

Clarion

YEAR-END 2018



Best Wishes and the Lord's blessings in the year 2019 to all our readers.

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Teach Us to Number Our Days



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As the last day on the last page of the calendar announces the end of one year and anticipates the coming of the next one, we are again reminded of the transience of life. The older one becomes, the more one realizes that our days here are indeed, as God's Word testifies, like a shadow, a mere breath, a small chronological blimp in the face of eternity. As David put it in addressing the Lord: "You have made my days a few handbreadths, and my lifetime is as nothing before you. Surely all mankind stands as a mere breath! Surely a man goes about as a shadow!" (Ps 39:5-6).

David's observation applies to all of us, whether we are young or elderly, and the obituary pages in the local newspaper are a daily reminder of that reality. It is especially heart-wrenching when a life is taken away at a time we think to be premature. Those who have reached a ripe old age may come to the point that they long to die so they can go home to the Lord. But those in the prime of life normally have no such desires, and when such a life is suddenly threatened or taken, we ask: why?

"Make me to know my end"

Such a question also haunted David as he composed Psalm 39. He was in deep trouble, perhaps it was a severe illness, and he experienced God's disciplining him. He felt his life being consumed and threatened (v. 10-11). He knew of his sin (v. 11), but he could not understand why God would put him through this trouble and he fought to keep his tongue under control. But as he did so, his distress only grew worse (vv. 1-2). When he finally spoke, he said "O LORD, make me to know my end and what is the measure of my days. Let me know how fleeting I am!" (v. 4).

What are we to make of these words? Why would someone ask God to know when he would die and how much time he has left on this earth? The point seems to be that if David is going to understand what life is all about, then he has to know and honestly acknowledge that his

present life on earth is very short. "Let me know how fleeting I am!" (v. 4). David is not after knowing the exact hour of his death, but he does want the LORD to inject in him a true realism about the brevity of his life. And God grants that to him. He realizes that his life is indeed but a mere breath (v. 5). Such a realization is important, for it is only when we realize our mortality and that life here on earth in its present form does not just go on and on, that we can get a mind of wisdom and understanding about our earthly existence. Moses articulated the same desire when he prayed in Psalm 90: "Teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom" (v. 12).

Such wisdom and the honest acknowledgment of the brevity of life is sorely needed in our time. Being young is often considered the ideal and staying youthful is a common goal. Fortunes are made on cosmetics that supposedly make you look younger or keep wrinkles at bay. Old age is to be avoided as long as possible. Becoming elderly and frail is scorned and the sometimes not-so-subtle message is that if you think your life has had it, there is euthanasia – the foolishness of an unbelieving world that thinks you are dispensable when you are past the imagined prime of life. What really is a human life?

One way to understand is to know what David prayed for. "Make me to know my end and what is the measure of my days." If we look at life from the perspective of the relative shortness of life and one day our leaving this life, we have a vantage point that takes us out of the humdrum of life and allows us to see our existence on earth from a more detached point of view, in this case, a more biblical point of view. We become ever more aware that our life here on earth is indeed relatively short and will end one day. We therefore also need to think of what happens next when we leave this earthly life.

Only God's Word can give us the wide angled perspective we need. Then we can truly know the measure and number our days and get wisdom.

The joy of the biblical perspective

Believers going from one year to the next can experience some nostalgia, but also much joy. After all, the future is always bright for those who are children of God. David already knew that in essence. He did not despair, although he had some serious questions about what was happening in his life. Yet he confessed to God: "My hope is in you!" This hope was well grounded, for he knew of the forgiveness of sins and asked to be right with the Lord (Ps 39:7-8).

How much more can our hope as believers be in the living God! We are privileged to live in the last age before Christ's return. Most of the prophecies have been fulfilled. The Messiah has come, and we know he is on track to come again to make all things new! And on top of all that, as Christians we may have a personal relationship with our Saviour who rules on high as triumphant king of all creation. To have that personal relationship by a true faith is to be "in Christ." Thus, the apostle Peter can address the believers as those who are "in Christ" (1 Pet 5:14). Christ is our life (Col 3:4) as believers and we can affirm with the apostle Paul that we are a new creation in Christ so that "it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" (Gal 2:20).

This union with Christ has enormous and profound implications for our relatively brief existence here in this world. For one thing, we don't really have to worry about the future in our relatively short life here on earth. God will supply our every need (Phil 4:19) and we have the sure knowledge that "all things work together for good" (Rom 8:28). We can be certain that "neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom 8:38-39). This comfort also means that more is involved.

Since our life is joined to Christ's life by the Holy Spirit, the life we have with him cannot be broken or interrupted, not even by death. Therefore, Christ said that "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die" (John 11:25-26). One enormous implication of this reality is that the life we live here now in this sin-broken world is the beginning of eternal life. There is no interruption between life here and the life to come. Should God call us as Christians from this present world, our life with and in Christ continues unbroken. Therefore, the apostle Paul could long to depart from this earthly life and "be with Christ" (Phil 1:23). The life of a believer with and in Christ goes on without any break.


Now if the life we now live is in essence the beginning of life eternal, then we may savour some of the foretaste of the joy of that eternal life that is to come in perfection. We therefore confess in our catechism that "I now already feel in my heart the beginning of eternal joy" (Q/A 58) and that "we begin in this life the eternal Sabbath" (Q/A 103). The future starts now! Life in a sinful world may indeed be short, but by God's grace, believers have already started to live life eternal! The future starts now.

That has implications. Reflecting on this reality makes us ever more determined to live close to the Lord and rejoice in his salvation. As we number our days, seeking a heart of biblical wisdom, we will use every opportunity to live for our Saviour and our God! The time we have is short and we do not know the measure of the days God has allotted us on this earth. But we know that "the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever" (1 John 2:17).

Such wisdom and the honest acknowledgment of the brevity of life is sorely needed in our time

With that assurance we can begin the new year with Christian enthusiasm! We have so much to be thankful for! Life may be relatively short and the struggle against sin is a reality, but Christ has redeemed us from all our sins (Eph 1:7). We may be marginalized in the public square and in the civic culture, which in several ways exults sin, but God "has seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph 2:6). It may not be full reality yet, but our citizenship is ultimately in heaven (Phil 3:20) and our life here on earth is a life that extends to the glory to come. The future rule of this earth is ours in Christ Jesus (2 Tim 2:12).

We may one day experience the gradual breakdown of our bodily tent, but we know the resurrection of the body will follow and body and soul will be reunited in glory. Death has been defeated! "Therefore, my beloved brothers [and the sisters are included!], be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain" (1 Cor 15:58).

With that conviction we can number our days, know their measure, and gain a heart of wisdom so that we can enter and experience the new year with joy in anticipation of the weight of glory to be revealed (2 Cor 4:17)! 

What's Inside

Dear Readers, in your hands is the 2018 year-end issue of *Clarion* magazine. Throughout this year we have been blessed with the supply of material coming in from our authors; but the year-end issue is always special. As in the past, Issue 25 is much longer than most issues, celebrating the birth of our Saviour Jesus Christ, reflecting on the year that is coming to an end, and looking forward to a new year.

On these pages you will find a variety of Christmas articles written by a number of our CanRC ministers (thank you!). There are also many of our regular magazine columns. Additionally, you will find news reports of various types: our editor's annual Year in Review, young people graduating, mission news, league day, and a minister retiring (that one is special to me – congratulations Dad!).

Our magazine uses space in the year-end issue for members throughout our federation to send each other seasons greetings, and I use this space to do the same: May your Christmas season be full of joy, celebrating the birth of our Saviour, and God keep you in his love and care in the year 2019.

Laura Veenendaal

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Clarion

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A Great Fear!

“...and they were filled with great fear.” (Luke 2:9)

Have you ever felt fear? What was the occasion? How were you affected? Was it brief or did the fear last several days? Was it overwhelming or did you find a quick answer? Fear comes in all shapes and sizes. A thesaurus will give a long list of synonyms: fear, terror, dread, anxiety, horror, distress, fright, panic, alarm, trepidation, apprehension, and worry. A simple glance at this list will show that not all fear is the same, and therefore we need more context to understand the type of fear. This is true today and is also true for the fear of the shepherds outside Bethlehem.

One evening, long ago, outside the town of Bethlehem in Israel, “there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night” (Luke 2:8). These words are so familiar to us; you might even be able to fill in the next several lines. “And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear” (2:9).

Why were the shepherds overcome by fear? What kind of fear did they have? The text doesn’t explicitly tell us. All we know is that they feared after the appearance of the angel and the glory of the Lord. Did the surprise appearance frighten them? Did the bright light in the middle of the dark night shock them? Was their fear simple alarm at the unexpected? It seems to be far more than that. The Greek words for great fear (*mega phobia*) suggest more than fear at the unexpected; they were terrified and very likely afraid for their very lives.

Zoom out of this momentary night and see the event within the timeline of history. The shepherds were Israelites, the people of God who enjoyed God’s blessings and knew the warning of God’s curse. God had last spoken to his people through the prophet Malachi. “For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble. The day that is coming shall set them ablaze, says the Lord of Hosts” (Mal 3:1-2). It would be a day of judgment, a day of purifying fire, a day when wickedness would be burned away.

Then many years later, the angel of the Lord appeared far away from the temple to men whose daily labour claimed no exceptional piety. Any informed Israelite might easily think, “Was the day coming when all evil would be set ablaze? Could prophecy be fulfilled tonight and the arrogant and evildoers made like stubble? Was God coming to purify the Jewish race, and was he starting with these shepherds?” The fear of that night is the fear of unclean sinners standing before the splendour of God’s holiness.

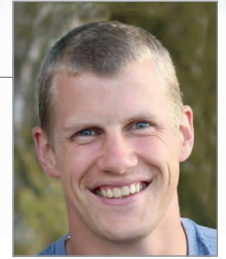
But this night of terror turns into a night of joyful awe. The shepherds who trembled before the holiness of God receive the good news of God’s favour. The angel says, “Fear not.” You are in the presence of God and his favour shines upon you. Tonight, in the town of Bethlehem is born a Saviour, he is Christ the Lord. God has come, not with his arm of judgment, but with his strong arm of salvation to rescue sinners from the wrath of God.

In these few verses, we find the fear of sinners in the presence of a holy God calmed by the heavenly news of a Saviour that has been born. The pages of the gospel are turned.

To know this good news of great joy, you must appreciate the trembling of sinners before God’s holiness. To embrace the joy of Christ’s birth, you must have cried out with Isaiah, “Woe is me” (Isa 6:5). In order to thankfully bow before an awesome God, you must know the bent knees of Peter before the Son of God, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man” (Luke 5:8). When you know the depth of sin and the wrath it deserves, you appreciate all the more the profoundly gracious and comforting words, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

As you joyfully embrace the good news of Christ’s birth, let your joy be magnified as you realize the terror from which you are saved. In the coming of Jesus Christ, “perfect love [of God] drives out all fear, for fear has to do with punishment” (1 John 4:18). May you rest this season in your Father’s love.





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Christmas and the Faithfulness of God

For some people, Christmas can't come soon enough. No sooner does November 1 appear on the calendar and they are already putting on the Christmas music – maybe for some it's right after Thanksgiving. That two months of waiting can seem like a long time. However, imagine waiting two thousand years for Christmas. That's roughly how long it took for God to bring his Son into the world after he made his promises to Abraham. Yet, throughout all that time, God's people had to wait for him.

God seems slow

We might wonder why God works so slowly. In fact, sometimes it feels like he is painfully slow. Waiting for God is hard. We go through difficult trials, we see difficulties in the church and in the world; it's hard not to wonder, "What has happened to God's promises? They seem to have come to nothing."

Despite all that, the Holy Spirit, through the Apostle Peter, reminds us, "Do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness." Peter penned these words about the second coming of Christ, but they can equally be applied to the first coming of Christ into the world. God was not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but he was working at every moment.

This truth is something we can easily see from our vantage point as we read through the Old Testament and into the gospels. However, it really took the eyes of faith to see this for the people living during that time. Think only of the people living right before the birth of Christ. For one, the silence from God was deafening. The last prophet he sent his people was the prophet Malachi. That was nearly four hundred years before John the Baptist. Was God going to ignore his people forever? Then there's the issue of the kingship. God promised that one of David's descendants would sit on the throne and rule forever (2 Sam 7). But who

was reigning on the throne in Jerusalem? None other than Herod the Great (who was anything but great). Herod was an Edomite, descended from Esau. Edomites were a people rejected by God, as their forefather Esau rejected God's covenant and his own birthright. Yet, here was an Edomite on the throne that belonged to the Son of David by right. Herod was the exact opposite of what the Christ, the great Son of David, should look like. He even went so far as to kill some of his own family members to secure his throne and was willing to slaughter helpless babies in Bethlehem. In all this, God's promises seemed to have come to nothing. And so, the cry goes up, "How long O Lord? How long must we wait for you?"

God is faithful

Despite every appearance to the contrary, God remained faithful. We see God's faithfulness first in that he preserved a faithful remnant of Israelites. The first major section of Luke's gospel records the announcement of John the Baptist's birth. Zechariah is chosen by lot to enter into the temple to offer incense, while a group of Israelite worshippers are praying outside (Luke 1:8-10). Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth had themselves endured a lifetime of disappointment, as the Lord withheld children from them. Moreover, the sacrifices and prayers offered at the temple went up every day with no apparent answer from God. Where was the Christ? The unbelieving would have scoffed at such a scene: "Why are you worshipping and praying to a God who seems to ignore you and lets you go through so much pain and heartache?" We might battle similar doubts in our hearts and endure similar scoffing from unbelievers as we wait for God in our lives. Yet, here in Luke 1, the believing remnant continues to worship and to trust. In fact, Zechariah's name means "Yahweh remembers." The promises of God were enough to keep them going through the dark times. After all, God is faithful.

What we see in Luke 1 is that, suddenly, after seeming to plod along at a snail's pace, God springs into action. The Lord sent an angel to Zechariah in the temple to announce the birth of John the Baptist. This child would prepare God's people for the coming of the Christ (Luke 1:17). The time of waiting was finally over, for God had heard the cries of his praying people. The birth of God's Son had now come.

Waiting for God is hard

So many of God's promises are fulfilled in the births of John the Baptist and our Lord Jesus Christ. The promised prophet Elijah was sent (Luke 1:17; cf. Mal 4:5), the virgin conceived a child (Luke 1:35; cf. Isaiah 7:14), Abraham's promised seed who would bless all nations was sent (Luke 1:72,73; cf. Gen 22:18), David's promised Son was born (Luke 1:32; cf. 2 Samuel 7:12,13), Israel's promised ruler came (Matt 2:6; cf. Micah 5:2), and God dwelt among his people (Matt 1:22; cf. Isaiah 7:14). Christ's birth not only marks the birth of our Saviour, but it's also an emphatic declaration that God is faithful.

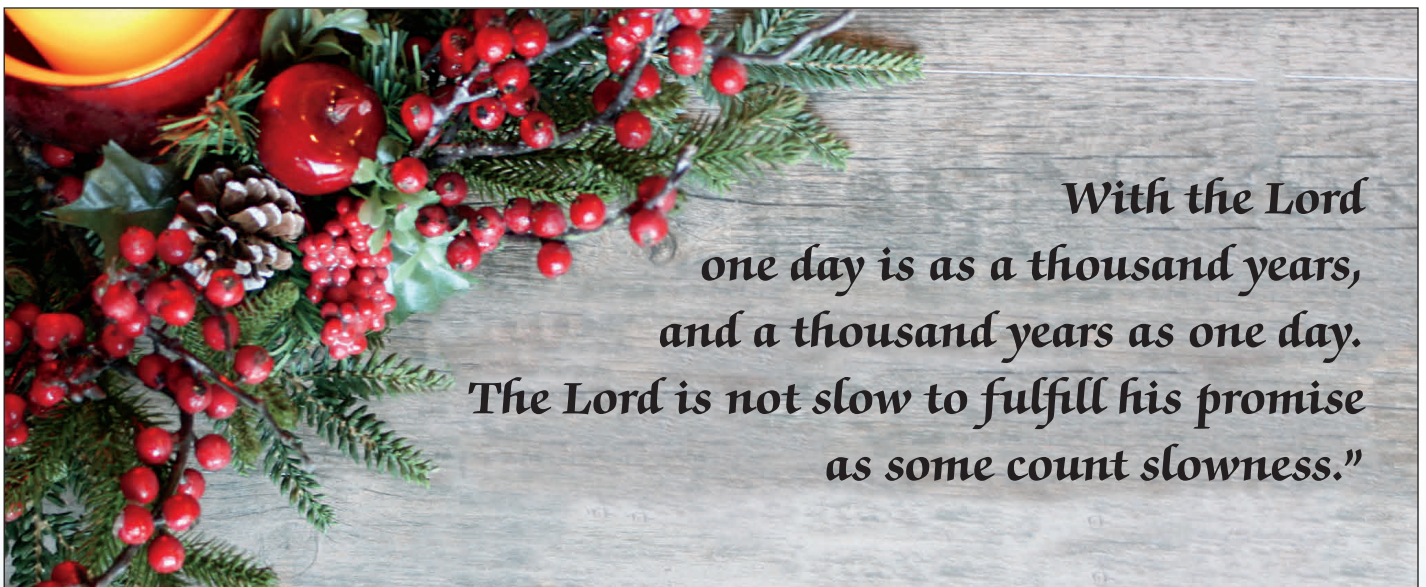
Faith became sight

For some of those faithful worshippers during the births of John and Jesus Christ, their faith finally became sight. Simeon was one such worshipper. He was a righteous and

devout man who was waiting for the consolation of Israel (Luke 2:25). Finally, after so much waiting, the Holy Spirit led him to Joseph and Mary when they presented Jesus in the temple. Simeon took the baby Christ up in his arms and praised God. His eyes fixed upon the baby Jesus were simultaneously fixed upon the faithfulness of God, as he himself confessed, "My eyes have seen your salvation" (Luke 1:30). Similarly, the prophetess, Anna, finally laid eyes on the Christ at the temple. She gave thanks to God and spoke of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem (1:38). For these two believers, faith finally became sight.

Faith will become sight

That's how it will be for all those who trust the faithfulness of God. No matter how long we have to wait for God, one day our faith will become sight. We have even more reason to hope. Christ's first coming declares that God is faithful. Despite the fact that outwardly God's promises may seem to have come to nothing for us or for the church, God is always at work, even when we can't see him work. Although our trials may last the better part of our life, God's promises are enough to keep us going through the dark times. God will bring about the new heavens and new earth as he has promised. One day we will be there with God. I don't think we reflect on that enough, but it will happen. Our faith will become sight like it did for Simeon and Anna. We will see the faithfulness of God. So be strong, take heart, and wait for the LORD!



***With the Lord
one day is as a thousand years,
and a thousand years as one day.
The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise
as some count slowness."***



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Gifts for the King – A Christmas Reflection

Carols. Christmas trees. Nativity scenes. Candy canes. Every year, our society celebrates Christmas through the use of various traditions. And of all the traditions associated with Christmas, giving each other presents is perhaps the most widely practiced. On the one hand, there's little question that widespread gift-giving has promoted the commercialization and materialism surrounding Christmas and draws attention away from the birth of our Saviour. On the other hand, it can be seen as a fitting response to the coming of our Lord and Saviour in human flesh.

After all, Christ's coming was celebrated with gifts from the wise men. It is true that the wise men would not have been present on the night of Christ's birth when the angels sang, "Glory to God in the highest." It was only after the birth of our Lord that these men arrived from the east, looking for the one who had been born King of the Jews. But it was the birth of Christ which was announced by the rising of a star. It was in honour of his birthday that the gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh were laid before the child and his mother, Mary.

Gifts fitting for the King

These three gifts were expensive items, suitable for one whom the wise men recognized as the king of the Jews and worthy of worship. To a degree, these gifts would have been considered an appropriate tribute for any Near Eastern king. Yet we can see that these gifts are especially fitting for the one who is the King of Kings.

The three gifts can point us to a number of places in Scripture which allude to the coming of the Messiah, the long-awaited Son of David. In Isaiah 60, the nations bring gold and frankincense to the city of Zion in recognition of all that the Lord had done for her. In Psalm 45, a Davidic king is described as being anointed with oil, that featured myrrh, and his bride stands at his right hand adorned with gold. In the Song of Solomon, myrrh and frankincense are associated with the figure of the bridegroom (Song 3:6, 7) and the bride (Song 4:6). However, if you really want to understand

the significance of the gold, frankincense, and myrrh, you need to look to the tabernacle.

Gold was used to cover every significant object and utensil that was used in tabernacle worship. The ark of the covenant, the table, the lampstand, the altar of incense, and the altar of burnt offering were all covered in a layer of gold and adorned with decorations that were crafted of pure gold.

Frankincense is an aromatic resin, which you would have smelled throughout the tabernacle. In Leviticus, we see that frankincense went hand-in-hand with the grain offerings that were presented to the Lord. As Leviticus 2:1 tells us, "When anyone brings a grain offering as an offering to the Lord, his offering shall be of fine flour. He shall pour oil on it and put frankincense on it." Frankincense was also put on top of the loaves of bread which were placed each week on the table of gold in the holy place of the temple.

