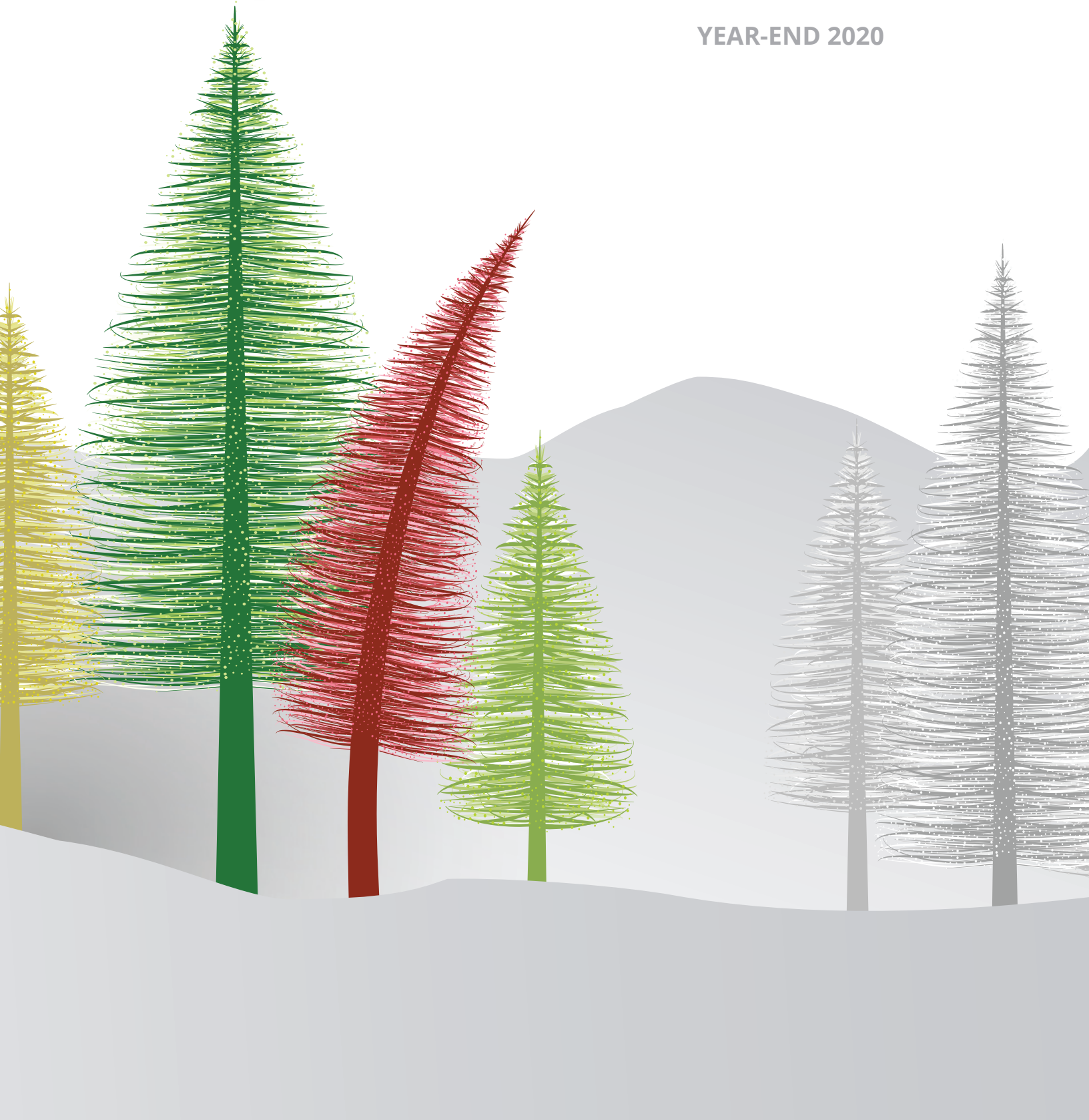


# Clarion

YEAR-END 2020



# **Best Wishes and the Lord's blessings in the year 2021 to all our readers.**

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## LEAD ARTICLE



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# Year End Issue

Since you are reading this article, you have the Year-End Issue of *Clarion* in your hands. If you double check the front cover, you will see that this is what it is officially called. I suppose that some, or perhaps many, of us call it the Christmas Issue. Thankfully, this does not need to be an either/or matter. I am quite sure that *Clarion's* editorial team is content with its readership using both names.

**B**ut let's come at this from a slightly different angle. Yes, this is the Year-End Issue, but the question remains: what is *the* year-end issue that you are particularly dealing with? With periodicals, like *Clarion*, an issue is something you receive in the mail. With life in general, an issue can be something that preoccupies a lot of your time and mental energy. So, allow me to ask again, what is *your* year-end issue?

# Even when we are born again through the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, our old self keeps on leaning and tugging in an unholy direction

## Different people, different issues

If we were to respond to this question based on the volume of attention given to any particular issue by the media, the answer is clear: COVID-19 is the year-end issue of 2020.

Likewise, if our answer is grounded in how much time we ourselves spend talking about a specific issue, the answer would likely be the same: COVID-19 was *the* issue that dominated, and still dominates, so many of our discussions with our brothers and sisters in the Lord.

Still, I have a hunch that some of our fellow believers would not point to COVID as their year-end issue. For example, when a marriage is in tatters, or family relations have sunk to an all-time low, those tensions sap far more strength than worrying about the possibility of contracting a virus. Or if there is a specific temptation that relentlessly threatens to sink its hook deep into the fiber of your soul, those news reports about COVID easily become distant chatter, don't they?

So as we think about, pray for, and reach out to people during this Christmas season, we do well to remember *their* issue is shaped by their own life circumstances, not necessarily the insatiable appetite of our media channels for yet more clips about COVID.

## Diverse issues, the same answer

Regardless, though, of what your year-end issue may be, what is the answer? Identifying problems is easy; coming up with effective solutions is usually much harder. However, here is where the two names of this copy of Clarion merge in a helpful way. Ultimately, the Christmas issue – the Word became flesh and dwelt among us – is the answer to each and every year-end issue we may have.

Admittedly, that last sentence is a strong and sweeping statement. Some may label it an overstatement and, indeed, in a

certain way, it is. The answer to all human misery resides not merely in Christ's conception but in his entire and all-sufficient work of atonement. This includes his death and resurrection, his incarnation right through to his ascension.

Nonetheless, it all started in Bethlehem. When the Word became flesh, the door opened decisively to the entire citadel of salvation: no incarnation, no cross; no cross, no grave; no grave, no resurrection; no resurrection, no return; no return, no new heavens and new earth. Looking at it from this perspective, the birth of our Saviour is truly pivotal. It impacts everything, quite literally.

## The saving solution of perfect holiness

Yet what exactly is it about this miraculous conception and birth of God's eternal Son that provides true relief in our misery-laden issues? In a phrase, it centres around the "perfect holiness" of the child born in Bethlehem's manger. You may recognize that phrase from the Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 14. Here is the full text: "What benefit do you receive from the holy conception and birth of Christ? He is our Mediator, and with his innocence and perfect holiness covers, in the sight of God, my sin, in which I was conceived and born."

Isn't it interesting that in addition to our Saviour's innocence, his holiness is highlighted? Not only that, but the Catechism even highlights his holiness by adding an adjective: *perfect*. Of course, his innocence is perfect, too. But, in particular, our Catechism urges us to reverently contemplate the perfect splendour of his *holiness* (Ps 29:2). Why?

Actually, the Catechism has been slowly developing a line of thought. It began back in Lord's Day 3, Question & Answer 6. "God created man good and in his image, that is, in true righteousness and *holiness*." Holiness goes to the very core of our being, our nature. We were created with a deep-seated

inclination and zealous desire to set apart the LORD in our hearts as the only true God and the overflowing fountain of all good. Here we can also think of that repeated refrain in Leviticus, “Be holy, for I the LORD your God *am* holy” (11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7, etc).

Tragically, the holiness of our human nature did not remain. Far from it! With the fall of our first parents, we did not just start doing evil deeds or saying unkind words. It’s much worse than that. The Catechism teaches us that “*our nature* became so corrupt that we are all conceived and born in sin” (LD 3, Q&A 7). Thus, our holy, original nature was warped into a wholly, hateful nature – rebellious against God and revengeful against our neighbour (LD 2, Q&A 5).

At Christmas, then, we celebrate that a Mediator came into the world to die on the cross for *the sins that we commit*. But even more, we rejoice that, long before he was nailed to the wooden beams of Golgotha, our Mediator was born to deal decisively and savingly with *our corrupt nature*. After all, that nature is the vile and abominable root that produces all sorts of sin in our lives (BC, Art 15).

## Back to the issue

But how does all this connect to the issues that we mentioned earlier? What does the incarnation of the Son of God have to do with tensions that have arisen within our congregations in dealing with COVID restrictions? Does the holy conception and birth of Jesus somehow help when marriage and family relationships are strained? When assailed by the Tempter’s arrows, we may well pray for the protective work of the Holy Spirit but does the arrival of Immanuel also help in some way?

In short, the answer is yes. The reason is that while all these matters are weighty issues, the one issue that makes all of them so much more difficult is the fact that, even when we are born again through the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, our old self keeps on leaning and tugging in an unholy direction, making complexities more complex and misery more miserable.

Honouring and obeying our governing officials while at the same time promoting the priority of divine worship and the

vitality of congregational fellowship is hard enough the way it is these days, let alone when our remaining sinful natures are leaning so hard in the direction of venting our frustrations instead of compassionately listening to the concerns and needs of others.

When two people are united as one in marriage, they will experience “worldly troubles,” as the apostle Paul warns us (1 Cor 7:28). But it is the selfish tendencies of our hearts that make matters so much worse. Somewhere down in the core of our being, it still feels so natural to hold a grudge and so hard to extend forgiveness. Sometimes these tendencies escalate trouble into tragedy.

Moreover, why is the cycle of temptation so hard to break? You would think that after three or four run-ins with the misery that sin inevitably brings, we would turn our backs on Satan’s lures for good. Alas, such is not the case precisely because sin is so much more than mistakes we make. It is a yearning deep within us that craves the unholy and impure.

This tenaciously obstinate and unholy nature still clings to us, wherever we go and whatever we do. *That* is the year-end, the year-beginning, and the mid-year issue with which we are constantly contending. If that issue is not dealt with decisively, we cannot make any real headway on any other issue either.

Thankfully, this is what Christmas is all about. On the cross, Jesus was crucified for all our sins, but in the manger he was born to swathe even *our corrupt inclinations* with the pristine, white bands of his perfect holiness.

Even all my immoral *leanings* are totally cleansed by the perfect holiness of Christ’s conception. Shall I sully my soul again with the filth of Satan’s enticements? May it never be.

Even all my stubborn *dispositions* are entirely covered by the perfect holiness of Christ’s birth. Can I still refuse to extend forgiveness to my loved ones? May it never be.

Even all my hate-filled *tendencies* are completely shrouded by the perfect holiness of my Mediator. Do I now want to show understanding, love, and compassion to all those around me? Yes, may it always be. **C**

# What's Inside

Wrapping up a volume of our magazine is an appropriate moment to pause and reflect. It is a time to take stock of the topics we have covered, to review the news in our federation that we have reported on, and to reflect on what has taken up space on the pages of Clarion over the past year. Since quite early in this volume, it seems most submissions cannot help but mention the pandemic situation that our world faces, with a constant refrain: "2020 has been a year like no other."

Yet, as our editorial team put together the pages you hold in your hands, it strikes me that our 2020 Year-End Issue is like other year-end issues: we celebrate the birth of our Saviour, thank the Lord for guiding us through the past year, and look forward to the coming year, putting our trust in him.

A sincere thank you to our contributors; our hard-working editors; Dr. James Visscher, our Editor-in-Chief, for his leadership; and to our printer and publisher, Will Gortemaker. Also, to our readers I would like to say: May your Christmas season be full of joy this year too. God bless you and keep you in 2021.

Laura Veenendaal

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# Clarion

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# How Will This Be?

