at. And large parking garages that span an entire block provide a particularly dreary view. Unfortunately, these kinds of parking strategies are often not only allowed but mandated by city ordinances.

Finally, walkability has to do with the presence of meaningful destinations. Consider the variety of things you could access within a five-minute walk from your front door. In some neighborhoods you could buy groceries, visit a library, get a haircut, play in a park, eat lunch, or worship at a church. In other neighborhoods there are only other single-family residences within a five-minute walk. People do walk for exercise in such neighborhoods. However, in neighborhoods that do contain meaningful destinations, walking tends to be much more common and is done by people of all ages—from babies being pushed in strollers to senior citizens out to pick up a newspaper.

### Hospitable Front Yards

A third feature that contributes toward making neighborhoods hospitable is the sociability of the front yard. In certain areas, usually older neighborhoods, the front yard used to be a very social space. The tradition of sitting on the front porch in the evening and greeting neighbors

who were out for an evening stroll provided an easy way to strengthen the bonds of community and to encourage relationship building.

With the growing popularity of air conditioning and television in private households, this tradition declined considerably throughout the 20th century. And during the second half of that century, suburban houses began to be built with an orientation toward the backyard rather than the front. The houses looked nice from the front, but families began spending more time inside and in the backyard instead of on the front porch.

These changes made it considerably more difficult for a stranger to comfortably interact with a resident of a particular household. In the typical North American home, a stranger has to cross over someone's property line, walk down a long pathway, and then knock on a door before they encounter the homeowner—during which the homeowner makes a quick assessment of the person at her door: is this a friend or a stranger? If it is a friend, the person is invited in. If it is a stranger, the question quickly becomes, "What do you want?" The assumption is that the stranger is trying to sell something or enlist the resident in some cause.

The North American front door can be considered a threshold where we distinguish friend from stranger. It does not lend itself to be a place where new friendships can reasonably be formed. But it is possible to create a much more hospitable front yard simply by shifting the location of the threshold.

James Rojas demonstrated this through a study of Mexican American homeowners in East Los Angeles ("The Enacted Environment: The Creation of 'Place' by Mexicans and Mexican Americans in East Los Angeles"). The residents he studied had moved into typical American homes with manicured lawns in the front and a backyard orientation. But rather than keeping their homes this way, they altered them by putting a low fence in the front yard and installing a gate.

By clearly defining a boundary for the front yard, residents created what Rojas calls "defensible space" and used this space as an extension of their living rooms. In

these homes, the threshold was moved from the front door to the front gate. And by making that change, these residents of East Los Angeles created a very complex and effective social space in their front yards. Depending on their mood, residents could use their front yard in different ways. If they're open to some public interaction, they can hang out near the front of the yard or even lean on the front gate. If they want to engage in a little chat with a neighbor, they can lean against the side fence.

If it's true that the hospitality of a neighborhood has to do with how easy it is to form new relationships or strengthen existing relationships, then it's clear that there is a wide range of hospitality among the neighborhoods we live in.

And while the effective hospitality of a neighborhood ultimately depends on the hospitality of its residents, factors like third places, walkability, and sociable front yards all have a place in fostering hospitable neighborhoods. The policies are being debated with increasing frequency within municipalities and homeowners' associations around North America. But whether you happen to live in a hospitable neighborhood or not, being a good neighbor has everything to do with your willingness to engage those on "the outside."

So who is your neighbor? According to Jesus, your neighbor includes the people who live next door as well as those who pass through your neighborhood. The real question for each of us, though, has to do with what kind of a neighbor you are to them. Do you really know who they are? Do you know their name? Do you know a few things about them? If so, well done. You are following God's will for your life. If you don't know these things, take note of the people in your area who are acting neighborly. And then "go and do likewise" (Luke 10:37). ■

STUDY QUESTIONS ONLINE



**Eric O. Jacobsen** is a pastor at First Presbyterian Church, Tacoma, Wash., where he lives with his wife and four children. He is the author of

*The Space Between: A Christian Engagement with the Built Environment* (Baker Academic, 2012).

# How to Help a Grieving Person

## IT STARTED OUT AS A NORMAL

Friday morning in February. My husband was showing some alarming symptoms, so we went to the hospital. By early afternoon, I was a widow. At the time of my husband's death, our son was 14 months old, and I was 18 weeks pregnant with our second son. Losing my husband so unexpectedly felt like I had sustained a gaping chest wound the size of a basketball.


The days and weeks that followed this devastating blow were a whirlwind. Dealing with death brings on a tornado of raw emotions. The aftermath is chaos for those closest to the bereaved and awkward for those looking in. I could easily sense how uncomfortable people felt around me. If the roles had been reversed, like them I would have wondered, *What should I say? What should I do? I want to help, but I have no idea how.* The vast majority of people were very kind and helpful. And among all those thoughtful people, some really nailed it.

I would like to share some of my experiences so that if you know someone who is dealing with a tragic loss, you might have a better idea of how to help.

Three concepts that I stumbled upon are mirroring, offering specific help, and avoiding giving advice. Please keep in mind that I'm only a few months into the grieving process, and that everyone grieves differently. So what I share may not be helpful for every person.

### Mirror the Grieving Person

Let the grieving person lead the attitude and emotional state of your interaction in social situations. This is especially important during the first few days or weeks following a tragedy. So if the grieving individual is somber, be somber with her. If the person wants to chat, then chat. If he wants to sit in silence, follow his lead.



Don't feel like you are less of a friend if the grieving person wants to have an ordinary conversation with you.

Don't feel like you are less of a friend if the grieving person wants to have an ordinary conversation with you. I felt comfortable crying and grieving with some people, while others were a welcome distraction from my pain. Both roles are important. Being able to take a step away from the tragedy and have a normal interaction was just as cathartic as breaking down in tears.

When interacting with the grieving person, try to reflect her body language, especially at the visitation and funeral. Think basic nonverbal communication.

Match the person when she moves toward you and when she moves away. When giving a hug, let the grieving person decide the type and length of the hug. In my experience, I felt uncomfortable when someone would hold onto me much longer than I wanted; I would try to move away but couldn't. It is likely the grieving person has hugged dozens if not hundreds of people already. If you didn't have a close relationship before the tragedy, your hug may be more for you than for the grieving person.



### Offer Specific Help

I have been fortunate to have many people offer to help. I can't even fathom how many people said, "Let me know if there is anything I can do." That is a kind thing to say. However, it is general, and the grieving person may not be able to immediately process what kind of help she needs. So I found it extremely helpful when people would offer specific forms of help. A church member who watched her grandkids every Tuesday offered to watch my son on those days. That was

outstanding. I was able to schedule my doctor appointments and my grief counseling on those Tuesdays because I knew I had someone to watch my son.

When offering help, be clear and precise. Make it easy for the person to accept or decline the offer. Also, consider the timing. I couldn't process help that was offered at the visitation or funeral. It was more helpful a week or two later.

Here are some examples of making your offer of help more specific:

- Instead of "I'd love to help; let me know what I can do," say, "Would you like help with household chores?"
- Instead of "I'm here if you need me," say, "I would like to take you out to lunch next week."
- Instead of "Let me know if you need a meal," say, "Could I bring you a meal tomorrow?"
- Instead of "I can come over if you don't want to be alone," say, "I'm free on Thursdays if you would like company."

### Avoid Giving Advice

Very few of us are comfortable with death, and sometimes we talk or give advice to cover up our discomfort. But in my experience, less is more when it comes to words. My wound is my wound; each person's pain is unique. It is unlikely that others can comprehend what the grieving person is feeling. So keep in mind that giving advice or quoting Scripture may not be well received immediately following a tragedy. The grieving person may not process or remember anything you say at that time. If you feel strongly that you have some valuable advice to share, include it in a card or note. That way she can choose when to read it and how to use it.

My favorite memory of the visitation was when one of my husband's acquaintances approached me with a strange question. It was obvious that he felt

uncomfortable around me and had no idea what to do. Most people said things like, "You have my sympathies," or "I'm sorry for your loss." This guy walked up to me and asked me about a pizza roll recipe I had made years ago. At that moment, I thought, *I will gladly talk to you about something other than my dead husband!* It was a slight moment of refreshing distraction. I'm not recommending that you ask for a recipe at a visitation or funeral, but it was hilarious and it illustrates the state of mind I was in. When my mind couldn't process the advice people gave, this interaction stands out as memorable.

We can glean a lot of useful information about dealing with a grieving person by looking at the book of Job. Job's three friends sat with him for a full week in shared, silent grief. But after that first week, his friends filled the air with high-sounding advice. They offered models of what not to say. Their arguments only made Job feel worse, and in the end God dismissed those friends with a scowl. As it turned out, compassionate silence was the most profound way to help Job deal with the tragedy.

Death is awful, but God is faithful. Death is painful for everyone, but God's people who showed me love reflect God, my ultimate comfort. I may be wounded, but I know the omnipotent Healer, and I have seen the love of Christ through countless people. Being on the receiving end of the visitation line gave me a new perspective about walking alongside a grieving person. ■



**Kari Poortinga** is a member of Community CRC in Indiana. She works part-time at a residential treatment facility for teenagers, where she leads equine-assisted psychotherapy sessions.

As Jul Medenblik's lectern shows, leadership is a key area of learning for students at Calvin Theological Seminary.



## Learning to Lead

by Nathan Bierma

Some subjects in seminary can't be mastered in a classroom. Laura de Jong knows that leadership is one of them.

"There's a lot in ministry that you just can't learn how to do until you're doing it," said de Jong, a Master of Divinity (M.Div.) student at Calvin Theological Seminary. "In seminary you gain a framework, you gain the tools for responding as a leader to whatever situation comes up."

"It's impossible to be fully prepared when we go into ministry," agreed M.Div. student James Lee. "Seminary is giving me the tools in my toolbox, and I'm learning how to use the tools so that when I'm a pastor, I can respond."

This is something that Calvin Seminary president Jul Medenblik also knows from experience. He served as a church planter before becoming president of Calvin Seminary in 2011. While wisdom in leadership comes from lived experience, he said, the seminary classroom can prepare students for those moments.

"I find that students take good notes in class, but it's when a situation arises later in ministry that they dig in and apply that wisdom and insight in a particular situation," Medenblik said.

To help prepare students, Calvin Seminary increasingly emphasizes leadership throughout the curriculum. This starts in students' first year when they

take a course in spiritual disciplines for pastors, and it culminates in their final year when each student presents an in-depth analysis of a case study in ministry to a panel of professors and pastors. Throughout seminary, students participate in vocational formation groups with peers and a mentoring pastor. They also serve in internships where they experience ministry firsthand.

The topic of leadership comes into focus in a capstone course called "Leadership in Ministry." Medenblik co-teaches one section of the course with Paul De Vries, senior pastor at Brookside CRC in Grand Rapids, Mich. Another section is taught by Geoff Vandermolen, a longtime

## ““ The need for leadership that truly transforms congregations is becoming more immediate. ””

church planter who now serves as director of vocational formation at Calvin Seminary.

Medenblik said the aim is to give a holistic view of leadership, where the emphasis isn't on authority and influence but rather on listening and shepherding a congregation.

“I believe in a reciprocal view of leadership, where the pastor isn't the only leader, but where the pastor and congregation are in dialogue and learning together,” Medenblik explained.

De Jong said that message has already sunk in.

“We're learning that you need to meet people where they are,” she explained. “If you're going to lead a congregation, you need to listen to them and make sure you've earned their trust.”

At the same time, Medenblik said that the need for leadership that truly transforms congregations is becoming more immediate.

“Churches have increasingly identified that they're disconnected from their community, and they see that leadership is key to helping to bridge that gap,” he said. “A church that's in status quo, in our changing society, will probably be a church that's increasingly out of touch, unless it is aware of the context in which they do ministry.”

Medenblik points to the 2014 report of the Strategic Planning and Adaptive Change Team (SPACT) of the Christian Reformed Church in North America. The report identified leadership as essential to helping churches engage their communities more intentionally.

“Leadership helps a church see beyond itself. Leaders help congregations shape the conversation about how they do ministry now and how they will do ministry in the future,” he said.

Vandermolen agrees. He sees leadership as a catalyst for transformation within and beyond congregations.

“Leadership sees the ideal, which is whatever Jesus describes for the world—shalom—and the gap between that and who we really are and what the world is actually like,” he explained. “Leadership is preaching, teaching, and leading toward addressing that gap in a variety of contexts.”

Lee said that preparing to guide conversations that build toward transformation starts with knowing himself as a leader and preparing to adapt.

“Seminary has shaped me to learn how to be a follower when I need to be and to be a strong leader when I need to be. I think I'm going to be a different leader five years from now, 10 years from now, and that's okay.” ■



Eduardo da Silva (second from right) said that the leadership course he attended before and after the Willow Creek Leadership summit taught by Jul Medenblik (far left) and Geoff Vandermolen (far right) was “one of the best courses I have ever taken in my academic life. Great content, awesome fellowship, and lessons and memories for life,” including meeting Willow Creek founder Bill Hybels (second from left).



Laura de Jong (left) said that Calvin Theological Seminary is giving her the tools she needs to respond as a leader in her future career.



Nathan Bierma is an educational technologist at Calvin Theological Seminary.

# The Making of a Servant Leader

by Emily Sajdak

“Leadership is serving and equipping others to serve in the body of Christ.”

This statement defines much of Jane Bruin’s life. Bruin’s ethnic heritage lies in Pakistan, but she was born and spent her early years in Nigeria before her family came to the United States. In Washington state, her family was invited to Lynden’s Sonlight Community CRC and began attending services. These early experiences as an immigrant have shaped how Bruin approaches leadership with others.

Another formative experience came at Calvin Seminary. After graduating from Dordt College in 1998, Bruin spent a number of years in West Africa teaching at Hillcrest School in Nigeria with Christian Reformed World Missions. When asked if she would consider teaching at the local seminary, Bruin decided to attend Calvin Seminary to obtain a master of arts in missions degree. While there, she met her husband. They spent 16 months as interns in Nigeria and later also worked in Senegal.

Today Bruin serves as assistant dean for international student development at Calvin College. She works closely with international students on campus to help them reach their goals and become who God created them to be.

Bruin said that her servant leadership while on the mission field and in the intercultural student development center has been significantly shaped by her theological training. Her time at Calvin Seminary shaped her theological framework for leadership and ministry and showed her that servant leadership is a large part of who she is.

She specifically credited Professor Ron Nydam’s pastoral care courses for demonstrating leadership to her. “He has a



**Jane Bruin has used her theological training from Calvin Seminary to become a servant leader both internationally and in the United States.**

committed way of serving people . . . he taught [me] what it really means to be a servant leader to those on the mission field. Not forcing our own will [on others] but instead focusing on who God made them to be,” Bruin said.

Bruin demonstrates those same skills in her daily work as she mentors a core group of student leaders who counsel fellow students and program events for the community. She describes this work as, “discipling in a less structured, more holistic way.”