*We worship God in spirit and in truth,
through the Messiah whom
God has given us*

In addition, frankincense was also a key ingredient in the incense that was offered upon the altar of incense in the Holy Place. The Lord had instructed Moses in Exodus 30:34-35, "Take sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum, sweet spices with pure frankincense (of each shall there be an equal part), and make an incense blended as by the perfumer, seasoned with salt, pure and holy." This incense would have filled the Holy Place, filtered out into the Holy of Holies, and drifted out into the tabernacle courtyard.

Myrrh served as a key ingredient in the anointing oil. In Exodus 30:23, 24 we are told that 500 shekels of liquid myrrh were used in the first batch of anointing oil. This oil

was used for the anointing of the priests, but God had also commanded that it be used in anointing the tent of meeting, the ark of the testimony, the table of gold, the lampstand, the altar of incense, the altar of burnt offering, and all the utensils used in the tabernacle (Exod 30:26-29).

In the tabernacle there were numerous objects covered in gold, anointed with oil featuring myrrh, and surrounded by clouds of smoke that were heavy with frankincense. And in a home in Bethlehem, all three of these elements were presented to the one who came as a fulfillment of the tabernacle and what it represented.

The tabernacle pointed to God dwelling in the midst of his people and the birth of Jesus Christ points to God dwelling in the midst of his people in an even more intimate or familiar fashion. In John 1:14 we read, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." The Greek word for "dwelt" can be seen as an allusion to the way God dwelt among his people in the Old Testament through the tabernacle. As a result, some have suggested translating this verse as, "the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us."

When the wise men fell down before Jesus, worshipped him and offered him gifts, they were pointing to the new reality which we now experience. The reality is that we no longer worship God in a specific place. We worship God in spirit and in truth, through the Messiah whom God has given us. Jesus Christ now dwells in our hearts through faith so that we live and breathe in the presence of God at every moment.

Gifts fitting for followers of the King

One way to battle the materialism of the Christmas season, for those who choose to give or exchange gifts, might be to prioritize gifts which promote a closer walk with Jesus Christ. There are many other opportunities during the year when our gifts to one another can reflect a loved one's interests or hobbies. But perhaps it would be fitting to commemorate the gift of Jesus Christ by giving gifts which help our loved ones to better know and love him.

In the first place, we can give the gift of the Word, or gifts which help us to better understand the Word. Your loved ones may have a copy of the Bible, but perhaps they would benefit from receiving a new one with different study notes, or in a different translation. A new devotional can be a gift that keeps on giving throughout the year. And one doesn't need to be a theologian to appreciate an introduction to systematic theology, such as Dr. Jason Van Vliet's *Growing in the Gospel* or Dr. Michael Horton's *Pilgrim Theology*.

In the second place, there are countless Christian books, audiobooks, albums, movies, and other resources which can help us to better know and worship our Saviour. As believers, we ought to be eager to provide one another with literature and entertainment which acknowledge the reality that God has given us the ultimate gift of his Son, Jesus Christ.

As Christians, we do not have to give gifts to celebrate Christmas, but if we do, let us put thought and effort especially into giving gifts which speak of Christ and the amazing revelation that the Son of God took on human flesh and dwelt among us.





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Have You Been Naughty or Nice?

A Christmas Meditation on Luke 1:51-53

At this time of year, many parents in Canada are asking their children if they have been naughty or nice. According to Christmas folklore, if a child has been naughty, then they should not expect too much under the Christmas tree this holiday season; but if they have been nice, then Santa is going to bring them some wonderful gifts. Such sentiments, which often obscure the real Christmas message about the birth of Christ, can be seen and heard everywhere. Many of us have likely turned on the radio in the car or walked through the mall hearing the merry jingle, “He’s making a list. He’s checking it twice. He’s gonna find out who’s naughty or nice. Santa Claus is coming to town.” In today’s culture, the song “Santa Claus is Coming to Town” is almost universally recognized as a symbol for Christmas.

A more meaningful song

If you really stop and think about it, this is shocking. Santa has little to do with the real meaning of Christmas. Christmas is about the birth of Christ. One of the most powerful songs about the coming of the very first Christmas is virtually unknown to the world around us – Mary’s song. But, surprisingly, Mary’s song deals with some similar themes. She also sings about the basic idea of whether you have been naughty or nice – only, her words have far more substance. In Luke 1:51-53 she contrasts the proud with the humble. The incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ would have serious implication for both parties.

The fate of the proud

Mary affirms that God, by a show of his strength, would seal the fate of the proud. “He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts; he has brought down the mighty from their thrones.” Perhaps it is not clear to us how the birth of Christ has accomplished all this. After all, he didn’t lead an army in

revolt against the Roman authorities, like many Jews hoped he would. The rule of the Roman Empire continued on for nearly a millennium.

To make things even more confusing, Mary speaks in the past tense, like the events had already happened. Jesus hadn’t even been born yet and she acted like the proud had already fallen from the heights of their power. Actually, in a certain sense they had. A promise from God is as sure as it gets. Our God always follows through on his promises. So, Mary sings with her sights fixed on the fulfillment of God’s wonderful promises. With God’s plan of salvation put in motion, the outcome was inevitable.

What a wonderful outcome she sees. All the powers of tyranny and oppression that trample down the poor and needy would be brought low. The kingdoms of the earth that stood opposed to the righteous king would come to a tragic and final end when the Son of God entered human history. In fact, all power and authority would end up in the hands of the Messiah, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And his Kingdom would have no end.

Blessing for the humble

But Mary doesn’t just sing about how the poor and lowly are vindicated from the oppressive powers of this world. She also speaks about the positive blessings that would be bestowed upon those of lowly stature. She says, “He has . . . exalted those of humble estate; he has filled the hungry with good things.” We can think first and foremost of Mary in her own situation. Her own humble state of affairs had met with the blessing of the Lord. She sings in verse 49, “He has looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed.” She was likely a young single girl in an average Jewish family, with nothing noteworthy to set her apart from her peers. And suddenly, she was in a position where all

future generations would remember the wonderful blessing that God gave her.

We should be clear, however, about the focal point of that blessing. The incarnation of the Son of God fulfilled God's promises of salvation. It was the reason the Israelites, including Mary, awaited the Messiah's coming with anticipation. She was given the joy of knowing that salvation had come to her, and to the people, and to top it off, she would be intimately involved. The blessings didn't stop with Mary. The blessings to Mary would become an overflowing fountain of blessings for all the humble. They would be exalted with the joy of salvation. We see an echo of these words in Luke 14:11, "For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

With God's plan of salvation put in motion, the outcome was inevitable

In addition to being exalted, they would be filled with good things. Mary essentially reiterates the reverse in position that the humble had experienced with the coming Saviour. Throughout the Scripture, the spiritual blessings of the Lord were often foreshadowed with reference to being filled and satisfied physically. In Isaiah 7, where we read the prophecy of the Immanuel, God declares that "everyone who is left in the land will eat curds and honey." The remnant of Israel representing those who believed

would be blessed with abundance. In the Beatitudes, we find a parallel blessing. "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied." To be filled by the Lord means that our needs will be satisfied, including the most essential need of all, salvation!

With the coming of Christ, we observe two contrasting images of reversal. First, the proud and mighty who administer power in this world were brought down. All power and authority now resides in our heavenly king, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Secondly, all the humble who trust in the Lord's plan of salvation will be exalted and lifted up, the hungry shall be filled.

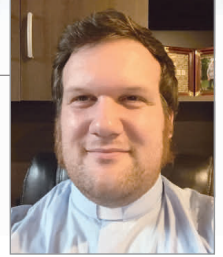
Which song will we sing?

Perhaps this Christmas season we should exchange the shallow jingle of our world that asks if you have been naughty or nice for something of more substance. We should rather be asking the question raised by Mary, "Are you proud or humble?" And I hope we all answer in humility that we trust in the promises of salvation secured by the incarnation of our Saviour. That is a gift that Santa just can't give. Then we have a good reason to join in singing Mary's song. As the Church of Christ, we can do so with the same confidence of Mary herself. With the promises accompanying the birth of our Saviour, the believers then and now are assured of the ultimate victory of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has ascended to the throne of glory. From there he is busy putting all his enemies under his feet. Even death has been conquered, ensuring that all the humble will be exalted. Now that is a song worth singing!



**My soul does magnify
the Lord, for he Most High
has shown to me his favour.
I praise him with my voice;
my spirit does rejoice
in him, my God and Saviour.**

Hymn 17:1



Making Something of Christmas

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“The White Witch? Who is she?”

“Why it is she that has got all Narnia under her thumb. It’s she that makes it always winter. Always winter and never Christmas; think of that!” (The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe).

That little exchange between Lucy and Mr. Tumnus always sticks in my head when I think of the plight our friends and neighbours who do not have Christ. They do not know the sense of joy and glory that comes with special days and festivals. They are losing any sense of holiness. Every day is the same to the atheist or the agnostic. His only reason for celebrating Christmas or any other special day is entirely arbitrary. Speaking symbolically, the dreary gray of winter skies always lies over his heart, never broken by the Christmas festivity. He may join in the festivity, but the gray skies remind him of his true state. In fact, our world is full of people who pursue happiness but do not truly find it. There is an opportunity for the Christian to invite his fellow man to celebrate the gift of Christ’s birth. We have an opportunity at Christmas to share the joy we have in Christ.

Meaningless holy days

We are a post-Christian country. David Bentley Hart argues that this brings with it a unique situation. In his essay, “Christ or Nothing,” he argues that whereas before Christ men were able to hold on to some type of identity, contemporary man loses Christ and gains nothing. Before Christianity had taken a hold on the world, men were able to find their identity in their gods and their customs and their tribal beliefs. They had something that grounded them in the world they lived in. It was demonic and it was miserable, but they knew where they belonged. They had a sense of place that came out in their festivals. After

Christ, however, the choice is Christ or nothing. This fits with what Christ says in Matthew 12:43-45. If the old demonic ways are cleared out and then you reject Christ, your latter state is worse than your first state. Now that the old gods of the west have been destroyed, either you hold to Christ, or you embrace Nihilism. Nothing transcends man’s will. Man’s sheer will creates holidays. Because they do not transcend man, every “holy” day becomes arbitrary and common.

Holy days as opportunity

For the Christian, it is not like that. We have our Holy Day. Every Christian celebrates the day of our Lord Christ’s resurrection every Sunday. A holy day that is grounded in the fact that our Lord Jesus Christ rose from the dead on that day of the week and so announced his victory of sin and death.

*In light of our contemporary malaise,
the joyful feast of Christmas is an
opportunity to show something of
Christ to your neighbour*

Not only does God give us holy days, but God’s people have historically selected other days in order to celebrate God’s salvation. We see this in Esther 5, when the Jews dedicated the fourteenth and fifteenth of the month of Adar to a celebration before the Lord. In the same way, the church has dedicated certain times of the year as festivals celebrating King Jesus and the salvation he accomplished.

Not only do we celebrate things that happened long ago, but we celebrate the works of a king who reigns right now.

These festivals give us an opportunity to reach out to our neighbour. We can give them a glimpse of a God, who has saved his people in the most marvelous way imaginable. When we think of Christmas, we think of how the Son of God took on flesh; how God in his providence laid his son in a manger, symbolizing that he would someday be bread broken for the life of the world. Here the Son of God redeemed the blighted womb of mankind, and by it promised greater redemption. In Christ, God gave his gift of wisdom, our righteousness, our sanctification, and our redemption. In light of our contemporary malaise, the joyful feast of Christmas is an opportunity to show something of Christ to your neighbour.

Ask your neighbour questions. Why do you celebrate Christmas? People will often complain about the commercialism and the consumerism that surrounds Christmas. Ask them what they would like Christmas to be. Maybe they know that it's about Jesus. Does that actually mean anything to them?

Three traditions

A lot of traditions have developed around Christmas as well. These traditions can be used to our advantage in shining our light among those who have no Christmas in the spiritual sense. In particular, three things stand out: the use of singing, the use of gifts (particularly gifts to the poor), and the use of feasts. Really these are connected to most Christian holidays, but they have a special significance at Christmas.

Singing is a beautiful way to show our Christian faith. And Christmas is possibly the one time of year people will open their doors and let strangers sing for them. This is an opportunity to share literature or perhaps invite your listeners to your church for a concert or for a desert evening, or some other event. Christians are people of song. You can see this in the book of Revelation, where there is constant singing before the throne of God. You can see this in Psalm 137, where the Babylonian captors ask of their captives, "Sing us one of Zion's songs." Through song, Christians carry out the mission God has called them to. Think of Psalm 8, where God establishes strength through the mouths of babes. In song, we can enjoy something of the glory of heaven and demonstrate that to our listeners.

In the same way, we can use Christmas as an opportunity to give. Many of us have the practice of giving out presents, which is a good way to show our gratitude to God for his indescribable gift to us – as long as this is done out of gratitude, not grudgingly or greedily. But we can go beyond that. Now, many of us don't often rub shoulders with a lot of disadvantaged people. But that means we have an opportunity to be intentional as to how to use our resources this Christmas, whether it is through reaching out to disadvantaged areas in our city or town, perhaps through fundraising for a mission, or some other opportunity we might think up.

Joy and feasting is another declaration that Christ has already won

One of the most important things we have at Christmas is the feast. We have an opportunity to share food and drink with our neighbour. Here we especially have an opportunity to reflect the love of God. I often think of the section on tithes in Deuteronomy 14, where those who live far away from Jerusalem are to come to Jerusalem and spend their tithe on wine, beer, and meat. That is God's gift to them, to enjoy food and drink before the Lord. We see that reflected in the feast that Ahasuerus gives in Esther 1. Ahasuerus shares of his largesse with all the kingdom, likely celebrating the peace that he has brought to the kingdom. Let us be no less generous in sharing our largesse, while we rejoice in the peace brought about through the incarnation of our Lord.

Using traditions to win our neighbour

One of C. S. Lewis's purposes in writing the Chronicles of Narnia was as an antidote to the pessimism and the grayness of his own time. He wanted to give his readers a vision of what joy and feasting look like. In *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, it is particularly the witch who hates joy and feasting. Upon meeting a party in the woods, she accuses them of self-indulgence and moments later turns them to stone. Why does she hate the joy and feasting of Christmas? It's because joy and feasting is another declaration that Christ has already won. Use the traditions of Christmas for the benefit and, through God's grace, for the salvation of your neighbour.





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2018: The Ongoing Marginalization of Christians in Canada

This past year has not been a good year with regard to safeguarding the rights of Christians in Canada. Several obvious examples come to mind.

Protecting freedom of conscience for physicians

The freedom of conscience and religion of medical doctors was violated when the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO) required doctors to refer patients to physicians willing to perform controversial procedures such as assisted suicide or abortion. A subsequent court challenge by the Christian Medical and Dental Society failed to overturn this new policy when the Ontario Divisional Court ruled in favour of the CPSO on January 31. The lower court's decision is being appealed and will likely be heard early in the new year.

The summer jobs debacle

Another indicator this past year of an attack on the freedom of conscience and religion for Christians was Justin Trudeau's shameful dictate that all applicants for the federally funded Canada Summer Jobs Program would have to sign an attestation that the organization supports among other things "reproductive rights" which includes abortion, a "right" which the Prime Minister has been vigorously promoting, also internationally. This program subsidizes student wages during summer employment, but Christian organizations could not in good conscience sign such an attestation and so received no funding to help hire students for their company or non-profit organization. This discrimination was vigorously attacked by many religious groups as well as by editorials in major media. Several legal challenges have been launched. But, that such an attestation could even be demanded in Canada is another indication of how Christians and their morals are being attacked and marginalized.

Threats to Christian education

On June 15, the Supreme Court of Canada upheld the decision of the Law Societies of British Columbia and Ontario not to approve Trinity Western University's (TWU) proposed law school. The central issue was TWU's community covenant, which required all students to abstain from sex outside heterosexual marriage. Dissenting justices Brown and Côté correctly stated that "The decision not to approve TWU's proposed law faculty because of the restrictions contained in the Covenant — a code of conduct protected by provincial human rights legislation — is a profound interference with religious freedom, and is contrary to the state's duty of religious neutrality." Midway through August, TWU announced it would no longer require its students to sign this covenant, but staff and faculty would still be bound by it. Making the covenant optional for students removes a major stumbling block for the Supreme Court of Canada and it would appear to be a first step for TWU eventually to renew its bid for accreditation. But the blatant discrimination against TWU in the highest court of the land remains as an ominous indicator of the erosion of the rights of Christians.

In this context, the big story currently is of course Rachel Notley's New Democratic Party's open assault on Alberta's Christian schools by threatening them with defunding and loss of accreditation unless they delete religious content from their "Safe and Caring" school policies. At issue are Bill 10, which requires every school in Alberta to have a Gay Straight Alliance Club (GSA) even if a single student as young as five asks for it, and Bill 24, which forbids teachers and principals from informing parents if their child has joined a GSA, even if the child is in kindergarten or has mental impairment or special needs. A coalition of schools sought an injunction of Bill 24 (and by implication Bill 10) so that its requirements could be put on hold until the case would get a proper hearing in court and

ultimately a decision regarding Bill 24's constitutionality. This injunction was not granted, in spite of the fact that religious freedom, conscience rights, freedom of association, and parental rights are all at stake.

The Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedoms (JCCF) is leading the legal fight on behalf of the schools and is appealing the court decision. During the first week of October, several schools requested clarification as to how their policies were violating "diversity" or be "unwelcoming, uncaring and/or disrespectful." However, the Alberta government has refused to provide any explanation as to how the school's belief in the Bible as true would make them unwelcoming and uncaring. The Alberta Ministry of Education justified its ban on faith references in school policies solely on the basis of "the opinion of the Minister." It appears that the Alberta government is determined to impose its will on the schools simply because in their opinion they think it is justified. This hostility to Christian schools (and for that matter to other faith-based Jewish and Sikh schools) is not based on any solid evidence but appears to be solely motivated with the ideology of the New Democratic government.

The matter will be going to court in the way of an appeal and it could very well end up at the Supreme Court of Canada. The JCCF is in this fight for the long haul. Its basic argument is that Bill 24 is unconstitutional, since both its purpose and effect is to deny the rights of parents under section 7 and section 2 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and to do so without the requisite justification. If possible, ARPA will attempt to receive intervenor status in this case. If granted, ARPA would argue "a Reformed perspective on education, the role of parents, the community aspect of our religion (the doctrine of the communion of saints, and how that's counter to the individualism of our current culture), the doctrine of the image of God and the Reformed view on the separation of church, state and family and how Bill 24 undermines all of this, indeed, threatens it in an existential way."

In the meantime, ARPA is assisting schools without interfering with the JCCF's court case. ARPA has challenged both Bill 10 and Bill 24 when they were debated in the legislature and met with government officials to recommend amendments to Bill 24. ARPA has also helped schools develop appropriate policies that would not compromise their Christian convictions and published a very helpful document entitled *Protect Them All. A Christian Case for Eliminating Lists of Special Identity Groups in School Policies* (available on their website).

Legal protections regarding trafficking and freedom of worship

Another example of the marginalization of Christian ethics concerns proposed changes to the Canadian Criminal Code. It is currently an indictable offence to engage in human trafficking, especially sexual exploitation of women and girls and to use threat or force to obstruct a clergy or minister from celebrating a worship service or carrying out any other duties related to his job (section 176). Last year the federal government proposed removing these offences from criminal code protection. Organizations like ARPA and the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) successfully opposed this removal concerning clergy. However, now Bill C-75 proposes to make human trafficking and obstructing clergy hybrid offences, that is, they are to be considered as a relatively minor summary conviction offences. These proposed changes undermine biblical principles of human life and dignity, care for the vulnerable, and freedom of religion.

Looking ahead

The marginalization of biblical principles and Christians in Canada leads to a situation that begins to remind us of the state of affairs that the early Christian church found itself in. Our society is becoming post-Christian and post-modern where not only biblical truth but also even the notion of absolute truth is being contested. Yet, we must not lose heart.

As we enter a new year, we can and should continue to fight unholy trends and work for change through both court challenges and political means, but we must also realize that true change can only come when society itself returns to honouring biblical norms. This reality underlines the great importance of each Christian letting his or her light shine and reminds us of the central significance of the proclamation of the gospel, the Word of God, the sword of the Spirit who alone can change hearts and lives. After Pentecost, God used these means to slowly but surely leaven the Roman Empire with the vivifying gospel of life in Christ. We may trust that God will use also our efforts as well as those of other Christians and their organizations for the well-being of our country in this coming new year to the praise of his glory. He is sovereign and, as we pray and labour, we know that he will ultimately work all things for the good of those who love him.

Sources used: Websites of Association for Reformed Political Action (ARPA) arpacanada.ca, Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedoms, www.jccf.ca and Evangelical Fellowship of Canada www.evangelicalfellowship.ca.



Graduation 2018

Emmanuel Christian High School, Fergus, Ontario

Dinner

On Friday, September 28, the Lord blessed our school community with another beautiful graduation ceremony. The weather was simply ideal – gentle, warm September breezes with sunny skies slowly clouding over. Those who brought in the food and prepared in the kitchen, as well as those who brought in the risers and arranged the furniture, did not even have to sweat while working; the temperature was ideal. By the time the café was rearranged, the stage prepared, and the food well on the way, the graduands, their parents, and the staff began to trickle in. The present grade 12 students were ready to serve the excited crowd hor d'oeuvres.