*“The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy – the Son of God.” (Luke 1:35)*

**G**od sends the angel Gabriel to Mary to inform her that she would give birth to the Christ. Imagine that. Mary was a teenager. She was engaged to Joseph but not living with him yet. It is not a wonder that Mary asks, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?” This was not a form of pushback. Mary was trying to understand: “Am I hearing this right? I’m just a girl. I’m not even a woman yet.” She has a brain; she knows her Bible; she loves God.

Gabriel doesn’t leave her confused. He says, with graceful repetition: “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God.” God is going to use Mary for his great plan, a plan that is as old as history, the plan to crush Satan and to set people free to be the holy children of God.


On separate occasions both Joseph and Mary are told to name the baby “Jesus.” In Matthew 1, Joseph is told to call the baby Jesus “for he will save his people from their sins.” Jesus means Saviour. Mary is told, “He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

Are we hearing this right? Mary’s son “will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High?” Mary’s son is God? As Mary struggles to comprehend this, Gabriel explains in verse 35, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy – the Son of God.” So it’s a miracle. It is a miracle of the Holy Spirit. There will be a conception in Mary’s womb – in other words she will become pregnant – not in the normal way that involves a man, but through the miracle of the Holy Spirit. Yes, the Son of God will reside in her womb, take her flesh, and truly become her Son in his human nature. He is Immanuel – God with us.

Gabriel makes clear to Mary that God would give Jesus “the throne of his father David” and “of his kingdom there will be no end.” That’s the fulfillment of the promise made to David in 2

Samuel 7. When the Son of David comes – he who is both God and sinless man – his kingdom and his throne will be established forever. He would make the once-for-all sacrifice that pays for our sins, reconciling God with us, so that we who are washed in the blood and Spirit of Jesus Christ might become citizens of the everlasting kingdom of heaven.

One day Mary would stand at the foot of the cross and watch her son die a horrible death. Thankfully Mary would see that the cross is not an end, but a beginning. Thankfully the King who saves us and leads us is no longer lying in a manger, or hanging on a cross, or lying in his grave. He has risen and ascended into heaven where he is crowned as King, and reigns forever.

What joy and confidence that gives us. In this Christmas season and the threshold of a new year, we are faced with many turbulent things. But we know that God is with us, reconciling us to himself through the blood of his Son, and promising that nothing can separate us from his love in Christ Jesus our Lord. 

## For Further Study

1. Why was Mary’s question to Gabriel not punished like Zechariah’s in Luke 1:18?
2. How is it that Jesus does not have original sin like the rest of the human race?
3. What comfort do you have from Jesus your Saviour during difficult times in your life?



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# Overshadowed by Glory

**I** understand that Mary was confused and perplexed. I doubt she was often greeted, in glowing terms, by an angel. “And he came to her and said, ‘Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you’” (Luke 1:28). It’s not an everyday greeting.

No wonder “she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be” (v. 29).

Then the heart of the matter is declared:

*And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” (vv. 30–33)*

Now that is heady stuff – a son, Jesus, great, Son of the Most High, throne of David, reigning, an unending kingdom. At last the great work of slaying Satan and sin and death was to take place. The time had come. The kingdom had come. Messiah was here; King Jesus was stepping into Mary’s life, and stepping into the world.

Then the hard news. An outside power, albeit that of the Holy Spirit, is going to come upon her and she will conceive a child. The angel said, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you” (v. 35). There is something intense in those words. One might even say threatening. Clearly her life will never be the same again. She is going to be overshadowed.

## Overcome by grace

Coming face-to-face with the grace of God in Jesus Christ is an encounter with power: an incredible power, perhaps even a terrifying power. The words Mary hears are not necessarily comforting. The verb, “to come upon [you],” is used several times by Luke. The context is often aggressive, as in, for example, Luke 11:22: “... but when one stronger than he attacks him [literally, ‘comes upon him’] and overcomes him, he takes away his armor in which he trusted and divides his spoil.” Jesus is

stronger than Satan and will come upon him and plunder his kingdom. It is not necessarily the case that Mary fears God will attack and plunder her. But it is no mere coincidence that the same word is used in these two places. God will come upon her, in order to enter this world in the flesh and attack Satan himself. Mary is being rescued. The rescue involves the power of God let loose in the world.

One should read Luke 21:24-25 and 34-35 to catch the eschatological overtones of this word. There is a sense of being

Do you see why  
the grace of God in the  
gospel can appear  
terrifying?

overtaken by something more powerful, something irresistible, and, in most cases, something to be dreaded. That is why the angel introduced the whole idea with these words, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God” (Luke 1:30).

If this is favour, the grace of the gospel, then why is it so daunting? The answer is wonderful. The King of Kings is on the move. He will bring salvation. He will melt the cold death of winter and bring new life. Yet, when Mary hears this, and learns she is to play a role in this, she is “greatly troubled” (v. 29) and clearly afraid (v. 30). She does not quite understand it (v. 34). Jesus steps into her life and into our world, by the power of the Holy Spirit, and she is frightened.



The Lord God in heaven was going to come upon her; he was to begin his great work and it would begin in her body. The next, and crucial, phase of the old enmity from the garden begins in the womb of Mary. This was a most unusual moment. Mary's body would be an instrument of righteousness in the hands of the King as he strides forward to crush Satan. But Mary, too, must yield to Jesus.

Do you see why the grace of God in the gospel can appear terrifying? God, in the gospel, is like an expeditionary force, come to invade your life and to retake possession for his holy residence.

Our first reaction is to say that it's not fair. We want Jesus in our lives, but on our terms. But God steps into our lives on his own terms. Too often our desires are too small. We want God to help us be a better spouse, or parent, or person. We want him to solve a problem, to fix a part of our lives. But the good news is this: he will do a much more powerful thing.

We might feel defenseless, invaded. But perhaps there is a better way to view it. The Holy Spirit will come upon us and, through the finished work of Jesus, make us new - a whole new creation. What do you say to that? Come, Holy Spirit.

## Caught up into the glory

This idea of power is reinforced by the other words used by the angel, "The power of the Most High will overshadow you" (v. 35). Overshadowed - that does not sound comforting. We might not react well to being told we are going to be put in someone's shadow. We think of grace as raising us to glory. We rarely think of it as being overshadowed by the glory of another. Yet everyone in the nativity was overshadowed by the glory of God. Joseph was overshadowed; Mary, Elizabeth, Zechariah, John the Baptist, even the angels, for they cry, "Glory to God in the highest" (Luke 2:14).

To be overshadowed is to be caught up into the glory of another, that of God himself. It is to be caught up into God's own glory cloud. All three synoptic gospels use this word to describe the cloud of glory that appears at the transfiguration of the Lord Jesus (Matt 17:5, Mark 9:7, Luke 9:34). The only other occurrence in the New Testament refers to Peter's shadow falling on the sick (Acts 5:15). For Mary, the good news of the coming of Jesus means that God's shadow has fallen upon her. There is healing under that shadow.

While Mary probably did not know of the coming transfiguration, she certainly knew of the cloud of glory in the Old Testament, the presence of God saving his people in the Exodus, and the presence of God filling Solomon's temple. To be overshadowed in this sense is not to be pushed off the stage;

rather, it is to be pulled further up and further into the glory of God's own presence. When God's shadow falls upon us in the person and work of Jesus, it is a moment of joy. It is a moment of redemption and salvation. At last, God has come to rescue us from the misery of our sin.

The good news of Jesus is about grace and glory. "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" (John 1:14).


Suddenly Mary finds herself living in the grace of God, because of Jesus Christ. She is in the glory, and she is not consumed. She is overshadowed by the power of God. Overwhelmed by love, overshadowed by glory.

## No glory thief

After the angel explains that her older cousin Elizabeth is also miraculously pregnant, "For nothing will be impossible with God" (Luke 1:37), Mary's response is that of faith. She believes, and so she says, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word" (v. 38).

She is no glory thief. She simply gives her whole self into the hands of the Lord: "I am your servant. Let it be to me according to your word." It is an amazing surrender of herself, body and soul, to the living God. She embraces the promise of a son, a holy son. More, she embraces the Son of God. She takes God at his word. Unbelief is to fight to be kings or queens in our own right. Faith is simply to cling to the Lord. Mary gives the glory to God because of the Son.

Now is the time to stop trying to defend yourself against God. Now is the time to hear the wonderful news. "[Jesus] will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end" (vv. 32-33).

Mary's faith in the soon-to-be-born Jesus is the same as that of the dying thief in the soon-to-die Jesus: "Remember me when you come into your kingdom" (23:42). He gives glory to Jesus and hears the reply, "Today you will be with me in paradise" (v. 43). What a glorious thing grace is. 

**Stephen J. Tracey**  
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Rockport, Maine.

**Note from the author:** This meditation was originally written for neighbours in the community. Perhaps you may have an opportunity to share it with one of your neighbours. Merry Christmas!

# Hark

## the Herald Angels Sing

.....

The baby  
born in Bethlehem  
is no ordinary lad –  
he is the  
exalted God!

.....

**H**ave you ever wished you could talk with the angels? To ask them about the important stuff of life? Just a little message from the heavens, a little counsel from the cherubs to give you some direction, some answers?

Well, the angels are talking to you today! In fact, thousands of angels have a message for you every Christmas in the old carol you've probably heard dozens of times:

*Hark the herald angels sing:  
"Glory to the newborn King!  
Peace on earth and mercy mild  
God and sinners reconciled"*

### Heavenly messengers

"Hark" is simply an old word for "listen!" It's a call to perk up your ears and listen to the "herald" angels sing. A herald is someone appointed to bring a message. A whole host of angels has come from heaven to bring you a message.

But who appointed them and why? This carol is based in part on a Bible passage, Luke 2:1-14. There we learn that God sent an angel

to some shepherds out in the field. This angel appeared without warning, shining brightly in the night sky. When the men fell down in fear he said, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord" (vv. 10, 11).

The quaking shepherds went from shock to utter amazement a moment later when, "Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests'" (vv. 13, 14). This is the song the herald angels sang that night, and this is their message to you once again this year!

### Glory to the newborn king

To sing "glory" to someone is to praise and lift up that person. In the Bible, the only person to whom glory is given is God himself and that's what gets the angels so excited. The baby born in Bethlehem is no ordinary lad - he is the exalted God!

The heavenly choir is singing about the miracle of Christmas. The child born of Mary is not just a human child; he is also the divine Son of God. This is the long-promised miracle! This is God's eternal Son coming down to enter the human race through the womb of the virgin Mary. To our astonishment, this baby Jesus is both fully human and fully God!

In fact, they sing, he is *King* over all creation. To this child belongs all power. This Jesus, the God-Man, has more power than Satan or sin or death or any human being!

### Peace on earth and mercy mild

And that kingship has consequences. That's what the angels sing about next, "Peace on earth and mercy mild." "Mild" just means "gentle" or "kind." This newborn King will one day cause peace and gentle mercy to thrive in all the earth!

No doubt you've noticed that there's not much peace or mercy on earth. Canadian soldiers are right now in harm's way in various war zones in the world. American cities have experienced multiple violent protests for much of 2020. We and most of the world with us felt a wave of anxiety sweep over us when the coronavirus hit earlier this year. But even in regular times and closer to home, in our neighbourhoods and communities there's not much true peace - think of the crime statistics, the child abuse, and the sexual assaults; think of those addicted to drugs, those selling drugs, and the gang networks. Think of the poor and struggling, the homeless and hapless.

And what about in our own hearts? Don't we have inner turmoil so often in the face of grief or loss or separation? Who isn't touched by personal regrets, things we've done we wish

we could undo, or the terrible acts done to us by others? Our own conscience often convicts us of guilt or plagues us with uncertainties. And aren't many people lost and without hope? Think of the high rates of anxiety and depression and the growing number of suicides. We need inner peace and mercy for our souls so desperately!

### God and sinners reconciled

And this newborn babe will do that! The angels croon that out too, "God and sinners reconciled!" The thing that interrupts peace is not a few bad people here and there. Nor is it, at bottom, an external problem of lack of education or money or food or shelter. These are only symptoms.

The real trouble lies deep within our own heart. Things aren't good between us and God. It's deep down that each of us naturally refuses to honour and obey our Creator and instead chooses to live our own way. We are spiritual rebels. And in our estrangement from him, our darkened heart chafes against God and our neighbour. When pushed or let loose, that dark heart is capable of any evil, and *that's* what causes the misery you feel and see. That's what leads people to hurt other people.