It is a style of leadership that is “speaking into people’s lives” and having a lasting impact. ■



**Emily Sajdak is a freelance writer and a graduate of Calvin Seminary (M.T.S., Th.M.).**

### Praying for Seminary Students

Students enrolled in the Leadership in Ministry course at Calvin Theological Seminary were asked how readers of *The Banner* could be praying for them and their peers. Here are their prayer requests:

- For the dividing walls of difference that separate—whether nationality, ethnicity, or gender—to be dismantled through intentional relationships of cross-cultural understanding and enjoyment.
- Discernment for students as we sift and sort our particular calls to the ministry.
- For our families as we understand the many sacrifices they make for the sake of our callings.
- For the ministries that await us, most yet unknown. Join us in praying for these ministries and their boldness for the mission of God.
- For financial resources for all students—being able to afford seminary education often requires sacrifices and part-time employment on top of our heavy course work.
- For the church to stay focused on the mission of God and for all of us to be centered on that focus.
- That Calvin Seminary be a “safe place” for hard conversations we need to engage in to be well-prepared for the challenges of culture and creed we will encounter in ministry.



You add.  
God multiplies.

## Funding Ministry Innovation

**W**hat happens when you invest in ministry? That's a question Jeff Bolt, director of advancement for the Christian Reformed Church, explores every day. As part of his duties, Bolt oversees the CRC Foundation in the United States.

The developmental ministry fund of the CRC Foundation in the U.S. and Canada has been known by many names over the years—first as the Fellowship Fund, then as the CRC Foundation, later as the Catalyst Fund, and now as Ignite: Funding Ministry Innovation. Its purpose, however, has remained the same—to join CRC members together in financially supporting innovative ministries and initiatives.

“Ignite is a venture capital fund for ministry,” Bolt explained. “It provides agencies and ministries, as well as local churches and classes, with the ability to start something new without having to sacrifice funding for current ministry programs.”

The idea behind Ignite is to create ways to resource new ministry ideas and initiatives.

“Ministry today is different from ministry 20 years ago, and ministry 20 years from now will look different from ministry today,” said Bolt. “Ignite bridges the funding gap between ministry today and ministry tomorrow.”

To help cultivate new ministry ideas, Ignite provides seed money for ministry innovation.

In Ethiopia, for example, Pastor Grima, a local pastor, is shepherding a group of 79 young people and helping them live more godly lives. Nearby, Pastor Berhanu has been reaching out to unbelievers in his community, offering them meals and spiritual comfort in times of need. Both of these pastors cite training they received from the Timothy



**Pastor Grima credits the Timothy Leadership Training Institute, which received seed money from Ignite, for helping him succeed in his ministry with 79 young people in Ethiopia.**

Leadership Training Institute (TLTI) as being essential for equipping them for this type of ministry. Ignite (then known as the CRC Foundation) was a partner in helping to seed TLTI 10 years ago.

Funds from Ignite are not limited to international ministry, however. They can also be accessed for ministry initiatives that help local congregations.

During the spring of 2015, the CRC's Faith Formation Ministries used monies from Ignite and a local classis (a regional group of churches) to launch a pilot program called “the Canadian

Youth Ministry Project.” The focus of the project was to equip youth leaders in Canada to do their work in more meaningful ways through webinars, blogs, Facebook posts, events, retreats, and regional gatherings. If effective, the lessons learned from this pilot project in Canada can be replicated across North America.

Steve van Breda, director of youth ministries at Exeter Christian Reformed Church in Ontario, says the Canadian Youth Ministry Project has helped him better understand what it means to be engaged in youth ministry.

“I am discovering that it is much deeper than just the kids,” he said. “It leads seamlessly into faith formation as a church body.”

Van Breda says the support he's received from the project has “been invaluable.”

Over the past 20 years, Ignite has invested more than \$9 million to fund 85 different ministry ideas, church plants, and leadership initiatives.

“If you are involved in ministry at any level, I encourage you to learn more about Ignite and how it can be used to foster innovation for God's kingdom work,” said Bolt. ■

—by CRC Communications

### Faithful Waiting

**A**dvent is a time of waiting—waiting for the Christ-child to be born. Mary and Joseph waited through a humanly impossible pregnancy and then, like many modern-day travelers, endured a long journey. Upon arrival in Bethlehem, they had trouble finding a place to stay, eventually landing in a stable.

Elizabeth and Zechariah waited too for the birth of a child. In fact, Zechariah had to wait in silence until their baby was named, because he had doubted the good news that was told to him by the angel Gabriel.

In today's instantaneous culture, we don't like to wait. And we certainly don't like to remain silent. Why settle for standard shipping if we can get overnight delivery? Is there a way to get priority boarding for that plane trip? Why wait to talk in person if we can Facebook, instant message, tweet, or email?

Our ministers and musicians, our worship planners and children's ministry leaders will remind us how to wait this Advent season. The hymns and liturgies and the lighting of the Advent candles will pace our waiting as we worship all the way to Christmas morning.

But well beyond Advent, we need to consider what faithful waiting looks like for a denomination and for congregations.

Sometimes our impatience transfers into our church life. Perhaps you see the CRC approaching major decisions. Fearful of the outcome, you begin exploring other options—other denominations or perhaps an independent church. Or maybe you've hit a dry spell in the life of your home congregation. Church shopping comes next.

But wait! It may not be in our nature, but the benefits of waiting are evident in the Advent story and throughout the Scriptures.

Zechariah waited until he was able to sing again, and he ended with these words: "Because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace."

Isaiah 40:31 (KJV) says: "But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

As a denomination and as congregations, let us faithfully wait for God's mercy and light as we journey together.

In the words of an African-American spiritual: "Guide my feet while I run this race . . . for I don't want to run this race in vain."



**Dr. Steven Timmermans** is the executive director of the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

### 신실한 기다림

**대**강절은 기다림의 절기, 즉 아기 그리스도의 탄생을 기다리는 기간이다. 마리아와 요셉은 인간적으로 불가능한 잉태 이후 임신 기간 내내 태어날 아기를 기다렸고, 현대의 수많은 여행객처럼 베들레헴으로 가는 긴 여정을 견뎠다. 도착해서도 머물 곳을 찾는 데 어려움을 겪다가 결국 외양간에 자리를 잡았다.

엘리사벳과 스가랴도 아이의 탄생을 기다렸다. 스가랴는 천사 가브리엘이 전한 기쁜 소식을 의심했기 때문에 아이의 이름을 지을 때까지 말을 못하는 채로 기다려야만 했다.

즉흥적인 현대 문화 속에 사는 우리는 기다리는 것을 좋아하지 않는다. 그리고 우리는 확실히 가만히 있는 것을 좋아하지 않는다. 온라인으로 구매할 때 다음 날 받아볼 수 있다면 왜 일반 배송을 선택하겠는가? 게이트에서 기다리지 않고 비행기에 먼저 탑승할 수는 없을까?

페이스북이나 인스턴트 메시지, 트윗, 이메일을 보낼 수 있는데 왜 굳이 얼굴을 보고 말하기 위해 기다려야 할까?

물론 우리 사역자들과 음악가들 그리고 예배감독과 아동부 사역자들은 대강절을 기다리는 법을 우리에게 상기시켜 줄 것이다. 크리스마스 아침이 되기까지 예배 중 찬송가와 예전, 대강절 촛불 점화 등은 우리 기다림을 도와 줄 것이다.

그러나 우리는 이 대강절을 넘어서 신실한 기다림이 교단과 회중들에게 어떤 것인지 생각해 봐야 한다.

때때로 우리의 성급함은 교회 생활에서도 드러난다. 어쩌면 당신은 북미주개혁교회가 어떤 중요한 결정에 대해 고민하는 것을 보고 있을지도 모른다. 그 결과에 대한 두려움으로 당신은 다른 교단들이나 혹은 독립교회 등 다른 선택을 만지작 거릴 수도 있다. 혹은 어쩌면 당신은 교회 생활에서 침체에 빠졌을 수도 있다. 그러면 그 다음은 교회 쇼핑이 될 것이다.

그러나, 기다리라! 그것은 우리 인간의 본성과는 다를지 모른다. 그러나 기다림의 유익은 대강절 이야기와 성경 전체에서 명백하게 드러난다.

스가랴는 다시 노래할 수 있을 때까지 기다렸다가 이런 말로 찬양을 마무리했다. "이는 우리 하나님의 긍휼로 인함이라. 이로써 돌는 해가 위로부터 우리에게 임하여 어둠과 죽음의 그늘에 앉은 자에게 비취고 우리 발을 평강의 길로 인도하시리로다."

이사야 40:31은 이렇게 말한다. "오직 여호와를 앙망하는 자는 새 힘을 얻으리니 독수리가 날개치며 올라감 같을 것이요, 달음박질하여도 곤비하지 아니하겠고 걸어가도 피곤하지 아니하리로다."

우리 함께 길을 가는 동안, 교단으로서 한 회중들로서 하나님의 긍휼하심과 빛을 신실하게 기다리자.

옛 미국 흑인 영가에 이런 가사가 있다. "이 경주를 달릴 때 내 발을 이끄소서 ... 나는 이 경주를 헛되이 뛰고 싶지 않아요."

스티븐 팀머만스 Steven Timmermans, 북미주개혁교회 총무

## Esperando con fidelidad

**A**dviento es la temporada en la que esperamos que nazca el niño Jesús. María y José esperaron durante una preñez humanamente imposible y, como muchos viajantes modernos, tuvieron que soportar un largo viaje hasta llegar a Belén, les fue imposible encontrar un lugar donde alojarse y, finalmente, terminaron en un establo.

Elizabeth y Zacarías también tuvieron que esperar para que les naciera un bebé. De hecho, Zacarías tuvo que esperar en silencio hasta el día en que le pusieron nombre al bebé, porque dudó las buenas nuevas que el ángel Gabriel le había comunicado.

En la cultura instantánea de hoy, no nos gusta esperar. Y ciertamente no nos gusta estar en silencio. ¿Por qué esperaremos al correo ordinario, cuando podemos hacer nuestra orden en la Web y obtener el producto al otro día? ¿Hay alguna forma en que podamos subir a bordo del avión antes que los demás? ¿Por qué esperar a hablar cara a cara cuando podemos enviar un mensaje por Facebook, tweet o e-mail?

Nuestros ministros y músicos, los que planifican la adoración y los líderes del ministerio de niños nos van a recordar cómo se debe esperar en la temporada de adviento. Los himnos y liturgias, y el encendido de las velas de adviento, guiarán nuestra espera, mientras adoramos hasta llegar a la mañana del Día de Navidad.

Pero más allá de esta temporada de adviento, necesitamos aprender lo que es esperar con fidelidad en nuestra denominación y congregaciones.

A veces, la impaciencia también se implanta en la vida de nuestra iglesia. Quizá usted sepa de algunas decisiones importantes que la CRC está por tomar. Temiendo los resultados, usted podría empezar a explorar otras opciones: otras denominaciones o, quizá, una iglesia independiente. O quizá usted ha llegado a un punto muerto en la vida de la congregación a la que asiste, y dirá que es hora de buscar otra.

¡Un momento! Aunque no suene natural, el relato de adviento y todas las Escrituras nos muestran los evidentes beneficios de esperar.

Zacarías esperó hasta que fue capaz de cantar otra vez, terminando con las palabras: “Darás a conocer a su pueblo la salvación mediante el perdón de sus pecados, gracias a la entrañable misericordia de nuestro Dios. Así nos visitará desde el cielo el sol naciente, para dar luz a los que viven en tinieblas, en la más terrible oscuridad, para guiar nuestros pasos por la senda de la paz”.

Isaías 40:31 dice: “pero los que confían en el SEÑOR renovarán sus fuerzas; volarán como las águilas: correrán y no se fatigarán, caminarán y no se cansarán” (NVI).

Como denominación y congregaciones, esperemos con fidelidad la gracia y luz de Dios durante nuestra marcha juntos.

En palabras del cántico espiritual africano: “guía mis pies mientras corro la carrera... porque no quiero correr en vano”.

Steven Timmermans es director ejecutivo de la Iglesia Cristiana Reformada en Norte América.



“In today’s instantaneous culture, we don’t like to wait. And we certainly don’t like to remain silent.”

## Gaining a Global Perspective

**W**hen he attended Calvin College, Daniel Kim was surprised to be exposed to so many cultures and to be engaged with students in talking about their global experiences.

A missionary kid from South Korea, Kim said he learned not only from professors about the world—which he fully expected—but also from his classmates.

Kim, a 2015 Calvin graduate, said semesters abroad in South Korea and England played a role in broadening his perspective as well.

“I wanted to attend a Christian liberal arts college because I knew that every subject is connected to another, and seeing the big picture is necessary for international work,” he said. “Calvin was very intentional about this.”

Kim, who now works for Compassion International in Colorado Springs, Colo., took full advantage of Calvin’s many

opportunities for faculty and student interaction, signing up for “lunch with a prof” sessions and becoming active in the international student organization and activities.

One of his student internships was at World Renew, where he worked to create a global volunteer internship program. He also helped resettle refugee families through Lutheran Social Services.

After Calvin, Kim worked for the Red Cross, helping refugees in the U.S. connect with families and find loved ones. That job was followed by his current position as a Korean market specialist for Compassion International.

“We have over 14,000 Korean sponsors and donors in the U.S.,” said Kim, “and I raise awareness about areas of need and steward them in support of humanitarian relief, especially for children in poverty.”

He sees this work as a natural outgrowth of his life and educational experiences.

“We have to share what we have been given by God,” he said. “Being Korean-



Daniel Kim says Calvin College opened the world for him.

American makes me very aware of both cultures, and I feel called to share my knowledge and gifts with others.”

He recently began working on a graduate diploma in international relations through the London School of Economics.

“I want to prevent and alleviate human suffering and expand international capacity for that work,” Kim said. “I especially want to lift up refugees and poverty-stricken children.” ■

—by Mike Van Denend,  
Calvin College

## Water and Sanitation Bring Better Health to a Cambodian Community

**M**rs. Ben Soda was unsure how to make ends meet. Her husband’s health had declined, and he could no longer work.

Besides having to earn a living, she had to care for her husband and for their children, who frequently missed school because they were sick. In fact, most of their money was being used to pay for health care, leaving very little left over to cover other basic expenses.

The illness that Mrs. Soda and her family were experiencing was not unique to their home in a remote Cambodian community. Chronic



Mrs. Soda uses a water filter to sterilize her family’s drinking water.

diarrhea, coughing, and fever were common in her village—and this was true in other communities as well.

Villagers are often unaware that practices such as open defecation can contaminate their water supply

and that drinking unclean water can cause illness.

Without adequate access to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) the community’s health problems would persist.

To help the community address their health concerns, World Renew and its local partner Light New Unity (LNU) established a WASH program. Mrs. Soda participated in several training sessions to learn about preventative health care, handwashing, and clean drinking water.