By 6:00, the MC, Mr. Stephen DeBoer, told us all to take our dinner seats. After opening the meal with thanksgiving to God, the thirty-six graduands were asked to take their plates to the buffet table where eager volunteers, well dressed in black, dished up the food. After the graduands managed to take their tantalizing plates to their table without any mishap, the parents and the staff could partake in the dinner too.

During dinner, the staff shared a successful jeopardy game that highlighted unique or memorable attributes, sayings, actions, or characteristics of each graduating student.

It's always amazing, and very biblical, to celebrate a big community event with food. God provides us with so many blessings, and eating delicious food with one another is symbolic of the fellowship and unity we may experience because of his blessings. After ending the meal with thanksgiving, the celebrants could take thirty minutes to stretch their legs and prepare for the evening's graduation exercises.



Ceremony

By 8:00, the ceremony began. The auditorium was filled with hundreds of guests, the pianist was serenading the audience with music, and the gowned grads came down the aisle to fill their reserved front rows of seats. The board chairman, Mr. Duane Koster, opened the ceremony with the reading of Psalm 144 and with prayer, then welcomed all, including the guest speaker. Mr. Bernie Kottelenberg, a father of one of the graduands, used Psalm 144:12 to inform and focus his message to the graduands. He urged the young men to be “resilient saplings” and the young ladies to be “palace pillars,” two metaphors that came out of this text. Saplings, rooted in good soil, nurtured by parents and church, watered with Christian education, are ready and equipped for service. They are resilient when they

*Mr. Bernie Kottelenberg,
keynote speaker*



face worldly philosophies, mockery, temptations, and sinful struggles only if they remain firmly rooted in the Word and confident in their faith. Likewise, the ladies are called to be pillars of virtue, pillars of support, pillars of strength, of organization, and of care – all pillars in the palace of our God. The graduands, Mr. Kottelenberg continued, are not crumbling pillars or dried out saplings if they continue firmly rooted and well watered. They are not ortho-dusty youth trained in nutrition-depleted, semi-arid soils. Far from it: “Blessed are the people whose God is the Lord!”

After the key note address, the principal, Mr. Nobel, shared his principal message to the grads. The main focus of his address was “If you have zero love, then anything you do, and have learned, no matter what it is, amounts to zero. Zero times anything equals zero. If love, however, is present, it dramatically multiplies the value of everything else.... Graduands, do everything out of love.”

After hearing these two addresses, the graduands were eager to stretch their legs and walk on to the stage to receive their hard-earned diplomas. Congratulated by the principal and the board chairman, the Grads took their diplomas, found their place of honour on the risers, and basked in camera flashes and limelights. It was their moment! And what a blessing for ECHS to provide Reformed education to our twelfth graduating class.

During the awards ceremony, Mr. Theo Hopman, and the vice-principal, Mr. Stephen DeBoer, called students to the front to receive the honour roll awards and other awards (see the side bar for details). ECHS is thankful to

individuals, families, businesses, and organizations in the community who sponsor a variety of awards, and who thus promote academic excellence at our Christian high school.

Lastly, the valedictorian, chosen by the graduates, shared an entertaining and meaningful address. Gloria van Weerden found her perfect metaphor one hot summer day as she was “bent like a pretzel inside this hulking machine fixing a paper jam” at Premier Printing. She compared the whole educational process to the process of a printer, from its feeding trays to its finished product holding trays. On the four feeder trays are the recently minted Grade 8 graduates from the four feeder schools. Each paper passed through the ink transfer belts which impresses images or letters on the pages. Thankfully the ECHS printer is a multi and technicoloured machine. Each teacher transfers ink in his or her own individual way and colour, which Gloria outlined in more specific detail for the benefit of the audience and at the expense of the staff member. Paper guides, Gloria continued, are those peers who nudge you into place when you, because of undue pressure or friction, may go off track. A paper jam is a student who goes out of line and disrupts the smooth process of the printing machine. The heat bars fuse the ink on to the page near the end of the printed page’s journey. These heat bars are, Gloria said, the godly talks and examples of our parents. Gloria ended her speech with: “We’ve been irreversibly printed with the knowledge of who we are and of whose world we live in. As we stand

*Mr. Henk Nobel giving his
principal’s address*



on the verge of this new part of our lives, let us all commit to not be that paper that gets left in a dusty corner. Let's spread this message to the world wherever we go and whatever we do." She urges her classmates to not be orthodoxy, but to be readable letters of Christ.

After the ceremony ended with singing of hymns and prayer, graduates enjoyed some quick refreshments first, dropped their gowns in a box, and stood in a line in the

large foyer for congratulatory handshakes, hugs, and kisses. The audience of siblings, parents, grandparents, great grandparents, church members, and friends chatted cheerily, sipped on juice, water, or decaf coffee, and munched on baking while waiting for their turn to congratulate the grads. By the end of the evening, a light rain started to fall, gently nudging all to quickly find their vehicles, jump in, and leave to their respective homes.



2018 Awards

Honours Achievement Award

George DeBoer, Lauren Doekes, Lauren Endeman, Caleb Hoeksema, Leah Hutten, Brianna Jonker, Juanita Kottelenberg, Rebecca Kottelenberg, David Nijenhuis, Mckenna Nijenhuis, Julie Selles, Heidi Tamminga, Johnathan Toet, Suzanne Van der Meulen, Rebecca Van Raalte, Emily Vanderzwaag, Chantelle Vanleeuwen, Emmanuelle Vanleeuwen, Laura Vis, Spencer Westrik

Royal LePage RCR Realty Business Excellence Award

Juanita Kottelenberg

Jordan Hutchinson Memorial Academic Proficiency Award

Caleb Hoeksema

Lieutenant Governor's Community Volunteer Award

Emily Vanderzwaag

L. Martin Toet Memorial Athletics Scholarship

Suzanne Van der Meulen and Johnathan Toet

Governor General's Academic Medal

Caleb Hoeksema

Fergus Thistle Award

Suzanne Van der Meulen

Golden Eagle Award

Spencer Westrik & Gloria van Weerden

Citizenship Award

Spencer Westrik

Stewardship Award

Laura Vis



Grads have just taken their seats



Retirement of Rev. Richard Aasman

In October of 2018, the retirement of Rev. Richard Aasman, minister of the Providence Canadian Reformed Church of Edmonton, was commemorated through several events.

Retirement party

On Friday, October 19, the members of Providence Canadian Reformed Church gathered to put on a fun-filled retirement party for their pastor of twenty-eight years. Invitations went out to all Providence members well in advance of the event. The Dutch Canadian Club was booked in order to accommodate the large amount of people attending. On the night of the big event, as Rev. Aasman arrived in his nice grey suit, and his wife, Joanne, in a lovely dress, they were surprised to see all of the guests arrayed in various camouflage-patterned clothing and hunting apparel, in honour of his well-known hobby of hunting! The hunting theme continued through the evening, with tables decked out with antler centerpieces and even a large bear skin. There were games to play: "Pin the tie on the Pastor" (with a life-size

picture of Rev. Aasman), a "shooting range" complete with wooden guns and elastic bands, and a photo booth with lots of fun props. Everyone was treated to a large gourmet spread of hors d'oeuvres, served by the Parkland Immanuel Christian School grad class, wearing fancy antler hats.

The MC, Sheldon Kok, began the evening with Bible reading and prayer. A beautiful PowerPoint of Rev. Aasman and his family was displayed, and an interactive game called "How Similar are You to Rev. Aasman" was played. The game's intent was a humorous attempt to find out "who in the room is most like Rev. Aasman," and it involved all of the guests present, as well as the Aasmans' children, spouses, and grandchildren. Forty statements about Rev. Aasman were read off, and for each statement that applied to a participant, that person got a point. In the end, it was fun to see Gerrit Vanderveen, Bill Geusebroek, and Shawn Veenendaal tied as winners, as most similar to our pastor! Everyone enjoyed the evening of mingling, delicious food, and spending time together.



Providence church members and the Aasman family gathered for the retirement party



Richard and Joanne Aasman enjoying the retirement service

Retirement service

On Sunday, October 28, Rev. Aasman, after thirty-eight years of preaching, teaching, and shepherding (twenty-eight years of those spent as pastor of Providence congregation), preached his last sermons as minister of the Providence Canadian Reformed Church. In the morning service, Rev. Aasman used an updated version of his inaugural sermon of September 14, 1980, when he first became pastor of Providence. The text was 2 Corinthians 5:18-21, which dealt with the “great exchange:” our sin, for Christ’s righteousness. In the afternoon, he preached on 2 Corinthians 3:7-18. Verse 18 formed the climax: “And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into this likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.” Rev. Aasman encouraged us to be “The People of the Shining Face,” giving all glory to our God. During both services the congregation was blessed with beautiful musical accompaniment by talented musicians on the pipe organ and the piano, as well as trumpet-playing and flute.

Special program

Directly following Rev. Aasman’s last sermon, a special retirement program was held. The church building was absolutely

packed with Providence members and guests from neighbouring congregations, including all of the Aasmans’ children, their spouses, and their grandchildren, as well as Rev. Aasman’s brother and sister-in-law from Burlington, Ontario, and Joanne’s sister and family from St. Albert, and other extended family.

Ron Doorten, the MC for the program, began by welcoming all of the Aasman family and relatives and other guests. Rev. Vanderlinde of Barrhead, Alberta then spoke on behalf of Classis and Barrhead church, followed by Curtis Hooimeyer on behalf of Neerlandia South, and Ken Hoeksema on behalf of St. Albert church. After that letters were read from the Canadian Reformed Churches at Coaldale, Taber, Calgary, and Neerlandia North. All of the delegates expressed sincere thanks to the Lord that Rev. Aasman was able to faithfully proclaim the gospel for so many years. It was also expressed that Rev. Aasman will be missed for the work and wisdom he provided to the federation especially at classis and synod meetings, as well as the work he has done while on the board of our theological seminary in Hamilton.

Next the children of the congregation came forward to sing “Amazing Grace” and to individually read poems for each letter in REV AASMAN. This was followed with a very humorous video presentation, depicting interviews with the little ones of the congregation, as they were interviewed and recorded on their thoughts on how Rev. Aasman spends his days, what it means to retire, and what the definition of a “calling committee” is. Next Luke Doorten and Noah Veldkamp presented a Bible verse and a gift card on behalf of the Young People’s Society. Frits Meyer spoke on behalf of the seniors in the congregation. Next a gift from the whole congregation, “young and old and middle-aged,”



Providence children singing “Amazing Grace”



The most like Rev. Aasman: Bill Geusebroek, Gerrit Vanderveen, and Shawn Veenendaal. And Sam VanderGaag joined Grandpa too!

was presented to the Aasmans. Each card in the memory book was filled out by the members of Providence to create a collection of memories, thoughts, and words of encouragement and affirmation. Some people handwritten notes, others typed a poem, or contributed a photo or Bible verse, some children drew pictures, and some of the seniors told funny stories or meaningful memories. Following this Martin van der Ahé spoke on behalf of Council, and presented Rev. Aasman and Joanne with a travel voucher to enjoy in their retirement, as well as flowers and chocolate.

Rev. Aasman then came up to the podium to speak. He expressed appreciation to the congregation, his family, and his wife, Joanne, and thanked the Lord for enabling him to do his task as minister. Craig Bansema then led us in closing

prayer. To end the program all of the elders and deacons of Providence Council came forward to sing “The Blessing of Aaron,” followed by Hymn 83, the Even Song, verse 1. The entire congregation then rose and joined in with heart felt singing on verse two.

As everyone filed out of the sanctuary there was ample time to stop and thank Rev. Aasman and Joanne, and to congratulate them on this new chapter in their lives. The Church Life Committee provided a delicious spread of buns, veggies and fruit and dip, baking, and cake.

We thank the Lord for the blessed time we have had with Rev Aasman as pastor of our congregation. We are also thankful that he and Joanne will remain living in the area, and that Rev. Aasman has offered to continue to help in many ways, including teaching the young people and pulpit supply. To God be the glory!



Grandchildren Hannah and Graham Veenendaal pinning the tie on Grandpa.

League Day Ontario 2018

Women in the Wilderness: Coping in a Post-Modern World

Dawn broke darkly in Southern Ontario the morning of October 17; intermittent squalls of autumnal rain with dark clouds scudding across the sky. Weather that, upon reflection, seemed particularly fitting in the context of this year's League Day theme: Women in the Wilderness: Coping in a Post-Modern World. Still, it was no obstacle for the many women who took the time out of their busy lives to come together in Hamilton for a day that promised to be enriching in so many ways.

Wendy Koster opened the League Day with prayer, let us know that the search for a League President to replace her has been successful, with Trish Gelms taking it on. The vacancy this left in the League Board for the position of League Representative for The Study has already been filled, with Daniella DeVries offering to step into that role.

Trish Gelms summarized the past year's work at The Study, formerly known as – and still, in occasional lapses, referred to as – as the ILPB. The refresh it has gotten with its rebranding and name change haven't changed their core mission of publishing Reformed study books. The Study had a book table, but in a departure from preceding years, only one book was in immediate cash-and-carry stock: their most



recent publication of Rev. Wes Bredenhof's *Solus Christus*. Book catalogues were readily available for browsing, and The Study's website is always open for orders. Trish also highlighted the current need for an Administrator, as well as a Marketing Manager, both of them volunteer positions that are so well-established that the transition for the new person will be a smooth and pleasant one.

The Women's Savings Action is an initiative that has its beginnings in the League of Women's Societies back in 1969. Since then, this group of women have been collecting money for the library of our Theological Seminary in Hamilton. It's been a labour of love throughout our federation, and the benefits reaped from harvest of this work over those years are indeed incalculable.

Roll Call by congregation always takes a few minutes, but it never ceases to be a beautiful and encouraging testament to the continuation of God's church-gathering work, also in visible representation from a geographic perspective.

All of this was followed by brief introduction to our speaker, who was already a familiar figure to many of us, mostly thanks to some forty years of teaching at Guido deBrès High School in Hamilton: George Alkema.





Marta Bartels and Anita Poort at the registration table



Mary Alkema, Trudy Terpstra, and Adria Stulp



Tobi Bos and Lindsey Sieders, with Teny Visscher

He set the tone for his speech with Psalm 11, where David the Psalmist asks, “When the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?” It has become a question of escalating urgency in this age we live in, with its gross moral decline. Though Canada began her history as a Christian society, there has been a conscious and deliberate dismantling of those foundations over the years, especially marked by Trudeau’s crusade for quick and easy divorce in 1968, and abortion restrictions being struck down, leaving a legal void that has yet to be filled.

Canada, along with the rest of the Western world, has become stridently post-Christian. Society AD 2018 acknowledges no God, instead placing its trust in Darwinian self-creation. Not realizing, however, that by denying God, they’ve also lost the metanarrative; there is no collective overarching story or worldview to explain life, leaving little to strive for or accomplish. Though as Christians we know and live by the guidance and the grounded foundations of God’s Word, in the world, there are no absolutes, no guideposts; instead, there is a denial of absolute truth. Truth has become malleable and arbitrary and is considered merely a social construct, with history being edited to appease and accommodate current social climates – not realizing, however, that sanitizing the perceived mistakes from history will leave society in a state of historical amnesia, with no mistakes to have learned from, no history, and no roots.

There is still much that is beautiful. This is God’s world and his creation, and he rules in wisdom and almighty power over all, even though to our sinful and discouraged hearts we may at times feel much like Elijah did in the desert, vastly outnumbered by the wicked, vulnerable prey to the encircling forces of evil. We must live prayerfully, with revived purpose as dedicated people, transformed by the renewal of our mind. We must study God’s Word in-depth, a study that will lead to prayer that focuses on the Lord and his holy will, less on our immediate needs. It is imperative that we be steeped in the Scriptures; we must meditate directly on the Word of God, being consciously aware too, that there are no quick instant fixes; that this kind of meditation takes time and consistent commitment. God has given us this gracious gift of time; how are we stewards of it? Psalm 119 has a message for us, also in its length, as well as in the care taken in composing it. “I love your Law; I meditate on it day and night.”

Food for thought indeed; even as we enjoyed our delicious lunch, there was still much reflection and conversation about it. The afternoon’s discussion dealt in finer detail what these things mean for us as women in the various places God has set us. Regardless of station in life, we are all called to keep in the forefront of our minds the words of Philippians 2:3-4: “Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.”

Rejoice! The LORD is King! His Kingdom cannot fail!
Our LORD rules. And he is returning.



Clarion Kids

The Great Commandment

Matthew 22:34-40, Mark 12:28-34

The Pharisees were always trying to trick Jesus into saying something wrong. One of them asked, "Which is the greatest commandment in the law?" He answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself." When God sent his son Jesus into the world at Christmas, he showed us the perfect example of love. For God so loved the world that he sent his one and only son, that whoever believes in him might have eternal life.

Go to www.clarionmagazine.ca to print and colour this picture!



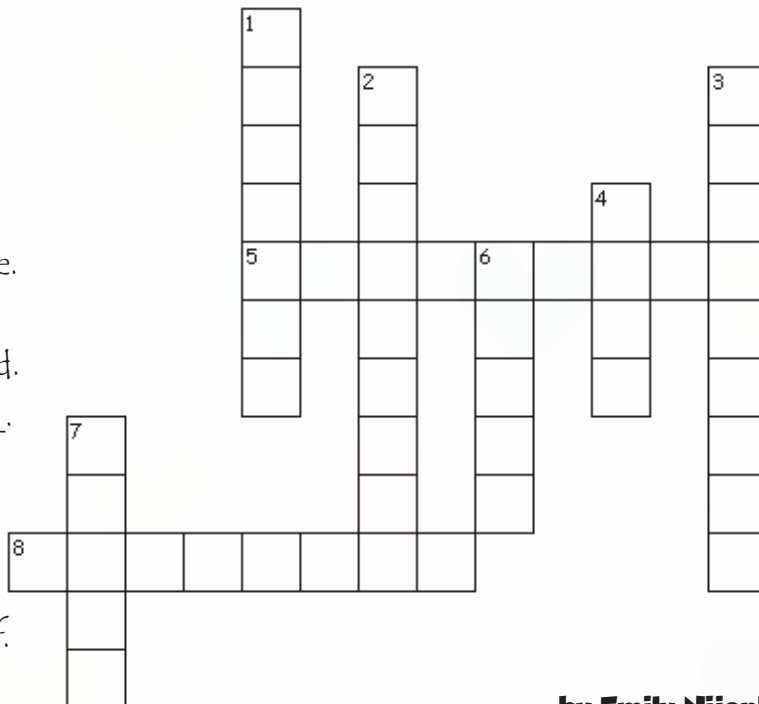
Crossword Puzzle

Down

1. Whoever believes in Jesus will have _____ life.
2. The perfect example of God's love.
3. People who tried to trick Jesus.
4. You shall _____ the Lord your God.
6. Love God with your whole _____.
7. For God so loved the _____ that he sent his only son.

Across

5. Love your _____ as yourself.
8. The _____ commandment.



by Emily Nijenhuis

Ben DeJong



If I began this write up describing a young man and asked you to guess who this might be, I would need to describe multiple unique characteristics of this individual. So, let me see, this man is turning twenty-eight on January 13, has dark hair, is kind and funny; he loves to dance and sing, give kisses and hugs, and burps; he loves coke,

eats Lay's chips, is gluten free, watches Scooby-Doo, takes pictures, and plays jokes on people. A few names might come up. . . Jerry, Cameron, Clarence. . . or Ben - you got it! Ben DeJong has lived at Harbour Home for almost four years, after moving out of his parents' home to reside at Harbour Home. This has been an adjustment for Ben having new housemates, a new environment and routines, but he is very happy and content here.

Ben attends Rehoboth United Reformed Church, along with his co-residents and his parents. Ben owns his own Psalter Hymnal book in which he follows along and sings. He enjoys Sunday luncheons and visiting fellow church members. Ben loves the Lord very much. He is always very enthusiastic during singsongs at Harbour Home and in church and this is also evident by the chain he wears around his neck which bears a cross on it.

Ben attends a day program called ECHO on Monday, Tuesdays, and Fridays, where he does a variety of social activities including crafts, exercises, games, and outings to aquariums, the War Plane Museum, the cinema, and Soccer World. On Wednesdays and Thursdays, Ben stays home, but he still keeps busy! Wednesday is Ben's chore and errands day; his day begins with laundry, drying dishes, cleaning the kitchen (fridge and cupboards), and then his room. The afternoon consists of grocery shopping, running errands with staff, as well as baking brownies or cookies and helping prep dinner. On Thursdays, Ben volunteers at Macassa Lodge from 9-12. This is a retirement

home where Ben ports elderly individuals to and from the barber shop. Ben greatly enjoys this social activity, as do the elderly! Many have called him their boyfriend, give him kisses and tell him how sweet he is. They also tell him how much he is appreciated, and how they look forward to seeing him weekly! In the afternoon, Ben delivers seventy-seven papers throughout the neighbourhood! This job gives him much exercise and a sense of responsibility; he does a very good job, rain or shine!