But Jesus, God-with-us, has come to reverse that! To "reconcile" means to bring back together two parties at odds and that's what Jesus has done. The angels knew that he would grow up to be a man who would stand in our place underneath God's punishment. Instead of punishing *us* for breaking his commands, God punished *himself* by laying his wrath against on our sin on his only and precious Son! Things between us are good again, are *peaceful* again. This is the way that love for God and love for our neighbour will rule in our hearts again. Through Christ's sacrifice, true peace and mercy will blossom in all the earth.

### Listen to the angels

Friends, listen to the angels speak to you! They have a glorious message of hope and life and peace for you, if only you will turn from the darkness, from your sin, and turn to the light by believing in Jesus Christ, God's precious Son! Join us in sincere repentance and faith and receive life. Join us together with God's angels in worshipping Jesus as King on High! Give your life to him as he gave his life for you! 🇨



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100 PERCENT  
**GOD**  
& 100 PERCENT  
**MAN?**

**T**here are certain questions that keep coming up. The words may change, but the matter at hand remains the same. Here are some examples.

"I understand that God, who is sovereign, can freely decide to elect some to salvation and leave others in their sin and perdition. But how is that fair?"

"Do we still have free wills, at least in some sense? After all, we are not robots, programmed by divine decree, are we? When someone comes to faith, they think things through for themselves and make a decision to follow Christ, don't they? Or does this way of talking amount to bad theology that compromises God's sovereignty?"

Have you ever wrestled with questions like these? In your own mind? In your Bible study group? If you have, you are certainly not alone.

These questions are linked to one, underlying point of doctrine: the intersection of God's sovereignty and human responsibility. Moreover, on this topic you may have heard someone say, "100% God and 100% man. God is 100% sovereign and man is 100% responsible. It's not possible to fully understand it, but this is what Scripture teaches us."

100% God, 100% man. Is this the best way we can sum up this crucial area of our heavenly Father's teaching?

### **The good**

Whenever people express themselves on a topic, wisdom encourages us to listen carefully for what they really mean, what they intend to convey. It is all too easy to pounce on their word choice and draw all kinds of conclusions from the vocabulary they select. But we all know that picking just the right words

and putting them together in just the right way is hard work. So, let's listen beyond the vocabulary, get through to the intent, and then come back to the vocabulary because, to be sure, words really do count for something.

Usually when someone says, "100% God and 100% man," they intend to defend, without compromise or question, God's complete sovereignty. That is why they say 100% God's sovereignty and not 99.99% God's sovereignty. This is scriptural. In Ephesians 1:11, we hear about our God "who works all things according to the counsel of his will." "All things" really means *all* things. Big, life-altering things. Small, seemingly insignificant, things. Our God sovereignly directs every one of them. 100%.

When someone promptly adds "100% man," they usually do not intend to compromise God's sovereignty in any way. The fuller version of this expression is "God is 100% *sovereign*, and man is 100% *responsible*." Yes, the numbers are the same at 100, but they refer to different things. Responsibility is not the same thing as sovereignty.

In addition, when it comes to our sinful conduct, we are 100% responsible for our transgressions. As James writes, "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am being tempted by God,' for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one" (1:13). Also, in the Belgic Confession, we affirm the same truth when we confess, "God is *not* the Author of the sins which are committed" (Art 13). So, when I sin I only have myself to blame. I am responsible. 100%.

To its credit, then, this adage, "100% God and 100% man," aims to hold both biblical truths together. As the Preacher says, "It is good to grasp the one and not let go of the other" (Eccl 7:18 NIV84). Many heresies arise when people zero in on one particular aspect of God's teaching and accentuate it so strongly that other aspects of the whole counsel of God fade into the background. In the end, divine truth is dangerously warped. This common saying about God's sovereignty and man's responsibility rightly aspires to avoid that trap.

## The not-so-good

Having said all this, we can still legitimately wonder if this expression is the best that we can do. To begin with, it frames theological truth within mathematical language - math with added mystery, to be sure. Everyone acknowledges there is something about this topic that we cannot fully comprehend. However, the numbers used still prompt the keen listener to wonder whether the math really adds up. Especially in its most succinct version, "100% God and 100% man," the calculations appear at first glance to be flawed. Already in elementary school we learn that 100% is the top limit; you cannot score higher than

that. (Unless, of course, there is a bonus question on the test, but that is another matter.) Understandably, then, this expression may well leave the impression that even if the *intention* is to uphold God's sovereignty unequivocally, the *net result* is decidedly different.

Probing this more deeply, let's say that someone asserts, "I wholeheartedly affirm God's sovereignty, but I also believe that people genuinely choose for Christ. They wrestle with it, they pray about it, and then one day they decide to believe in the Saviour of the world." Well, someone else may come along and observe, "You say you believe in God's comprehensive sovereignty but as soon as you give any room whatsoever for the free choice of man, you inescapably compromise his sovereignty. You say 100% God, but you actually *affirm* no more than 99%, and maybe much less than that."

In math they call this a zero-sum game. Pick whatever numbers you like, but whatever you give to the one (man), you must take away from the other (God). Yes, math is a wonderful area of study, but as you can see, it is not always the best tool to express theological truth.

What is more, so long as we are speaking about evil deeds, we can readily concur that we are 100% responsible for our transgressions. But what about when we are speaking about good actions, such as repentance and faith? What is our level of responsibility or involvement there? Here we immediately sense that if we put a percentage on that, we may easily slip into the error of Arminianism.

## A venerable guide

Obviously, we are not the first generation to wrestle with this intersection of God's sovereignty and human responsibility. In fact, this topic was at the heart of the debate at the Synod of Dort. Our Reformed fathers poured many long hours into crafting sentences that capture the whole counsel of God in a succinct way. Here are some excerpts from the Canons of Dort that will help us make some headway.

### ***The Cause of Unbelief, The Source of Faith***

*The cause or guilt for this unbelief, as well as for all other sins, is by no means God, but rather in man. Faith in Jesus Christ and salvation through him, however, is the free gift of God (Chap 1, Art 5).*

### ***Regeneration is the Work of God Alone***

*Hence all those in whose hearts God works in this amazing way are certainly, unfailingly, and effectually regenerated and do actually believe. And then the will so renewed is not*

*only acted upon and moved by God but, acted upon by God, the will itself also acts. Therefore man himself is rightly said to believe and repent through the grace he has received (Chap 3/4, Art 12).*

Two truths come to the fore here. First, the cause of unbelief and sin and the cause of faith and salvation are *not* the same. This can be hard to swallow. Our sense of consistency prompts us to think, “If man is responsible for unbelief, then he is also responsible for faith. Alternatively, if God is responsible for faith, then he is also responsible for unbelief. It’s either one or the other.” Yes, such a paradigm would be logically tidy, but it would also be unscriptural. Faith is a gift from God (Eph 2:8), but sinful desires, including unbelief, are “not from the Father but from this world” (1 John 2:16) and, in particular, our own sinful nature that is part of this fallen world. Whenever we are discussing divine sovereignty and human responsibility the sharp line of distinction between these two causes is often blurred and sometimes erased. Let’s watch out for that and avoid it!

Secondly, and perhaps surprisingly, our Reformed confession verifies that “man himself is rightly said to believe and repent.” Did some Arminian phrase miss the editor’s eye and slip into the final text of the decisions of Dort? No, not at all. God’s own Word speaks in the same way. *Abram* believed and it was credited to him as righteousness (Gen 15:6). *Job* despised himself and repented (42:6). However, it is what you put around that statement that makes all the difference, either preserving Reformed doctrine or veering off in an Arminian direction. To be more specific, it all depends on how you answer this critical question: “Who caused Abram to believe and how did he do it?”

Who caused Abram to believe? Our gracious God did. Period. We already confirmed this in the quote from Chapter 1, Article 5 of the Canons. This also means that true faith is not a part-God, part-man event. Our Reformed forefathers were clear on this: “This regeneration is *by no means* brought about only by outward teaching, by moral persuasion, or by such a mode of operation that, *after God has done his part*, it remains in the power of man to be regenerated or not regenerated, converted or not converted” (Chap 3/4, Art 12). There is no synergism in salvation.

But how, then, did God cause Abram to believe? He did so by regenerating Abram’s naturally rebellious will and transforming it into a sovereignly softened will. We also hasten to add that Abram’s will, “so renewed is not only acted upon and moved by God but, acted upon by God, [Abram’s] *will itself also acts*.” Here is no fatalistic determinism in which divine sovereignty


nullifies the human will. But here is a venerable confession of the incomprehensible yet delightful miracle of the Spirit’s sovereignty that graciously transforms sinful human wills (Chap 3/4, Arts 11&12).

## A better expression?

This brings us back to that common expression, “100% God, 100% man.” We have already identified the pros and cons of that aphorism. Can we do better? I suggest that we can. Of course, optimally expressing something that, in the final analysis, is “inexpressible” (Chap 3/4, Art 12) is challenging, to say the least. Nonetheless, here is my proposal. What if we replace “100% God’s sovereignty, 100% man’s responsibility” with “*Our gracious God sovereignly acts so that sinful man actually believes*”?

Granted, it is not as short and sweet as 100% God, 100% man. But a few extra words won’t hurt, will they? More importantly, this summary statement offers the following advantages:

- It takes the numbers out of the equation. As we have seen, even well-intentioned numbers can generate unintended confusion.
- By juxtaposing “gracious God” and “sinful man,” we constantly remind ourselves that we have no reason to boast in ourselves (Eph 2:9) and every reason to glorify God alone (Ps 115:1).
- While upholding the full sovereignty of God, this summary statement also explicitly affirms that a regenerated person “actually believes” because the *divinely renewed* will is not only acted upon (passive) but “the will itself also acts” (active). We are regenerated humans, not reprogrammed robots.

Undoubtedly, the suggestion above has weaknesses, too. As iron sharpens iron, perhaps someone else will improve this adage. In the meantime, if it helps, even in some small way, to sort through some of the thorny doctrinal questions that often arise concerning divine sovereignty and human responsibility, it will have served its purpose. 



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This article was Dr. Visscher's final chapel message before he retired, delivered at CRTS in May 2020.

# FROM 9.11 TO COVID-19

What do you have that you did not receive? 1 COR 4:7

It's a tradition at CRTS that when seminary students draw to the close of their four years, their final chapel becomes a bit of a swan song. Well, I've been part of this institution for twenty-three years - first as a student from 1975-1979 and then as a professor from 2001 to 2020 - so I guess it's time for a major swan song. It might be even more appropriate in my case; I mean, Wikipedia says that a swan song "is a metaphorical phrase for a final gesture, effort, or performance given just before death or retirement."

The years of my time here as a professor have been marked by two dramatic book ends. When I began, it was the practice that the NT professor did not teach on Tuesdays. That Tuesday, instead, I joined the world and stood aghast as the twin towers of

New York city came crashing down. So, there's the one bookend: September 11, 2001. And now we're going through the second bookend: COVID-19. I am tempted to say that maybe if I retire and get out of the way, the world will be a safer place. But of course, that would be foolishness. The world does not centre around you or me. It is centred around our Lord Jesus Christ.

To see that, I would like to read from 1 Corinthians 4, that chapter from which I drew my first sermon text upon ordination over forty years ago. I am thinking especially of verse 7: "What do you have that you did not receive?"

Since I am being somewhat historical this afternoon, let me also mention this. Back around 1972, I was a young philosophy student in Toronto, and one question that I was engrossed in

# God doesn't need anything that you or I have to offer

was the philosophical problem of evil. The argument goes like this: if there is a God in the world where evil also exists, then one of two things must be true. Either this God is not *powerful* enough to *do* away with evil, or he is not loving enough to *want* to do away with that evil. That question can and did send a young man for quite a spin.