Excited about what she had learned, she started to make changes, putting the family’s water in glass jars to

keep it clean. She also taught her family how to boil their water and use a water filter to sterilize the water before they drank it.

World Renew and LNU staff visit the community regularly to check on the progress Mrs. Soda and her neighbors are making.

“My family seems to have better health right now, no more sickness for my children and my husband,” Mrs. Soda said. “My kids can regularly attend their school. My husband is now able to help me.” ■

—by Taylor Smith,  
World Renew

add.  
God multiplies.

## Being the Church

**P**astor Joshua Jung reaches out to the Korean-American community of Orlando, Fla., using soccer games, hot dogs, fishing, service, and other activities.

Many in the Korean-American community have heard of Christ but have never gone to church. Jung hopes to change that.

“People ask me, ‘You’re a young man. Why are you helping us? No one else does!’” Jung said. “These acts of service are the starting point for invitations to church.”

A Korean immigrant himself, Jung knows the stresses of trying to fit into a new culture. Finding a lack of Korean Reformed churches in Orlando led him to start Grace Church.

Since its start in 2014 with four members, membership has grown to 50, including 30 new members just this year.

“For a church, *doing* is important, but the most important thing is *being*. Being who God created us to be. We need a church that understands who we are and what our culture is.



Members of Grace Church.

That’s why I founded this church,” Jung commented.

Grace Church, supported relationally, spiritually, and financially by Christian Reformed Home Missions, does not just serve the Korean population. Other immigrants, such as people from Cuba and American-born citizens, attend as well.

“For the immigrant, this country is not their country. There is always something missing,” Jung said. “But for all of us, there is something missing—always. It is as the Heidelberg Catechism states: ‘What is your only comfort in life and in death? That I am not my own, but belong—body and soul, in life and in death—to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ.’” ■

—by Brooke Bonnema,  
Christian Reformed Home Missions

## A Family Christmas Tradition

**F**orty years ago, Margie Hall’s family was on a fishing trip at Lake Red Rock near Pella, Iowa, when they decided to stop and refresh themselves at a little wayside chapel on the side of the highway.

There they discovered the *Today* devotional, which has offered them refreshment ever since.

*Today* is produced by ReFrame Media, the English language outreach of Back to God Ministries International.

“At first, I read it like a book,” said Margie Hall, 78. “Then I started reading the Bible passages too.”

She often read the devotionals at bedtime, but then



Margie Hall and her family discovered *Today* at Calvary Wayside Chapel.

she would take *Today* to work and read the messages while waiting for starting time. Now retired, she still continues the practice of morning *Today* devotions and prayers.

Hall and her siblings especially enjoyed the 1990 Christmas edition entitled “The People of Christmas.” She and three of her unmarried siblings lived together and began an annual tradition of taking turns reading the daily mes-

sage every evening during the Christmas season.

After her brothers died, she and a sister who lived farther away kept up the tradition by reading the Christmas devotionals over the phone until her sister passed away.

Hall is the last of her siblings, but she still reads that 1990 issue during the Christmas season.

“Last year I started with the introduction on November 30 and finished on December 29 with the devotional about Jesus talking,” she said.

Hall added, “I find the *Today* to be the most enlightening devotional I’ve ever read. I don’t know how my day would go without it.” ■

—by Nancy Vander Meer,  
Back to God Ministries  
International

## SHORT TAKES

### Gather at the River

Best-selling author Ann Voskamp, who lives on a farm in Canada, will help open the Christian Reformed Church’s Inspire gathering to be held Aug. 3-5, 2017, in Detroit, Mich.



Inspire is being called a “gathering” because it will gather CRC members from Canada and the U.S. to meet at the river in Detroit to pray, learn, experience, engage, inspire, and grow. The theme of Voskamp’s time of worship and sharing will be “The Costs of the Call.”

To get updates about Inspire 2017 and to be notified when registration opens, visit [crcna.org/Inspire2017](http://crcna.org/Inspire2017) or join the Facebook event page. ■



### Celebrating the Old, Looking Forward to the New

Christian Reformed Home Missions held a dinner in September for current and former ministry leaders at which they said goodbye to their old identity and welcomed in a new era as part of a new, expanding mission agency. “This is a historic time for us,” said Moses Chung, director of Home Missions. “We’re celebrating God’s faithfulness for the past 137 years that Home Missions has been in existence.”

At the same time, they celebrated the fact that the work will continue, he said. ■

# Stargazing

During this time of the year you'll see a lot of stars in different places. They'll decorate Christmas trees, hang from streetlights, appear in store windows, and maybe even decorate your house. We decorate with stars to remember the Christmas star, the one that guided the wise men to the baby Jesus.

Here's an even better way to celebrate that very special star: Go stargazing!

December can be a great month to stargaze. The air is usually crisp and clear, free of bonfire smoke and summer heat waves. This year the moon is new

near the end of the month, which means it's dark. So why not give stargazing a try then?

Stay alert for a cloudless night sometime after Christmas. Then bundle up and turn off any outside lights. Take a blanket to your backyard, lie down, and look at the sky. Give your eyes some time to adjust to the darkness. At first you may just see the brightest stars or maybe a planet or two. But after five or ten minutes you should be able to see lots of stars and pick out some constellations.

Here are some things to look for.

## Star or Planet?

Here's how to figure out if you are looking at a star or at a planet. You'll have to go outside a few nights in a row, if possible. Try to look at the same section of the sky every night. That way, you can become a little familiar with it. Here are a couple of things to remember.

- **Stars twinkle, planets shine steadily.** Stars are huge balls of burning gasses. They twinkle because they're burning. Planets are made of solid material. They do not twinkle, they simply reflect sunlight.
- **Stars seem to stay in place, planets wander.** That's because stars are far, far away from Earth. We can't see them move much from night to night. Planets are very close to Earth. We can watch them wander in the sky.

Try planet-gazing as your first step in stargazing. Go outside a few nights in a row and look for planets only. Look for one or two bright non-twinkling lights. Watch them for a few nights in a row, if possible. See if and how much they move every night. Watch planets until you can easily tell planets from the twinkling stars. After that, you're ready for real stargazing. A good place to start is with star pictures—also called *constellations*.

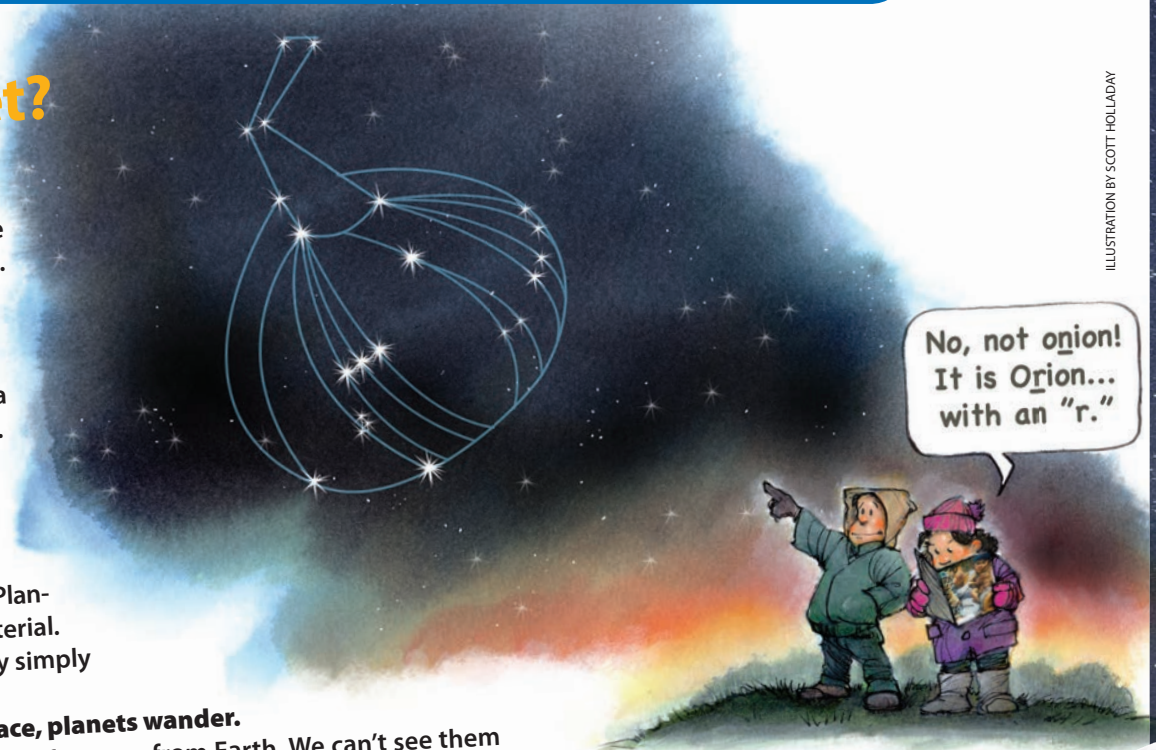


ILLUSTRATION BY SCOTT HOLLADAY



## Star Pictures

Some groups of stars form pictures in the night sky. The stars that form each picture are usually placed close to each other. If you imagine lines connecting these stars, you can see the picture. Constellations are usually named after a common object (the Big Dipper), an animal (Ursa Major or The Bear), or a character from a myth (Orion, the hunter). Even if you don't know the myth, you can usually find the constellation with a little bit of help.

Here's your first stargazing task: Find the constellation named Orion.

Orion is a fairly easy constellation to find. Check out this illustration so you'll know what to look for. Then go outside and look at the southwest sky. Look for three stars in a row. They form Orion's belt. If you look closely along his belt, you can find a small cluster of stars that form a sword hanging from the belt. Two stars above the belt mark his shoulders, and two stars below his belt mark his feet.

After you've found Orion, you can look for other constellations. People like to point out the Big Dipper and/or the Little Dipper. You can Google "constellation" for lots of other star pictures.



## The Christmas Star

Have you ever wondered about the star that led the wise men to Jesus? Astronomers can't agree on just what it was. Here are three ideas:

1. Maybe it was three planets close together. Because planets wander, at times they seem to move very close to each other.
2. Maybe it was a comet. According to records from the ancient Chinese, a very bright comet appeared about the time Jesus was born.
3. It could have been a nova, an exploding star. Stars don't explode often, but they're very bright when they do.

But maybe it was a new star, or a star that God moved especially for the wise men. God can do anything. After all, God made the stars. He guides them and calls them all by name.

## Starmaker

Unscramble these words and write them on the lines below. It's a great Bible verse for stargazers.

**stars, number, each, name, determines, calls, and, of, by, them, He, the, the**

---

---

Answer Psalm 147:4 (NIV)

## Thank you, Joanne!



This issue marks the final column from Joanne De Jonge. Her very first *Banner* article, "Mooncakes and Motorcycles," appeared in August 1968. In 1975, she started writing the "Young Look" series. Generations of kids have looked forward to her columns ever since! Thank you for sharing your wonder and love of God's creation over the years, Joanne.

# The Truth about Fiction

PHOTO BY EDGAR MASCARELL/FICKR



“Why are you wasting your time reading something that’s not even real?” I remember my teacher asking that question when I brought C.S. Lewis’s *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* back from the school library. Back then, I didn’t know what to say. But after many years of fervent fiction reading, I’ve got at least five legitimate reasons why people—Christians especially—should be serious about fiction. And stories in general.

**5. Your brain likes stories. It just does.** Let’s start with the basics: stories stick with and engage us. Psychologists and neuroscientists have been observing this phenomenon for years. In her article “Your Brain on Story: Why Narratives Win Our Hearts and Minds,” Michele Weldon observes, “Your brain on story is different than your brain when it is receiving any other form of information, including straight facts and data. There are proven intersections between neuroscience, biology, and story that we cannot ignore.” Your brain “lights up” when absorbed in a story, to the point of actually engaging parts of your mind that deal with experience.

To put it in theological terms, we were made for stories. This allows us to communicate important truths in ways that stick and move God’s people to action. While I have trouble recalling the points from last week’s

sermon, I still remember stories my pastor told when I was a child. These stories compelled my young heart to love God in ways that cold hard facts never could. They transformed me.

**4. Stories help us understand the significance of conflict.** My ninth grade English students and I discovered a profound connection between conflict and significance. All the stories ever told—from children’s books to multi-million dollar movies—include conflict. Our favorite stories are almost always the ones that have the greatest conflicts; the ones in which evil has all but won the day before that glimmer of hope bursts to life and conquers the darkness.

On the other hand, our culture is all about making life easier. Everything from microwave-safe Tupperware to the latest smartphone promises to make our life easier: in other words, less conflict. We seem to be obsessed with eliminating all forms of conflict from our lives because, well, easier is better, right?

Then why are so many people dissatisfied, restless, purposeless, and hungry for something more? The answer can be found in the pages of your favorite story. A good story cannot exist without conflict that needs overcoming, and the same is true of a significant life. When our desire for conflict-free lives influences our choices, the way we work, the

way we conduct our relationships; when we consistently choose the easiest possible path, we are actually uprooting the potential for significance, the possibility that our stories will be worth telling.

Following Jesus isn’t about finding the easiest way out of conflict; it’s about living lives of significance. Whether that means standing up to peer pressure, confronting addiction, or befriending the “least” at the risk of losing our reputation, following Jesus always leads to conflict. And, as we learned in Freshman English, conflict always leads to a better story.

**3. Stories inspire virtue.** Characters are vessels that bring stories to life. In terms of transmitting virtue, mere command is not enough; we need example. One author wrote, “We might know that courage is a virtue, but having watched Maximus in *Gladiator* or Jo March in *Little Women*, we find ourselves longing to be courageous.”

Think of Atticus Finch as he defends a man wrongfully accused in a case he knows he can not win; Jean Valjean refusing to let another receive punishment for his mistakes; Gandalf confronting Saruman and his quest for power. These fictional characters stir in us a desire for virtue. In stories, we see men and women and children who do the right thing in the face of



dominating evil, and we long to be like them. What better word for the next generation of Christ followers who are striving to live as citizens of light in the dominion of darkness?

**2. Stories ignite imagination.** Imagination is one of the most valuable—and perhaps most overlooked—elements in Christian communities today. Eugene Peterson calls imagination “among the chief glories” of being human. “One of the essential Christian ministries in and to our ruined world,” he writes, “is the recovery and exercise of the imagination. . . . Imagination opens things up so that we can grow into maturity—worship and adore, exclaim and honor, follow and trust.”

Imagination allows us to see what wasn't there before. And story is nothing if not the practice of imagination. Those whose hearts and minds have been touched by the magic of story will be the ones who lead the church to engage culture in new and transformative ways. The ones who've learned to trust the promise of dawn in the middle of the night.

**1. Stories tell the truth.** There is a difference between something that is truthful and something merely factual. A Westerner may tell you that the story “The Boy Who Cried Wolf” is not true because it didn't really happen. But tell the same story to someone from a story-centric society, and they'll likely disagree. Because it *is* true, isn't it? The squandering of one's integrity is very serious business. Every time you break your word, the value of your word decreases. “The Boy Who Cried Wolf” tells truth, though not necessarily fact. This is an exceptionally significant distinction. And it is, in my opinion, the very best reason to read fiction.