During the week Ben also does many activities, especially in the evenings after supper between breaks to watch Scooby-Doo in his room. Ben does enjoy some quiet time after a busy day. At around 7:30, Ben comes upstairs and joins the others with games, UNO, crafts, playing Wii, reading books, going to the library, walking to the park, enjoying spa night, or helping collate papers. On weekends, the home usually does an outing. Friday night is often movie night or Fun Night - where all the Anchor Homes get together for games and social time, or fellowship groups from churches come and visit. When that happens, watch out for Ben playing shuffle board; he is a champ! Also, if you are camera shy, stay away from Ben or he might snap multiple pictures of you! Saturday outings include visits to the RBG, walks, Tim Horton's outings, festivals, breakfasts, bazaars, farmer's markets, Marineland, Ripley's Aquarium, the mall, parks, the pumpkin patch and many more activities! Sometimes in the mornings, a family member will take Ben out for Tim Horton's, for a walk, or might stay for a visit. Now, a fun fact about Ben that you wouldn't believe: he *loves* roller coasters and went on the Sky-Screamer three times at Marineland this summer, along with many other rides!

So this is a little about Ben DeJong. I, his support worker, have had the joy of getting to know Ben much better! If you are ever in the area, please feel free to come and visit and learn more about Ben and the wonderful gifts and talents he has to share!

Written by Michelle VanGoolen

January birthdays

- 6 JASON HERREWYNEN will be 45**
c/o Harbour Home
42 Spadara Drive
Hamilton, ON L9B 2K3
- 7 CHRISTINE BREUKELMAN will be 47**
2225-19th Street
Coaldale, AB T1M 1G4
- 13 BEN DEJONG will be 28**
c/o Harbour Home
42 Spadara Drive
Hamilton, ON L9B 2K3
- 14 STEPHEN DYKSTRA will be 36**
Box 3573
Smithers, BC VOJ 2N0
- 17 HENRY DRIEGEN will be 63**
PO Box 2532, Station A
Abbotsford, BC V2T 56R3
- 17 GRACE HOMAN will 63**
c/o Anchor Home, 361 Thirty Road S., RR 2
Beamsville, ON LOR 1B2
- 19 Edwin Schutte will be 35**
844 Bowman Road
Abbotsford, BC V3G 1S9
- 19 JANINE SMID will be 49**
141 Kittridge Avenue E.
Strathroy, ON N7G 2A9
- 26 KATHERINE NIJENHUIS will be 53**
c/o Lighthouse
6528 1st Line, RR 3, Fergus, ON N1M 2W4
- 30 TYLER HOEKSEMA will be 30**
6755 Lorne Drive, Sardis, BC V2R 2G3

Congratulations to the many of you celebrating a birthday in January! May the Lord be with you in the year to come, that you may live in joy and in peace with him by your side.

I would also like to wish everyone a joyous New Year. Let us continue to live for our Heavenly Father each and every day, praising him for all things!

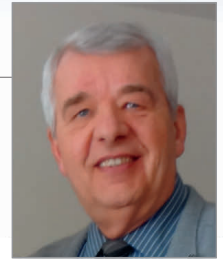
A NOTE TO PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

If there are any address or other changes that I need to be aware of please let me know as soon as possible.

Rachel Vis

731 Lincoln Street, Wellandport, Ontario LOR 2J0
tom.rachelvis@gmail.com • 905-329-9476





William den Hollander
Minister emeritus of the
Bethel Canadian Reformed Church
at Toronto, Ontario
denhollanderw@gmail.com

Q Where and how do we worship God on the day of rest during the holidays?

I have noticed that more and more people will go on holidays, like camping at a lake, and they do not go to church; they just listen to "live feed." I know this even happens when one of our churches is less than an hour away. Is this "practice" pleasing to God? They will argue that "where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am among them" (Matt 18:20). I really wonder what they do for the rest of the day. What are they teaching their children about observing the Sabbath day?

A This question includes a number of important aspects regarding a Christian lifestyle. Indeed, such a lifestyle in which we distinguish ourselves as Christians is important also during the holidays. Hence, the choice of a place for a camping holiday should also be determined by the way we prioritize, placing God first in our life. When everything in our life is Christ who lives in us (Gal 2:20) and in Christ we ask ourselves what does the Father want me to do, then it is very important where we want to be on the Lord's Day. Christ, also, had his times away in the peace and quiet of nature, for a time of prayer, yet on the day of rest he was among God's people. Being among God's people was a desire that was of the people's first and foremost priority. God's people who were sick, or who had to miss out on being present among God's people for whatever circumstances, found that very difficult. Even in their prayers they would give priority to being able to be among God's people rather than to their restoration of health (Ps 42:2; 43:3; 63:2f.).

Today's availability of live stream, therefore, is a rich blessing for the sick, the shut-ins, and those who have to be away of their congregation for valid reasons. When it pertains to the choice of a campground or other holiday destination, however, there certainly is no lack of a place of (Reformed) worship throughout North America or abroad! It's, indeed, in such a choice for a place to enjoy a holiday that we should also show this priority for being in the midst of the communion of God's people. Even though it's a blessing for the sick and others when they have the opportunity to be part of the worship of their congregation via live stream, they would be the first ones to mention that it is second best; they would also echo the same sentiments that are expressed in various psalms. In the congregation, among God's people, that's where you belong; that's your home, your identity! You are who you are as member of God's people and where his people gather to worship! If necessity or circumstances cause you to miss out, that's hard; when you have a choice and the opportunity is available, you would go where his people gather to worship. Just as the Lord Jesus would ask himself, this would be the will of his Father that pleases him!

The questioner adds another important observation and consideration: what about the Lord's Day observance and celebration; and what about the example to the children? Due to the times in which we live, the greater possibilities and opportunities, and the greater prosperity that can be enjoyed generally, the temptation to put ourselves first, to please ourselves first, is something for which we should be alert very much. We might be inclined to find for ourselves good reasons, sound excuses, and even a quote from Scripture to justify our choice. Then a reference to Matthew 18:20, as the questioner mentions, will not do, since the Lord Jesus there is speaking about matters of mutual discipline, admonition, and repentance, in which we don't need the whole gathering of God's people but can suffice with two or three, knowing of God's grace that he will be in their midst with his Spirit and wisdom. Also making it a matter of our NT Christian freedom or doing so with a clear conscience won't do, since it ultimately is an indulgence to the flesh instead of a show of honour and glory to God.

That is our priority when it comes to using the Lord's Day for worship and celebration! Indeed, that will also be an important lesson to the children to learn discernment, discretion, prioritizing, and seeking to please God rather than ourselves! Hence, our welfare may be coming with new and different challenges to seek to do the will of God, but it's a good opportunity to show them and others whom we serve and for whom we live, united as we are with Christ and his people!

*Is there something you've been wanting to know?
An answer you've been looking for?*

ASK US A QUESTION!

*Please direct questions to Rev. W. den Hollander
denhollanderw@gmail.com
23 Kinsman Drive, Binbrook, ON L0R 1C0*



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

I really appreciate all the many interesting articles that are written in *Clarion* and want to encourage everyone to continue. Just to state my view, I have noticed some disturbing articles which I believe are going in a different direction and are fundamentally wrong: the way we approach matters that affect our church, church services, church liturgy, and mission to mention a few. We are abandoning some of our history and convictions of our church fathers. We are reasoning from a personal and human perspective, not from a scriptural position.

Some recent *Clarion* articles display this change.

Rev. Murphy wrote in the June 15th edition that we should get with the times, dust off our principals and traditions, and add some pizzazz, with the result of making it more appealing for people outside.

In the *Clarion* September 21 edition, Dr. B. DeJong says there has to be more flexibility to allow a Baptist minister to lead a worship service as long as you have extenuating circumstances. In his opinion the Church Order is not clear, and so has no jurisdiction on this matter.

In the same edition, the editor, Dr. J. Visscher, explains we need to do more outreach and he has no issue with a Baptist minister leading the worship service because of special circumstances.

I would like to say Adam's circumstance started off with his wife taking from the fruit. He ultimately blamed God. Our human nature is to find circumstances to justify every sin. There are many times the Lord places us in difficult circumstances and many times we fail the test. This is also true for church life.

I have never heard the term "mission church" in the past, but we read this more often in *Clarion*. Blessings Christian Church in Hamilton claims this title and other locations are considering it as well. I am convinced that the church services are not to be used as a mission tool. The purpose of the worship service is for all those who are called to place themselves under the true preaching and discipline of the Word of God in his faithful church. Members in good standing are allowed to celebrate the Lord's Supper. When you allow a Baptist minister to lead a worship service, he needs to be in good standing with our

confessions and doctrines. If a Baptist or Christian Reformed or Lutheran can preach in our churches, then it is only the next logical thing to say this is an extenuating circumstance, so let them partake at the Lord's Supper table.

Dr. Jack Visscher wrote in the *Clarion* July 14, 2017 edition that some say we as CanRC are only twenty years behind what the Dutch churches are doing. He writes in his article that he feels this will never happen in Canada because we have a different culture. In my humble opinion his theory is way out. We see Holland and other Reformed churches have lost their Reformed identity because of their efforts to make the church and services attractive and appealing to young people and non-church members. If we continue in this reasoning, it is not going to take twenty years to lose our Reformed identity.

We as people in the pew want to have solid scriptural preaching every Sunday. The pulpit should stay central in the service and everything else should promote this. Someone who came to faith by God's grace said to me, "The preaching is like a huge battery charger and we are the batteries. After being recharged, we as members of the church go out and shine our light." That is doing mission. The Lord promised to protect the church for thousands of generations as long as we remain faithful.

Respectfully submitted,
Albert Vanleeuwen

Editorial comment

I thank br. Van Leeuwen for his letter; however, I do think that he should read what is written with greater care. Among other things, (a) it is *wrong* to state that I have "no issue" with a Baptist minister leading a worship service. Rather, I pointed out that the circumstances were unique and rare for doing this, that this is a matter of local church governance, and that it would have been advisable for Blessings to have gone to Classis with this matter; (b) I did *not* say that what is happening in our sister churches in The Netherlands will never happen to us in Canada, but pointed out that we live in a different continent, associate with different Reformed churches, and that there is no movement afoot in our federation whatsoever to go in this direction.

James Visscher

*Letters to the Editor should be written in a brotherly fashion in order to be considered for publication.
Submissions need to be less than one page in length.*



FROM THE PUBLISHER

Patience

But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Romans 8:25

We live in an impatient world. Whether in terms of technological development, economic change, or news cycles, our world has taken on a dizzying pace. Our culture and advertising teach us: Don't wait! Buy now! Go get what you want! We are conditioned to be dissatisfied with the time required for (and the messiness inherent in) the worthwhile things in life.

This mindset does not leave our spiritual life untouched. We struggle with God's timing in restraining evil, in relieving suffering, in answering our prayers. We grow discouraged at the lack of spiritual progress we and our congregations are making. We don't have the patience to be still and to set aside time for Bible study, meditation, and prayer.

God's people often asked, "How long?" But the incarnation of our Saviour marks the vindication of the remnant who longed for the promised Messiah. It is a reminder that "the Lord is not slow to fulfil his promise as some count slowness." And we likewise are commanded to put on patience, a fruit of the Spirit. May God grant that this fruit more and more displace the impatience in our lives.

Thank you

Dear readers, thank you for your continued support. Our goal is your edification. Over the last couple of years, Rev. Eric Kampen led the editorial team and publisher through discussion on the *why* and *how* of *Clarion* in a series of Strategic Planning sessions. These sessions have helped to remind us of our purpose and unify us in a shared vision. You will see some of the results of this exercise beginning with Volume 68 for the year 2019. On the front cover and in the colophon (on the inside

front cover) of the magazine we will include the goal and values we identified. Going forward, we will work from this vision. Your feedback is most welcome!

The lion's share of the work of putting together the content for each issue falls to our chief editor Rev. Jack Visscher and copy editor Mrs. Laura Veenendaal. Add to that regular planning, communication, and contribution from co-editors Rev. Peter Holtvlüwer, Rev. Eric Kampen, Dr. Cornelis Van Dam, and Rev. Matthew Van Luik; and submissions from the coordinators and writers of our regular columns: Mrs. Rachel Vis (*Ray of Sunshine*), Mrs. Emily Nijenhuis (*Clarion Kids*), Mr. Arthur Kingma (*Education Matters*), Rev. William den Hollander (*You Asked*), Dr. Cornelis Van Dam (*Clippings on Politics & Religion*) and Rev. Eric Kampen (*Treasures, New & Old*). The result is the magazine that arrives biweekly. Thank you all for this continued service! Rev. S. Carl Van Dam kindly offered to prepare a new column entitled *Church News Review*. Thank you!

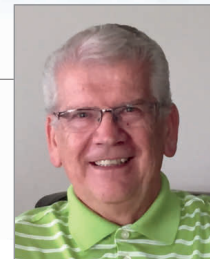
Towards the end of each issue there is other content, from our advertisers. Thank you also for your important support in making our magazine possible. Our hope is that this section too is mutually beneficial for advertisers and readers alike.

Greetings

On behalf of the Premier Printing team, greetings to you all, and best wishes for a blessed New Year. *"May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light"* (Col 1:11-12).

William Gortemaker

Year in Review



James Visscher
*Minister emeritus of the
Canadian Reformed Church
at Langley, British Columbia*
jvisscher@telus.net

The year of our Lord 2018 is almost over. This issue of *Clarion* is the last one in this volume number. Soon a new one will appear, and it will signal the start of a whole new year.

Yet before we enter into 2019, it has become our custom to look back over the past twelve months and take stock of the events and developments that have transpired in our churches in the days gone by. Yes, and as always, there are many. Some might even be tempted to say that there are more – more things happening than ever before. I, for one am not prepared to say that; however, there is no doubt that life is busy in the twenty-first century. And that goes for church life as well. The lives of members and churches are filled with activities, events, and meetings. There is much to report, so let us begin.

Churches and pastors in the West

Over the years we have made it a practise to move either from east to west or west to east when surveying churches and pastors. This time we are moving in an eastward direction which means that we will start in the west, and that brings us to the churches in British Columbia and Washington. For some years these churches have mostly all had full-time serving ministers, but in 2018 that changed. At present the churches of Chilliwack, Cloverdale, Nooksack Valley, and Vernon are without a pastor.

In the case of the church at Chilliwack, the Rev. Abel Pol accepted a call to a church both out of the province and out of the country. He said “yes” to the Free Reformed Church at Mundijong, Western Australia. He then had to wait for almost eight months before receiving a visa, but finally it came, and so he exchanged the rain for the sun and the mountains for the outback. We wish him well Down Under.

As for the church at Cloverdale, it decided to commence calling and issued an invitation to the Rev. Rolf den Hollander of the Grassie church to become its pastor and teacher. He, however, declined the call to move west and to become a neighbour to his pastor brother, William, in Langley.

Next, there is the church at Nooksack Valley. You might say that this is “the new kid on the block,” as it is the youngest church to become part of the federation. Formerly most of its members belonged to the church at Lynden, Washington, but then as the latter increased in size some members living to the east thought that the time was ripe to launch out on their own. I have not received word as to when the calling work will begin, but it may not be that far away.

In what is surely one of the most beautiful places in BC, one finds the church at Vernon. Its former pastor, the Rev. Arend Witten, was led to accept a call that came from the church at London, Ontario. So, beginning in July, the status of the church at Vernon changed from occupied to vacant. Its first attempt to remedy that situation was through issuing a call to Candidate Darren Feenstra; however, he declined an invitation to minister among the lakes and vineyards of the Okanagan Valley (can you imagine that?).

In the midst of all of these declines it is good to mention that at least two churches had success in the calling department, the churches at Abbotsford and Yarrow. The Rev. Dave DeBoer moved to Abbotsford from the church at Chatham, Ontario. The Rev. Ted VanSpronsen came to Yarrow from the Free Reformed Church at Busselton, Western Australia. We welcome both to the ranks of Canadian (American) Reformed ministers in the west.

Crossing the Rocky Mountains, we come to Alberta. In the northern part of the province, the vacant church of Neerlandia South extended a call to the Rev. Eric Kampen of Orangeville, Ontario, but he declined. The church at St. Albert called the Rev. Peter Holtvüwer from Spring Creek, Ontario, and the Rev. James Sinke of the United Reformed Church at Woodstock, Ontario, but neither one was persuaded that the Lord wanted them to move.

Meanwhile, the nearby church at Edmonton (Providence) said “farewell” to its minister of more than twenty-eight years, the Rev. Richard Aasman. His ministry there can be numbered among the more long-standing

CALLED

Called by the Canadian Reformed Church at St. Albert, Alberta:

Rev. Rolf den Hollander

of Covenant Canadian Reformed Church, Grassie, Ontario

CHURCH NEWS

ministries in our churches. Thankfully, he retires being in good health and this will no doubt prove to be a bonus to vacant churches seeking assistance. May the Lord grant a long, healthy, and productive retirement to Rev. Richard Aasman and his wife, Joanne.

Moving eastward we come to the province of Manitoba. There the church at Carman East saw its minister, the Rev. Steve Vandervelde, depart and move across the border to serve the church at Denver, Colorado. Another development of note has to do with Brandon, Manitoba. A number of members living in that area are attempting to start a church plant. Let us hope and pray that their efforts will meet with success.

If you now add up the number of vacant churches in the west, you come to a total of eight churches that are actively seeking a pastor and teacher.

Churches and pastors in the East

The church at Chatham, Ontario, became vacant with the departure of the Rev. Dave DeBoer and it has been seeking to correct that situation. First, it extended a call to the Rev. Ben Schoof who serves the church at Surrey, B.C., but that resulted in a decline. Recently it extended a call to Mr. Arjen Vreugdenhil of the United Reformed Church of Jenison, Michigan. At this time nothing is known about the outcome of that call.

Moving to what is called the Golden Horseshoe area of Ontario, the church in Hamilton – Blessings issued a call to the Rev. Ian Wildeboer, formerly serving as a missionary in Papua New Guinea. He accepted that call and is hoping to start a church plant in the Stoney Creek area. Across town the church at Hamilton – Cornerstone called Candidate Darren Feenstra to pastor alongside the Rev. John Louwse, and he accepted that call and has since been ordained. We wish both Darren and Ian every blessing in their respective charges.

Nearby in the church at Hamilton – Providence the calling work has yet to be met with success. Their last call was to the Rev. Hendrik Alkema of the Free Reformed Church at Albany, Western Australia, but it did not lead to the desired result. So, the work of investigating, weighing, proposing, meeting, and praying goes on. May it soon result in a positive outcome.

As the church at Hamilton – Providence waits, it is, however, not without assistance. In a rare move indeed, the Classis Ontario West examined and granted permission to Dr. Jeff Temple to speak an edifying word. It did so on the basis of Article 8 of the Church Order and after receiving

the approval of Regional Synod East. What this means is that Dr. Temple is considered a man of “exceptional gifts” and thus does not have to pursue the regular course of study at the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary.

So where is Dr. Temple speaking an edifying word? If my sources are correct, then he is doing this mostly in the church at Hamilton – Providence. Since this is something new in our churches procedural questions are being asked: Can he preach only in Classis Ontario West? How long does he get to speak an edifying word? Is he already eligible for call? No doubt in time all of these questions will get sorted out. In the meantime, we wish him well as he prepares to enter into the ministry of the gospel.

Trivia time. How many other Article 8 ministers have served in our churches? The answer, as far as I am aware, is two: the Rev. Hendrik Scholten and the Rev. Wim Pouwelse. Both, however, entered the ministry under that particular article in The Netherlands. So, Dr. Temple, you are not only a teacher of history, but you are also a maker of history in Canada and in our churches.

Next door to the church at Hamilton – Providence lies the church at Ancaster and there another type of history was made in 2018. Only it was not of the happy kind. The church at Ancaster decided to invoke Article 11 of the Church Order and moved to dismiss its minister, the Rev. John Ludwig. In due time Classis reluctantly agreed and the deputies sadly concurred. Needless to say, this is a traumatic development for all concerned: the minister, his family, the elders, and the congregation. Far be it for us, as readers of *Clarion*, to apportion blame. Instead this should move us to pray that out of all of this division and heartbreak the Lord will work some good for both the Rev. Ludwig and his family and for the church at Ancaster.

Next to Hamilton lies the city of Burlington and there the Rev. John van Popta was granted early retirement due to health reasons related to Parkinson’s disease. It is hoped that an operation planned for later in the year will be successful and will give to our brother a better quality of life. May the Lord grant him and his wife, Bonita, a happy retirement filled with days of improved health.

To the south of Hamilton, there is another vacant church, namely the church at Attercliffe. That church too has been busy extending calls but has thus far not received the answer they hope and pray for. May the Lord make it happen in 2019! Not too far away the church at Smithville too has been busy. They extended a call to the Rev.

Rodney Vermeulen from the Glanbrook church. They did so not because they are vacant but because the size of the Smithville church is such that a second pastor is needed. Alas, he declined.