But the truth is that it is the *gospel* that provides exactly the necessary answer to that question. This is Paul's position over against Corinthian leaders who tend to elevate themselves over against each other and over against him in the face of God. He says to them: "What do you have that you did not receive?" The obvious answer to the rhetorical question is: "Nothing!" Everything we have, we have received from God. Every bit of it is from God. There is a similar note to this effect in Romans 11; in the context of election and reprobation, the question of the future of Israel, he plays with the words of Job and says: "Who has ever given to God that God should repay him?" In other words, there is no one who gives anything to God that would make God the debtor. God owes us nothing. When you think in a Christian manner about your life, you know it. God does not just give us salvation and life eternal. There is nothing that we are and nothing that we have that God has not given.

So I would first like to note that from where I am today, whatever I have received spiritually, materially, family-wise – these are all gifts of an ever so generous God. You come towards the end of your life before you know it and you have to say as a Reformed person: "God, I owe you everything. It's all grace."

## Free of charge

One of the authors I have found very helpful on all of this is Miroslav Volf, professor at Yale University. I thank my colleague Bill de Jong for frequently referring to Volf, and I am thinking especially of Volf's book, *Free of Charge: Giving and Forgiving in a Culture Stripped of Grace* (Zondervan, 2005). While I cannot of course endorse everything that Volf writes, especially in the first part of this book he gives a very clear and delightful exposition of the love and generosity of our gracious God. The approach of Volf here reminds me of the writings of John M. G. Barclay, which I have warmly recommended in other contexts.<sup>1</sup> Both fit very well with Reformed theology and help us to appreciate its nuances.

At one point, Volf says that there are a number of ways one can imagine God giving gifts to his people. The one way is to think of him as *God the Negotiator*. This is when we try to make deals with God. "God, I'll be like this and I'll do this if you will give me that." Think of Gideon and his fleece: "I'll satisfy your need, if you satisfy mine." That's how it goes in business in and trade. But the problem here is: God doesn't need anything that you or I have to offer. There is no way in which we enrich him. It's what Paul says in Romans 11, "Who has ever given to God that God should repay him?" As Volf says, if we see the God of Jesus Christ as a negotiator, we will experience the law of Christ (Gal 6:2) as an even heavier burden than the law of Moses. It does not even fit with the Mosaic period. God gave gifts and deliverance to Israel long before they offered anything to him that even looked like obedience. Even with respect to the cross, God is not saying, "I died for you, so now you've got to do what I tell you." God's goods are not for sale. You can't buy them with money, or good deeds. God doesn't make deals. God just gives.

Well, then Volf says, maybe God is more like *Santa Claus*. It seems appropriate. God gives as lavishly and generously as the legendary Santa. But there's an important difference. Santa doesn't really care what you do and how you live after he gives you his gifts. A Santa Claus God demands nothing from us, but God does. Would a God who is loving still be God if he ignored evil and injustice in the world? Certainly not, says Volf. God's face twists in the pain of disappointment and sometimes even frowns in angry condemnation when we fail to live as we ought, bringing devastation to ourselves as well as to those around

<sup>1</sup> "Is Grace Alive and Well among us? Clarion, 66: June 2, 2017; Review of John M. G. Barclay, *Paul and the Gift in Unio cum Christo: International Journal of Reformed Theology and Life*. 3.2:233-236.



us. Here's the point: the true God gives so that we can become joyful givers, and not just self-absorbed receivers.

I can give you many more wonderful quotes from this Yale professor. He says that since our very existence is a result of God's grace, if God were to stop giving, we would just stop existing. Everything that is not God owes its existence to God. Volf works with a wonderful thought of Martin Luther, who said: "The love of God does not find but creates that which is pleasing to God" (37). "God's gifts," says Volf, "oblige us to a posture of *receptivity*" (42). All we do is receive. Faith is an expression of the fact that we exist so that the infinite God can dwell in us and work through us for the well-being of the whole creation. Second, he says, God's gifts oblige us to *gratitude*. But grati-

.....

**The God who freely  
gives his grace does  
expect a return on his  
most gracious gift.  
He expects something  
of himself reflected  
in the one to whom  
he graciously gives.**

.....

tude is not a gift we return as part of our negotiation. When we are grateful, we express our appreciation of the fact that gifts have been given to us. The things we do are not acts of ours

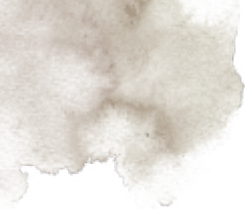
we return as gifts. They are signs of the fact that we are grateful and that his grace continues to work in us. When I'm grateful I recognize and honour God explicitly as the Giver. Faith and gratitude are two sides of the same coin.

These are all words that accord very well with Reformed doctrine. Think of the Canons of Dort "Faith is a gift of God ... in the sense that he brings about in man both the will to believe and the act of believing" (III/IV, 14) "This grace God owes to no one," says the Canons, "For what could he owe to man? Who has given him first that he might be repaid? What could God owe to one who has nothing of his own but sin and falsehood?" (III/IV, 15).

It also reminds me of John M. G. Barclay, who, in trying to understand Paul, compares God's relationship to us to the patron-client relationship of Paul's day. The generous patron does not lay down conditions for his generosity. He does not negotiate or force the clients into the conditions of a contract. He just freely gives to the one he chooses. But, says Barclay, in a patron-client society, there was always still the expectation of some kind of return to the giver. So too the apostle. The God who freely gives his grace does expect a return on his most gracious gift. He expects something of himself reflected in the one to whom he graciously gives.

It's also refreshing to note the clarity that Volf brings to the whole matter of evil in the face of holy righteous and loving God; anyone who has gone through the ravages of war will agree. Volf says at one point:

I used to think that wrath was unworthy of God. Isn't God love? Shouldn't divine love be beyond wrath? God is love and God loves every person and every creature. That's exactly why God is wrathful against some of them. My last resistance to the idea of God's wrath was actually a casualty of the war in the former Yugoslavia, the region from which I come. According to some estimates, 200,000 people were killed and over three million were displaced. My villages and cities were destroyed, my people shelled day in and day out, some of them brutalized beyond imagination, and I could not imagine God not being angry.... How did God react to the carnage? By doting on the perpetrators in a grandparently fashion? By refusing to condemn the bloodbath but instead affirming the perpetrators basic goodness? Wasn't God fiercely angry with them? Though I used to complain about the indecency of the idea of God's wrath, I came to think that I would have to rebel against a God who wasn't



Love  
is the word that  
best defines  
God

wrathful at the sight of the world's evil. God isn't wrathful in spite of being love. God is wrathful because God is love"<sup>2</sup>  
More directly to our topic, Volf says:

Is evil, whether humanly caused or natural, God's gift? It is not. Evil just inexplicably is. God didn't create it. It's a twisting of God's creation, a negation of its original goodness and therefore an assault on God. In the end, God will finally and definitively overcome evil. And even now God is engaged in countering it. Just as God was mysteriously in the Crucified One, God is in the midst of humanity's suffering, listening to every sigh, collecting every tear, resonating with the trembling of every fear-stricken heart (p. 30).<sup>3</sup>

We could ask: what about COVID-19 then? What about 9/11? Clearly our answer and Volf's answer would be that this is our responsibility. It finds its origin in our fallenness, in our twisting of God's good creation. It reminds me of Article 13 of the Belgic Confession which reminds us that God is not the author of sin and evil. There are times in which he uses the evil of our of our own making for his purposes but "even when his actions surpass human understanding we will not curiously inquire farther than our capacity allows us but with the greatest humility and reverence we adore the just judgments of God and we content ourselves that we are pupils of Christ."

Volf's book can help us to appreciate the truth of the very profound statement of 1 John 4:16 that "God is love." There the Scriptures are making the point that love is not just one of the many attributes of God like mercy or grace or justice. God is merciful and gracious, to be sure but he is not, as we often think, partly loving and partly just. The Bible never says, "God is mercy" or "God is grace." It never implies that justice is the sum total of the divine being. What John means to say, I believe, is that all of God's activity is loving activity; when God creates, he creates in love; when he rules, he rules in love; when he judges, he judges in love, but it's not judgment that defines him to the core. It is love.

### **Psalms of lament to a gracious God**

Here's another example of God's love towards us. I have been preaching lately on a psalm of lament, and I have wondered: are these psalms not a wonderful gift of a loving God to his people? We don't let members of our family complain to this degree, but God lets us as members of his family. Only we call it a "lament." One third of the psalms are apparently about evil, and so laments are quite predominant. One Old Testament scholar, Claus Westermann, says that "this is Israel's foremost word on pain and Israel's most daring the theological act"<sup>4</sup> because it asserts (1) that pain is present, and that (2) pain can and must be addressed to God. Why? Because (3) pain and evil and trouble is God's proper business, and he is the only one who is doing and can and will do something lasting about it, because (4) he does care for us.

The lament needs to be uttered because, in the understanding of Israel, the lament cannot be answered and resolved by God unless it is spoken. I must say that the first time I read these comments of this scholar (Walter Brueggemann), I wondered about their truthfulness. He says we *must* speak to God about our trouble. Reflecting on it, though, I'm sure he's right. We may not just argue that God knows all things and therefore I don't need to tell him my trouble. No. We must verbalize our trouble. In this God distinguishes himself from all other gods. He wants to hear us put our trouble into words. Think of what James says in chapter 4, verse 2 (cf. 1 John 5:15). He says: "You do

<sup>2</sup> Free of Charge, p. 138-9.

<sup>3</sup> Free of Charge, p. 30.

<sup>4</sup> W. Brueggemann, *Israel's Praise: Doxology against Idolatry and Ideology* (Fortress, 1988), 141.


not have *because you do not ask*." Think of how the Catechism summarizes Scripture in Lord's Day 45. Why do you need to pray? Because "God will give his grace and Holy Spirit *only to those who constantly and with heartfelt longing ask him for these gifts and thank him for them*." It's not speaking about the grace of God that begins your conversion. In the unconverted state we are in no position to ask for that. But as Christians, we *need* to continue to voice our concerns to God so that we might receive all the help and grace we need as we go through life. That's God's way. Says Brueggemann: "The speech out of despair moves toward and addresses God, the subject of hope. As silence leads to brokenness, so speech invites the God of all hope to be present" (p. 142). The speech of Israel draws God into the trouble. The prayers of the people of God shape their lives and the lives of those around them. That's why laments are necessary. That's why they are redemptive and therapeutic. It's why we need to be singing the whole psalter.

## COVID-19

There will be times in the lives of your future parishioners, in your life as a pastor, Lord willing, when the songs of lament are very helpful for your people in order to move from the pain of suffering to the joys of victory. It's one example of the way in God how helps us his children through our pain and the troubles of a broken world by broken people. "Can a loving God exist in the same world as evil?" the philosophers ask. Yes, absolutely. Even in a COVID-19 world, he is lovingly reaching out to us and shaping us to be the kind of persons he wants us to be. In such a world he's reaching out in love to humanity, he's shattering all of our idols, and he's showing us: there is one God and one God alone. In the end, it will be clear that his love is victorious over all the evil that humanity has ever brought into being.

## Pastors: Administrators of God's grace

What's the concrete takeaway for our community here today? Hopefully, with me, you come to a clearer insight into God's love and grace. But there's also this. How then should you see ministry if the Lord allows you to become ministers of the Word? How should you see yourselves in what will hopefully be your future jobs and tasks? All of this should make it quite clear that,

in your service of God, you are not attempting in any way to earn some merits or points before God. Indeed, how will you enrich him? He will be who he is even without all of us together. It's not a matter of God has done so much for me, so now I need to do this for God; rather, it's a matter of you and me reflecting the grace and love of God in our actions and in our ministries. Faith tells us that we will not exist simply to live our threescore and ten years without pain, with ease and enjoyment so that we can accumulate possessions. Faith is an expression of the fact that we exist so that the infinite God can dwell in us and work through us for the well-being of the whole creation. The truth is that by serving God we are not doing him favours. Hopefully he gets glory and praise from us, but even a lifetime of service doesn't mean he is indebted to us. We are here to benefit God's people, to be a blessing to his creation, and to share the message of his great generosity in Christ. When we are the grateful recipients of God's loving grace, we become ourselves generous, gracious distributors of that same loving grace. Paul refers to himself as an administrator of God's grace in Eph. 3:2 (NIV). You are not called to be a policeman or a supervisor, but to the administration of the grace of God. We really want all those who hear us, all those whom we love, all those to whom we minister, to experience the love of God in their lives. We say with Paul, "The love of Christ compels us." We are imitators of God in every way, who live a life of love because Christ loved us and gave himself up for us. God's gifts aim at making us into generous givers, not just fortunate receivers. God gives so that we in human measure can be givers as well. We are channels of God's gifts to our neighbours. We are cheerful participants in Christ's giving to the world. May God bless you all in this. 