Stories like the Harry Potter series, *The Lord of the Rings*, and *The Chronicles of Narnia* are stories that tell the truth. Friendship *is* more

valuable than power. People *are* more than appearances. Humility and self-sacrifice *are* greater than pride. Courage in the face of overwhelming odds *does* make a difference. Love *is* stronger than death. The light *does* shine in the darkness and the darkness *will never* overcome it.

There is great and nourishing power in stories that tell the truth—even when the stories aren't comprised of facts. Jesus himself dealt almost exclusively in fiction to communicate truth to his audiences (Matt. 13:34). “There was a man who had two sons. The younger son came to his father and demanded his share of the inheritance. . . .” “Suppose one of you has 100 sheep and one of them runs away. . . .” “There was a woman with ten silver coins. . . .” “A wealthy man was preparing a great feast. . . .” Even Jesus' *I am* statements found in the gospel of John are fictional snapshots designed to tell the truth in a way that fact simply can not match. Jesus really isn't a gate. Nor is he bread. But these creative declarations help us understand who he is in fresh, new ways by inviting us into mini-stories that point to Christ's very real sustaining identity.

Fiction is more than superficial entertainment. The very best works of fiction are invitations to experience the deeper magic of God's Story from a new perspective. “This was the very reason why you were brought to Narnia,” says Aslan to Lucy, “that by knowing me here for a little, you may know me better there.”

Which, by the way, is a quote from C.S. Lewis's *Voyage of the Dawn Treader*—a story I'm so glad I read! ■

STUDY QUESTIONS ONLINE



**Bryant Russ** is a Bible teacher at Holland Christian High School. He attends Faith CRC in Holland, Mich., and blogs at [onehundreddangerussgifts.com](http://onehundreddangerussgifts.com).



The very best works of fiction are invitations to experience God's Story from a new perspective.

## Hymns for All Ages



**KEITH AND KRISTYN GETTY HAVE BEEN** producing thoughtful, well-written, and well-recorded worship music for more than 15 years. Their music is noteworthy because the melodies are easily sung by congregations and because the texts are rich and theologically sound.

So when the Gettys turned their attention to making an album for children, they stuck with what they do best: they chose some of their recent songs, found children who sing in tune, and had their regular band come

in to accompany them. Aside from the children's voices, this doesn't sound like an album for children.

**Aside from the children's voices, this doesn't sound like an album for children.**

But *Getty Kids Hymnal—In Christ Alone* is a children's album. Because the Gettys' tunes are grounded in Irish folk music, kids will pick up on the melodies quickly. It is easy to imagine this album being played in the car or at bedtime. The new arrangements may also encourage those who lead music with kids to think of using songs they might not have otherwise considered.

Songs like "We Believe (Apostle's Creed)" or the wonderful "The Lord Is My Salvation" aren't specifically written for children but could very well become favorites. A companion book of sheet music is also available, making it even easier to use these songs in your church. (Getty Music) ■

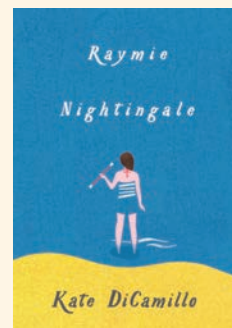


**Robert J. Keeley** is professor of education at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Mich.

## Raymie Nightingale

by **Kate DiCamillo**

reviewed by **Otto Selles**



Raymie needs to learn how to twirl a baton to win the Little Miss Central Florida Tire competition. She hopes her father, who ran away with a dental

hygienist, will see her picture in the paper and return home. Then she gets to know her fellow baton-twirling classmates, who create all manner of mischief and adventure. At first it's hard to see where the offbeat situations will end up, but DiCamillo is a master at drawing together the strands of a plot to deliver a strong message about hope and courage in the face of adversity. Ages 10 and up. (Candlewick)

## Love & Hate

by **Michael Kiwanuka**

reviewed by **Greg Veltman**



As a black man from London, and given recent political and social upheaval around race, Kiwanuka explicitly

picks up themes of social justice and turns toward the blues and soul in his sophomore album *Love & Hate*. He does not take on the justified use of anger, but rather draws listeners back to the gospel themes of forgiveness, peace, and reconciliation. On "Father's Child," he implores, "Some things just seem to take so long/I've been thinking 'bout what's gone wrong/I've been searching for miles and miles/Looking for someone to walk with me." Kiwanuka aims to win you over gently rather than wake you suddenly from your sleep. A wonderful album to enjoy and reflect on. (Interscope)

## Life, Animated

reviewed by Kristy Quist

Owen Suskind stopped interacting with the world at the age of 3. But eventually his family learned that Owen could use the framework of

Disney movies to let his family into his inner world. His journalist father, Ron, told Owen's story in the bestselling book *Life, Animated*. Now Owen is all grown up and getting ready to live on his own. This documentary by the same title gives viewers new insight into the unique joys and challenges of living with autism. Affirming and humorous, it's a fascinating look at how much we all crave the same things—love, intimacy, significance—even when our brains work differently. On disc now. (Sony)

## The Confessions of X

by Suzanne M. Wolfe  
reviewed by Jenny deGroot

"She is lost to history." "She" is the mysterious concubine referred to only as "Una"—the One—in Augustine's *Confessions*. Since hearing about Augustine of Hippo's love for this woman, author Suzanne Wolfe has pondered what life might have been like for them. This novel is the imagined



story of a deep love forever denied its fullness because of societal class. The context is well-researched and grounded in historical accuracy, drawing from texts of Augustine and his contemporaries. The novel is at once beautiful and poignant, lyrical and poetic in its telling. (Thomas Nelson)

## Unstuffed: Decluttering Your Home, Mind, and Soul

by Ruth Soukup  
reviewed by Sonya VanderVeen Feddema



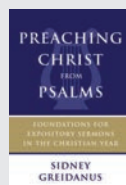
After inheriting two estates to add to their burgeoning possessions, Ruth Soukup and her husband were at a crisis point. They had to do some soul-searching and then take action. Realizing that "we've stuffed ourselves to overflowing with the pressure to achieve," she adds that "the only way to become truly unstuffed is to accept the amazing, incredible, unlimited and *totally undeserved* grace we've already been given and to stop trying to fill that hole ourselves." Those realizations also inform the wise and beneficial suggestions that she offers readers for unstuffing their lives. (Zondervan)

## THE LOWDOWN

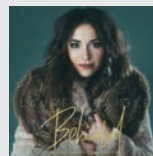


**Nature of Advent:** *All Creation Waits* by Gayle Boss is a unique book of

25 lovely readings about animals paired with glorious woodcuts, giving glimpses of how all of creation waits for Christ's coming. (Paraclete)



**Preach It:** Pastors sermonizing on the psalms should check out the new book from Sidney Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from Psalms*. (Eerdmans)



**Joyful Noise:** A plethora of Christmas albums are out this season, including offerings from Lauren Daigle, Pentatonix, Rascal Flatts, Sarah McLachlan, Jennifer Nettles, and Matthew West.



**Spaced Out:** Sci-fi of every stripe is coming to theaters near you; *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story*, *The Space Between Us*, and *Passengers* all hope to take off at the box office.

## SMALL GROUP SUGGESTION

### Slow Kingdom Coming:

Practices for Doing Justice, Loving Mercy and Walking Humbly in the World

by Kent Annan  
reviewed by Sonya VanderVeen Feddema

Kent Annan, codirector of the nonprofit Haiti Partners, candidly admits that over the last 20 years, he's "succumbed to various failed justice shortcuts instead of living the freedom of faithful practices." Acknowledging that working for justice in the world is overwhelming, he sets forth five practices—attention, confession, respect, partnering, and "truthing"—to avoid shallow changes and quick fixes and instead bring about lasting transformation in people's lives. Study guides—one for a single session and another for a six-week session—are available free of charge to interested readers. (InterVarsity)



MORE REVIEWS  
ONLINE

BY LEONARD J. VANDER ZEE



# OUR LADY TOO

**B**ECAUSE THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH has in some ways over-emphasized the role of Mary, the mother of Jesus, many Protestants tend to think of her as little more than a fixture in a crèche. Perhaps we should stop being concerned about thinking too much of her, but rather be concerned about thinking too *little* of this young Jewish girl who can teach us so much.

There is something very special about Mary, especially in Luke's gospel. Luke recounts more about Mary and her inner thoughts and feelings than do any of the other gospel writers. He places her at the epicenter of the incarnation.

Mary herself recognized her place among Christians: "From now on," she sings, "all generations will call me blessed." What is it about Mary that places her as preeminent among the saints, the foremost Christian?

Some might say that Mary's importance is that she was the mother of our Lord. That was indeed a privilege, as her cousin Elizabeth said: "But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord comes to me?" (Luke 1:43). But Mary's greatness is not merely tied to her motherhood, as important as that was for her and for all mothers. It is not merely Mary's biological role that is celebrated by the church.

Jesus himself destroys that notion. In a marvelous dialogue recorded in chapter 11 of Luke's gospel, a woman piously calls from the crowd to Jesus, "Blessed is the mother who gave you birth and nursed you." What a privilege to be Jesus' mother! But Jesus replies, "No, rather, blessed is that person who hears the word of God and keeps it." The miracle of Christmas and the blessedness of Mary is not merely a matter of her biological equipment. Mary's real importance was in her faith and courage, her humble servanthood.

In a Christmas sermon written 450 years ago, Martin Luther said that when Jesus was born at Bethlehem, three miracles occurred: God became human; a virgin conceived; and Mary believed. That Mary believed, said Luther, was the greatest of the Christmas miracles. All the rest could be done by God alone—but in this matter, God needed someone to say yes.

## MARY'S YES RINGS OUT ACROSS THE YEARS AS EXHIBIT A OF HUMAN FAITH.

For this young peasant girl in Galilee, that call comes with Gabriel's visit. Gabriel confronts Mary with an astounding, fearsome request. In the hundreds of paintings of the annunciation, Mary is often pictured as calm, receptive, demure. I imagine that she might have been amazed, fearful, and overwhelmed. Angel or not, this must have been a disturbing intrusion on Mary's life.

What if Mary had said instead, "No, thank you very much, but I'm not up to it right now. It's just too much to handle"? We tend to assume that Mary *had to* say yes; that God knew Mary would say yes, and that is why he sent Gabriel to her in the first place. Of course there's no way to know about this from God's side of things—we only know it from the human side. And from our side of the equation, Mary had a choice to make. Faith is not programmed into us by God's call. It involves a real response, a real choice.

Notice that Mary does not give an immediate assent, even to Gabriel. According to Luke, "Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be." And then Mary asks a question: "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"

Very early on, the church went on the wrong track about the virgin birth. People assumed that the virgin birth of Jesus Christ was necessary because of some assumed sordidness of sex.

But the virgin birth is not enshrined in our creeds because sex is distasteful to God. God invented it, after all. The point of the virgin birth is that self-assured, independent human action had to be excluded. If the Savior had been the child of two extraordinarily wonderful people, humanity could save itself. Instead, it had to be clear from the start that this was God's sovereign grace at work and not human self-improvement.

Only God can save us. Humanity cannot make itself worthy or lift itself by its own bootstraps into God's holy presence.

On the other hand, God will not force his way on humanity. God chooses instead to work through a human partner, a human gateway for his holy entrance.

Standing awestruck and afraid before the powerful form of an angel, Mary speaks for the whole community of faith throughout history, from beginning to end. "I am the Lord's servant, may your word to me be fulfilled." Mary believed in the impossible possibilities of God for the whole human race. Mary's yes rings out across the years as Exhibit A of human faith.

I remember talking to a young mother, a few weeks home from the hospital with her first infant. What astounded her, what she was really unprepared for, was the sheer loss of control. Once that baby came home, life revolved around feeding, diapering, sleeping, crying. She'd be lucky to remember whether she'd had a chance to shower that day. Her life was no longer

her own. For nine months, the baby had gradually been assuming more and more control, until finally it pushed its way out into the world. Now that control was almost complete, and it would continue for the rest of her life.

God seeks men and women who are willing to open their hearts to the seed of God's Word and the power of his Spirit—so that they can give birth to God's will and God's work in the world. Thomas Merton calls this the *point vierge*, or "virgin place." It's a place at the center of our souls that belongs only to God and that awakens only at his call.

In her book *Amazing Grace: A Vocabulary of Faith*, Kathleen Norris writes, "I treasure this story [of Mary] because it forces me to ask: When the mystery of God's love breaks into my consciousness, do I run from it? Or am I virgin enough to respond from my deepest, truest self, and say something new, a 'yes' that will change me forever?"

In the Roman Catholic cathedral in Cuernavaca, Mexico, a large crucifix hangs over the altar as it should—Christ front and center. On the left, at the front, but clearly among the congregation, there stands a simple, modest icon of the Virgin Mary. She is not front and center. She stands among the people of God, and with them, her eyes are turned to the cross. That's where Mary belongs. She has a special place among God's people of all times and places as the one who believed the promise and gave herself to God's purposes. "I am the servant of the Lord, let it be to me according to your Word."

As someone once said, "It's good to be related to the son of God on his mother's side of the family." She is our Lady too. ■



Leonard J. Vander Zee is interim pastor at Church of the Servant in Grand Rapids, Mich.

# Moses, Deuteronomy, and New Year's Eve

**WHO BETTER TO INVITE** to a New Year's Eve party than . . . Moses!

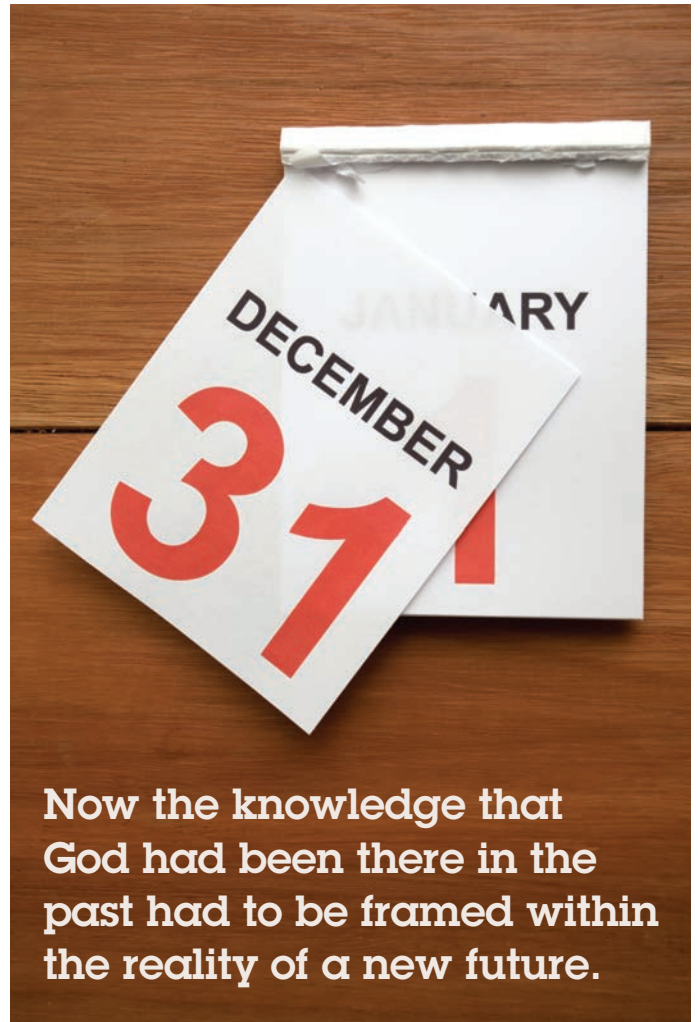
If you are like me, when another new year approaches you find yourself dividing your thoughts between the old and the new, the past and the future. It's exciting to anticipate the new year that lies ahead with its renewed opportunities to make good on resolutions; to see new visions or experience old dreams come true; to look forward to important personal or family milestones. Yet at the same time, it is haunting to look back on another whole year of life and experiences that are now only memories—both fond and sad. We wonder if we've made the most of the year gone by. How could the time have gone so quickly? What will the new year bring?