The church at Dunnville also extended a call, only it was a different kind of call. Ever since his release from the church at Denver in 2015, the Rev. Ryan Kampen has been eligible for call. Finally, the church at Dunnville called him with the intention of setting him aside for mission work being done by the Reformation Study Centre in South Africa. He accepted this call and has since been installed as a second minister of the Dunnville church. May the Lord bless him in this special work!

Of candidates, church plants and Streetlight

It may have escaped the attention of many, but Classis Pacific West recently had the privilege of examining a young man with a view to eligibility for call. Br. Iwan Borst graduated from CRTS some years ago but decided to pursue further study instead of going into the ministry. After his studies he moved to northern BC and there he worked together with the Rev. Tim Schouten for a number of years in Prince George and he married a girl who hails from Smithers. Our brother is now eligible for a call and, if you will forgive my forthrightness, all of you vacant churches out there should be taking a good look at him.

Since I just made mention of a church plant, it should be said as well that the work in Prince George continues to mature thanks in large part to the faithful work being done by Pastor Tim Schouten. The church in Smithers remains heavily invested in this project and has the support of other churches in BC.

Further south the Rev. FD continues to function as missionary to the Chinese Reformed Church. This church too keeps on growing and is in need of more worship space. It is also making progress in moving from church plant to instituted status.

In Manitoba, the church plant led by the Rev. James Zekveld is moving forward and getting off the ground. Currently the meeting place can be found in Niverville, not far from Winnipeg.

In Ontario, the church at Brampton, in co-operation with the church at Toronto and with the support of other churches in the area, is actively looking for a church planter. The same is also true for the London area where the Canadian and United Reformed Churches are working together to make something happen.

The church at Hamilton – Blessings can hardly be considered a church plant; however, it is still very much a church with an outward focus and thus is very involved with its surrounding community. Its commitment to planting more churches is also evident in the call issued to Rev. Ian Wildeboer and in its current aim of establishing a new church in the Stoney Creek area of greater Hamilton.

In Hamilton there is also another type of mission work being conducted by Streetlight Ministries. Unlike other efforts, this one does not focus all of its energy on moving towards institution. Although it would love for that to happen, its primary focus is on bringing the gospel to the down and out. And in their part of the city of Hamilton there are a great many of those kinds of people. They desperately need the gospel to rebuild their lives and give them hope.

For twenty years now, Streetlight has been doing this work faithfully. They are hoping that soon their building plans can move a step closer to fruition. They are planning to demolish their old premises and erect newer, more functional ones. May the Lord continue to bless them, their pastor, the Rev. Paul Aasman, and the many volunteers who make so much of this work possible.

Together what all of these efforts indicate is that as churches we have moved out of the immigrant phase of our existence in Canada and into a stage in which we identify with this country, consider ourselves citizens, and want to share the gospel with the community in which we live, work, and worship.

The Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary (CRTS)

One thing has become an annual event in the life of our churches and it has to do with the College Evening in September sponsored by CRTS. In most years there is reason to celebrate as another graduating class is honoured. In that regard, the year 2018 was no different. The students Darren Feenstra, Cody Swaving, and Sungwon Yoon were awarded Master of Divinity degrees and Scott Bredenhof received a Bachelor of Theology degree. The biggest difference between these degrees has to do with the biblical languages, as the B.Th. does not require that a student master Hebrew and Greek.

As previously mentioned, one of these students, namely Darren Feenstra, has since been examined and ordained and become a pastor in the church of Hamilton – Cornerstone. Graduate Cody Swaving is currently serving alongside Rev. C. Bouwman in Smithville as an intern. Graduate Sungwon

Yoon has gone back to his home country of Korea and will no doubt enter the pastorate there. Graduate Scott Bredenhof has agreed to serve the churches at Abbotsford and Vernon functioning as their mission worker in Mexico.

While the departure of these students left a hole at CRTS, it was soon filled by a batch of new students. Rodney denBoer, Dathan Pleiter, and Anson vanDelden came from Australia. Tsjibbe DeJong, Timothy van Beek, and Bryan Vanderhorst hail from Canada. In addition, two students, namely Jaeyong Jung and Sung-min Hong, came from Korea and enrolled in a one-year course of study.

Of interest as well is the fact that a number of students applied for and received preaching consent. Since the summer Chauncey Knegt, Eric Onderwater, Jeremy Segstro, and Mark ten Haaf have been honing their homiletical skills in congregations far and wide. They are all students who have successfully completed three years of theological training.

Yet this may change in the future. Both Regional Synods East and West dealt with overtures from churches asking that students be given the right to speak an edifying word after two years of theological study, instead of three. What General Synod Edmonton 2019 will do with this remains to be determined. Way back when the course of study for the ministry at the Theological College was three years, students could apply to preach after two years of study. I was one of those students. But then when the course of study was extended to four years, the opportunity to preach was moved up a year. These overtures, if approved, would bring it back to two years, and would also bring it in line with what other churches and seminaries in North America require. Hence the future may see even more preaching choice for the churches and more practice opportunities for the students.



Meanwhile, back in Hamilton, the faculty composed of the professors John Smith, Arjan de Visser, Theodore Van Raalte, Jason Van Vliet, and Gerhard Visscher continue to research, write, and deliver their lectures. In addition, Dr. Smith recently wrote an Intermediate Hebrew Grammar, Dr. Van Raalte had his doctoral dissertation published by Oxford University Press, and Dr. Visscher supervised the publication of a Dutch book by Dr. J. Douma called *Common Grace*. Dr. Cornelis van Dam, the emeritus professor of OT studies, wrote a book called *The Deacon* and had it published. Of course, these are not the only publications coming from the pens of our professors. Articles, both popular and scholarly, have been written and will appear as contributions in various books yet to appear.

Of course, our professors do not work in a vacuum and special thanks has to be given to their supporting staff. Margaret Alkema continues to be a valuable asset as Librarian, as are Catharine Mechelse and Leanne Kuizenga, who handle the administrative work.

The passing of a gracious lady

One more thing needs to be mentioned in connection with CRTS, and that has to do with the passing this summer of sr. Wietske Faber, the widow of Dr. Jelle Faber, the first Principal. Many of us who knew her will always remember her as a gracious, friendly, and soft-spoken lady. She had a ready smile for one and all.

At the same time her life was not always easy, as she had to immigrate to Canada and adjust to a new land, as well as be the wife of an often absent professor, and the mother to a large family.

I recall that as students we sympathized with her when, for example, it came to the interesting driving skills of her husband. As well as when it came to the antics and interests of her sons. One day Prof. Faber was lecturing and there was an emergency call from his wife. So off he went to take care of the matter. It turned out that his sons had a terrarium in the basement filled with snakes, and one morning the lid had not been put on properly. The result was snakes all through the basement! And sr. Faber was terrified of snakes.

When Dr. Faber decided to retire at age sixty-five, we who were on the Board of Governors at the time tried to persuade him to keep going for some more years. He declined and said that he owed it to his wife, who was older than him, to spend some more time with her. We respected that, and acquiesced. Little did he or we know that he would be taken home to glory in 2004 and that she would live yet

for another fourteen years. Such are the ways of the Lord! Farewell, dear lady!

Preparation time

Moving on from matters related to CRTS, we come to church life as a whole. Anyone who keeps abreast of the latest news in the churches by reading what is on the website can see that another general synod is approaching. In both east and west, classes and regional synods have been busy dealing with overtures, as well churches and members are reading the often lengthy reports that are being posted. There is a lot here to digest.

Are there also controversial issues? On the whole it would seem that things are rather peaceful in the churches. Of course, there are always things that one can disagree with, but are they of such a nature that they create deep division? I am not aware of that.

Still, there are usually some issues that generate debate. Perhaps the issue of students preaching after two years instead of three years of study is one of them. Another is the topic of revising some of the forms as they relate to the language used. There may also be some disagreement as to how best to deal with our Dutch sister churches.

And then there is the matter of church music. For a considerable time this has been a topic of discussion and it may have become a little hotter with the appearance of the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* (TPH), a song book published by two of our North American sister churches, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the United Reformed Churches. Its appearance has led to overtures which call for local churches to be given the freedom to sing from the TPH as well as from the *Book of Praise*.

Alongside that is the fact that there is also an overture which calls for the revision of Article 55 of the Church Order, dealing with Psalms and hymns. It would stress the need to sing the Psalms but leave the choice of which Psalm versions, as well as what hymns and song books to use up to the local church to decide.

Without wading too far into this debate, I would say that there are number of factors that unite us as churches. They include our high view of Scripture, our loyalty to the Three Forms of Unity, our adherence to the Church Order, our support of CRTS, our involvement in various local and foreign mission efforts, and the *Book of Praise*. In various ways these factors determine our identity and define who we are as Canadian Reformed Churches.

What this means is that we should think long and hard before we jettison any of these. It is one thing to approve

the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* for congregation singing alongside the *Book of Praise*. It is another thing to leave the music sung in our churches to some general guidelines. Such a decision may well weaken the very fabric of our churches.

Conferences

Any number of conferences are held throughout the year in our churches. As an example, every year the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary hosts a conference in January. In January 2018 the theme was “Real Gospel: Sovereign Grace for Church and World” and the speakers included Dr. Mark Jones, Dr. Donald Sinnema, Dr. Ted Van Raalte, Dr. R. C. Janssen, and Dr. Jason Van Vliet. All of these speeches are still accessible on the CRTS website.

In September of every year the Canadian Reformed Missions Association (CRMA) also hosts a conference. In 2018 Mr. Gilbert Langerak of the Canadian Council of Christian Charities (CCCC) spoke on financial compliance to federal government regulations when work overseas.

Dave and Trish Holabeck spoke about missionary care, and this was followed by a panel discussion that included them as well as Henry and Rita Versteeg and Ian and Nadia Wildeboer.

In October 2018, the ministers and professors in the East met at the Bonmiller Inn in Goderich, Ontario, for their annual gathering. Dr. Alan Strange from Mid-America Theological Seminary was the main speaker. His talks dealt mostly with the book of Acts. About seventy people were in attendance.

From November 6 – 8, 2018, the Western Ministerial Conference of the Canadian Reformed and United Reformed Churches met in Cedar Springs, Washington. The featured speaker was the Rev. Harry Zekveld, pastor of the United Reformed Church in Strathroy, Ontario. He delivered four talks on the theme “The Fear of God.” In addition, the Rev. Doug Vandeburgt of the Langley CanRC spoke on Stephen Ministries and the Rev. Joe Poppe led a discussion on Article 11 of the Church Order on dismissal. About fifty-five pastors and their wives came out from the Western provinces and from Washington State.

From the feedback received from both gatherings, it appears that a good time of learning and reflection, discussion, and fellowship was had by all who participated.

Foreign mission

Earlier we took note of various mission projects that our churches are busy with in Canada. Now, it is time to direct our attention to what is happening overseas on the foreign mission front.



Brazil

Alphabetically, the first country that is the object of our efforts is Brazil. Both the Aldergrove church and Hamilton – Cornerstone, together with their supporting churches, are busy in this vast country, supporting the Reformed Churches in Brazil and promoting the Reformed faith.

The church in Aldergrove has two missionaries at the moment in the persons of the Rev. Ken Wieske and the Rev. Jim Witteveen. Unfortunately, the former cannot be in Brazil at the present time as he is in Canada where he is battling cancer. In the middle of November, he was scheduled to have an operation and at this time it is not known how that turned out. Our prayers are for a good operation and a speedy recovery.

Due to the sickness of Rev. Wieske, the Rev. Jim Witteveen is the only missionary/pastor on site in Recife. Needless to say, this creates a rather busy life for him. Not only is he visiting churches and dealing with local Brazilian pastors, he also lectures regularly on various topics at conferences throughout Brazil. In addition, he is teaching a new crop of prospective students, many of whom hope to enrol soon in the John Calvin Seminary.

It may be mentioned too that his family situation adds a measure of stress and uncertainty. Rev. Jim and his wife Nallely are in the process of adopting three children; however, those children are native, and this means that both social service workers and tribal elders have a say in their adoption. Thus far the social workers have given the green light, but the tribal elders continue to make it very difficult for them to adopt these children and take them out of the country. What this means is that sr. Witteveen and her six children (they already have three of their own) can come to Brazil for no longer than three months at a time and

then they have to return to Canada. Hence the family is constantly on the move, coming and going, living in Canada and then in Brazil. Not an easy situation and not without difficulty for the Witteveens.

Still, the work goes on. A reading room is operating in Recife. The publishing of books continues, and the first of a series of commentaries by John Calvin on Genesis has appeared. Both are done under the auspices of an organization called CLIRE. The Aldeia Training Center, site of the John Calvin Seminary and home to the missionaries, is under the care of the church in Yarrow, BC., and continues to be used for various activities.

The church at Hamilton – Cornerstone is also active in Brazil and its long-time missionary the Rev. Abram deGraaf lives in Maceio where a church has been instituted. He works together with a number of local pastors in spreading the gospel. His days are filled with sermon preparation, writing lectures, translating material, counselling churches, helping local pastors. Thankfully he receives assistance from Pastor Lucio and Pastor Flavio.

Last year Pastor deGraaf was busy organizing and speaking at conferences related to the 500th anniversary of the great Reformation. This year he is busy preparing for celebrations connected to the 400th anniversary of the great Synod of Dort.

Once the John Calvin Seminary in Recife starts up again, he will also be tasked to lecture on various subjects in the theological curriculum. This will mean traveling regularly from Maceio to Recife. Of course, that sounds easy, but if you have travelled in Brazil you will know that getting around there can be a challenge.

Mention should also be made of the Mission Aid work being done by br. Chris Boersema. He lives to the south



of Recife in a place called Marigogi. From there he is busy organizing seniors' meetings, literacy programs, interacting with Clire, hosting financial seminars, managing the Aldeia Training Centre, serving as an elder, and advising local churches. Recently Chris has been in Western Canada visiting the supporting churches and having meetings with the Mission Aid board.

China

Last year in this review we mentioned that the work in China is increasing in difficulty. Well, it is the same story this year, if not even more so. In that most populous nation on the earth the efforts of the missionary of the local churches of Cloverdale and Langley is leading to the rise and development of a federation of Reformed churches. And this unofficial federation is growing. On a regular basis, new churches come forward and ask to be part of this effort.

Now, you might wonder as to why they are requesting to affiliate with us. A lot of it has to do with the fact that they are seeking stability. The house church situation in China is one of great chaos and confusion. The churches are often small. Their leaders are usually self-educated and poor preachers. Their members are generally lacking in instruction. They easily fall prey to greedy men posing as pastors. They often having difficulty distinguishing major from minor matters and tend to major a lot in minors. Nevertheless, what they lack in experience, they make up with their enthusiasm and commitment. So many of these people are on fire for the gospel.

Hence, when our missionary comes, and they receive true preaching, wise advice, tender nurture, and solid Reformed instruction, there is rejoicing. Many of these Chinese believers also have a great love for the Heidelberg Catechism as well as a great appreciation for the Church Order of Dort. Now, you may understand the former, but why the latter? Primarily it is because the CO is brief and basic. Unlike other church polity structures that require members to plow through hundreds of pages and hire the services of a parliamentarian, Dort is short. It is also simple, and both are a huge attraction to the Chinese believer.

So, more and more churches are coming, but it has to be said that it is not easy for them. The current political climate in China is difficult for them. Many churches affiliated with the efforts of Cloverdale, Kelmscott, and Langley have been ordered by the government to disband and cease operation. Pastors are being watched constantly and pressured. Church members are threatened with the loss of their jobs or with eviction from their homes.

Depressing – right? From our perspective indeed, but the remarkable thing is that so many Chinese believers remain brave and cheerful even in the face of persecution. They see themselves as mirroring a situation described in Acts 8:4, “Those who were scattered went about preaching the word.” The NT church grew through being scattered and the same goes today for the church in China. It is growing in the face of persecution.

So please include the saints in China in your prayers. They don't want your pity, but they do covet your pleas to the Almighty. And as you pray, count your blessings whether in Canada, the United States, or Australia. Readers, most of you live in freedom, prize it, make of the most of it, and defend it.

Indonesia

If the believers in China face an oppressive government that makes their life difficult, then the believers in Indonesia have a different problem. They face an oppressive religion that is determined to squeeze them out. What I am referring to is the religion of Islam that dominates in much of Indonesia and threatens the Christian church.

It is in that country that the church at Smithville is doing its mission work. There the Rev. Edwerd Dethan, his wife Femmy, and their four children live and serve as serve as missionary family in West Timor. What keeps Rev. Dethan busy is especially his work at the college and seminary in Kupang. Most of his day consists of planning courses, preparing lectures, staff meetings, dealing with students, interacting with government officials. And then when the daily work is done there is always the Sunday work of preaching, teaching, and pastoring. Oh, and lest we forget, there are those missionary reports that need to be written every month. All in all, it consists of a busy life.

Mexico

Together the churches at Abbotsford and Vernon are busy through their mission board working on establishing a missionary presence in Mexico. The plan is to concentrate this work in the state and city of Queretaro. To that end they have hired a mission worker in the person of br. Scott Bredenhof, a recent graduate of CRTS. Scott and his wife have already been down to Mexico and made the acquaintance of the URC missionary Rev. Matt van Dijken. There is even some talk that Scott will do a kind of apprenticeship under Matthew.

In any case, much of his effort for the foreseeable future will be on learning the Spanish language. As he is doing this, he will also investigate what the best approach will be to starting a mission work in Queretaro.

Meanwhile, as he is doing this, missionary trips to the nearby orphanage of Pan de Vida will continue. Two teams from the Fraser Valley of BC are making preparations to travel down there and use their talents in various ways. Once there they will be assisted by br. Jeremy van Beelen and br. Duane Visscher, members at large of the church at Langley, BC., who live and work there on a permanent basis.

Papua New Guinea

The church at Toronto, together with its supporting churches, continues to be very much involved in Papua New Guinea. Currently they have a number of personnel in the field including: the Rev. Cornelis Kleyn and his wife Greta, and family, as well as br. Mark Mulder and his wife Liz.

Meanwhile, the Rev. Henry Versteeg and his wife, Rita, have retired from regular missionary service and moved back to Canada. Aside from a twelve-year stint of service in the church at Chatham, this couple have served all of their years of ministry on either the west or east side of the island. And then it has to be added that it has not always been easy service either. They have faced many challenges and dealt with numerous hurdles in what remains a remote part of the world. Still, our brother did his work faithfully. His missionary reports, I am told, always came in on time. Often they were long and detailed too, but they painted a vivid picture of the kind of work he was doing, as well as the kind of conditions he and his family lived under.

One suspects that getting used to life again in Canada will have its challenges. No doubt the presence of children and grandchildren will help the transition. Also, I suspect that as long as health allows them, they will still be making the occasional trip to that part of the world to assist in one way or another.

Brother and sister Versteeg, we salute you for your many years of yeoman service to the Lord in Irian Jaya (West Papua) and PNG! May the Lord see fit to bless your labours.

For the rest the regular work of teaching at the Reformed Bible College, preaching in churches and public squares, training church leaders, and assisting churches in many different ways goes on. You may have noted too that the church at Toronto did not replace the Versteegs with another missionary but with an educator. Br. Mark Mulder, a teacher and principal from Australia, was appointed to head up the work at the College. From all appearances and from the reports that we read, it was a good decision. Thank you, Mark and Liz, for your lively and interesting reports! If you want to read them, you have only to log in to the website of the Canadian Reformed Missions Association (www.reformedmissions.net).



The Philippines

Not much news about work in the Philippines has reached my ears of late, except to say that the work there must still be going on. I had a phone call not so long ago from a brother from Australia who was travelling there with the Rev. Stephen 't Hart, now pastor of the church at Melville, Western Australia. They were doing this work on behalf of a number of churches in Australia, and since they are connected in this work to the church at Hamilton – Providence, I assume that things are still happening. Right? Perhaps some information on this can be uploaded via the CRMA website.

South Africa

Elsewhere mention has been made that the Rev. Ryan Kampen was called by the church at Dunnville to work for the Reformational Study Centre in South Africa. As previously reported, this special work of making Reformed material of many kinds available to African pastors was started some years ago by the Rev. Jopie VanderLinden. Since then the work has continued to grow. A large and beautiful building was erected in South Africa, thanks to the donations of many, and it serves as the nerve centre for this work. It also houses a large and growing library and is equipped with many computers. As well, the work has expanded from English into French. Today most of the continent of Africa is within reach.

And many pastors are making use of this resource. Thousands of requests for help in preparing sermons, in writing lectures, and in teaching congregations keep pouring in. The hunger for more information knows no ends. And this is where the Rev. Ryan Kampen comes in. He is among those who supply the material that is needed. As such he is always busy searching, sifting, cataloguing,

writing, translating, and uploading. We wish him well in this new and interesting challenge!

Inter churches relations

Recently reports appeared on the Canadian Reformed website on the state of our relations with other faithful Reformed churches around the world. In North America our churches continue to maintain close relations with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the Reformed Church in the US, and the United Reformed Churches in North America. We are also active members of the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC) and through it we also maintain regular contact with the Free Reformed Churches, the Heritage Reformed Churches, the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America, and other church bodies. All indications are that there is at this time a great deal of faithfulness to the Word of the Lord among these churches and that there is also a healthy openness to assisting and interacting with one another.