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# INSTITUTION OF Pathway Christian Church

By **Katrina Breukelman**

**T**here was great joy and thanksgiving to our Heavenly Father as our inaugural service for Pathway Christian Church was led by Pastor James Visscher on September 13, 2020. This day arrived with much anticipation! Our journey began a few years ago when God put the desire upon the hearts of members within our Abbotsford Canadian Reformed Church to start a second, smaller Canadian Reformed church in our city. Our Father's guiding hand was at work through many members giving of their gifts and talents. He taught and molded us along the way, reminding us to rest in his perfect timing.


Saying goodbye to our home church was bittersweet; for some it has been their place of worship for over sixty years! We are not the first congregation to grow out of the Abbotsford Canadian Reformed Church. This well-established church has also been the mother church to Chilliwack, Lynden, and Yarrow Canadian Reformed Churches. What a beautiful testament to God's faithfulness in growing his church! We are thankful to the council and congregation of the Abbotsford Canadian Reformed Church for their care, guidance, and prayers over the years. We look forward to being a support and encouragement to each other as we share the gospel in our city.

The first worship service of Pathway Christian Church was unique, as COVID-19 places limits on gatherings in British Columbia to a maximum of fifty people. However, it was felt that our entire membership of 176 should be together in some way to celebrate this joyous occasion! Using the various gifts and talents among the congregation, technologically able minds, willing hands, and gracious hosts allowed for our first service to take place in the rented chapel hall at St. Matthews Anglican Church, while being live streamed into the shops of the Schutte and VanWoudenberg families. Our first service included the installation of our new council. The institution

of Pathway Christian Church brings the number within the Canadian Reformed churches of our federation to sixty-two. Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

Pastor Visscher's message on 1 Thessalonians 1:1-4 had the theme, "A New Community." As members, we were urged to be rooted in Jesus, live for him, and were reminded that we were chosen by God according to his will and purpose. It is only by the power of the Father, Son, and Spirit that we can be unified as a church and seek our life in God. We need to have a faith that is directed to God, a love that is aimed at our neighbors and a hope that looks to our eternal inheritance and the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Pathway Christian Church is not simply the work of people; it is God's church and must stay grounded in him.

Under the guidance of the Bible and the preaching of the gospel, it is Pathway Christian Church's vision to be a faithful church of Jesus Christ, equipping our members as disciples of Jesus, caring for each other, and being a light in our community. Every time a new church is established, there is an opportunity for spiritual growth, individually and as a community, as new roles are filled and new relationships are formed. There will be a great deal of work ahead! Please pray for us, that we will always consider it a joy and gift to be able to worship in freedom, encourage and build each other up in words and deeds, and seek out opportunities to share the gospel with those who do not yet know Jesus.

You are welcome to join us for worship in the future should you find yourself in the area. Our services are being held at 2:30 and 5:00pm on Sundays currently at the St. Matthews Anglican Church on Guilford Drive. Please check out our website for directions, newly posted sermons, and contact information at [www.pathwaychristian.ca](http://www.pathwaychristian.ca). 



(Top left) First service live-streamed in Schutte's shop; (Top right) First service live-streamed in VanWoudenberg's shop  
(Middle left) First service held in the rented chapel hall of St Matthew's, led by Pastor James Visscher  
(Bottom) Installation of our first council: (left to right) Dave VanLaar, Len Stam, Allan Boeve, Devon Dykstra, Archie Kobes, Rob Beukema, John Zietsma and Bert Kuik

FROM THE PUBLISHER

NOT AS THE  
WORLD  
GIVES



“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you.” (John 14:27)

As the year comes to an end, many of us give gifts to our loved ones and donate to worthy causes. Our Lord Jesus, when his time on earth was coming to an end, also gave a gift to his loved ones: peace. Not only did this fulfil the promise spoken to the shepherds at his birth, but Jesus added to this blessing a new promise: the sending of the Comforter. Jesus gave not as the world gave – not temporal or superficial gifts, and not merely good wishes. No, Jesus by his very word of power gave an eternal gift of immense value: peace.


The context of this blessing is instructive for us. It was a time of terrible uncertainty and fear for Jesus’ disciples. Though they did not yet understand the path Jesus was to walk, they did understand that he would be leaving them. Jesus’s seemingly cryptic words about the kind of death he was going to die and about the desertion of his disciples must have left them confused and apprehensive, troubled and afraid. They needed peace.

Don’t we feel similarly at this time? The events of this past year have left us confused, apprehensive, troubled, and afraid. Our world has been turned upside down with negative effects on our physical, mental, and spiritual health. We need peace. That’s why Jesus followed his blessing with a command: “Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.” Let us heed his command and fix our eyes on our Saviour. We know that his gift is like no other: true peace. And he was able to give it because he would pay for it with his own precious blood.

### Thank you

Dear readers, we aim for *Clarion* to be an encouragement to promote peace and confidence in Christ. At the close of another volume of our magazine, we again thank Dr. Visscher, Laura Veenendaal, and the rest of the editorial committee for their work in making this possible. Thank you also to the coordinators of our regular columns and to all other contributors. Our advertisers also play a key role in bringing this magazine to you. We pray that the ads too would be beneficial to advertisers and readers alike. Thank you to Matt and Janette at Premier Printing for a good transition in our layout and administration tasks. Dear readers, we hope you enjoy the results of all their work, and we thank you for your continued support.

### Greetings

Jesus further admonished his disciples that they should have rejoiced at his going to the Father. We stand on the other side of the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. We know that Jesus has indeed purchased peace for us. We have received the promised Comforter, who works in us the fruit of peace. How much more should we rejoice! Let us hold firm the promise that “the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” On behalf of the *Clarion* team at Premier Printing, greetings and best wishes to all. 

*William Gortemaker*



# GUIDO DE BRÈS CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION 2020

By **Courtenay VanVeen**

**C**ommencement at Guido de Brès Christian High School in Hamilton, like everything else in 2020, looked very different this year. We are thankful that it was able to happen at all. When our Grade 12 students left for March Break in their final year of high school, no one knew that they would not return. They missed out on a lot of the experiences that characterize a senior year at Guido: the class trip to Wonderland; the staff breakfast; and even the signing of their Guido shirts. So, when given the option to have a virtual commencement or wait until the fall to see if an in-person event was possible, the grads voted in favour of waiting.

Finally, nearly six months later, on October 3 they were all brought together again. Although slightly windy and chilly with dark clouds in the background, the sun was shining over Guido. Under a large tent set up on the soccer field, graduates were able to enjoy their buffet lunch. Cheerfully chatting as they ate, graduates shared stories of life under COVID, summer adventures, and their post-secondary endeavours.

In line with COVID protocols, only a small number of parents were able to sit outside with the graduates. Other parents were seated throughout the school, small numbers in each room watching over livestream. Mr. Heemsker, principal, started the ceremony by speaking about who the graduates are today as young adults and how they will change in the years and decades to come. They are all headed on separate journeys but hold in common that they are children of God. He impressed upon graduates to remember that Lord has carried them through the past four years and will continue to do so.

Rachel Kampen, a graduating student, stayed on message with her beautifully sung solo, "Wonderful, Merciful Saviour."

Pastor Tony Roukema delivered the commencement address centred around Romans 12. He appealed to the graduates not to be transformed by the world but, instead, to be agents of transformation. We are all the products of our generation, as Pastor Roukema illustrated in a COVID meets GI Joe musing that got many, especially the parents, chuckling. In knowing this, he urged graduates to keep their eyes on Christ, in view of his mercy, and in this way live their lives. When they are confronted by questions, doubts, and lose their way, look to Christ. Find the path that he has laid for each of them to follow. In doing so, Christ will be the one who forms them, and they will be a part of the voice that is looking to change the world.



Graduates received their diplomas to the sound of applause; parents were able to come out a few at a time to cheer them on. Awards and scholarships were given in recognition of a range of gifts, some in athletics, some in academics, and others in the contribution of time and talent within the community. It was truly amazing to hear what these students were able to accomplish in their four years.

Elliott Holtvlüwer delivered the valedictory address. Like the class he represented, his speech was eloquent, funny, mature, and visionary with a hint of mischief. He spoke of all the firsts the graduating class enjoyed: coffee, detention, driving (and parking a car in the school), exams, and loves. He also spoke of the great sadnesses and losses many endured. Again we were reminded that God preserved them through it all and will continue to do so.

On a personal note, this was a bittersweet event for me. I was not ready for the wave of emotions I experienced watching these students cross the lawn in their caps and gowns; this wasn't because they've managed to escape while I have not. Nor was it only because I witnessed my oldest child graduate. This class started Guido the same year that I started teaching there. I got to know many of them and watch them grow into the young men and women they have become. The emotions came from knowing that the fun and life these graduates brought to the school, although still present, will be different and we will miss them.

Congratulations Guido graduates of 2020, and may God continue to bless you and make you a blessing in the years ahead.

## Ontario Secondary School Diplomas

Benjamin Henry Alkema*	Malachi Jacob Lodder
Simon James Baker	Cameron John Lof
Eden Hilary Bartels*	Tasha Emily Malda
Kenton John Bartels	Brody Albert Nicholas Mans
Levi Peter Bartels	Isaac Timothy Nordeman
Tonya Lynn Bartels*	Leah Michelle Nordeman*
Andrew Terrance Bergsma	Mikayla Shyanne Petter
Luke William Blokker	Michael Frederick John Pilon*
Joshua Jared Davis Boersema*	Darius William Post
Sarah Janna Bontekoe*	Stephen Hendrick Ravensbergen*
Lucas Daniel Boone**	Jonah Aidan Roukema*
Lauren Anne Buikema	Aidan Pieter Schenkel*
Katelyn Rose Buitenhuis*	Jordan Zachary Schenkel
Jacob Darren Crewe*	Caleb William Schulenberg*
Andréa Gabriel D'Addazio	Erin Janneh Schuller*
Naomi Danielle Datema*	Brayden Jacob Schutten*
Christopher Bradley de Jonge	Dawsen William Schutten
Alanah Adrienne DeBoer	James Peter Smid
Cari Helena DeBoer	Andrew Smith
Natalie Grace Gelms*	Matthew Harm Stel*
Benjamin Jacob Harsevoort*	Brett Austin Tenhage*
Olivia Rian Harsevoort	Jayden Hunter Tenhage
Brianna Leigh Heeg	Emma Kimberley Van Dam*
Heidi Everdina Heemskerk	Derek Henry Van Iperen*
Robyn Elizabeth Heemskerk*	Carissa Joy Henny Van Raalte
Matthew Frederick Heikamp	Riley Aaron VanAndel
Leah Yvonne Heres*	Travis Richard VandeBurgt
Taylor Joy Heyink*	Benjamin Alexander Vandenbos*
Talia Jordin Hofsink	Shawn Edward VanderLaan
Elliott John Holtvlüwer*	Derek William Vanderveen*
Alexis Hennie Hordyk*	Andrew Justin VanderVelde
Bailey Anderson Hordyk*	Daniel Asher Vanderwal*
Damian Cole Hulleman*	Justin Hayden Vanderwoude*
Jared Robert Hutten	Lorissa Joanne VanSpronsen
Emma Danielle Jagt*	Levi David Van Veen*
Maxwell Nicholas Jans	Reuben Joel VanWoudenberg
Mitchell David Jans*	Caleb Vaughn Vermeulen*
Rachel Maria Kampen	Austin Wayne Versteeg
Mitonga Kasweka	Jaden Berend Vis
Olivia Renae Kelly*	Benjamin Taylor Vos*
Lucas James Kingma	Courtney Andrea Widmer*
Ashlyn Dawn Knegt*	Lucas Aleksander Woudenberg
Meaghan Alyssa Koning*	Derek VanderVeen
Brittany Janelle Krikke*	

\*Denotes an Ontario Scholar \*\*Denotes an Ontario Secondary School Certificate recipient





**Scholarships**

Cari DeBoer  
Emma Jagt  
Ashlyn Knegt  
Meaghan Koning  
Matthew Stel  
Ben Vandenbos

**Subject Specific Scholarships**

**Applied Skills**

Dawsen Schutten

**The Arts**

Carissa Van Raalte

**Humanities & Social Sciences**

Elliott Holtvlüwer

**Languages**

Derek VanderVeen

**Mathematics**

Daniel Vanderwal

**Science**

Alexis Hordyk

**Academic Athletics**

**Scholarship**

Ashlyn Knegt

**Participation Awards**

Luke Blokker  
Cari DeBoer  
Natalie Gelms  
Rachel Kampen  
Meaghan Koning  
Justin Vanderwoude  
Levi VanVeen  
Reuben VanWoudenberg

**The Governor General's**

**Academic Medal**

Emma Jagt

**The Lieutenant Governor's Community**

**Volunteer Award for Students**

Naomi Datema

**The Dr. F. G. Oosterhoff**

**Student-Of-The-Year Award**

Matthew Stel



IN MEMORIAM:  
**Dr. Jochem Douma**  
 (1931-2020)



**O**n November 7, 2020, the Lord called to himself Dr. Jochem Douma, emeritus professor of Ethics at the Theological University in Kampen, The Netherlands, at the age of eighty-eight years. Author of many books and articles, Douma was one of the foremost opinion leaders in the Reformed Churches Liberated in The Netherlands. His influence reaches far and wide. As a former student of Dr. Douma, I thought I'd share some reflections on his life and legacy with the readers of *Clarion*.