And this is where Moses fits in. Because perhaps more than anyone, Moses was faced with the dilemma of having to look ahead and look back—both at the same time. Recall that at the end of his life, God took him to the top of Mount Nebo. From there he could see “the whole land—from Gilead to Dan, all of Naphtali, the territory of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the Mediterranean Sea . . .” (Deut. 34:1-2). Before Moses' death, he was promised he would see the future, the land his people would enter. But before taking that final journey up the mountain, God gave him the chance to address the people one last time. Imagine the situation that put him in! With so much to look back on, and even more to see ahead, how could Moses possibly sum it all up in one message?

Looking back on his life, Moses knew that for 40 years, whenever there had been a need, God had responded. When direction was needed—there came the cloud and the pillar of fire. When food was needed—quail and manna. When drought threatened—water from a rock. When impenetrable barriers faced God's people—the sea parted. But now the knowledge that God had been there in the past had to be framed within the reality of facing a new future, crossing into a new land, and dealing with the uncertainty of what might be around the next corner. Just what might this new chapter in the life of God's people hold?

So what was Moses' final message to them? What last thought did he leave with them after all they had been through? Whether looking back or ahead, the message was the same: the certainty and the comfort of God's presence. “The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms” (Deut. 33:27).

That's why I think Moses would be a great addition to a New Year's Eve party. As we look back at the year gone by and ahead to the new year, Moses reminds us that one constant remains.



**Now the knowledge that God had been there in the past had to be framed within the reality of a new future.**

He leaves us with the assurance of God's presence—so clearly evident in our past and so certain to be there in all the seasons ahead. This is the God who led his people out of Egypt into the promised land and who continues to care for us. God is the refuge whose everlasting arms are underneath us, whatever the circumstances might be. ■



**Burton VanderLaan** is a retired physician and a member of Brookside Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Mich.

# FAQs

## Church

**Q** The Church Order (Art. 28a) says that assemblies (synod, classis, council) “shall transact ecclesiastical matters only.” Does that mean they are prevented from addressing climate change or capital punishment or systemic racism?

**A** It’s not that simple. Synod 1937 decided that “political, social, and economic questions are ecclesiastical matters only when doctrinal and ethical issues of sufficient moment and magnitude are involved according to the Word of God and our [confessional] standards.” It recognized that there are limits to the church’s competence. But it also insisted that the assemblies may touch on such issues when that is warranted.

Take, for example, the system of apartheid in South Africa. The assemblies of the Dutch Reformed Church there were eloquently silent. Those who wanted the assemblies to speak prophetically and correct the wrongs of society were initially told that this was none of the church’s business. But they argued that apartheid was out of tune with the church’s creedal foundation that all human beings are created in the image of God. And so, eventually, the tide shifted, and the assemblies declared that any theological justification of apartheid is heresy. Note that they didn’t embrace any particular political avenue. They just spoke prophetically and within the realm of their competence.

It is important also in our society today to have the church’s voice heard in the marketplace. Our Lord has a claim on every square inch of it. So we address political and societal issues but never bind our people to vote in a certain way when the next election comes around. We must be careful not to politicize the gospel. Yet our assemblies and congregations must be bold in proclaiming it.

*Henry De Moor is professor of church polity emeritus, Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, Mich. He’s the author of Christian Reformed Church Order Commentary.*

We must be careful not to politicize the gospel.

## Relationships

**Q** Are we denying Christ by going on a family reunion cruise with my siblings over Christmas? My wife and I feel uncomfortable celebrating the birth of Christ in this way, but since we are the only Christians in the group, our wishes have been ignored.

**A** It depends. If you and your wife go on this trip feeling guilty and wishing you were home, than yes, not going might have been the better choice. However, remember that it is The Accuser who specializes in creating guilt where none is called for.

Instead, I encourage you to think of this reunion trip as an opportunity given by God for you to get to know your siblings better, understand your family history better, experience personal renewal and growth, and have fun.

To get there, be intentional about how you want your love for God and neighbor to impact your experience of the trip. For instance, you and your wife could agree to begin each day together with devotions, including reading Scripture and prayer. With your siblings, resolve to spend some time exploring your common history. Bring up significant family events and ask about how your siblings’ experiences and memories might be different from yours. If there are spouses whose culture, religious upbringing, or family experiences are different from yours, be curious about those differences.

Above all, realize that you are called to pray for each of your siblings and their spouses. Follow the prompting of the Holy Spirit and be ready to “give an account of the hope that is within you.” Think of Christmas not as a birthday party but as a season of celebration, full of joy and grace—a new beginning of God with us.

*Judy Cook is a family therapist and a member of Meadowlands Fellowship CRC in Ancaster, Ont.*

## Ethics

**Q** How should we live in a culture that no longer values truth? From politicians to parents, everyone lies routinely these days. My friends think “little white lies” are no big deal. But didn’t the Ten Commandments forbid lying?

**A** The Bible takes lying seriously. God is not only true in his ways (Rev. 15:3) but also true by nature (John 15:26). In contrast, Satan is called the “father of lies” (John 8:44). God detests falsehood (Prov. 12:22). And liars are specifically mentioned in Revelation 21:8 as among those thrown into the “fiery lake.”

However, in this sinful world, Jesus told us to “be wise as serpents and innocent as doves” (Matt. 10:16). We need to be both prudent and loving in our truth-keeping. For example, in order to protect his life, God instructed the prophet Samuel to disguise his true intentions of anointing a new king (1 Sam. 16:1-5).

The ninth commandment you referenced prohibits lying against your neighbor (Ex. 20:16)—connecting truth-keeping with love for neighbor. This is why neither Rahab’s lying to protect the spies (see Josh. 2:4-6; Heb. 11:31) nor the Hebrew midwives’ lying to protect the baby boys from Pharaoh (Ex. 1:15-20) were condemned. They acted out of fear of God and love for neighbor.

It was not wrong, for example, for the many Dutch families to lie to the Nazis about harboring Jews in their homes during World War II. “Speaking the truth in love” (Eph. 4:15) is not simply an injunction to tell the truth politely in every case. More important, our truth-telling always aims at the good of our neighbor.

*Shiao Chong is editor in chief of The Banner. He attends Fellowship Christian Reformed Church in Toronto, Ont. ■*

# ADS

**Deadlines:** Jan. 2017 issue is 12/6/2016; Feb. issue is 1/3/2017. Details online.

**Prices:** Beginning January 2017, new rates will go into effect. Most ads are \$0.39<sup>US</sup> per character (min. 150 characters including punctuation and spaces). A discounted rate of \$0.32<sup>US</sup> per character and \$50 per photo applies to Anniversaries, Birthdays, Obituaries, Denominational and Classical Announcements, and Congregational Announcements.

**To Advertise:** Place your classified ad online at [www.thebanner.org/classifieds](http://www.thebanner.org/classifieds) or email it to [classifieds@thebanner.org](mailto:classifieds@thebanner.org) or fax it to 616-224-0834. Questions? Call 616-224-0725.

## Denominational and Classical

### Meetings of Classis

**CLASSIS ZEELAND** will meet on Thursday, January 19, 2017, 4PM, in the Rusk CRC. Deadline for the agenda is December 7

### Available for Call

**REV. GARY LUURTSEMA** East Saugatuck CRC heartily recommends Rev. Gary Luurtsema for consideration for a call as Minister of the Word and Sacraments. Rev. Luurtsema faithfully served at East Saugatuck CRC for many years as our lead pastor. He can be reached at (616) 886-8151 or at [luurtsema@usa.com](mailto:luurtsema@usa.com).

### Calls Accepted

**REV. DR. JAMES C. BUSSCHER** has accepted a call to become the next lead pastor at Roselawn Community CRC in Roselawn, Indiana.

### Financial Aid

Students preparing for ministry in the Christian Reformed Church from **CLASSIS HEARTLAND** may apply for aid to assist them in their study for the 2017-2018 academic year by contacting Rev. Loren Kotman; 1111 5th Street, Hull, IA 51239; (712) 439-1123; [pastor@hull1stcrc.com](mailto:pastor@hull1stcrc.com). The deadline is February 1, 2017.

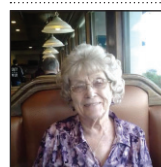
## Miscellaneous

**AZ SNOWBIRDS** Come worship with us at Maranatha Community CRC from Dec. thru mid-Apr. at 10:00 AM at Farnsworth Hall, 6159 University, Mesa, AZ. Pastor: Rev. Harry Weidenaar ??? Call John DeJager 920-344-1675

## Birthdays

### 100th Birthday

**KATHERINE (STAR) BOK** will celebrate her 100th birthday on December 28. She is the wife of Mathtys (deceased) mother of William (Lucille) Bok, Kay (Dick) Van Houten, Ruth (Doug) Van Dyke, Lucille (Albert) Maloley, grandmother of 9, great grandmother of 15, and great great grandmother of 1. Send greetings to Katherine at 1028 Allen Springs Ln. Apt 602, Jenison, MI 49428. Praise God from whom all blessings flow.



**EVELYN WETTOUR (BLAUW)-(DECKER)** - December 20th. Praise the Lord for his faithfulness to her and her family: Ken Blauw (Helen), Marilyn Cook (Ray), Karen Slinkman (George) - deceased, John Blauw - deceased. Step children Ken Wettour (Capri) Jeanne Pinner (John). 45 Grandchildren, 61 Great Grandchildren, 12 Great Great Grandchildren. Evelyn and her husband Elmer currently reside in Saratoga Grove in Downers Grove, IL. 3460 Saratoga Ave. unit 110, Downers Grove, IL 60515. Open house December 17, 1-4pm at Faith Church in Elmhurst.

### 95th Birthday

**RUTH (HUISENGA) TEUNE** celebrates her 95th birthday on Dec. 13. She has been blessed by her loving husband John (now deceased) for nearly 70 years, 6 children, 18 grandchildren, and 8 great-grandchildren. She is formerly from Evergreen Park, IL, and now resides at Raybrook Manor in Grand Rapids, MI.

### 90th Birthday

**ANDREW BANDSTRA** Some readers may know him as Dr., Rev., or Prof. Andrew Bandstra, but we have had the privilege of knowing him as our loving, wise, and compassionate husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather. Happy 90th Birthday Andrew John Bandstra. We praise God for you!

**MARIE TERPSTRA** 4715 Trillium Springs Blvd, Apt 107, Fremont MI 49412, celebrated her 90th birthday on November 16, 2016. Her husband of 69 years, Hank; five children and their spouses; 15 grandchildren; and 20 great-grandchildren praise God for Mom's long life filled with love and service to others. She's the best blanket baker in the world. We love you, Mom!

Think you can change the world *through media?*  
**We do.**

**CHANGE** can be big, like producing a television show big. Or it can be small, like writing a blog post small. It's about what you choose to do on the one hand, and who you are on the other. We are more than our jobs, and God has a calling for each of us, wherever we go. That changes everything. Including you.

**REDEEMER** UNIVERSITY COLLEGE *A degree you can believe in.* [redeemer.ca](http://redeemer.ca)

**Help Increase the Reach of the Worldwide Church Today!**

- Through Timothy Leadership Training Institute untrained pastors, evangelists, and lay leaders are equipped for ministry right where they live and work.
- Please consider a year-end gift to TLI - visit us at [TLI.org/donation](http://TLI.org/donation) today.

**Will you help us impact the Global Church today?**

**TIMOTHY**  
LEADERSHIP TRAINING INSTITUTE  
[www.tli.org](http://www.tli.org)  
3300 Burton St. SE, Suite 105  
Grand Rapids, MI 49546





# DORDT COLLEGE

Dordt College is seeking applications for the following areas beginning August 2017:

## Faculty Positions

Business Administration	Art
Construction Management	Engineering
Farm Operations & Management	Philosophy
Manufacturing Technology	Physics
Mathematics/Statistics	Theology

Application reviews will begin immediately. Qualified persons committed to a Reformed, Biblical perspective and educational philosophy are encouraged to follow the faculty application procedure at the link below.

Dr. Eric Forseth, Provost  
Dordt College  
498 4<sup>th</sup> Ave NE

Sioux Center, IA 51250-1697  
provost@dordt.edu

[www.dordt.edu/prospective\\_employees/faculty/](http://www.dordt.edu/prospective_employees/faculty/)

*Dordt College does not discriminate as to age, sex, national origin, marital status or against those who are disabled.*



## Westminster Seminary California

WSCAL.EDU

Westminster Seminary California (WSC) is a graduate theological school that exists in service of Christ, His Gospel, and His Church.

For nearly 40 years, the seminary has prepared future ministers and leaders through Reformed theological education.

Westminster Seminary California seeks its fourth president in the history of the seminary. The seminary seeks a president who will possess excellent leadership abilities, personal integrity, and theological conviction consistent with the heritage that includes a commitment to the authority of the inspired and inerrant Word of God and to the seminary's doctrinal standards.

To nominate someone who you believe would be ideal for this position, email [PRESIDENTSEARCH@WSCAL.EDU](mailto:PRESIDENTSEARCH@WSCAL.EDU).

\*

To apply, please send a Cover Letter and Curriculum Vitae to [PRESIDENTSEARCH@WSCAL.EDU](mailto:PRESIDENTSEARCH@WSCAL.EDU).

For more information, including the Opportunity Profile, visit [WWW.WSCAL.EDU](http://WWW.WSCAL.EDU).