The Reformed Churches in The Netherlands

Still, that is not the case everywhere. In these reports cited above you will also find a lengthy account of what has transpired of late with the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands (RCN). Officially they are one of our sister churches, but anyone who knows anything about our history knows that they are a lot more than that. Originally the RCN was our “mother church.” Almost all of the immigrants who came from The Netherlands to Canada in the 1950s especially, and started the Canadian Reformed Churches, came from these churches. Our roots are in Europe in general and in The Netherlands in particular.

Alas, however, that connection is at the point of being severed. The decision of the last general synod of the RCN to open all of the offices in the church to women is seen among us as a bridge too far. Why? Because it is contrary to the plain and clear teaching of Holy Scripture. For years and decades the RCN was highly critical of any other church federation in the world that moved in this direction, but now they are going down this road themselves. What has changed? Not the Word of God. What has changed are the times. The pressures, dictates, and philosophies of the age have infiltrated into the church and today they speak louder than the Word of the Lord.

As a result, it seems highly likely that the next general synod that meets in 2019 in Edmonton will have to make a sad decision, namely to end the relationship of ecclesiastical

fellowship with the RCN. No doubt another appeal to reconsider will be sent across the pond, but there is very little indication that hesitation, much less retraction, is in the air. Many local churches in the RCN have already taken the step and embraced female deacons, elders, and pastors.

So where does that leave us? Not to despair! Contacts with other faithful churches in The Netherlands are growing. In addition, we continue to maintain relations with the Free Church of Scotland and the Free Church of Scotland – Continuing. As well, there are other churches in that part of the world – in England, Ireland, Germany, Hungary, Poland, and Spain – whom we know and respect through our membership in the International Conference of Reformed Churches.

The Free Reformed Churches in Australia

The year 2018 was a synod year in the federation of our sister churches Down Under, the Free Reformed Churches in Australia (FRCA). This synod met in Bunbury from June 18 to 26 and our churches were present there and represented by the Rev. Arend Witten and br. Henry Schouten.

A fuller report on this synod will be written elsewhere, so we will confine ourselves to a number of highlights and some comments. Undoubtedly the decision that made the most waves had to do with the fact that the FRCA decided to terminate their relationship with their sister churches in The Netherlands (RCN). For the Australians, having always been closely linked to the “old” country and already feeling somewhat isolated in the world, this was a most painful decision. Still, the members of synod felt that they had no other choice; faithfulness to the Lord trumps all else.

At the same time the FRCA decided to maintain relations with the Canadian Reformed Churches. That as such is no surprise, since our relationship remains close and strong. What does create some surprise, however, is that the Australian deputies are charged specifically to “monitor developments within the CanRC in relation to Blessings Christian Church in line with the questions expressed in the deputies report.”

So, what are these questions? A look at the report reveals that they relate to two things. The first has to do with the fact that Blessings moved from one classis to another without mutual consent and the second has to do with the fact that Blessings “has no defined church boundary or catchment area.”

Now, both of these matters left me scratching my head. In the first place, Article 44 CO deals with classis, but nowhere does it say what the correct procedure is for a church to move from one classis to another or that

mutual consent is required. Now, I do not know exactly how things transpired in Ontario, but why would a synod in Australia instruct its deputies to monitor a situation that is not stipulated in the Church Order and hence cannot be a violation? In the second place, if Blessings is in trouble because it has no church boundary or catchment area, then a lot of other Canadian Reformed churches are in trouble as well. Here in the Fraser Valley of BC there are eight churches living side by side and there are no boundaries. The same applies in many other parts of the country. And again, on what Scripture are boundaries based and what Church Order article is being violated?

Still, I do not want to come across as super critical. After all, my wife and I have helped out in Australia and we thoroughly enjoyed our time there.

Besides, most of the other decisions that Synod Bunbury made are clear and well-founded. Decisions were made to establish closer ties with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the United Reformed Churches in North America. In spite of a number of appeals, it was decided to continue the sister church relationship with the Reformed Churches in New Zealand. It was also decided to adopt the Psalms and Hymns in the Book of Praise and to print an edition that would include the Australian Church Order and some other variants. Deputies for Theological Training were divided on whether or not to start their own seminary at this time. Synod decided not to do so at this time and so CRTS will continue to be the main training school for the FRCA.

We will leave the matter of synod for now, except to say (and here a word to those among us who have been delegated to the forthcoming General Synod 2019 Edmonton) that the new way of reporting decisions used by our Australian brothers is a considerable improvement over ours. Our synods have historically grouped decisions under “observations,” “considerations,” and “recommendations.” As a result, a lot of decisions are long, difficult, and hard to follow. Perhaps the Australian approach of “material,” “decision,” and “grounds” should be considered and adopted. It will lead to greater clarity and give us, readers, a more edifying experience as we read the Acts. Have a look at the Acts of Synod Bunbury on the FRCA website.

Other sister churches

Much more could be said under this heading; however, we need to draw this section to a close and move on. Suffice it to say that our relations with Presbyterian and Reformed churches in Brazil, Indonesia, Korea, New Zealand, and South Africa remain on track.

The only other comment that deserves to be mentioned is the fact that perhaps it is time to spend less effort on maintaining our North American ties and direct more attention at strengthening and helping those smaller and more vulnerable sister churches in other parts of the world.

Christian education

Across Canada and United States there are many Christian schools that are organized and operated by Canadian Reformed parents. In most cases both elementary and secondary schools are experiencing the blessings of the Lord.

Yet there are challenges too. One has to do with staffing. Every year Clarion carries countless ads from schools who are seeking to hire qualified teachers. As a result, there is movement in the system as teachers move around. There are also new faces as new teachers enter the profession. Is there a shortage? I am not sure that anyone is tracking this. Perhaps it would be good to know exactly how many schools are at full staff and how many are still searching.

Another challenge is in the province of Alberta, where Christian schools generally, and that includes ours, are under government pressure to become more inclusive. This means accommodating transgender students, organizing gay straight alliances, keeping parents out of the loop, adding gender neutral washrooms, revising constitutions, and changing moral standards.

Now, I am sure that none of these schools tolerate the bullying of students who are different in race, looks, or even sexual orientation. But the question remains in how far Christian schools should accommodate behaviours that are deemed to be contrary to the Word of God? Is there still room in our society for the teaching and modelling of a



standard of conduct that does not agree with homosexual behaviour and the transgender agenda?

At the same time, we should not be so naïve as to think that these kinds of issues only crop up in Alberta. There are indications that the transgender movement is spreading rapidly and gaining traction in many countries. So most likely this is coming to a school near you, and even to your school. You had better be prepared. The Christian ethic and lifestyle is under attack! Every day it is being ridiculed in the press and mocked in the media. The winds of change and immorality are blowing.

In this menacing climate it is good to know that the Covenant Canadian Reformed Teachers College in Hamilton is still hard at work training men and women to be committed Reformed teachers. As far as I am aware, the CCRTC continues to actively pursue the matter of government accreditation. Perhaps the change in provincial governments in Ontario will help in this regard.

ARPA/WeNeedaLaw

Leading the charge in educating and equipping Christians to do battle in the public square is the Association of Reformed Political Action (ARPA). As I am writing this, the ARPA train is touring the country. Mark Penninga, André Schutten, Colin Postma, and others are informing believers across the land about current political developments and legal actions. From the reports received, it seems that the turnouts have been getting larger and larger. There is a sense that as Christians we are under attack and that we need to become both better informed and more assertive.

Functioning in concert with ARPA is WeNeedaLaw. This organization, headed by Mike Schouten, is campaigning for the federal government of Canada to adopt a law that will reduce the number of abortions being performed. As such it is an uphill battle, but there is hope that prayer and persistence will one day secure the desired result. It is bitterly ironic fact that in a land where politicians love to talk about “human rights” they refuse to extend those rights to those who are growing in the womb. May the campaign being launched make inroads.

Summer camps

On a totally different subject, there is every indication that the summer camps that are held in so many places are flourishing. In BC, Camp Stepping Stones continues to do great work among the young. It really is a transformative experience for many. At the same time Camp Stepping Stones needs to expand and plans are under way to construction a new main building. A good deal of the funding is in place (great!) and now it is on to obtaining the necessary building permits (groan!).

In Ontario, Campfire! continues to draw a host of young campers, as well as an army of volunteers. Every year it is a challenge to find enough volunteers, but somehow as the deadlines draw near, the Lord always provides.

In Denver, Colorado, there is also an annual camp, only it is geared to families. From far and wide, young and old come together to listen, discuss, share, fellowship, and exercise.

Special homes

In our community there are any number of special homes, meaning homes that cater either to the elderly or to those with special needs. Some of those homes are operated privately through fund raising, donations, and member fees, while others make use of government funding. Whatever the case may be the aim is the same: to secure the best care possible for the vulnerable in our midst.

As a result, we may be very thankful for homes like Manoah Manor, Ebenezer, Elim, Greenview, Shalom, Trinity Towers, Maranatha, Mount Nemo, and so forth. I know that there is often a real reluctance to surrender one’s independence, sell one’s home and move into one of these homes. Yet I also know that many who have made the move come to see it as a real plus and benefit in their lives. Often residents have told me, “I should have done this years ago.”

In addition to homes for the elderly, we also have homes for the physically handicapped and mentally challenged. Whether they be called Anchor, Bethesda, Rehoboth, or whatever, they too are so often places of special love and care.

Truly, the character of a society is not determined by how it treats the healthy and the wealthy, but by how it deals with the sick, the weak, the vulnerable, the handicapped, and the aged. May we realize this and may the Lord bless our efforts in this regard.

Fini

As always, there are many more things that could be mentioned; however, the publisher of *Clarion* does not want me to monopolize this last issue of the year, so it is time to bring it to a close. At this festive time of year, I wish you all the joy of the season, a joy anchored in our great Joy Giver, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Also as the old year comes to a close and a new year dawns, let me remind you of the words of Jude, “Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority before all time and now and forever” (24, 25).



ADVERTISEMENTS

Announcements of Weddings, Anniversaries (especially those with an Open House) should be submitted six weeks in advance.

BIRTHS

*"Know that the Lord, He is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture."
Psalm 100:3*

The Lord in His infinite love and grace has blessed us with a child in His time. It is with great joy that we announce the birth of our 9th child

AIDEN TOBIAS

Born on July 29, 2018, at 1:26 A.M. weighing 8 lbs. 7oz.

John and Sonya Post (nee Pieffers)

Deanna, Leah, Ethan, Kaileigh, Caleb, Reuben, Adam, Shane

20th grandchild for E. John and Ena Post

34th grandchild for Henry and Christine Pieffers

7394 Sideroad 20, RR 2 Alma, ON N0B 1A0

OBITUARIES

May 30, 1944 to July 9, 2018

I Love the Lord, the fount of life and grace... In life, in death, my heart will seek His face – Psalm 116

In His time, our Heavenly Father called home to Himself

RON BERENDS

to dwell with Him in eternal glory and to experience the fullness of joy.

Beloved husband of Ina Berends (Wendt) for 45 years

Loving Father and Opa of:

Grand Valley, ON: Andrew and Janet Wildeboer

Brianna (and Josh Blokhuis)

Willem (and Michaela Hutten)

Josiah

Jenna

Summer

Fergus, ON: Bryce Berends

Terence Berends

Correspondence: 193398 Amaranth East Luther Townline,
Grand Valley, Ontario L9W 0N5

OBITUARIES

May 19, 1923 ~ November 4, 2018

Light is sweet, and it is pleasant for the eyes to see the sun.

*So if a person lives many years, let him rejoice in them all;
but let him remember that the days of darkness will be many. . .
and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns
to God who gave it. Ecclesiastes 11:7 – 12:7*

After a long and fruitful life, our Lord took to her heavenly home, his dear daughter

MARTJE EKE MEERSTRA, nee Bulthuis

Predeceased by her husband Sybe on June 12, 2014,
after 65 years of marriage.

Fondly remembered by her children:

Vernon, BC: Ben and Nancy Meerstra

Smithers, BC: Zina and Dick Vandavelde

Mission, BC: Fred and Mary-Kay Meerstra

Vancouver, BC: Albert Meerstra

Aldergrove, BC: Henry and Joyce Meerstra

Also survived by 22 grandchildren and 64 great-grandchildren

Address:

B. Meerstra, 7912 Glenhayes Road, Vernon, BC V1B 3S3

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- Well maintained building and grounds
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All this and more make Maranatha Homes an attractive and affordable accommodation for seniors.

For further information contact:

Rosanne van der Woerd

109-3260 New Street, Burlington, ON L7N 3L4

905-681-0311

Email: rvanderwoerd@gmail.com

TEACHING POSITIONS



Immanuel Christian School
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada
Due to teacher retirement,
the Board of Immanuel Christian School
invites applications
for the following full-time position:

HIGH SCHOOL MATH and SCIENCE TEACHER

with duties commencing on August 1, 2019.

Not your level or subject area? No problem!

Teaching arrangements can be adapted to fit you.

**We would love to bring you to Winnipeg
to discover our beautiful community and city.**

Immanuel Christian is a K-12 school supported by members of
Canadian Reformed and United Reformed churches.

At present we have 236 students in single grade classes.

Teachers are supported by an extensive resource program as
well as educational assistants for students with special needs.

Interested persons requiring more information
or wishing to apply should contact:

Mr. Mark den Hollander, Principal
principal@immanuelchristian.ca
Phone 204-661-8937 (school), 204-619-0776 (home)

Mailing address:

Immanuel Christian School
215 Rougeau Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R2C 3Z9



The Canadian Reformed School Society of
Edmonton, operating
Parkland Immanuel Christian School,

invites applications for the 2019-2020 school year for the
following part-time position:

ELEMENTARY TEACHER

Parkland Immanuel Christian School operates a reformed K-12
school that offers a supportive school community, competitive
wages, and a collaborative and professional environment that
encourages and supports innovation and excellence in teaching.
The school has a population of 405 students and is experiencing
a time of significant increase in enrollment.

Applicants must be a professed member in good standing of a
Canadian Reformed, United Reformed, or sister church, and
must have the necessary post-secondary qualifications
to teach in Alberta.

For further information please contact the Principal,
Mr. Ken Leffers
Phone: 780-444-6443 (school), 780-297-8841 (home)
kleffers@parklandimmanuel.ca

Applications should be directed to:
Mr. Wayne de Leeuw, Chair of Personnel Committee
c/o Parkland Immanuel Christian School
21304 35 Avenue NW, Edmonton, AB T6M 2P6
vicepresident@parklandimmanuel.ca



Ebenezer Canadian Reformed School (ECRS),
located in the beautiful Bulkley Valley
in Smithers, BC, invites

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST and APPLICATIONS

for the 2019/2020 school year. ECRS is a vibrant, growing
school community supported by four local Canadian and United
Reformed churches. Due to expansion and retirement we will
have full-time positions available in:

- the primary grades
- high school

If you are qualified and interested but not sure about teaching
in Smithers, contact us to discuss arranging a complimentary
flight from anywhere in Canada.

If you have questions please call or email the principal,
Derek Stoffels, at work: 250-847-3492;
principal@ebenezerschool.com

*"Assisting parents in equipping our children. . . to function as
prophets, priests, and kings in this world."*



Heritage Christian School
invites applications for the following positions:

FULL-TIME EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANT

Position begins February 2019

FULL-TIME GRADE 2 TEACHER

Position begins March 2019

For the 2019 – 2020 school year:

FULL-TIME SECONDARY SCIENCE/MATH TEACHER

FULL-TIME ELEMENTARY TEACHER

FULL-TIME HEAD OF SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER

FULL-TIME EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANTS

HCS

- a student body of 653 students from K to 12
- a dedicated and supportive Reformed Christian community
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We seek

- Qualified applicants who seek to serve Jesus Christ in the
area of Christian education and who submit to Holy Scripture
as confessed in the Reformed creeds
- Committed professionals who positively lead students to a
life of dedicated service to our Lord
- Enthusiastic, dedicated rookies or seasoned veterans looking
for a positive change.

How to join us

- Submit a résumé, with a statement of your philosophy of
education, a statement of faith, and references, including one
from your current pastor.

Please forward inquiries and/or applications to:
Heritage Christian School (Attn: Admin)
2850 Fourth Avenue, Box 400

Jordan Station, Ontario, Canada L0R 1S0
Phone: 905-562-7303, fax: 905-562-0020

Email: heritage@hcsjordan.ca • Website: www.hcsjordan.ca

Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD. Psalm 127:3

TEACHING POSITIONS



The Board of **Credo Christian High School** invites applications for:

FULL or PART-TIME TEACHING POSITIONS

Preference will be given to applicants with qualifications in **Automotive Technology / Carpentry and Joinery / Bible**

Duties to commence in September 2019.

British Columbia affords teaching opportunities to those with Professional Certificates (B.Ed.), Subject Restricted Certificates (undergraduate degrees), and School and Subject Restricted Certificates in the areas of applied skills (Diploma or Red Seal designation).

Credo Christian High School is located in Langley, BC and has an enrolment of about 300 students in grades 8 through 12. It serves the educational needs of families from across the Fraser Valley through a broad range of programs, including music, visual arts, shop, textiles, athletics, and student leadership.

For further details on these positions, please contact
Mr. Kent Dykstra, Principal
k.dykstra@credochs.com

EMMANUEL CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL

Located in Fergus, ON
invites applications for the following position due to a maternity leave:

HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

Preferences will be given to applicants with qualifications in the following areas (although other areas will be considered):

History/Geography/English

for the 2nd semester of the 2018/19 school year (Feb to June).

This position can also carry beyond the maternity leave period.

Full and part-time applicants will be given consideration.

Emmanuel has a student body of 178 students in grades 9 through 12. It is located in a picturesque southern Ontario town.

Our school has excellent working relationships with board, staff, principal and society.

Qualified individuals who seek to serve in the field of Reformed Education, and who submit themselves to Scripture as summarized in the Reformed Confessions, are heartily encouraged to submit an application, including a philosophy of education and references.

Additional information can be obtained by contacting the principal:

Mr. Henk Nobel, principal
226-383-7300 (work), 519-843-1790 (home)

Applications to be addressed to:
Emmanuel Christian High School c/o Education Committee
680 Tower Street S., Fergus, ON N1M 0B1



The Board of **Covenant Canadian Reformed School** invites applications for the 2018/2019 school year for the following full/part time position:

SENIOR HIGH SCIENCE TEACHER and GENERAL ELEMENTARY/JR. HIGH/SR. HIGH TEACHER

Covenant Canadian Reformed School (CCRS) is a vibrant K-12 school community with a current student population of around 250. We are situated 3 km east of the hamlet of Neerlandia and approximately 25 km north of the Town of Barrhead. Between these two locations there are three Canadian Reformed congregations and one United Reformed congregation. CCRS is located about an hour and a half north of the cities of Edmonton and St. Albert.

We anticipate growth over the next number of years and are currently planning for future expansion.

We encourage energetic, qualified (or soon to be qualified) educators, committed to Reformed Christian education, to apply. Under our Father's blessing of a broad, highly supportive membership base and current levels of government funding in Alberta, we are able to offer a very attractive wage and benefits package.

We would love to arrange flights for applicants who are out of province to come and visit our community!

All interested individuals can apply by submitting a resume, a statement of faith, a philosophy of education, and references.

Please visit our school's website at www.covenantschool.ca

Applications can be sent in writing to
3030 TWP RD 615A, County of Barrhead, AB T0G 1R2
or to the Board secretary, **Mrs. Tara Tiggelaar**
secretary@covenantschool.ca

If you would like further information about the school and the area please contact the Board chairman:

Mr. Jordan Tiggelaar
780-307-8449, chairman@covenantschool.ca
or the principal: **Mr. Mike Nederveen**
780-674-4774 (school), principal@covenantschool.ca

John Calvin Christian School

invites applications for

PRIMARY and INTERMEDIATE TEACHERS

for the 2019/2020 school year.

To apply or to receive further information please contact:

Michael Raap
604-823-6814 (school) principal@jcscs.ca

For a life of responsible stewardship.

TEACHING POSITIONS

With a view to long-term continuity, **Cornerstone Christian School** in Lynden, Washington seeks candidates interested in filling a potential full time opening at the high school level for the 2019/2020 school year for the position of

MATH/SCIENCE TEACHER

We are also interested in exploring other possibilities in various areas of subject expertise. Our school has approximately 120 students in grades 1-12, thirteen full or part time teachers, excellent staff relations, a beautiful and functional facility, and a high level of community support.

The Lynden area is an idyllic one, with access to a virtual cornucopia of outdoor leisure and recreation activities, and yet is within a ninety minute drive of the major urban centers of Vancouver, British Columbia, and Seattle, Washington.

Interested parties who are committed to serving in the field of Reformed Christian Education and who submit to Scripture as confessed in the Three Forms of Unity are encouraged to contact either the school's Principal,

Mr. Darryn Kleyn

(e: dkleyn@cornerstoneschool.us, p: 360-318-0663)

or the Chairman, **Mr. Darren Leyenhorst**

(e: darren@faberconstruction.com p: 360-815-4234).