As a young theologian, Jochem Douma burst onto the scene with his doctoral dissertation in the 1960s. Whereas most dissertations are soon forgotten and buried in theological libraries, Douma's dissertation was read widely and reprinted several times. One reason was that he focussed on a very interesting topic: the views of Calvin, Kuyper, and Schilder with respect to common grace (the idea that God bestows some of his blessings on all people, even on those who are not destined to inherit eternal life). Those who are familiar with the debates will know that Kuyper was positive about the concept of common grace while Schilder was critical. Douma's dissertation garnered

attention because he questioned aspects of Schilder's views and he was fairly sympathetic towards the views of Kuyper. In the ecclesiastical climate of those days (with Schilder being almost untouchable among his followers), this was a brave thing to do. Fifty years later, Douma's dissertation is still worth reading. It is great that in 2017 an English translation was published under the auspices of CRTS in Hamilton.<sup>1</sup>

### **Courage**

The courage that I mentioned remained a hallmark of Douma's character and work all his life. While he did not seek confrontation for the sake of confrontation, he did feel a responsibility to speak up when he thought it was necessary. He often represented the Christian view in the rapidly secularizing Dutch society. He also addressed controversial issues within the church community itself. As a result, he would often find himself in hot water because of the positions he defended, and this could happen with both friend and foe.

An example of Douma "speaking with the enemies in the gate" was the way he participated in discussions about nuclear

weapons in the early 1980s. It was the time that public rallies against nuclear weapons were happening all the time, and liberal Christians were at the forefront of the movement. In January 1980, as a Freshman student at the seminary in Kampen, I attended a public debate between Jochem Douma and Okke Jager (professor at “the other seminary” in Kampen). Jager defended the popular view that nuclear weapons should be removed from Western Europe. Douma defended the view that having nuclear weapons was necessary in order to prevent a nuclear war from happening. Jager was a captivating speaker, but Douma stood his ground with good arguments.<sup>ii</sup> We were proud of “our” professor.

## Church

Douma did not shrink back from addressing controversial issues within his own denomination either. In the 1970s, the view that there can be only one true church in a given place was still widespread in the Reformed Churches Liberated. Douma critiqued this idea in articles in *De Reformatie* and other publications.<sup>iii</sup> Along similar lines, Douma pleaded for more openness with respect to cooperation with other Christians in the socio-political arena. He showed what he meant by being personally involved (even as chairman) in the VBOK, a pro-life movement that boasted a membership of close to 100,000 from various denominations, including Roman Catholics.

Douma was professor of Ethics at the seminary in Kampen from 1970 to 1997. His lectures were impressive because of his mastery of the subject. He could be intimidating as well. By way of illustration, at times he would test our knowledge with questions such as: “Gentlemen, what is Constantinianism?” When nobody knew the answer, he would proceed by saying: “This is supposed to be general knowledge, but let me explain to you...”


Alongside his task of teaching seminary students, Douma was always working on his publications. One of the most enduring fruits of his labour is his commentary on the Ten Commandments, which has been translated in English and is being used by many pastors and theologians around the world.<sup>iv</sup> When this book was published in English, someone commented in a review that Douma’s work represents the best of the Reformed tradition: Biblically grounded, theologically sophisticated, and down-to-earth realistic.

## Distance

After his retirement in 1997, Jochem Douma and his wife moved away from Kampen and settled in Hardenberg, a small town in

the eastern part of The Netherlands. Unfortunately, in following years the distance developed into something that was more than just geographical. Douma started to voice concerns about developments at the Kampen seminary, especially in the area of hermeneutics and the authority of the Scriptures. He also became increasingly concerned about developments in the churches in general, especially the push towards ordination of women in the offices. Something remarkable happened: the “progressive” Jochem Douma became a leader of the conservative wing in the churches. This ultimately led to Douma and his wife leaving the churches they had served for so many years. In 2014, they joined the Reformed Church in Hardenberg that had seceded some years earlier.<sup>v</sup>

One could argue that there is something tragic about the career of Jochem Douma. For a man of his stature and influence to end his life “outside the camp,” it just doesn’t feel right. But Douma himself did not experience it that way. I was able to visit him and his wife in their penthouse apartment in Hardenberg in May 2019. He was still sharp. He was not bitter. He was enthusiastic about new initiatives (for example, the establishment of a Reformed seminary in Heidelberg, Germany). He trusted that the Lord would take care of his church in The Netherlands and elsewhere in the world.

Along with many others, I remember with gratitude the life and work of Jochem Douma as a faithful servant of the Lord. 

<sup>i</sup> X Douma, *Common Grace in Calvin, Kuyper, and Schilder: exposition, comparison, and evaluation*. Transl. Albert Oosterhoff. Edited by William Helder. CRTS Lucerna Publications, 2017.

<sup>ii</sup> See also Jochem Douma, *Onderweg: autobiografie*. (Brevier uitgeverij, 2019), 264-265.

<sup>iii</sup> See also Douma’s contribution in: P. Jongeling, J.P. de Vries & J. Douma, *Het vuur blijft branden: geschiedenis van de Gereformeerde Kerken (vrijgemaakt) in Nederland, 1944-1979*. Kok, 1979.

<sup>iv</sup> Jochem Douma, *The Ten Commandments*. Transl. Nelson Kloosterman. P&R Publishing, 1996.

<sup>v</sup> The GKN Hardenberg, <https://www.gereformeerdekerkhardenberg.nl>



**Arjan de Visser** Professor of Ministry and Mission  
Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary  
Hamilton, Ontario  
[ajdevisser@crtcs.ca](mailto:ajdevisser@crtcs.ca)

# January Birthdays

**6 Jason Herrewynen will be 46**

c/o Harbour Home  
42 Spadara Drive  
Hamilton, ON L9B 2K3

**7 Christine Breukelman will be 48**

2225-19th Street  
Coaldale, AB T1M 1G4

**13 Ben DeJong will be 29**

c/o Harbour Home  
42 Spadara Drive  
Hamilton, ON L9B 2K3

**14 Stephen Dykstra will be 37**

Box 3573  
Smithers, BC VOJ 2N0

**17 Henry Driegen will be 64**

PO Box 2532 Station A  
Abbotsford, BC V2T 6R3

**17 Grace Homan will be 64**

c/o Anchor Home  
361 Thirty Road S.  
RR 2 Beamsville, ON L0R 1B2

**19 Edwin Schutte will be 36**

844 Bowman Road  
Abbotsford, BC V3G 1S9  
northchilliwackhome@bethesdabc.com

**19 Janine Smid will be 50**

c/o Beacon Home  
653 Broad Street West  
Dunnville, ON N1A 1T8

**26 Katherine Nijenhuis will be 54**

c/o Lighthouse  
6528 1st Line  
RR 3 Fergus, ON N1M 2W4


**30 Tyler Hoeksema will be 31**

6755 Lorne Dr  
Sardis, BC V2R 2G3

**M**erry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all of our readers, and to all of those who we celebrate a birthday with every month! I would like to wish you all the Lord's blessings in the year ahead. Let us all continue to put our trust in our Heavenly Father in all circumstances. Also during this Christmas season, we may reflect on the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, and thank him for all he has done for us. Let us look forward to the return of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Even during these more difficult times we have so much to be joyful and thankful for. May we all continue to look to our Heavenly Father for all things.

I would also like to say Happy Birthday to all of those celebrating a birthday in January! May you all have a wonderful birthday celebrating with family and friends. This is a great time to reflect on all that God has given you and thank him for his blessings. We are also always looking for more people to celebrate their birthday with us at Ray of Sunshine, so if you know anyone who you think would be interested in joining the list please contact me. This is for anyone in our churches with a disability of any kind.

To all of our readers and those who send birthday cards every month, we say thank you! It is such a rich blessing to be part of the communion of saints. We are all able to support and celebrate each other in small ways, whether it is through a phone call, card, quick email, or a visit. I know each person who celebrates their birthday in this column looks forward to and appreciates the cards and other gifts they receive from our readers.

Included, is a short poem from Connie VanAmerongen for all of you to enjoy as we celebrate the birth of Lord Jesus. Thank you, Connie, for sharing another one of your beautiful poems with us! 

## A PRESENT!

(The Best Present That Anyone  
Could Ever Hope For)

**A**n Almighty GOD - and that - the: ONE, and the: *ONLY* True God gave us His Son, JESUS:

**P**rince of Peace, the Heavenly Father's Only-Begotten Son, the only sinless one, a ransom for sin, who;

**R**edeems for Himself, a genuinely repentant people, thus setting us apart from this world, and promises us,

**E**verlasting Life, one where we who truly love Him, live with Him in the new Heavens, a new earth when -

**S**aviour, JESUS, He will live with us in Eternal Joy, Unending Bliss; "Pain and death are no more...."

**E**ven now, He, our God is everywhere present, all the time, He, Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,

**N**ever will the One and Only True God, the Three-in-One leave His chosen people alone! He loves us so;

**T**he Victory belongs to our GOD!

Praise be to Him alone. "In Him, we are more than conquerors!"

**Connie E. Van Amerongen**

(written on Monday, June 15, 2020)

## YOU ASKED

**Ask us a question!** Please direct questions to Rev. W. den Hollander [denhollanderw@gmail.com](mailto:denhollanderw@gmail.com) 23 Kinsman Dr. Binbrook, ON L0R 1C0

## How does the clarity of Scripture apply to the existence of opposing views based on God's Word?

You write in your column "You Asked" (*Clarion* Vol 69, No 20, October 2, 2020) many good things about the authority and clarity of Scripture. When we take your response on the question about *Sola Scriptura* in consideration, how can it be that opposing opinions about the same topic (e.g. divorce and remarriage, women in office) are both based on the Scriptures?

This question refers back to an earlier answer regarding the principle of *Sola Scriptura* and the fact that there are differing opinions and actions supposedly based on the Scriptures. It is true, indeed, that there are positions that are contradictory and that are defended by an appeal to evidence from the Bible. The questioner mentions a few, which can be supplemented with many more (e.g. slavery, infant baptism, Sunday observance, and others). The answer to this question must be that Scriptures are misused in numerous ways, but this misuse does not yet cancel out their proper use. This misuse of Scripture is not something new, we see examples of it in the Bible already where we read of the opposition of Jesus by the Pharisees, of Paul by the Judaizers.