## Church Position Announcements

**WORSHIP/MUSIC COORDINATOR** Graafschap Christian Reformed Church in Holland, Michigan is seeking to fill a position for Worship and Music Coordinator. This position requires a servant of Christ who understands the biblical concepts of worship and appreciates the emphases of Reformed theology in worship. The individual will be a vital part of Graafschap's life and ministry and should be able to love and empathize with her. Interested candidates can submit a resume with references or other inquires to: Graafschap CRC, 5973 Church Street, Holland MI. attn: Worship/Music Search Committee or [graafschapworship@gmail.com](mailto:graafschapworship@gmail.com).

**PASTOR:** Grace CRC in Welland, Ontario Canada, in the heart of Niagara, is seeking a full time Pastor of Preaching and Congregational Care. To faithfully preach the Word, nourish the spiritual growth of the congregation and reach out into the community to facilitate growth. To request a copy of our profile send an email request to [profiles@ccrca.org](mailto:profiles@ccrca.org). Supplemental information available by contacting George Sportel at [sport57geo@gmail.com](mailto:sport57geo@gmail.com), 905-714-1100.

**PASTOR** Unity Reformed Church in Norton Shores, MI seeks to call an ordained Senior Pastor. E-mail Minister Profile to Search Chairman [davidritsemaump@gmail.com](mailto:davidritsemaump@gmail.com)

**PASTOR** Reaching Up, Reaching In, Reaching Out! Christ Community Church in Victoria, BC is inviting qualified candidates to lead and feed our congregation. Our congregation is firmly rooted in God's love and is committed to practicing love, promoting dignity and discipleship, and living our faith. We are seeking someone to nourish the spiritual growth of the congregation, provide pastoral care and promote the intergenerational, multi-cultural and accessible vision held by the church. To learn more about this position, go to [www.cccvictoria.ca](http://www.cccvictoria.ca)

**PASTOR** Trinity CRC in Anchorage, Alaska has a unique opportunity for an experienced pastor who has a passion for God's Word and is blessed with a shepherd's heart. Position available beginning July, 2017. See the pastor search page at [www.trinitycralaska.com](http://www.trinitycralaska.com) for more information.

**DIRECTOR OF YOUTH & EDUCATION** Pease CRC, a large, rural church in central Minnesota, is hiring a full-time director of youth & education to oversee our growing youth programs and facilitate the educational programming for K-12. Preferred applicants should have training and/or experience in youth ministry or education. Call or email Trudy Ash for more information. [peasecc@frontiernet.net](mailto:peasecc@frontiernet.net). 320-369-4228

**WORSHIP COORDINATOR** - Living Hope CRC in Sarnia, Ontario is seeking a qualified individual for the position of Worship Coordinator. This is a paid part-time position requiring 20 hours per week. The qualified candidate will have an educational background in music or equivalent experience. This individual will be required to plan and coordinate the worship service, as well as all participants, and lead the congregation in music. The applicant must be willing to become a member of Living Hope CRC. If you are interested in more information please contact Jo Smit by email: [smjt.johanna83@gmail.com](mailto:smjt.johanna83@gmail.com) or by phone at 519-491-8248.

**LEAD PASTOR:** Cornerstone Christian Reformed Church of Chilliwack, in southern British Columbia, Canada, seeks the services of a full time lead pastor commencing in the summer of 2017. This pastor will help us grow into the next chapter of our ministry by dynamically proclaiming God's Word, by actively leading in the implementation of our ministry plan and by caring for the congregation and community. Please indicate your interest in this position to: [searchteam@cornerstonecra.ca](mailto:searchteam@cornerstonecra.ca)

**PASTOR, BETHLEHEM CRC:** We are situated in beautiful Thunder Bay, Canada in the heart of Northwestern Ontario at the head of Lake Superior. God has presented us with unique opportunities and we're looking for a full-time pastor to take on the unique challenges at Bethlehem CRC as we strive to grow in grace and in numbers. As a

small, tight-knit congregation passionate for worship, we are seeking a pastor gifted in worship, preaching and forming genuine connections with the congregation and community. Our church is located near a low income area that we feel called to minister to and support; we would love to have a pastor to help guide us in this calling. For more information or a church profile, please contact the Search Committee at [kelseyhoogsteen@gmail.com](mailto:kelseyhoogsteen@gmail.com).

**WORSHIP AND MUSIC COORDINATOR** Covenant Christian Reformed Church in Cutlerville, Michigan, is seeking candidates for a part-time Worship and Music Coordinator. Applicants should have a passion for creative uses of music in worship and an ability to manage the people and processes of a thriving music ministry. Applicants should have a degree in this area of study and/or at least three years experience. Send resume to [info@covenant-crc.org](mailto:info@covenant-crc.org). Application deadline: November 30, 2016.

**PASTOR** Rochester CRC: Our mid-sized western New York state congregation seeks a senior pastor for preaching, spiritual leadership and pastoral care. We value strong preaching of the Word and seek someone who will challenge us to implement it in the culture around us. We have a strong desire for church growth and seek leadership to realize that vision in our community. Can you lead us as we face these challenges? To explore this opportunity with us, contact our Pastor Search Team at [Office@RochesterCRC.org](mailto:Office@RochesterCRC.org)

**FULL TIME PASTOR POSITION:** Are you interested in ministerial leadership in a vibrant, energetic community? Evergreen Community Christian Reformed Church of Fort Murray, Alberta ([www.eccrc.ca](http://www.eccrc.ca)) is seeking a full-time Pastor. After 7 years of wonderful service to our community, our previous pastor retired from full-time ministry. Our goal now is to seek for the right candidate who can provide guidance, leadership and pastoral care. With this in mind, we reach out to the broader church to consider this position with Evergreen Community CRC in pastoring our congregation and serving our energetic community. Please submit your cover letter and resume to [dennisroom1@gmail.com](mailto:dennisroom1@gmail.com).

**SEYMOUR CRC** is searching for a **Senior Pastor** to replace our retiring pastor. Primary responsibilities include supporting and encouraging the purpose, vision, and mission of Seymour Church by providing preaching, teaching, pastoral care, and visionary and executive administrative leadership. Applicants should possess the ability to generate enthusiasm for ministry and to equip and encourage others. Ordination is required. If you are interested in learning more about this opportunity, please contact [info@seymourchurch.org](mailto:info@seymourchurch.org).

**SEYMOUR CRC** is seeking a part-time **Youth Pastor** to oversee its youth programs (7th grade - college age). Primary responsibilities include providing pastoral care to youth and administrative leadership over programs. Applicants with a passion for and training or experience in youth ministry are preferred. For those with the appropriate skills, additional ministry responsibilities could be added to create a full-time position. If you are interested in learning more about this opportunity, please contact [info@seymourchurch.org](mailto:info@seymourchurch.org).

**DO YOU THINK THE NEIGHBORHOOD** church is called to be a vibrant light in its community? Does it need to be relevant to this generation of Christ followers? Are you hungry to co-labor with a team to create a transformative culture? Park Church in Holland, MI, strives to glorify God as we gather to grow in our faith and go and make disciples. We are praying that God will bring us a lead pastor who is gifted to inspire and lead our staff and our congregation from the inside out. If you are gifted and are passionate about the local church, we invite you to learn more about us by visiting our website at [www.parkchurchholland.org](http://www.parkchurchholland.org) to access the job description, our church profile, and to learn more about our church and the Holland community. Submit a resume, pastor profile and letter of inquiry to [parkcra\\_pastorsearch@gmail.com](mailto:parkcra_pastorsearch@gmail.com).

## Intergenerational Faith Formation Worship Resources

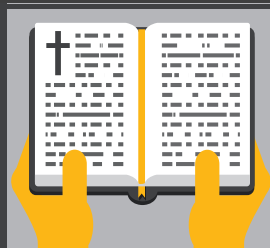


RECOMMENDED BY  
CALVIN INSTITUTE OF CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

## YOUR GIFT CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE



**2.2 million people**  
are in US prisons



**40% have little experience**  
studying the Bible



**95% eventually**  
will be released



**67% of those released**  
will be rearrested



Doc spent much of his life in and out of prison. During his third time behind bars, he gave his life to Christ and enrolled with CBI. Since being released, his life has changed. He is now active in his church and serves as a motivational speaker to young people in his community.

Your donation to Crossroad makes life change possible.  
**Make a gift at [crossroadbible.org/donate](http://crossroadbible.org/donate).**



## Anniversaries

### 70th Anniversary

**POEL** Harvey & Jeanne celebrated their 70th anniversary on November 15. Their 5 children and spouses along with 48 grand and great-grandchildren are grateful for their love, encouragement and witness of Christ's love in marriage and in life. To God be the Glory!

**VAN ZEE** Harold and Jeanette (Hansum) 725 N James Ave, Apt C, Tea, SD 57064 celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary November 25, 2016. They, with their children and grandchildren, praise God for His faithfulness and blessing.

### 65th Anniversary

**DOKTER** Bernie & Lydia and their 5 children, 9 grands & 8 greats give thanks for 65 years of marriage on Dec. 20. Gracias a Dios.

**GABRIELSE** Richard S. & Idelle M (Ruiter) Gabrielse 2327 Aurora Pond Dr. Wyoming, MI 49519, celebrate 65 years of marriage Nov 2, 2016. They and their family give thanks for God's faithful and abundant provision. Ps 23."

**ZIGTERMAN** Ronald and Christine of 8643 Kelly Drive., St John, IN, 46373 celebrate their 65th Wedding Anniversary on January 18, 2017. Celebrating with them will be their children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. To God be the Glory!

### 60th Anniversary

**GULKER** Mert & Sally (Walhof), 2412 Upton Street, The Villages, FL 32163 celebrate 60 years of marriage on December 27. Their 5 children and spouses, and 9 grandchildren join them in praising God for His love and faithfulness.

### 50th Anniversary

**VLAARDINGERBROEK** Rev. Hank & Chris (Eichhorn) will celebrate their 50th Anniversary on December 30. They, with their children Cori & Jeff Vandenberg (Taylor/Lucas) Marcia & Adam Jansma (Jade/Julie) Sandra & Chadd Goodyke (Madison/Charlie), Praise God for His faithfulness.

## Obituaries

**ANEMA** Teena (Van Dellen), age 95, passed away on July 1, 2016, in Minneapolis, MN. Born in Alberta, Canada, she is preceded in death by her 10 siblings. Her husband of 49 years, George J. Anema, also pre-deceased her in 2009. She is survived by sons Mark and David and 4 grandchildren.

**BOEREMA** Mary Tolsma, age 83, passed peacefully on Thursday, October 6, 2016. Surviving are her husband of over 60 years, Roger Boerema; four children; Elizabeth (Todd) Kingma, Janet (Scott) Spoelhof, Richard (Wende) Boerema, Mary Jill (Dr. Robert) Morren; and 17 grandchildren.

**BOSCH** Evelyn J., age 94, went to be with her Lord on October 13, 2016. She is survived by her husband of 69 years, Meindert, sister Gretta Otte, and children, Bob (Linda) Bosch, Ron (Carol) Bosch, Luci (Tom) Draayer, and Bonnie Bosch De Nooy, 15 grandchildren, 20 great-grandchildren, nephews, and nieces. Praise God for her devotion to family.

**BRUINIUS** Ella (Pleiter) 81 of Evergreen Park, IL Called home 8/20/16. Beloved husband Bill of 60 years; children Sandy & Jack Mudde, Marcia & Tim Kuiper, Bill & Carrie; 11 grandchildren; 9 great-grandchildren.

**COOK** James A., 82, went to be with his Lord on October 3, 2016. He is survived by his loving wife Joyce Vander Molen. He was preceded in death by his late wife Sandra (Rop). He is the father of Cathy Lusiana (Paul Kasicki), James, Jr., and Dr. Robert C. (Kim VanderSloot); grandfather of Cy, Erin, Kelly, Eli, Jennifer, Caitlin, Molly, and Benjamin; great-grandfather of seven; brother of Thelma Bergman and the late Edward, Herman, and Thomas Cook and Barbara (Spoelman). Jim was born in Muskegon, MI. He attended Calvin College and earned his M. D. at Wayne State University. He served on the founding board of Central DuPage Hospital in Winfield, IL. He was a Family Practice physician at Wheaton Medical Clinic in Illinois for 35 years. He was a long time active member of Wheaton Christian Reformed Church.

**GRAVES, WILMYNA** Mrs. Wilmyna B. Graves, age 87 of Liburn, died Sunday, November 6, 2016. She was preceded in death by her parents, Cornelius and Kate Bonnes. She is survived by her husband, Fred Graves; children, Lois and Dennis Ostermann, Marybeth and Roy Dockum, Calvin and Maria Graves, Jeff Graves, Delores and Jeff Gold, David Graves; 12 grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren; and sister, Inez Hoftzyer. Funeral Services were held Saturday, November 12, 2016 at 11 a.m. at Scot Ward's Green Meadow Chapel with Micah Smith officiating; interment followed at Green Meadow Memorial Gardens. Family received friends Friday, November 11, 2016 from 4 until 6 p.m. and Saturday from 9:30 until 11 a.m. prior to the service at the funeral home. Condolences may be submitted on-line at [www.scotward.com](http://www.scotward.com). Scot Ward Funeral Services, 699 American Legion Rd., Conyers, GA, 770-483-7216.

**KOK** Herman, age 90, went to be with his Lord and Savior on October 19, 2016. He is survived by his wife of 68 years Jean Kok (nee Griffieon). Loving father of John (Sanneke), Jim (Deborah), Wayne (Mary), and the

late Philip (Lorraine). Cherished grandfather of 21 and great-grandfather of 28. Fond brother of Grace Kuiper, Harry Kok, and the late Bill, Shirley Jonker, Henry, George, Jim, and Bernice Rinzema. He devoted 41 years of his life to Christian education in the south Chicago area, serving first as teacher and principal at Englewood Christian School, and later as superintendent of Southwest Chicago Christian Schools. After retirement, he spent 18 years tutoring math at Roseland Christian School.




**KLAP** Henry J. 3/13/37 to 10/21/16. 8780 Ea. Yale, Unit A, Denver, CO 80231. Henry went to be with the Lord after a long illness. A memorial to celebrate his life was held on 10-29-16. He is survived by his wife Betty, sons Kelly (Susan) and Terry (LaNae), 4 grandchildren, a brother Herman, and sisters Jean, Sarah and Marian. We thank God that Henry has a place in Heaven where there is no pain and suffering.

**4 YEARS**  
growing generosity  
**BARNABAS**<sup>®</sup>  
FOUNDATION

**Barnabas Foundation will help you...**

- develop a Will or Estate Plan from a distinctly Christian perspective
- provide for retirement income while accomplishing your giving goals
- reduce taxes and benefit ministries close to your heart when selling investments, property, businesses or other assets

 **BARNABAS**<sup>®</sup>  
FOUNDATION  
growing generosity

Toll Free: 1.888.448.3040 | [www.barnabasfoundation.com](http://www.barnabasfoundation.com)

**PAUL GEORGE SCHUTT**, MD, of Grand Rapids, Michigan went to be with his Lord and Savior on October 8, 2016. He was preceded in death by his wife Thelma Catherine (La Fleur). He is survived by his daughters Debra (Jeff) Youngsma and Cindi (Jim) Hoekstra; son David (Heather) Schutt; six grandchildren Zack (Megan) Youngsma, Samie (Nate) Otter, Alex (Amber) and Andrew Hoekstra, and Justin and Mackenzie Schutt; great grandson Grayson Otter; sisters Marge (Dr. Mel) Mulder and Gen (Jim) Tuinstra; and sister-in-law Norma (Rev. Jim) Osterhouse.