Complete applications consisting of a résumé summarizing university and teaching qualifications, contact information for three references, and a statement of educational philosophy can be sent electronically to either of the above email addresses, or via mail to:

Mr. D. Kleyn, Principal

Cornerstone Christian School
8872 Northwood Road, Lynden, WA 98264

The Board of **Coaldale Christian School** invites applications for various positions at the

ELEMENTARY and HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL

for the 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 school year.

Preference will be given to applicants with a Bachelor of Education degree who would be able to teach a variety of subjects and/or grade levels. We encourage students graduating in 2019 to submit letters of interest for future consideration.

Coaldale Christian School offers Kindergarten to Grade 12 education and currently has a student body of approximately 200. We anticipate significant growth over the next several years resulting in an increased number of elementary classes.

To submit an application or to receive further information about our school or about our area, please contact:

Mr. Stuart Boeve, Board Chairman

Phone: 403-223-4916, email: sdboeve@shockware.com

Mr. Joop Harthoorn, Principal

Phone: 403-345-4891, email: joop.harthoorn@coaldalecs.com

Application may be sent to:

Mr. Stuart Boeve, Coaldale Christian School
2008 – 8 Street, Coaldale, AB TIM ILI



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For further information:

John Dekker (Treasurer) • 905-637-9799

johnbdekker@gmail.com

John Glasbergen (Board Chair) • 289-260-1739

jjglasbergen@sympatico.ca

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careers@jancosteel.com
www.jancosteel.com



500 Upper Wellington Street,
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We are expanding and renovating and require approximately \$1.5 million in Promissory Note investment funding over the next 2 years!

Offering 4.75% interest through loans made to the BFM Foundation Holdings Society designated for our Hamilton store construction costs.

Minimum investment amounts of \$5,000.

Donations also accepted through BFM Foundation Canada.

Please contact **Jonathan Catania** at BFM Foundation Canada for investment or donation information by phone at 647-360-4762 or by email at jonathan_catania@missionthriftstore.com.

For Hamilton project information contact: **Garry Glasbergen** at 905-678-8878, 905-928-7919 (cell) or email at glasbergengarry@gmail.com



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We hope to make a trip along the West Coast of the U.S.A.



from July 15, 2019 – August 6, 2019.

Our house is available from July 5th – August 9, 2019

Information: John/Jenny Pruij-Leyenhorst
email: pruij@shaw.ca, phone: 604-826-5184

Dieuwke/Bertus Leijenhorst
email: bertusleijenhorst@hetnet.nl, phone: 0031529434720

Career Opportunity

With much thankfulness, we, a growing steel service are in need of:

MAINTENANCE AND GENERAL LABOUR

employees at Plant 3, located in **Hawkesville, ON.**

This plant is an easy commute to many Reformed churches in the Guelph, Elora, Fergus and Listowel area.

We offer competitive wages, an RRSP plan, profit sharing and generous benefits. These positions may involve rotational shift work at some point in the future.

For more information, or to submit your resume, please email:

careers@jancosteel.com
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PSALM 78:4

ADMISSIONS SEPTEMBER 2019

The Board of Covenant Canadian Reformed Teachers College invites applications from prospective students for the 2019-2020 academic year.

Admission Requirements:

For the Two-year Diploma of Education Program:
a suitable university degree

For the Three-year Diploma of Teaching Program:
a grade 12 diploma with university entrance equivalence

Prospective candidates are invited to contact the College for more information and/or to obtain an application package.

Application deadline: February 1, 2019.

Those who plan to seek admission in the year 2020-2021 are also encouraged to contact the College as soon as possible.

Visit our website: www.covenantteacherscollege.com

Covenant Canadian Reformed Teachers College

Address: 410 Crerar Drive, Hamilton, ON L9A 5K3

Telephone: 905-385-0634 • Fax: 905-385-8409

Email: covenant@covenantteacherscollege.com



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May you have the gift of Faith, the blessing of Hope,
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“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord”

– Romans 6:23

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ATTERCLIFFE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH

Wishing you all a blessed Christmas and the LORD's guidance in 2019!

"She will bear a son and you will call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."

MATTHEW 1:21

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ALDERGROVE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH

The brothers and sisters of Aldergrove Canadian Reformed Church, including our missionary families the Wieske family and the Witteveen family, join in wishing all of our brothers and sisters in Christ a blessed Christmas and a prosperous New Year under the guidance of our Lord.

*Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth!
Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into his presence with singing! Know that the LORD, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name! For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.*

PSALM 100

ABBOTSFORD – British Columbia

ABBOTSFORD CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH

Wishing you all a blessed Christmas and God's gracious blessings in the year 2019.

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The Word

became flesh and made his dwelling

among us.

We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only

Son,

who came from the Father, full of

grace and truth

John 1:14

Wishing all a wonderful Christmas season as together we celebrate
the birth of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

From all of us at:

BARTELS
GROUP



ANGCASTER - Ontario

ANGCASTER CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH

Greetings to all our brothers and sisters in Canada and abroad!

"In this you rejoice, though for now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith – more precious than gold that perishes though tested by fire – may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

1 PETER 1:6, 7

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BARRHEAD - Alberta

BARRHEAD CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH

We wish all our brothers and sisters in Canada and abroad the joy and peace of the Christmas Season and the Lord's blessing and guidance throughout the New Year.

"A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit."

ISAIAH 11:1

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Season's Greetings from all of us

Wishing you the Lord's blessing in 2019

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BURLINGTON - Ontario

REHOBOTH CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH

We extend Christmas Greetings to all our brothers and sister in Christ the Lord. We pray that the Lord God will continue to guide, direct and bless us all in the year of the Lord 2019.

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom His favor rests".

LUKE 2:14

AART and MARTHA BLOKHUIS
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BURLINGTON SOUTH - Ontario

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...so that you may have Fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and with His son, Jesus Christ.

1 JOHN 1:3

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CLOVERDALE - British Columbia

CLOVERDALE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH

We wish you all a Blessed Christmas and the Lord's blessing for 2019.

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

ISAIAH 9:6

GEORGE and AMY GUNNINK, Lydia, Andrew, Benjamin
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Merry Christmas & A Happy New Year



May you have the gift of Faith, the blessing of Hope, and the Peace of His Love at Christmas and Always.

-Brent Rook, Darren Leffers, and Ryan Leffers



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CHILLIWACK - British Columbia

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GUELPH - Ontario

LIVING WORD CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH

Let us rejoice in our confident hope as we enter 2019. May all the blessings of the Lord be yours in abundance in the new year!

"Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert."

ISAIAH 43:19

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GRASSIE - Ontario

COVENANT CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH

Wishing our brothers and sisters around the world God's blessings in this holiday season and throughout the New Year!

Lord, You have been our dwelling place throughout all generations.

PSALM 90:1

DOROTHY BEIJES, *Scott*
WES and JACLYN BLOKKER, *Cameron, Weston, Violet, Georgia, Mila, Peri*
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ADRIAN and JOANNE DIELEMAN
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PEARL JAGER
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MARK and HELEN VANANDEL

GORD and ESTHER VAN EGMOND, *Justin, Rachel*
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BERT and HELENA WANDERS

HAMILTON - Ontario

PROVIDENCE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH

We wish all our brothers and sisters the joy and peace of the Christmas season and the Lords blessings and guidance through out the new year.

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favour rests.

LUKE 2:14

JOHN and MARTHA BEINTEMA
BERT and JEAN BLOKKER
STEVE and JACKIE BLOKKER, *Madison and Joe, Luke, Robert, Naomi, Joelle*
PETER and ELEANOR BOERINGA
MATT and ELSA DEGELDER, *Garnet, Justin, Kate, Landen, Erin*
JANE GROENWOLD
GEORGE and COOSJE HELDER
JOHN and JANE HUIZING
PAUL and MARSHA LEISTRA, *Rachel, Alexandra, Mark, Joel*
STEVE and ROSLYN ONLAND, *Ayden and Justin, Ethan, Jonah, Denia*
HERMAN and CHRISTINA SCHUTTEN
RYAN and ALANA SCHUTTEN, *Tysen, Silas, Wyatt, Avery, Felix*
MARK and STEPHANIE TENHAAF, *Jaiya, Bauer, Creed, Oslo, Viggo*
ADRIAN and WILHELMINA VANDERLAAN, *Corey, Jordan, Nicholas, Brendan, Mikayla*
GEORGE and DORA VANPOPTA
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and a
Prosperous New Year
to all!*

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*For to us a child is born, to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty, God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
~ Isaiah 9:6 ~*



Wishing you all a blessed Christmas and New Year in
2019 filled with zeal for Him who sent His son
and bore all of our sins!

Sincerely,
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GUELPH - Ontario

EMMANUEL CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH

We wish our brothers and sisters in Canada and abroad the joy and peace of the Christmas Season and the LORD's blessing and guidance through the New Year 2019.

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

JOHN 3:16, 17

GERRIT and FRED BOS, Colin and Faith, Adam, Elissa, Kelsey
CURTIS and STEPH BOUWMAN, Livia, Zachary, Owen
HAROLD and JOCELYN BOUWMAN, Alyssa, Kennedy, Ryan
MRS. RIKA BOUWMAN

KLAAS and JANNY BOUWMAN

IAN and ADALIA CULLEN

DALE and ANNIE DALLINGA

WENDELL and MARJORIE DALLINGA, Dylan, Ian, Aimee,
Samantha

LEE and ADA DAM, Coby

REV. PETER and JEANETTE FEENSTRA

MRS. HENNIE HELDER

BERT and ELSA HOPMAN

THEO HOPMAN and ERICA TOET HOPMAN, Johnathan and
Marissa, Thomas, Sean, Davin, Kailynn

MRS. SHIRLEY KNOT

DAVE and EMMA KUIZENGA, Karys, Stef, Nick

JAKE and MARG KUIZENGA

GEORGE LODDER and GRACE KNEGT-LODDER

JACK E. and FRANCINE LODDER

TONY and NINETTE LODDER, Jenna

KLAAS and DARLENE NIJENHUIS, David

CORNELIS and MARY POPPE

JOHN and BRENDA VANAMERONGEN, Ethan

AUSTIN and BRITTANY VANAMERONGEN, Kapri

PETER and MARY VANDELLEN, Sarah, Rebecca, John,
Nathan, Stephen, Rachel

LUKE and JACQUELINE VANDERGAAG, Drew, Isabelle

BERT and GRACE VANDERWOERD

KEITH and ANN VAN LEEUWEN

LLOYD and JOANNA VAN LUIK, Rachele, Hein and Juanita,
Laurissa, Courtney

PETE and ANITA VAN ROOTSELAAR

NEIL and LIZ VAN WEERDEN, Dianthé, Garnet, Levi, Holly,
Gloria

GERRY and HEATHER VAN WOUDEBERG and family
ANDREW and THERESA WESTRIK, Julia, Aaron, Tiana, Riki,
Loraya, Audrey

FRED and RIKI WESTRIK

JOHN and ROBIN WESTRIK and family

LYNDEN - Washington, USA

LYNDEN AMERICAN REFORMED CHURCH

Wishing all our brothers and sisters in Christ the Lord's continued blessings and guidance in the year ahead.

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased"

LUKE 2:14

JIM and STEPHANIE BAREMAN and family

OTTO and JEANETTE BOUWMAN, Derrick, Jonathan,
Marina

COR and KAREN BLANKEN

JOHN and GRACE BUITENBOS

RAY and HANNAH BUITENBOS, Alexa, Kenton, Serena, Levi

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JOHN and SHONA DOORNBOS, Katrine, Emma, Benjamin,
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CASON and HELENA VANDRIEL, Aaron and Lydia, Jaymie,
Julia

RYAN and MICHELLE VANDRIEL, Joel, Tyler, Dylan, Anna

HARRY and KATHY VELDMAN

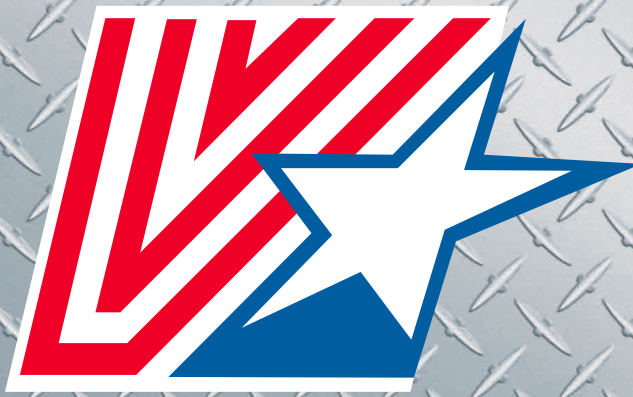
HENRY and SHIRLEY VELDMAN

KOLIN and SHARON VELDMAN, Alexa, Desiree, Jaymie,

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Jan Kottelenberg

Cason Van Driel

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Ryan Van Driel

Mark Veldman

John Deboer

Bob Lodder

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CARMAN - Manitoba

CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH CARMAN - WEST

Wishing you a Merry Christmas and God's blessings in the New Year.

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace."

JOHN 1:14 AND 16

GERALD and NELINDA DERUITER, *Nathan, Cody, Mitchell, Kylie, Josie*
ART and ALICE POPPE
CHRIS and JOANNA DEBOER, *Peter, Annemarie, Joseph, Calvin*
PAUL and NEL DERUITER
FRED and CELIA DEWIT
KEES and ALICE BROUWER
GLEN and NANCY VANDERVELDE
JOHN and HILLY BEUKEMA and family
KEVIN and LISA BREUKELMAN, *Kelsey, Sara, Thomas*
KEN and TERESA VANDERPOL, *Madison*
JACK and FRANCES VANDERMEULEN

COALDALE - Alberta

COALDALE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH

Wishing all our Brothers and Sisters in the Lord a blessed Christmas and New Year.

MANCE and MARY BREUKELMAN and family
JOHN and DINY DEHAAS
DIRK and WILMA DEVRIES
LEON and RACHEL DIEK, *Matthew, Meaghan*
JOOP and JANNY HARTHOORN
HENK and MAGGIE HOFSTINK
REV. and DINIE HUIJGEN, *Lars*
MARY KOK
CORNELIUS and JENNIFER LEFFERS, *Sophia, Darek, Kylie, Travis, Evan, Kaitlyn*
HOWARD and IRENE LEFFERS, *Nadia*
JANE LEFFERS
JOHN and ERNA MOEDT, *Tristan*
SID and BETTY OOSTENBRUG
GUS and CORNELIA VAN DASSELAAR

JOHN and GERTEEN VANDENBERG
SIMONE VAN SETERS
CORNELIUS and JOHANNA VANSRONSEN
RICHARD and AMIE VELDKAMP
ITE and JANE VEURINK
CHARLENE VOORHORST
JOHN and JENNY VOORHORST
NIC and JOLENE VOORHORST, *Jayden*

CARMAN - Manitoba

CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH CARMAN - EAST

Wishing all brothers and sisters in the Lord a blessed Christmas and 2019.

"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord." -

LUKE 2:11

"The incarnation is proof that God is not against us"

- MARTIN LUTHER

AUKE and WILMA BERGSMA
BRENDAN and MICHELLE BERGSMA, *Gianna, Kayla, Anika, Janoah, Kinsley, Adele*
WAYNE and FINA BERGSMA
JANE KLEINE DETERS
LEN and BRENDA LODDER
PIETER and ELSIEN NIJENHUIS
SIERT and EVELYN PRINS, *Wayne, Anne, Charlotte, Jonathan*
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THEO and MARGARET VANDASSELAAR
GERALD VANDERSLUIJ
KELVIN and CHRIS VANDERVEEN
GERRY and MARRY VAN DIJK
GUS and FREDDIE VEENENDAAL
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HENRY and WILLEMEN VELDMAN
HANK and JACKIE VERSTEEG



FOR ALL
WHO ARE
SEARCHING
THIS CHRISTMAS SEASON
WE PRAY
YOUR HEARTS
WILL FIND THE

JOY

OF JESUS CHRIST

A Blessed Christmas to all!



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HE IS BORN! MAY OUR HEARTS
AND HOMES FILLED WITH THE
JOY OF JESUS CHRIST.

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CHATHAM - Ontario

EBEN-EZER CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH

The Brothers and Sisters of the Eben-Ezer Canadian Reformed Church of Chatham wish you all the Lord's blessings as we Praise His Glorious Name!

"Let every valley be lifted up, And every mountain and hill be made low; And let the rough ground become a plain, And the rugged terrain a broad valley; Then the glory of the LORD will be revealed, And all flesh will see it together; For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

ISAIAH 40:4,5

GESIENA ANTUMA
ANDY and INA BEINTEMA
CHARLIE BEINTEMA
DOUG and KAREN BEINTEMA and girls
LOUIS and MARG BEINTEMA
AL and DIANE BERGSMA and family
PETE and TERESA BERGSMA
DARREN and JANAE BOS
JOHN BOS
RALPH and ANITA BOS
JIM and YVONNE BULTJE and family
JOHN and ANN BULTJE
GEORGE and TRACY BULTJE, *Edward*
PHIL and JANICE BULTJE and family
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MEL and DONNA DEBOER, *Samantha*
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ANNIE HOUGH
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ADRIAN and IETIE KOSTER
KEN KOSTER
PHIL AND LISA LINDSAY
GARRY AND REBECKA PUNT
LENA SIKKEMA
AREND and WILLA DALE SMID
JOHN and RIETTA SULLIVAN
HILCO and ANN TAMMINGA, *Jodi, Josh and Justine, Kyle, Lauren, Nathan, Annika*
TALO and JITSKE TAMMINGA
JERRY and IDA TILLEMA
BILL and ANGIE VANDERGAAG

GERALD and NANCY VANDERGAAG
NEL VANDERGAAG
BERT and JUDY VANDERHEIDE
ANDY and SANDRA VANDERVEEN, *Matt, Greg*
BARBARA VANDERVEEN
JIM and RENSKJE VANDERVEEN and family
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JOANNE VANDERVEEN
ROB and JANET VANDERVEEN
STAN and ELSA VANDERVEEN
ANDREW and DARCIE VEENEMA, *Jack, Owen, Jada, Nathan*
JOHN and WANDA VEENEMA
MIKE and ASHLEY VEENEMA, *Amelia, Hannah*
WILMA VEENEMA
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JENNY YTSMA

DUNNVILLE - Ontario

DUNNVILLE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH

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JEFF and TRICIA DEBOER, *Stephanie, Ryan and Kennedy*
CORNELL and WILMA FEENSTRA
ED and LORRAINE FEENSTRA
KAYLEY HOEKSEMA
DIRK and AKKE HOMAN, *Hendrik, Raelene, Eva*
HENRY and ANNELIES HOMAN
JAMES and RACHEL KINGMA, *Lucas, Elisabeth, Lilia, Ayanna, Shiloh, Judah*
JON and SHARON KINGMA, *Avaiya, Javan, Kenley, Shaye, Emery*
JACOBUS and JOHANNA KOOLSBERGEN
HENRY and LEANNA LANTING, *Sophia, Theresa, Garrett, Adrienne, Jeana, Gerry, John*
WAYNE and JANE OOSTERHOFF
SHAWN and ANDREA SCHUTTEN, *Dausen, Zoe, Blake, Sullivan*
ED and JENNIFER VANDER VEGTE, *Ed and Monique, Danielle, Kim*
JACK and MICHELLE VANDERVELDE, *Taylor, Meagan*
JACK and MARLENE VANROOTSELAAR
TINIELLE VANROOTSELAAR
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*We wish all the peace of God as we celebrate Christ's birth
and a Blessed New Year*

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**Wishing you all a
Merry Christmas
and a
Blessed New Year**

WILLY VANDERGAAG

GREG VANDERGAAG

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**From our Home to yours,
have a Joyous Christmas and
a Blessed New Year.**

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ELORA - Ontario

ELORA CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH

Greetings from the church in Elora. We wish you all a blessed New Year!

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

PHILIPPIANS 4:4

GERRY and HENNY BROERSMA
MIKE and DIANA BROERSMA, *Hadassah, Nathaniel, Micah, Christian*
PAUL and GERALDINE DEBOER, *George, Tara, Dianne, Gavin, Julie, Hansen*
JOOP and CAROLYN FEENSTRA, *Nadine, Conner, Brooklyn, Dustin, Desiree*
WIM and SAAKJE FEENSTRA
BERT and DINAH HUTTEN
JERRY and CLAIRE HUTTEN
HANK and MARG JAGER, *Ashley*
WILMA JANSEN, *Jeff*
DICK and DINA LODDER
JOHN and FRAN PENNINGA, *Kerissa, Karlena, Darren, Danelle*
HENRY and CHRIS PIEFFERS
JOHN and ENA POST
KOR and HILDA REININK
MARNIX and ANNE-MARIE SIKKEMA, *Alina, Jonathan, Alexandra, Jordan, Erika, Reuben, Isaac*
BERT and HENRIETTA TENHAGE, *Deanna and Mitchell*
ED and WILMA VANDERVELDE

CALGARY - Alberta

CALGARY CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH

The members of Calgary wish all their brothers and sisters in Christ, in Canada and abroad, the Lord's blessing for 2019 AD. with the words of 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8.