In dealing with such questions, we are concerned first of all with the *hermeneutics* of the Scriptures; hermeneutics dealing with the *interpretation* of God's Word. How do we deal with the Scriptures if we want to know what God demands of us today? Then I do not need to repeat the many aspects I mentioned in my previous answer regarding *Sola Scriptura* and the *clarity* of Scripture. I also should mention the fact that we consider in our interpretation the understanding of Scripture by the church ("with all the saints," Eph 3:18). The latter consideration is important in distinction from the so-called "*new hermeneutics*," which interprets Scripture in the way it should be understood for our present time, in today's culture (e.g. as applied to the question of today's issue of women in office). Then the Scriptures must be accommodated to modern man, instead of modern man accommodating himself to the Scriptures. Our rejection of this modern hermeneutics, however, is no guarantee that we will always understand Scripture in the same way (e.g. in the matter of divorce and remarriage).


Sometimes people will make the Scriptures say what they want them to say, and the danger of what's called *biblicism* has often been the cause of this. When someone isolates one text from its *context* rather than considering the context and the *exegesis* (explanation) of other passages, wrong conclusions are the result! In general, we may confess and maintain that the Scriptures are "clear," and it's easy to say what the will of God is. It's also true that we sometimes *think* that Scriptures are very clear in certain matters while the answers to the situations are complex and complicated. *Biblicism* pulls texts out of their contexts without paying sufficient attention to the reason and purpose which the author of the text had for writing what he did. With a view to the questioner's reference to the matter of divorce and remarriage, for instance, a sole use of Paul's words in Romans 7:2-3 would seem to imply that remarriage after divorce is wrong in every case and an act of adultery. Given the context, however, we see that Paul uses the basic situation of a husband and wife under the law as an example to illustrate that death releases us from the law and puts an end to a marriage. Paul, however, is *not* giving a judgment on every and all situations of a marriage break-down leading to divorce and thus judging every remarriage an act of adultery (as some have concluded); rather, Paul is speaking about dying to the law of the flesh, and this death leading to a new life in Christ through the Spirit. Such a conclusion and judgment would be an example of *biblicism*.

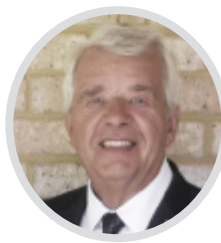
In view of the questioner's difficulty with opposing (or differing) views of certain matters, it may be helpful to expand on the previous paragraph by making reference to other parts of Scripture as well. In Matthew 19:9, the Lord Jesus also speaks about divorce and about remarriage being an act of adultery.

There, however, he mentions as well what's commonly known as the "exception clause:" "except for sexual immorality." This exception would be understood well and readily by the hearers of his time as a reference to the OT laws on marriage, and on adultery. When in the OT a man or woman committed sexual immorality, infidelity, adultery with a third party, this would lead to the *death* of this marriage partner by *stoning*. Hence the marriage was *dead*! The marriage being "dead," therefore, the remaining partner could remarry and *not* commit adultery. Thus, there is no contradiction between Paul's example in Romans 7:2-3 and Jesus's words about the "exception clause."

Let me add to this for our NT context that we do not kill an adulterer by stoning anymore; yet, we could conclude that the act of infidelity or adultery principally "kills" the marriage, opening the way to remarriage. I should add as well that by the power of the Holy Spirit as the NT power of life and renewal, the faithful partner could receive the power and willingness to forgive the adulterous spouse and the marriage be restored. It's not that this *has to* happen but by the grace of God *could* be the way toward restoration. On the other hand, if the faithful

partner is not able to forgive, then divorce and remarriage upon this "death" of their marriage may lead to remarriage.

This further elaboration on one of the questioner's references, namely divorce and remarriage, shows that a further study and comparison of texts and contexts leads to another answer or judgment than the one that's based on Romans 7:2-3 only. They aren't opposing views, though, except if we stick to the first at the neglect of the second. The Scriptures are clear, yet this does not mean that we arrive at our answers without further study and renewed enlightenment. Thankfully we do not need to arrive at this answer on our own; we have "all the saints," including the many who since the Great Reformation have grappled with these questions and come to similar conclusions. 



**William den Hollander**, *Minister emeritus*  
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## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editors,

I read with considerable interest Rev. Holtvlüwer's article, "Improving Home Visits." I have to admit that a lot of what he writes resonated with me. I have served as an elder for a number of terms and have felt uncomfortable with the way that the traditional home visit was done. Over the years, and with some good guidance from other elders and some authors, I came up with a system of taking care of those the Lord had put under my care. Eugene Peterson in his book, *Reversed Thunder*, points out that the Lord in the letters to the seven churches in Revelation used the same approach to all seven churches – the Lord knows his people; the Lord encourages his people; the Lord admonishes his people; and the Lord gives his people hope. I got to thinking that would be a good system for home visits. The elder should know the family, the elder should encourage the family, the elder should admonish the family, the elder should give them hope. The order, know-encourage-admonish-give hope, is of the greatest importance. An elder cannot go into a home and begin to admonish a family if he does not know the circumstances that the family is living through. So the point that Rev. Holtvlüwer made about knowing the family is well put. I would take it even further. An elder ought to find out what are their daily tasks, what are their hopes, dreams, aspirations, gifts, talents, get to know them, know them, know them. When you know them, know them, know them, you can then also encourage, admonish, and give them hope.

I have been blessed to offer elders training in this way of caring for the sheep. Like Rev. Holtvlüwer says, "That's a lot of extra work." But it blesses the elder and it blesses God's people.

May God strengthen the brothers as they care for those in their flocks.

*John Siebenga*



# Aiming to Please: A Guide to Reformed Worship

Every Sunday, millions of Christians gather in various places throughout the world to worship the Triune God. If we would be able to see the various liturgical practices throughout the world, would we see more differences or more similarities? Would the differences of practice be rooted in cultural application or in biblical interpretation? What would worship that pleases God look like?

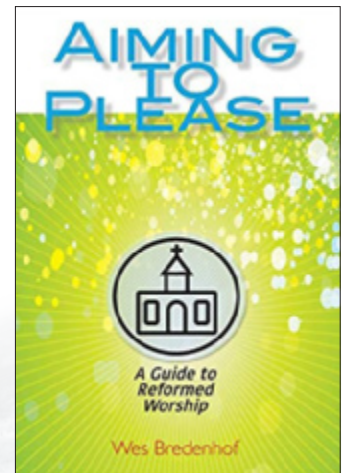
It is this last question that Dr. Wes Bredenhof seeks to address in his latest book, *Aiming to Please: A Guide to Reformed Worship*. The first chapter outlines the covenantal dialogue that takes place between God and his people in formal worship. This forms the foundation for the rest of the book and keeps the focus on biblical worship.

Worship must be “aiming to please” our King. In all that we do, including our formal worship, our aim should be to please the Lord. And we know what pleases him because he has revealed that to us in his Word. To worship God in no other manner than he has commanded in his Word (HC, LD 35) has been called the *regulative principle of worship*, and is rooted in the second commandment. Bredenhof holds to this regulative principle in this book as he explains why Reformed worship has the liturgical elements that it does.

## Elements vs. circumstances

The word “elements” is chosen purposefully and differentiated from “circumstances.” Bredenhof explains how the elements are the “what” of worship, the things that should not be changed.

The circumstances are the incidental things that surround the elements. An example of an element would be the singing of psalms in the worship service, while the use of Genevan tunes would be a circumstance. If the churches agreed to change from the Genevan tunes to an alternative setting, that would not stop us from being psalm-singing churches. This distinction between “elements” and “circumstances” is important because the regulative principle of worship applies only to the elements.



### **Aiming to Please** *A Guide to Reformed Worship*

by Wes Bredenhof  
The Study, 2020.  
253 pages; softcover  
\$22.50

The book is available internationally on Amazon and other online booksellers. In Canada, the book can also be ordered from the publisher *The Study* at [thestudy-books.com](http://thestudy-books.com).

Having established the basis for worshipping God in no other manner than he has commanded in his Word, Bredenhof engagingly walks his readers through the various elements of the worship service. He explains things like pre-service songs, silent prayer, the handshake, and the use of "Amen." Bredenhof suggests that elders and seminary students should not change the wording of the blessing from "Grace to you, and peace" to "Grace to us, and peace" because that changes the words of Scripture itself, and fails to recognize that the one leading the service does so as the Lord's representative. As such, there is also no biblical basis for why an elder should not raise their hands when giving the blessing when they lead a service, argues Bredenhof.

Today, there are some churches that suggest that we stop reading the Ten Commandments every Sunday. Bredenhof explains why this practice is more beautiful than legalistic. I appreciate the nuance that Bredenhof includes:

Is it possible to read other "law" passages, whether from the Old Testament or the New Testament? There is no principled reason why this can never be done. However, it ought to be remembered that the Ten Commandments are an extensive summary of God's moral law. Symbolizing their importance, the two tablets with the Ten Commandments were placed in the ark of the covenant (Deut. 10:1-5). Moreover, in Deut. 4:13, the Ten Commandments are even referred to as God's covenant. We therefore often refer to them as the "Ten Words of God's covenant." They do have a special place, and therefore substituting other "law" passages for the Ten Commandments should only be done occasionally. (p. 79)


As I read through the book, there are some questions that I wish I could have asked Dr. Bredenhof and I was grateful for the opportunity to ask some of them in an interview that can be found on Reformed Perspective's YouTube channel. Since worship, liturgy, and change are so prevalent these days, I'm sure more questions could be asked, and discussions had, about the application of the regulative principle of worship.

## Conclusion

This book is a great resource for understanding why Reformed churches do what they do, and in particular why Canadian and Free Reformed (Australia) churches do what they do. Ministers could use this book as a reading assignment for pre-confession students, consistories could use this book to help them answer questions during home-visits, and to remind themselves of why our liturgical practices are as they are.

There is a lot more to Bredenhof's book, and a lot more that could be said about it, but let's conclude with Dr. Ted van Raalte's endorsement of the book, where he offers his own concise take:

From the personal experience of having been a grateful parishioner, I know that Wes Bredenhof consistently delivers sermons that glory in the gospel of God's grace. He also leads the liturgy, and especially the prayers, in a most edifying manner. His new book, *Aiming to Please: A Guide to Reformed Worship*, helps readers appreciate that his care in preaching, prayers, and liturgy grows out of his love of God's Word. In the book he explains from Scripture why Reformed churches worship as they do. He writes in a very uncomplicated way for the average member of the church, showing what each part of the worship service means, and how the minister and the members can most glorify God through these elements of worship.

Of particular help to ministers - especially new ministers - will be the five excellent appendices. Bredenhof wisely provides some real time-saving suggestions: (1) over 100 suggestions for scripture readings for various parts of the worship services; (2) eight rotating groupings of prayer items for intercessory prayer in the afternoon services; (3) an explanation about Lord's Supper policy; (4) psalm and hymn selections for preaching on the catechism; and (5) psalm and hymn selections related to the days of commemorating Christ. 

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# Year in review

## Finally, it's over

Most of the time when we come to the end of another year we are somewhat sad and wax nostalgic. I am not sure that this will be the reaction when we look back over the year 2020. For almost all of us 2020 has been a difficult year. It started well, although with some concerns on the horizon, but then as March came along the world discovered that it was in the grip of a full-scale and world-wide pandemic. Suddenly, COVID-19 began to dominate the news and it has been dominating it ever since. Every day we got to hear about more sick and infected people, hospitalizations and deaths, linked especially to care homes. Hospitals under stress, businesses needing to close, visitor restrictions, an economy in upheaval, the fallout goes on and on.

Little wonder that for most of us the year 2020 will always stand out as a different kind of year. Indeed, many are not sorry to see it end. As one person was heard to say when the time changed at the end of October and we received an additional hour, "That's all we need, one more hour added on to 2020."

## Rising to the challenge

Yet if 2020 has been tough on the world at large, it has also presented the church around the world with numerous challenges. How do you do church when you can't worship every Lord's day and do it altogether, when you can't visit normally, when you can't meet in a group as you please? Thankfully the churches in our federation, as well as in many others, have in most cases risen to the challenge. COVID committees were appointed, consulted with health officials, and came up with guidelines and direction. Audio-video committees upgraded their equipment and improved online broadcasting of worship services immeasurably. Elders and deacons found new ways to connect with members in their wards or districts.