**SLOMP** Clarence, age 77, of Grand Rapids, MI, entered heaven on Monday, July 18, 2016 following a lengthy illness. Lovingly remembered by Elsa, his wife of 45 yrs; his children Brandon (Jacki), Devon (Janessa), Ryan (Carol), Hilaree (Chris); and 11 grandchildren; his Slomp relatives in Alberta, Canada, and his in-law Baker relatives of Michigan.

**TAZELAAR** Jeanette, nee Boersema, age 88, went to be with Our LORD on November 2nd. 18W 271 Kirkland Lane, Villa Park, IL 60181. Beloved wife of the late Gerald "Jeff"; loving mother of Grace Tazelaar and the

late Terry Zeilstra and mother-in-law of John (Jan) Zeilstra; devoted grandmother of 3; step grandmother of 4; great-grandmother of 8; fond sister of Anjean and preceded by 1 brother and 1 sister. Memorials to Faith Christian Reformed Church, 1070 S. Prospect Ave, Elmhurst, IL, 60126 or Nurses Christian Fellowship, PO Box 7895, Madison, WI, 53707-7895 are appreciated.

**TRIEMSTRA**, Evelyn (Kimm) 93, of Bozeman, MT met her Savior on September 19, 2016. She was preceded in death by her husband, Henry, in 1981, survived by her children, Helen (David) Hoeff, Joel (Danielle) Triemsttra, Howard Triemsttra, Calvin Triemsttra, Kara (Greg) Leep; 8 grandchildren; 4 great grandchildren.

**VANDEBERG** Marian (Zylstra) 95, of Grand Rapids, MI was called to her heavenly home on October 20, 2016. See obituary at [www.zaagman.com](http://www.zaagman.com).

**VANDEN HEUVEL** Rev. Henry, age 79; passed away on September 25th. Wife: Nancy, Children; Greg and Lauren Vanden Heuvel, Amy Vander Ploeg, Brad and Kim Vanden Heuvel; 5 granddaughters; 5 great grandchildren;

siblings: Rev. Tom and Laurie Vanden Heuvel, Mary and Jim Zuidema, Bill and Marilyn Vanden Heuvel; brothers and sisters in law: Donna and John Asma, John and Margaret Vander Ploeg, Betty and Dale Slobe.

**VANDER SLIK** Julius H., 101 years old, passed away October 8, 2016. A lifelong member of the CRC, his career was in tool, die and stamping work, supervision and sales. He and Cornelia (Koopse) were members of Milwood CRC and married 74 years. From a Kalamazoo career, they retired to Florida. Children are Jack (Gertrude Bonnema), Judith (Bruce) Thompson and Rev. James (Marge Westra), with many grandchildren, nieces and nephews who mourn his passing but rejoice about his heavenly home.

## Employment

**AMERICAN HOUSE SENIOR LIVING** of Jenison Michigan is hiring Resident Assistants and Lead Resident Assistants. We strive to create a loving and caring setting for seniors. It is our commitment to honor and respect the lives of our elders. Your primary responsibilities are, but not limited to, providing residents with personal care and other assistance with activities of daily living as outlined by resident care plans and doctor's orders. Once you have passed your physical, drug screen and fingerprinting, we will get you trained right at our campus. Please call 616-457-9815

**CAREGIVERS NEEDED** Are you interested in working for the best living assistance services company in West Michigan? Visiting Angels is looking for people who can be excellent, not average; make a connection with our clients; be perfectly dependable; practice compassion and work with integrity. Contact Heather at 616-243-7080 or [heather@vangels.com](mailto:heather@vangels.com). [www.vangels.com](http://www.vangels.com)

**DIRECTOR OF NURSING** Artesia Christian Home, located in sunny southern California, is seeking applications for an experienced Director of Nursing for its 66 bed 5 star skilled nursing facility. It is affiliated with the Reformed and Christian Reformed Churches of Southern California. In order to find more information about the facility you can visit their website at [www.achome.org](http://www.achome.org). if interested please send a cover letter and resume to Kevin Thon at [www.Agaperecruiting.com](http://www.Agaperecruiting.com)

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR** for GEMS Girls' Clubs, a thriving, international, faith-based ministry for young girls, headquartered in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Applicants should have a bachelor's degree, or equivalent learning experience, and a minimum of five years in a senior leadership position. Resumes will be accepted until November 30, 2016. To apply, please email your resume and cover letter to [search@gemsgc.org](mailto:search@gemsgc.org). GEMS is an EEO employer.

**PRESIDENT** Calvin Christian School seeks candidates for president to lead our three campuses, serving 425 K-12 students from throughout the greater Twin Cities of Minnesota. Beginning summer 2017, the next president of CCS will be an engaging and inspiring leader, able to build on current strengths and provide vision for the future, champion and nurture an exceptional and passionate staff, and collaboratively guide Calvin Christian's growth in impact, reputation, and resources. Additional information is available at [bit.ly/CCSPresident](http://bit.ly/CCSPresident).

## Teachers Wanted

**PRINCIPAL** Rochester Christian School is seeking a proven educational leader with a passion for Christian Education for the position of Principal, beginning July 2017. The Principal will be responsible for leading the school, articulating its vision, and maintaining a high-quality, distinctly Christian education. Some classroom teaching is required. Rochester Christian School, based in the Reformed tradition, is located in Rochester, NY and is currently celebrating its 100th anniversary. For more information and to apply, visit [www.rochester-christianschool.org/employment-opportunities](http://www.rochester-christianschool.org/employment-opportunities)

## Real Estate: Sales and Rentals

**ANNA MARIA ISLAND, FL CONDOS** pool, beach access, linens, fully equipped. 1 and 2 bedrooms. \$650-850/wk. D. Redeker, 941-704-7525. [redekercondos.com](http://redekercondos.com)

**CONDO FOR RENT** oceanfront Key Colony Beach Florida Keys. 2br, 2ba, lg pool, fishing pier, beach. 2 week min. Feb, Mar, Apr. 616-396-4304



*A CENTURY  
OF CARING.  
A WORLD OF  
DIFFERENCE.*

Jane Keim  
*Fulton Manor Resident*



# Holland Home

Since 1892, we've helped countless mature adults flourish. Providing the care needed as it is needed, whether at one of our residential communities or in their own home. In each case, delivering a broad range of care services designed to answer the needs of every mature life stage.

From independent living to in-home care, you can rely on Holland Home for comprehensive services and incomparable resources today, as well as tomorrow.

**For more information call 616.235.5113 or visit us online at [HollandHome.org](http://HollandHome.org).**

Helpers of Holland home | HomeCare of Holland Home | Faith Hospice



**THE GARDEN HOUSE B&B VENICE, FL.**  
Come for a short stay in the Sweet Suite. Groups up to 5. (2 Queens, 1 double). Minutes from Gulf beaches and Downtown Venice. Centrally located Sarasota, Tampa/St. Pete, Ft. Meyers. Orlando. Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/TheGardenHouse>

House, look free Airbnb [www.airbnb.com/rooms/1708354](http://www.airbnb.com/rooms/1708354) for availability and pricing or call 941-306-7851.

**NAPLES AREA** 2 bd. gated condo, great pool, beautiful residential area near gulf. Available thru this Dec 31, 2016. Then open from April 1 thru Dec 31, 2017 at reduced rates. 616-560-2895.

**SAN DIEGO, CA WINTER GETAWAY FOR RENT** Elegant condo, fully furnished, 1800 sq ft, 2BR/2BA one level, panoramic views. Available

Jan-Feb-Mar. Min. stay 1 mo, max 3 mos. \$2400 per month. [mkratzenstein@cox.net](mailto:mkratzenstein@cox.net), 619-667-5231 or 619-251-5914.

**COASTAL NC** Come South for all or part of the winter on beautiful Core Sound by the Outer Banks in Atlantic, NC – great fully furnished waterfront home - 3 br, 2 baths, dock, TV, wifi, washer/dryer, fireplace, amazing views and bird watching - \$1,300/mo. OR come to the Historic District of Beaufort, NC and stay at one of our 4 pet-friendly cottages beginning at \$900/mo. – Nightly & weekly rates also available. 252-241-7532

### Travel

**HOLIDAY IN HOLLAND** in our self-contained cabin or suite. We also offer vehicle rentals and tours. [www.chestnutlane.nl](http://www.chestnutlane.nl)

**FOR RENT** For rent - condo, 2 bedrooms Gulf Shores, Ala. available Dec.& Jan - \$1200.00 per month. Call. 616-6383635 616-638-3635



Gulfoss Waterfall, Iceland

**Explore.  
Connect.  
Experience.**

## GO with WITTE!

2017 GUIDED ITINERARIES:

**Paul's Missionary Journeys in Greece**  
March 30 – April 11 | Dr. Jeffrey Weima

**Netherlands Waterway Cruise**  
April 21 – 29 | Henk & Thressa Witte

**Iceland: Awe-inspiring Natural Beauty (Calvin Alumni)**  
May 19 – 31 | Joel Adams

**Following in the Footsteps of Jesus: Israel & Jordan**  
May 11 – 23 | Dr. Jeffrey Weima

**Reformation Heritage Tour of Germany**  
May 26 – June 3 | Dan Hermen

**The Danube: Queen of Europe's Rivers**  
June 26 – July 6 | Henk & Thressa Witte

**Cathedrals of England & Southern Cathedrals Festival**  
July 16 – 26 | Dr. Randall Engle

**Alluring Alaska: A Glacier Discovery Cruise**  
August 19 – 30 | George & Kathleen Gentes

### SIGN UP TODAY!

For a full list of tours please visit:

**wittetours.com/banner**  
**800 GO WITTE**



**TRINITY**  
THE TRINITY FUND



**IN THIS, AND IN EVERY SEASON,** giving the gift of personal development, experiential learning, and faith prepares our students with the strength and mindset to make a difference in the world. Through the Trinity Fund, your donation touches every student through:

- Scholarships and financial aid
- Programs and organizations
- Clubs and athletic teams
- Cutting-edge technology
- And so much more

**TRANSFORM THEIR TOMORROW BY GIVING TODAY**

Please visit: [trnty.edu/give](http://trnty.edu/give) to donate

### Office of Advancement

TRINITY CHRISTIAN COLLEGE  
6601 West College Drive Palos Heights, Illinois 60463  
708.597.3000 [trnty.edu](http://trnty.edu)

# Give a *gift* that lasts.

The ministries of the Christian Reformed Church in North America have played an important role in carrying out our calling as a denomination—to express the good news of God’s kingdom that transforms lives and communities.

You can be a part of the story by helping sustain these CRC ministries to ensure that they remain a strong part of the Christian Reformed Church for generations to come.

Please consider these CRC ministries as you plan giving through your will or estate plan:

Aboriginal Ministry  
Back to God Ministries International  
Candidacy Committee  
Centre for Public Dialogue  
Chaplaincy and Care Ministry  
Christian Reformed Home Missions  
Christian Reformed World Missions  
Disability Concerns  
Faith Alive Christian Resources  
Faith Formation Ministries  
Global Coffee Break  
Office of Social Justice  
Pastor Church Resources  
Race Relations  
Safe Church Ministry  
ServiceLink  
Sustaining Congregational Excellence  
Sustaining Pastoral Excellence  
Timothy Leadership Training Institute  
World Renew  
Worship Ministries

Donations from your will can be made in a variety of ways:

- a percentage of your estate
- a specific asset
- a gift of residue of your estate

To discuss planned giving to the ministries of the Christian Reformed Church, please call us at (877) 272-6204 or email [foundation@crcna.org](mailto:foundation@crcna.org).



Christian Reformed Church  
**Foundation**



**HOLLAND TRAVEL** can make your vacation a personal experience by assisting you with your travel arrangements for Holland. We specialize in biking and hiking trips. contact Yvonne at info@hollandtravel.tours

### Products and Services

**ABSOLUTELY BEST PRICES** paid for religious books. Contact Credo Books, 1540 Pinnacle East SW, Wyoming, MI 49509, ph. (616) 249-9291. gvsbooks@gmail.com

**BOERS' TRANSFER & STORAGE, INC** Offering professional moving services within the United States and Canada. EXCELLENT CLERGY DISCOUNTS and an approved mover for retired CRC clergy! 13325 Riley Street, Holland, MI; 1-800-433-9799 or 616-399-2690 email: larry@boerstransfer.com; www.boerstransfer.com Agent for Mayflower Transit, LLC.

**CARING FOR AGING PARENTS?** Visiting Angels offers in-home assisted living. Our caregivers will prepare meals, do light housekeeping, run errands, provide transportation to appointments, and joyful companionship. Whether you need a few hours a day or live-in care, for assisted independent living in your home anywhere in West Michigan call Trish Borgdorff at 616-243-7080 or toll free at 888-264-3580. TRIP Participant.

**REMODELING?** Call Ken DeVries today for an estimate on your next project. 616-457-5880. Serving West Michigan since 1985. www.homework-construction.com

**TRUE BLUE CAREGIVERS** is an agency that offers in home (non-medical) care to seniors. We are intentionally small allowing us to build relationships and tailor our services to each clients unique needs. Learn more about us at truebluecaregivers.com or call 616-406-6819. Owned, by Calvin alums who serve the greater Grand Rapids area. True Blue Caregivers, the small company with a big heart.

**I CAN SELL YOUR HOUSE FOR \$1000 or 1.5%.** Local Calvin grad will sell your house for \$1,000 or 1.5% commission. Full, complete service but with savings! The system works! 135 closings in 2016 alone. Ranked in the top 2% of all West Michigan agents. **Call or email Doug Takens: 616.262.4574 takens@sbcglobal.net**

**TRUE BLUE CAREGIVERS** wishes all our loyal customers a happy and blessed holiday! We are thankful for each and everyone of you.

**ATTN BUSINESS OWNERS.** Are you ready to retire? It's hard to find someone with the same values and principles upon which you built your business. We can help. We want your business! Email us at nextgenmarkandjohn@gmail.com to discuss options in confidentiality.

**GPS FINANCIAL GROUP** – Offers comprehensive wealth, retirement, and financial planning to individuals and businesses with offices in Chicagoland and West Michigan. Contact James Louwerson or Joel Poortenga at 888.717.2266 or gpsfinancialgrouppllc.com.

*A Christmas gift from Ascending Leaders:*

This advent season, we're offering you a **FREE** copy of our study on fasting to encourage you to feast on God and be filled with the joy of Christ's birth.