ALLAN and JUDY BERGSMA, *Raelene, Rynell, Laura, Denise, Jocelyn*
ANDREW and LORI BOS and family
BRIAN and TONYA BRUEKELMAN, *Josette, Elise, Dominic*
SHAUN and DEBORAH CHIN, *Emily, Nathaniel, Leah*
MIKE and EUNICE DE GROOT, *Katarina*
RICHARD and GWENDA DE HAAS and family
ALICE DE JONG
BILL and JACKIE DEKKER
TONY and ALYSSA DEWIT and family
DEBBIE FEENSTRA, *Ryan*

JACOB and JESSICA HANSMA and family
ED and CAROLIN HELDER, *Aidan, Caitlin, Micah*
GARRETT and KIMBERLEY HOEKSEMA and family
EDWARD and ALICE HOOGERDYK, *Zach*
DEWEY and DIANA JONGBLOED, *Jason*
LYNDON and DINY KOK, *Lydia, Emma, Laura*
KARINA KUIPER
EILEEN MCEWAN
RAY and MELINA NOOT and family
ALIDA OOSTENBRUG
HENRY and ANN OSTERMEIER
RALPH and ANN PENNINGA
JOEY and BECKY SCHOUTEN and family
DAVE and TAMMY SCHRIEMER, *Brent, Chloe, Cassidy, Haley*
AWADIA SONGA and family
MARTIN VAN BOSTELEN
ERIC and CAROLYN VANDERVEEN
CRAIG and KAREN van ELLENBERG, *Jayden*
JUDY van ELLENBERG
GRANT and DANIELLE VAN KAMMEN, *Asher, Amira, Kade*
PASTOR STEVE and KRYNA VAN LEEUWEN and family
LORRAINE VAN OOSTERHOUT
KEVIN and IRENE VAN TIL, *Austin*
ERIC and NATASHA VEENENDAAL and family
WES and ROLENA VERSTEEG and family
MURRAY and MARITA VRIESFLAAR, *Fallon, Jolene, Marco*
DEAN and KARIN WALLACE

WILLOUGHBY HEIGHTS - British Columbia

WILLOUGHBY HEIGHTS CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH

We wish all our brothers and sisters the Lord's blessing for 2019!

"Sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done marvelous things; his right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him."

PSALM 98:1

CORY and EMMA FLOKSTRA
HENRY and ANN JANSEN
KARLO and ANNET JANSSEN, *Roy, Yannick, Kylian, Nyls, Sophy, Yesper, Ambyr*
PAUL and RITA SCHOUTEN
PHIL and WENDA SIKMA and family
DICK and ALIDA VANDERHORST
BILL and JOANNA VANDERPOL
MIKE and MIRIAM VANTIL, *Jaime and Jordan Star, Jake, Amber, Claire*

*Wise men still seek
Him ...*

*Mark & Monica Riemer
and family*

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you celebrate this *Christmas*
and may God's goodness fill you with
love, joy and peace in the *New Year* ahead.



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KERWOOD - Ontario

GRACE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH

We wish all our brothers and sisters the joy and peace of God and his blessings and guidance in the year 2019.

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.

LUKE 2:14

CHRIS and REBECCA VEENEMA, Lydia, Kara Rozlyn,
Zachary, Brett
JIM and JACKIE JANSSENS
ALIE JANSSENS
MIKE and SARA JANSSENS, Landon, Savaya, Anica, Braxton,
Kianna, Talia
BILL and LINDA DOKTER
LEIN WATTEL
MAYNARD and SUSAN SMID

GLANBROOK - Ontario

TRINITY CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH

May the Lord bless all our brothers and sisters with a joyous Christmas season, and God's rich blessings as we serve Him in 2019!

"I know that my redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand on the earth...How my heart yearns within me!"

JOB 19:25, 27B

ED and LISA BAKER, Josh and Taylor, Simon, Katrina
THEO and MELANIE BEIJES, Timothy, Katie, Addison, Maxwell
CLAUDE and TERESA BOISVERT, Samuel, Jacqueline
NELLIE BUITENHUIS
ARIE and TAMARA DEN HOLLANDER, William, Lucas,
Abigail, Esther, Jonathan, Andrew, Lydia
REV. and MRS. WILLIAM DEN HOLLANDER
ANDREW and EMILY DYKSTRA, Lydia, Charlotte, Vivian,
Jasper
HENRI and TRISH GELMS, Sheldon, Mitchell, Kaylee, Amy,
Cason, Alaynia, Benjamin, Logan
JOHN and WILMA GROENWOLD, Nadia, Krista and Bruce
BRIAN and BARBARA HARSEVOORT, Bethany, Jeremy,
Zachary, Joshua, Caleb, Micah, Benjamin, Esther
TIM and ELLY HUTTEN, Calvin
HARRY and GAIL JANS, Kaitlyn, Darren, Sean, Jarod, Blake
DEREK and TINA LANTING, Sarah, Terissa, Lydia, Albert,
John, Hannah, Owen, Elaina, Ian

ARNOLD and PATTI MANS, Samantha, Amber
JAMES and ANGELA MEERVELD, Emberly, Mikaela, Calvin
WAYNE and AMY MORRIS
PETER and JOANNE OSTERMEIER
JOSH and DINA ROODZANT, Hailey, Kris, Lauren
JUSTIN and MARY-LYNN SCHUTTEN, Kyle, Brayden,
Natania, Sarah
DAVE and YVONNE SLANEY
GARY and JACKIE SMID, James, Leah, Maria, Timothy, Seth,
Isabelle
PETER and GRACE SMID
DR. JASON and JANET VAN VLIET, Curtis, Hannah, Ruth,
Abigail, Philip, Joelle, Jared

TINTERN - Ontario

SPRING CREEK CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH

"May Christmas find you surrounded by those who love you. And may the true meaning of the season bless your heart always."

"Blessed is the Lord. . . for He has visited and redeemed His people."

LUKE 1:68

DON and MONICA BOS, Anna, Joseph, Benjamin, Reuben,
Beth and Simeon
HENK and SIENA BREUKELMAN
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Wishing you all a blessed 2019. From your brothers and sisters in Christ at Providence.

But those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

ISAIAH 40:31

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HAMILTON - Ontario

CORNERSTONE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH

Let the miracle of Christmas fill your hearts with joy, peace and love.

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favour rests.

LUKE 2:14

BRYAN and TOBI BOS, Chloë, Cohen, Lily, Joely
HANS and COBY BARTELS
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EDMONTON - Alberta

IMMANUEL CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH

We wish all our brothers and sisters in Canada and abroad the Lord's blessing and His guidance for 2019.

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ROB and EMILY DUKER, Asia, Lydia, Sierra, Jaxon
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BRAD and HANNAH VAN DELDEN, Taylor, Oscar
GERDA VANDENHAAK
JULIUS and KAREN VANSRONSEN, Melissa, Elena, Titus, Joel, Hannah, Amaryn, Charis
GARRY and CATHY VISSCHER
HENNIE WEESSIES
PETER and THERESA WEESSIES, Matthew
JOHN and FRED WIERSEMA

DENVER - Colorado, USA

EMMANUEL AMERICAN REFORMED CHURCH

May the wonderful gift of sonship fill your hearts and minds this holiday season, and throughout the year.

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

GALATIANS 4:4-5

“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

~ John 1:14



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May the truth of this Christmas dwell in each of our hearts

~ Henry and Judy Heyink and Families ~

~ Phil and Janice Bultje and Families ~

FERGUS - Ontario

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Wishing all our brothers and sisters in the Lord a wonderful Christmas season and the Lord's blessings in 2019!

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FERGUS - Ontario

MARANATHA CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH

Greetings to our brothers and sisters in the LORD, May He graciously guide us and care for us in the year ahead.

LORD, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations.

PSALM 90:1

PIETER and TINEKE AGEMA, *Douwe, Harriet, Roelof*

CORNELIS and RENA BOOT

OLIVER BOOT

HARRY BOUWMAN

JEANNETTE BOUWMAN

JOHN and RACHEL BROEKEMA, *Seth, Joel, Dayna*

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ADAM and FEIKJE FLACH, *Melani, Aaron, Levi*

DUSTIN and NICOLE HUTTEN, *Kaden, Ethan, Mariah, Alexander, Thea*

JOHN and JOANNE HUTTEN, *Allen, Michaela and Willem, Leah*

HENK and NATASHA HUIJGEN, *Leah, Claire, Asher*

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TONY and JOANNE VANTOL, *Mikkyle*

CHARLES and LINDA WESTRIK, *Nicole, Ryan and Sarah, Colin and Rosie, Joshua, Danielle*

REV. THEO and LIDY WIERENGA, *Jeanette, Corina and Jonah, Jared, Shawna*

GRAND RAPIDS - Michigan, USA

GRAND RAPIDS AMERICAN REFORMED CHURCH

We wish all our brothers and sisters in the U.S., Canada and abroad a very blessed 2019.

Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

EPHESIANS 5:20

PETER and JANET KINGMA, *Joshua*

REV. KEN and BRENDA KOK, *Edwin, Megan*

TERRY and RITA MEDEMBLIK, *Patrick, Olivia*

DIRK and RIA RIEDSTRA

DIRK and KATHY TENHAAF, *Anthony, William, Victoria*

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*"I shall see him, but not now:
I shall behold him,
but not nigh:
there shall come a Star out of Jacob...."*

Numbers 24:17a



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*Wishing all our brothers and sisters
the peace of Christ's birth
and a joyous New Year!*

GRAND VALLEY - Ontario

GRAND VALLEY CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH

***We wish all our brothers and sisters in the Lord,
God's blessing and guidance during the year 2019
and always.***

*"For the Lord is good. His steadfast love endures forever,
and His faithfulness to all generations."*

Ps. 100:5

ALLEN and SABRINA BALCH, Gabriel
BILL and GRACE BALCH, Christine
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LEO and JONI KOTTELENBERG, Winston, Devon, Gavin,
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Keziah
TRISTAN and RUTH VENEMA
ANDREW and JANET WILDEBOER, Brianna and Josh, Willem
and Michaela, Josiah, Jenna, Summer

NOOKSACK VALLEY - Washington, USA

NOOKSACK VALLEY AMERICAN REFORMED CHURCH

***As we share in the celebration of the birth of
our Savior, we wish all our brothers and sisters
in Christ a joyful holiday season and the Lord's
blessing for 2019!***

*But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I
bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the
people; for today in the city of David there has been born
for you a Savior who is Christ the Lord."*

LUKE 2:10, 11

ED B and TRACY BOSSCHER, Eddie
ERIC and ALYSSA BROWN, Maddy, Joey, Evan, Lucy
WAYNE and ANTINA CHASE
IAN and ANGELA DAVIS, Allison, Kayleigh, Emma, Lucas
ANDREW and KAREN DEMOOY, Kyleigh, Mikenzie, Bridget
RICK and JANICE DEMOOY, Brent, Blake, Jordan, Kyle, Cassie
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Olivia
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*Wishing everyone a Blessed Christmas and New Year
I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. Luke 2:10*



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LANGLEY - British Columbia

LANGLEY CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH

Wishing all our brothers and sisters in Christ a Blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year.

*"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior,
who is Christ the Lord."*

LUKE 2:11

KEN and PAULINE BULTHUIS, *Evan and Corinna, Kelian,
Quinton*
WILFRED and HELEN BULTHUIS, *Jodi*
JOHN and MARGARET DEBOER
RON and SHIRLEY de HAAN
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Silas*
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KEITH and JESS WILDEBOER, *Chelsea, Travis, Levi, Lucas,
Greyson*

LINCOLN - Ontario

VINEYARD CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH

God's continuous blessing and guidance for the year 2019 is our wish to our brothers and sisters in Canada and abroad.

*LORD, Thou hast been our dwelling place
to all generations.*

PSALM 90:1

MARY ALKEMA
JOHN BEINTEMA
JERRY and RICKI BLOKKER
HENRIETTA BUIKEMA, *Jell, Kevin*
MARK and HEIDI DE BOER, *Keira, Teagan, Austin*
GERRY and PAULINE DENBOK
JOHN and JENNY HORDYK, *Simon*
JAY and META KOSTER, *Rianna and Max, Tyler and Carrie,
Alexis and Scott, John, Christian*
HENNY MANS
ERIC and GRACE STIEVA
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WAYNE and HELEN VAN SYDENBORGH, *Michael*
BILL and CORRIE VANWOUDEBERG

LONDON - Ontario


PILGRIM CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH

Wishing all our brothers and sisters in Christ, both near and far, a blessed Christmas as we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Saviour.

*Blessed is the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited and
redeemed His people, and has raised up a horn of salvation
for us in the house of His servant David.*

LUKE 1:68, 69

ALAN and ANNETTE JANSSENS, *Kyle, Connor, Lucas, Logan*
FRANK and JENNY OOSTDYK
JACK and RENNIE PIETERMAN
TED and LYNDA SCHOUTEN and family
BILL and CATHY SLAA
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JOHN and AMANDA VANDERHEIDEN, *Kelvin, Nolan,
Zachariah, Callie*
COLIN and ALICIA VERSTEEG, *Peyton, Ethan, Darryl, Casey*
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FLAMBOROUGH - Ontario

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Greetings from the following brothers and sisters of Flamborough! We wish all brothers and sisters in Christ a joyous Christmas season and the Lord's blessing and guidance throughout the New Year.

MIKE and WILMA BEIJES, *Jordan, Rachel, Jessica*
JEFF and EILEEN BREUKELMAN and family
WILL AND JANET HAVENAAR
ROB and CONNIE HOFKINK, *Aaron, Naomi, Jonathan, Luther*
HERMAN and JOANNE JANS and family
JOB and DONNA SCHENKEL, *Shannon, Jordan, Tristan, Connor, Dylan*
MARC and MARG SCHUTTEN and family
PETER and LORI STEGENGA, *Dustin, Karissa, Ashley, Tyler*
HENK and CHRISTINE VAN HALEN
RICH and CYNTHIA VANDERLAAN and family

ORANGEVILLE - Ontario

ORANGEVILLE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH

We wish all our brothers and sisters around the world the Lord's blessing and guidance for the coming year.

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."

LUKE 2:14

ROB and ANNE BOUWERS, *Brett, Taryn, and Tiffany*
KYLE and KAYLA GEURTS
JOHN and HARMA GRIT
PAUL and MARGARET JANSSEN, *Dan and Jo, Matt*
JERRY and RITA KEEP
GARY and LORI KOTTELENBERG, *Katie and Greg, Juanita and Hein, Christina, Sarah*
JASON and MELANIE KOTTELENBERG, *Jaidynn, Mikayla, Lukas, Titus and Elias*
JOHN and WILHELMINA KOTTELENBERG
HENRY and JOANNA SIKKEMA, *Greyson*
JOHN and HANNA VANBODEGOM
ALBERT and JANET VANRAALTE, *Philip, Victoria, Laura, Rebecca*
JEFF and KAREN VANSYDENBORGH, *Joel, Aaron and Mariah, Jonal, Hanna, Lydia*

OTTAWA - Ontario

JUBILEE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH

Wishing all our brothers and sisters in Canada and abroad a very Merry Christmas and blessed New year.

PETER and ELLIE BUIST
RICHARD and EMMA BUIST, *Peter, Evan, Charlie*
CAROL BUTLER
TIM and KENDRA FRISBY, *Xavier, Viola, Jazz, Isla*
PATRICK and ZWANY HAVENAAR, *Kyle, Lindsay, Steve*
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HAROLD and ELIZABETH SMITH, *Joanna, Simon, Noah, Zoe, Isaiah*
ANDREW and CARRIE VANDERVEEN, *Lily, Nora*
MALCOLM and CINDY WILDEBOER, *Sjanie, Naomi, Anna, Olivia, Callum*

OWEN SOUND - Ontario

OWEN SOUND CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH

We would like to wish everyone a safe and joyous season as we celebrate our Saviour's birth.

JACK BOERSEMA
DIANNE BREUKELMAN
MENZE and SYLVIA FEENSTRA, *Christina, Nicholas, Timothy, Julia, Benjamin, Matthew, Ester, Levi and Hannah*
JEFF and CATHY SCHEPER, *Shannon, Lauren, Kimberly, Ryan and Derrick*
ALEX and RACHEL SIKKEMA, *Ariane, Lauren and Liam*
JOHN and MARGARET SPANNINGA, *Megan, Jackson, Reuben, Madelyn, Cohen, Katie and Sebastian*
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Wishing all the Lord's blessings for 2019



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*May the miracle of Christmas fill your heart with joy and peace.
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*Seasons
Greetings*

*Konrad & Joanne VanDasselaar
and Family*

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NEERLANDIA - Alberta

NEERLANDIA NORTH CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH

Wishing all the Lord's blessings and guidance in the coming year.

For the LORD is good, his steadfast love endures forever, his faithfulness continues through all generations.

PSALM 100:5

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TORONTO - Ontario

TORONTO CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH

We share in the joy of the birth of our Saviour. To all our brothers and sisters across Canada and abroad, the Lord's blessing for 2019!

*"For to us a child is born, To us a son is given;
And the government shall be upon his shoulder,
And his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."*

ISAIAH 9:6

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*Wishing you a Blessed Christmas
and
God's blessing for a Prosperous New Year*



*“Fear not, for behold,
I bring you good news
of great joy
that will be for all the people.”*

Luke 2:10

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We wish all our brothers and sisters in Canada and abroad the LORD'S blessing and His guidance in the New Year.

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NEERLANDIA - Alberta

NEERLANDIA SOUTH CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH

Sharing with our brothers and sisters across the world the joy of the birth of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Prayers for peace and wisdom to you all in 2019!

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased!

LUKE 2:14

HENRY and KATRINA BARENDREGT and family
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ST. ALBERT - Alberta

ST. ALBERT CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH

Wishing our brothers and sisters in Christ many blessings in 2019.

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths."

PROVERBS 3:5-6

GORDON and JENNIFER CAMPBELL, *Samantha, Liam, Ava*
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*This Christmas our thoughts are
with those who are grieving.
Our prayer for you is this:*

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**“May the God of hope
fill you with all**

*joy and
peace*

**as you trust in him,
so that you may overflow
with hope by the power
of the Holy Spirit.” >> ROMANS 15:13**



It's comforting to come home.



Rick Ludwig



Garnet van Popta



Diane Vanderwoude

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SMITHERS - British Columbia

SMITHERS CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH

Wishing all our brothers and sisters in the family of Jesus Christ the Lord's blessing during this holiday season and throughout 2019.

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LARRY and JENNY WIERENGA

SURREY - British Columbia

MARANATHA CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH

The following brothers and sisters of Maranatha Canadian Reformed Church at Surrey, B.C. wish all the brothers and sisters in Christ a blessed Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

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HENRY and COBY HENDRIKSEN
JOHN and FRAN JANSEN
JEROME and KIM LEE and family
PASTOR BEN and DANIKA SCHOOF and family
HUGO and SYLVIA STAR
ALBERT and COBY VAN DER HEIDE
ADAM and KASSANDRA VAN GROOTHEEST and family

TABER - Alberta

TABER CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH

The following members of the Taber Canadian Reformed Church wish to pass on their greeting for a joyous Christmas and a blessed new year.

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

ROMANS 15:13

ANDY and FELICIA BIJLSMA, Seth, Tristan, Rowan, Abby, Marla
STUART and DARLENE BOEVE, Kristen and Jason
GOOI and CLARY BOUMA
PAUL and KINSKE DEVOS, Nick
EVERT and PEARL VANKAMMEN



Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year

For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.

And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

-Isaiah 9:6 NIV



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WINNIPEG - Manitoba

GRACE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH

We wish you all God's richest blessings in 2019!

KRIS BROUWER
RICHARD and LIZ BUIST, *Eric, Marjorie*
ALAN and JANETTE DEWIT and family
MARK and SACHA HOFINK, *Jordan, Cody, Brett, Jaydyn, Jesse, Ashlyn*
ED and TINA HARKE
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REMMIE and LINDA VANDER VEGTE
SCOTT VANDER VEGTE
GERRIT and GERDA VANLAAR
ED and JANNI VERSTEEG
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WAYNE and CAROLYN VERSTEEG

WINNIPEG - Manitoba

REDEEMER CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH

We wish all our brothers and sisters around the world the Lord's blessing and guidance for the coming year.

GARRY and CHRISTINA BOERINGA, *Daniel, Valerie*
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JAMES and MARY-ELLEN VANDERMEULEN, *Andrew, Reuben, Nathan*
PETER and TRUDY VEENENDAAL
JONATHAN and AMANDA VERSTEEG, *Morgan, Drew, Cohen, Jamin, Ty*
JANNES and CATHY WIERSEMA

VERNON - British Columbia

VERNON CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH

We wish all the brothers and sisters around the world Season's Greetings and the Lord's blessings in 2019!

DIANE DALHUISEN
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Best Wishes for 2019 from



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and a joyous New Year!**

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YARROW - British Columbia

YARROW CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH

We wish all our brothers and sisters in Canada and abroad the joy and peace of the Christmas Season and the Lord's blessings and and guidance throughout the New Year.

MARY BOEVE
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WINNIE WINKELAAR

HOUSTON - British Columbia

HOUSTON CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH

Extending to all our brothers and sisters in Canada and abroad, our hope that the Lord will guide and keep you in His care in the New Year.

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

PHILIPPIANS 4:4

ARCHIE and JEAN BRIENEN
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AUSTRALIA

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