**Simplicity and Sacrifice: Embracing More with Less**

**FREE digital copy | Available now at [ascendingleaders.org](http://ascendingleaders.org)**

A special thank you to our donors who made it possible to serve churches large and small this past year! All donations through Dec. 31 will be **DOUBLED** by our Matching2Multiply Crew.

**Witness for the LIGHT**

God is transforming lives and communities around the world. You can be part of what He is doing. Learn more about our ministry and how you can get involved at [CRWM.ORG](http://CRWM.ORG)

Christian Reformed **WORLD MISSIONS**



## My Daughter's Life Was Saved

The Christmas prior to starting Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) at Pine Rest, my daughter didn't think she was worthy of living. That year, we both cried the entire way to our family gathering.

The following Christmas, I came home from work to find that she had decorated our Christmas tree and the entire house! My heart was full and is full to this day because my daughter continues to thrive.

**Your gift today to the Patient Assistance Fund will help other children get the treatment they desperately need. DBT saved her life. It saved mine as well.**

Thank you.

*A Grateful Mother*



616.455.8680

300 68th Street SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49548  
pinerest.org/foundation

## The relief needed most in refugee camps today is education.

U.N. SUMMIT ON REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS 2016

Provide safe, compassionate learning spaces for displaced children, in Jesus' name.



tentschools™  
INTERNATIONAL

TENTSCHOOLSINT.ORG | 616.531.9102  
629 Ionia Ave SW, Grand Rapids, MI 49503  
Facebook.com/TentSchoolsInt



A tent school for Syrian refugees in Lebanon





## Christian International Medical Ministries

The Luke Society supports international Christian health visionaries who are passionate about ministering to their own peoples and cultures. Medicine serves as their tool to share the love and saving grace of Jesus Christ through teaching, preaching and healing.

3409 S. Gateway Blvd.,  
Sioux Falls, S.D. 57106  
605-373-9686  
[www.lukesociety.org](http://www.lukesociety.org)



# HOLISTIC HEALTH



**DOUBLE  
YOUR  
IMPACT**

**2x**



# My Neighborhood My Mission Field

**Your gift transforms lives.** That's why your donation is so important—ministry leaders and new Christians alike are impacted by your partnership in the Gospel.

If you give today, **your gift will go twice as far.** A generous supporter has agreed to match all gifts you send in through December 31, 2016 - up to \$100,000. Will you join us? Will you help us reach this goal? Don't miss this fantastic opportunity to double your impact!

Visit [www.crhm.org/MatchMyGift](http://www.crhm.org/MatchMyGift) today and your gift will be doubled.

**PLEASE PRAY. PLEASE GIVE. PLEASE JOIN US.**

**Start. Strengthen. Transform.**

[www.crhm.org](http://www.crhm.org)



**Christian Reformed  
Home Missions**



*You didn't realize it when  
you wrote that check,  
but your partnership  
gave Joan's mom a home.*

Healthcare is expensive, and government subsidies are not enough. But the ministry of Providence Life Services is supported by Christians like you. For Joan, that meant her mom could stay with Providence even after her resources ran out. For Joan's mom, it meant she could spend her last days surrounded by caregivers who consider their work a ministry.

**FIND OUT WHAT WE CAN DO FOR YOU**

PROVIDENCE  LIFE SERVICES

18601 North Creek Drive | Tinley Park, IL 60477

**(708) 342-8114**

[www.ProvidenceLifeServices.com](http://www.ProvidenceLifeServices.com)

Providence Life Services is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization that does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, or handicap.



# Worship Symposium

The Calvin Symposium on Worship brings together more than 1500 pastors, worship leaders and planners, artists, musicians, scholars, students and other interested worshipers from around the world for worship and learning together. Over 50 seminar and workshop themes, including:

## **Public Worship as Sign and Means of New Creation**

—N.T. (Tom) Wright

## **Glorifying God in a Diverse World: Next Steps in the Journey**

—Sandra Maria Van Opstal

## **Singing Bilingually in Spanish and English: A Vision and Resources for Singing Together on the Journey of**

**Faith**—Alison Adam, Tony Alonso, Alfredo Colman, Carlos Colón, Choir from Seminario Internacional Teológico Bautista, Gerardo Oberman

**January 26–28, 2017**  
**[worship.calvin.edu](http://worship.calvin.edu)**

CALVIN INSTITUTE OF CHRISTIAN WORSHIP  
AND THE CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE IN PREACHING  
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN, USA

# Come and Impact the World for Christ

Hannah Boer  
Business Leadership

## Making a Difference

Kuyper College is focused on effectively equipping students to make a difference in God's world. And they are doing so successfully, as they use what they've learned at Kuyper to make an impact in the lives of others for Christ.

## Extraordinary Results

As social workers, pastors, teachers, accountants, radio and video producers, aid workers, and in many other professions, our graduates are helping to build God's Kingdom in the U.S. and in more than 50 countries around the globe.

## Academic and Biblical Integration Plus Spiritual Maturity

At Kuyper, we center the Bible in the academic experience of our students through the integration of a high-quality academic curriculum and a biblical worldview. This helps them become knowledgeable and spiritually mature, and develop the ability to see, understand and live all of life through the lens of Scripture.

It is all of this, plus the results-driven commitment of our students to serve others, which makes Kuyper College unique.

**KUYPER**  **COLLEGE**

Grand Rapids, MI 49525 | 800.511.3749

[kuyper.edu](http://kuyper.edu)

## Winter Tour 2017 Dordt College Concert Choir



**January 3, 7:00 pm**

First Christian Reformed Church  
Edgerton, MN

**January 4, 7:30 pm**

First Presbyterian Church  
Grand Forks, ND

**January 5, 7:30 pm**

Covenant Christian Reformed Church  
Winnipeg, MB

**January 6, 7:30 pm**

Emo Christian Reformed Church  
Emo, ON

**January 7, 7:00 pm**

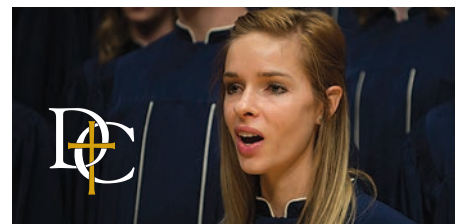
Pease Christian Reformed Church  
Pease, MN

**January 8, 4:00 pm**

Grace Evangelical Free Church  
Fridley, MN

**January 9, 7:00 pm**

First Christian Reformed Church  
Sioux Falls, SD



The Concert Choir, under the direction of Dr. Benjamin Kornelis, is bringing the music of Dordt College to a location near you!

Admission to the concert is free, with a freewill donation received to help defray tour expenses.

For more details, go to  
[www.dordt.edu/arts/music/tour](http://www.dordt.edu/arts/music/tour)

# *Venture Meets Vision*

The CRCNA's Ignite Fund matches visionary disciples with venture capital, helping to kickstart innovative and collaborative ministry ideas in your neighborhood, your church or your classis. The Ignite fund has equipped and advanced more than 85 denominational and local ministry projects.

**Yours could be next.**



Christian Reformed Church

ABORIGINAL MINISTRY CANDIDACY COMMITTEE  
CENTRE FOR PUBLIC DIALOGUE CHAPLAINCY  
AND CARE MINISTRY DISABILITY CONCERNS

# Congregational Services

FAITH FORMATION MINISTRIES OFFICE OF SOCIAL JUSTICE  
PASTOR CHURCH RESOURCES RACE RELATIONS  
SAFE CHURCH SERVICELINK WORSHIP MINISTRIES

The ministries of Congregational Services are focused on serving Christian Reformed churches like yours through:

## Faith Formation Ministries



Encouraging and equipping congregations to grow as disciples of Christ

[crcna.org/FaithFormation](http://crcna.org/FaithFormation)

## Worship Ministries



Supporting biblically grounded and Reformed worship

[crcna.org/Worship](http://crcna.org/Worship)

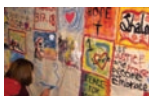
## Disability Concerns



Helping churches enfold people with disabilities

[crcna.org/Disability](http://crcna.org/Disability)

## Office of Social Justice



Responding to God's call for justice in our world

[crcna.org/Justice](http://crcna.org/Justice)

## Race Relations



Assisting churches in engaging the ministry of racial reconciliation

[crcna.org/Race](http://crcna.org/Race)

## Safe Church



Equipping the CRC in abuse awareness, prevention, and response

[crcna.org/SafeChurch](http://crcna.org/SafeChurch)

## Aboriginal Ministry



Supporting healing and reconciliation between Aboriginal peoples and non-Aboriginal people in Canada

[crcna.org/Aboriginal](http://crcna.org/Aboriginal)

## Centre for Public Dialogue



Presenting a positive voice of faith in Canadian public life

[crcna.org/PublicDialogue](http://crcna.org/PublicDialogue)

## Candidacy Committee



Encouraging people to enter ministry in the CRC

[crcna.org/Candidacy](http://crcna.org/Candidacy)

## Chaplaincy and Care Ministry



Supporting and developing the ministry of chaplains

[crcna.org/Chaplaincy](http://crcna.org/Chaplaincy)

## Pastor Church Resources



Supporting congregations and pastors in transition

[crcna.org/PCR](http://crcna.org/PCR) [cncna.org/SPE](http://crcna.org/SPE) [cncna.org/SCE](http://cncna.org/SCE)

## Service Link



Connecting volunteers with opportunities to serve

[cncna.org/ServiceLink](http://cncna.org/ServiceLink)

Faith Formation | Gospel Proclamation and Worship | Mercy and Justice | Servant Leadership | Other Denominational Services

Learn more or give a gift at [cncna.org/Services](http://cncna.org/Services).

# Punch Lines

What has made *you* smile lately? Got a joke or funny incident you'd care to share with your wider church family? Please send it to *The Banner* at 1700 28th Street SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49508-1407; or email it to [editorial@thebanner.org](mailto:editorial@thebanner.org). Thanks!

**T**wo young boys were spending the night at their grandparents' house a few weeks before Christmas.

At bedtime, both boys knelt beside their beds to say their prayers. The youngest began praying at the top of his lungs: "I pray for a new bike." "I pray for a Nintendo."

The older brother leaned over and nudged him. "Why are you shouting your prayers?" he said. "God's not deaf."

To which the younger brother replied, "No, but Grandma is!"

—Clarence Wildeboer

**T**he CEO was scheduled to speak at an important convention. He asked one of his employees, Jenkins, to write him a punchy 20-minute speech. When the CEO returned from the big event, he was furious. "What's the idea of writing me an hour-long speech?" he demanded. "Half the audience walked out before I finished."

Jenkins was baffled. "I wrote you a 20-minute speech," he replied. "I also gave you the two extra copies you asked for."

—D. Gebben

**I**n the bulletin in the order of worship for last Sunday's communion service:

*Communion*

Pass the bread: "The Old Rugged Cross"

Pass the wind: "Resurrection Hymn"

—Henry Lise

**A** pastor stopped a boy on the street and asked him for directions to the post office.

After being told how to get there, the pastor said to him, "Now if you'll come to my church on Sunday, I'll tell you how you can get to heaven."

"No thanks," said the boy. "If you didn't know how to get to the post office, I doubt you can tell me how to get to heaven."

—Aletta Whipple

**I** was teaching a lower elementary Sunday school class about being a follower of Jesus. We

reviewed the 12 disciples, and I mentioned that they are sometimes called "apostles." A 5-year-old boy got all wide-eyed and said, "You mean like the Apostles' Creed?"

—D. Brumfield

**W**hy did Hendrik become a baker?

Because he kneaded the dough.

—R. Smit

**M**y husband is in the financial planning and insurance business selling annuities and the like. When my son was young, he was asked what his dad did for a living. Ben, aged 5 or 6, proudly answered, "My dad sells iniquities!"

—Cathy Jager

**I** have learned two very important lessons in life. I don't remember the first one, but the

second one is to write everything down.

—Rich Klajnscek

**W**hile growing up, Grandpa's older sister would often point her finger at him and shout, "Behave! Act your age!" Now, at age 84, it is quite easy for him to act his age. But his behavior is questionable.

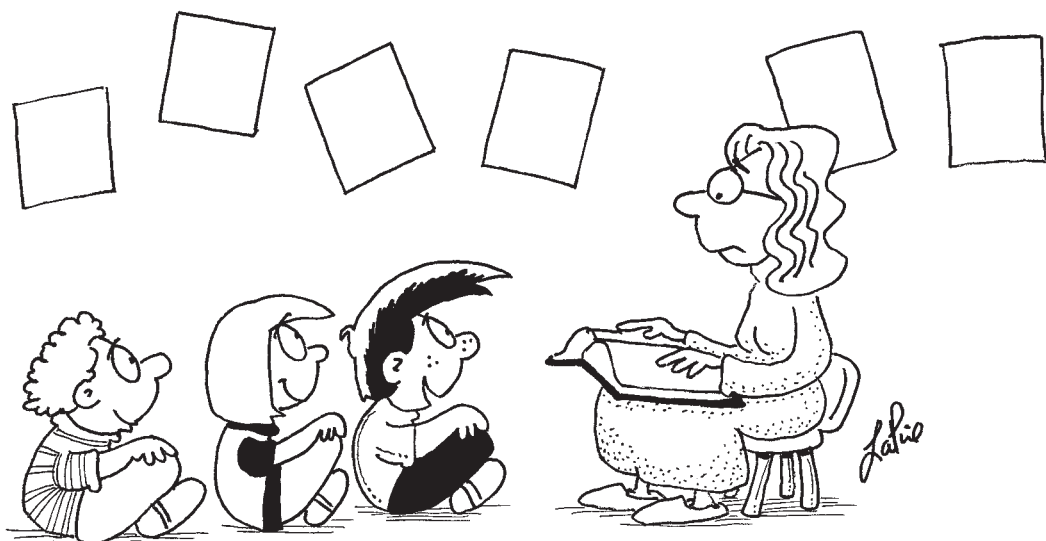
—Adrian Vander Starre

**C**oincidence is God's way of remaining anonymous.

—Connie Brink

**A** young couple regularly allowed their 6-year-old daughter to fall asleep at night with the radio on for some soothing background noise. After a while, they were surprised to hear the ending of her bedtime prayer: "God bless Mommy and Daddy and my sister. Amen. And FM."

—Alvin Bosma



"Did God ever write any children's books?"

Changing  
the story

# Give hope worth smiling for

You can help change someone's story of illness into a testimony of good health

Stefanie and her mother Santos live in the remote community of Concepción Actelá, Guatemala. For them, your gift means access to clean water and an end to chronic illnesses like diarrhea, fever, and malnutrition.

See how your support is giving hope to Stefanie and her family by visiting [worldrenew.net/changingthestory](http://worldrenew.net/changingthestory).



[worldrenew.net](http://worldrenew.net)    

1700 28th Street SE • Grand Rapids MI 49508-1407 • 800-552-7972  
3475 Mainway • PO Box 5070 STN LCD 1 • Burlington ON L7R 3Y8 • 800-730-3490