Of course, happiness did not prevail everywhere and members were not always pleased with the results. Who wants to sit at home and use a little or large screen to worship? Who wants to social distance? Who wants to wear a mask? Who appreciates more government involvement in their lives?

## What about 2021?

Does hope shine brighter for 2021? No doubt we are all hoping and praying that it will. There is news of a vaccine or any number of vaccines on the horizon. No doubt that will ignite new controversy. Some will line up to receive it, others will resist. Some will demand that the government make it mandatory and others will insist on freedom of choice.

Altogether then we are living in uncertain times. These are also the sort of times that test our faith, as well as our conduct. Are we daily remembering who is really in charge? What kind of message are we sending to our neighbours? Is it one of quiet confidence or one of constant agitation? Is it one of concern for those around us or one of pushing our own opinions no matter what and no matter who? It is always a good thing to pause, to zip one's lips, to take a step back, and to reflect carefully on what it means to be a child of God – no matter what the times.

## Churches and ministers

We, however, need to get back to the year 2020, otherwise this will turn out to be more of a ramble than a review. Among those who read my long epistle every year, there may be some who remember that last time I began in the eastern regions of Canada when it came to looking at events in the lives of ministers and churches. This means that now we will begin in the western parts of Canada and the United States.

## British Columbia

In the middle of BC, we have the churches of Houston and Smithers. The latter has at the moment shelved plans to split into two churches but is hoping to attract two ministers, and then go from there. The problem is that, at the moment, they have none. The Revs. Carl van Dam and James Slaa both moved, one at the end of 2019 and the other in 2020. The interesting and unusual thing is that they both moved to the same town, Carman, Manitoba. Is that coincidence, collusion, or providence? Most assuredly, it was the last one. Still, this means that both Houston and Smithers are calling ministers and candidates, but thus far without success. (As this is being written Candidate Daniel Shin is weighing a call to Houston.)

## The Fraser Valley

Further south in the Fraser Valley of BC, the situation is somewhat the same. Currently, there are vacancies in Langley (Refuge), Abbotsford (Pathway), Sardis, and Chilliwack. All of these churches are either calling or preparing to call but none have been successful. The latest news is that Refuge has called the Rev. Randall J. Visscher of Grand Valley, Ontario.



Jerry and Teny Visscher

Now, you may be wondering about churches called "Refuge" and "Pathway." They are, together with a new church in Devon, Alberta and one in Niagara South, Ontario, "the new kids on the block," which means that they are all newly instituted churches. The year 2020 has seen the largest increase of new churches in our federation in decades. We now have sixty-two churches across the continent.

It should be noted that three of the vacant churches in the Fraser Valley all share a common problem. They are all having difficulty finding buildings to rent that would allow them to worship at regular times. As a result, Pathway, Refuge, and Sardis are holding their two worship services on Sunday afternoons. Thankfully, the members are making it work, but it is still a departure from what we have grown used to over the years.

While at the moment the number of vacant churches in BC is more than in any other province in Canada, the news is not all bad. The church at Langley was blessed with the arrival of Candidate Aidan Plug and his family. He has now been ordained and is hard at work adjusting to being a minister of the gospel.

The Yarrow church has also had to face a new situation when their minister, the Rev. Ted Van Spronsen, had to go on medical leave. Thankfully, he is improving and has even been able to preach the occasional sermon again.

The Chilliwack church remains vacant but did manage to convince Dr. Gerhard Visscher to help out for two months after his retirement went into effect. Between preaching, visiting, consistory meetings, and counselling, he even managed to get in a few games of golf. In any case, it is good to see that he and other retired ministers and professors are willing to come to the aid of vacant churches. No doubt their services will remain in demand for some time as the vacancy rate in our churches is not expected to go down any time soon.

## Washington

Seeing that we are busy with churches in the far west, we also need to head south of the border. There in Washington state, the church of Nooksack Valley, after a long wait and a lot of red tape, was finally able to welcome the Rev. Calvin Vanderlinde and his family as their new pastor and teacher. He previously served in Alberta (Barrhead), but was led to exchange it for the warmer, wetter climate of Washington state.

## Alberta

Moving on to the churches in Alberta, it may be reported that they are no longer full when it comes to ministers. As mentioned above, the Rev. Calvin Vanderlinde moved out of Barrhead and this means that this church is now vacant and looking to call another pastor. Meanwhile, in the greater Edmonton area, a new church was instituted in Devon, a small city on the west side of Edmonton. At the moment this new church continues to make use of the Immanuel church building. One suspects, however, that once the COVID restrictions are lifted and it is possible to rent or buy and build, they will be moving.

Speaking of COVID restrictions and worship, it is interesting to see what churches across the country are doing to be compliant with health restrictions. In some cases, they are dividing their churches into separate zones using rope, tape, and Plexiglas. The result is that the "sanctuary" becomes one space, the front foyer (if it is large enough) becomes another, and the church hall becomes a third. In other instances, churches are setting up separate worship sites in nearby school gyms, workshops, and storage sheds and then equipping these sites with large screens and projectors that are hooked into their local church building. Innovation and ingenuity are the name of the game.

Yet, that is not the only news coming out of Alberta, there was also the sad tiding that the Rev. Ken Wieske had contracted

cancer again and needed yet another operation. Thankfully, the operation has happened and he says that he is healing well. Let us pray that the Lord will also give him good news that his cancer been removed and defeated. We wish him and his family much strength, comfort, and healing in the days ahead.

## Manitoba

Moving from Alberta east to Manitoba, we make our first stop at Rivers, Manitoba. It is located forty kilometres northwest of the city of Brandon. In that town there is a church plant called "Westman Canadian Reformed Church." Currently it is under the care of the church of Carman West, but it is hoping that it will grow and in due time become instituted. Continuing our journey east, we come to Carman, Manitoba, where there are two sizeable churches with the names Carman West and Carman East. As previously mentioned, both churches have new ministers coming from the Bulkley Valley of BC. In addition, the minister of Carman West, the Rev. Dr. A. Pol, was recently granted emeritus status. We wish him well as he moves into retirement. No doubt he will find lots to do both at home and elsewhere. If my sources are correct, then Carman West considers itself to be a two-pastor congregation. So, the hunt is on to find a colleague for the Rev. James Slaa.

Moving down the road, we arrive at Niverville, which is about forty kilometres south of Winnipeg. There we find another church plant and it is called "Ambassador Canadian Reformed Church." The Rev. James Zekveld is serving this congregation as its pastor and teacher. Here too the hope is for growth in grace and numbers with a view to instituting a church.

North of Niverville we come to Winnipeg. At the moment both churches in this city have pastors; however, the pastor of the Grace church, the Rev. Rick Vanderhorst, has been sidelined and is on medical leave. He longs and his congregation longs

A new church instituted in Devon, Alberta.



for recovery and a return to health and proper functioning. May the Lord be gracious and hear their pleas.

Indeed, it is to be hoped that members and churches throughout the federation are aware that ministers in certain places are struggling for various reasons, be it related to workload or to physical and/or mental health. Such situations require a lot of prayer and understanding for the minister and his family, a lot of wisdom on the part of the church council, and a lot of patience on the part of the congregation.

## Ontario

When we say “eastern news” our readers will no doubt be thinking particularly of Ontario, but let us not forget the church in Grand Rapids, Michigan. It is, along with a number of other churches such as Houston, Smithers, Calgary, Denver, Vernon, Ottawa, and a church plant like Prince George, among the more remote congregations. This means that there are no other churches in the federation nearby. As a result, a feeling of loneliness and isolation can exist. For the ministers in such places, it can be particularly daunting. So, our hats go off to the Revs. Iwan Borst, Tim Schouten, Steve van Leeuwen, Ken Kok, and Winston Bosch. Brothers, you may be out of sight, but you are not forgotten!

As this is being written, the number of vacant churches in the East comes to six. The Guelph-Emmanuel church said farewell

to the Rev. Peter Feenstra, who entered into early retirement due to health reasons. The Elora church reluctantly released its minister, the Rev. Jonathan Chase, as he accepted a call from the Aldergrove church for mission work in Brazil. The Burlington-Fellowship church has extended a number of calls but has thus far not found a replacement for the Rev. John van Popta. The Spring Creek church saw its minister, the Rev. Peter Holtvlüwer, move down the road and around the block to the church of Ancaster. And then there is the eastern “new kid on the block,” namely the church of Niagara South. This church is waiting on word from the Rev. Jeff Poort of Kerwood to see whether he will accept its call. Oh, and lest we forget, the Grassie church is not officially vacant yet, but once its minister the Rev. Rolf den Hollander receives his exit papers, he and his family will be off to the land Down Under to serve the Free Reformed Church of Legana, Tasmania.

Still, vacancies are not the only news in Ontario. The church at Orangeville is doing a major renovation on its building and it should be ready for occupancy soon. Other churches have either given their church a makeover or are planning to do so. Several churches are still in the hunt for property or are hoping to build at last. All across the country a sad reality is setting in, namely, that it is becoming harder and harder to obtain municipal permits for the building of church buildings. Whereas once the spread of the Christian faith and institutions was welcomed and supported by the authorities, in these ever-increasing secular times it is often akin to wading into a bureaucratic minefield.

Another development to take note of in our churches is what may be called “changing demographics.” In Ontario, it used to be so that church members would move from Toronto to Burlington or Hamilton, and sometimes Orangeville too. These days the movement is from Burlington to Niagara. Soon it may be from Niagara into Lake Erie, or Brantford, and what about North Bay? In most of these cases the reason has a lot to do with the ever-increasing price of homes in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).

It should be noted that a similar shift is going on in the area around Vancouver. There members are moving from Delta and Surrey towards Yarrow, Sardis, and Chilliwack. In these cases, housing prices are also a major factor, as well as the reality that the East Indian population is settling into large parts of Surrey and Abbotsford. No, this is not about racism, as we love our Indian neighbours, but it is probably more about being comfortable in your own cultural surroundings.



Niagara South church building

## Church plants

Things keep changing not just in the case of instituted churches, but in those churches that are moving in that direction. The Chinese Reformed Church, which formerly worshipped in part of the Cloverdale church building, is now using the large music room in the Credo High School. COVID restrictions were the main cause of the move, although the space being used in Cloverdale was becoming too small. Thankfully, the growth of this church continues to be steady. The worship services continue to be in Mandarin due to the large number of more recent immigrants from China. In that connection, it should also be noted that they now have access to the entire *Book of Praise* in Mandarin.

In Prince George, the work of planting a church also continues. The Rev. Tim Schouten is hard at work in that northern BC community. He is being assisted by John and Betty Siebenga. John, a retired school teacher/principal and Christian counsellor, together with his outgoing wife, Betty, are proving to be a real help and support. It helps too that several families have moved into the area and it is hoped that more will follow.

The church plant at Niverville is also making inroads into the town and surrounding area. The Rev. James Zekveld is increasing his contacts, developing material, and teaching those who have expressed an interest in the Reformed faith. The fact that he is doing this work in a predominantly Mennonite community is both a plus and a minus. It means that the Christian faith is not unknown, but it also means that established traditions run deep.

In Ontario, the Blessings church is spreading its wings with the result that Pastor Ian Wildeboer is now living and working in the eastern part of Hamilton. He is hard at work trying to grow Mercy church. Worship and meeting space is being rented from a local eastern Orthodox church. As well, office space has been found providing working space for the pastor and room for weekly meetings.

Streetlight Ministries has been an inner-city effort in downtown Hamilton for some time already. It is located in one of the poorest neighbourhoods in Canada. The Rev. Paul Aasman is spearheading this work, along with both paid and volunteer staff. Because of all the social problems in this area (homelessness, addiction, crime, mental health), it is even more challenging to plant a church there. For such an effort to succeed, a solid core of committed, stable members is needed. Only, such members are harder to find, grow, and attract to depressed and problem-ridden urban areas. Still, the work continues and it may even be changing somewhat as there is talk of Ancaster church relinquishing supervision and ceding that to the Blessings church

which is already located in downtown Hamilton and thus has more experience when it comes witnessing and living in the inner city.

Looking at the broader picture, it would great if our federation would in the days to come be involved in more church plants across the country. Perhaps one day each classis will make it an aim to sponsor and support at least one church plant in its geographical region. It is rather much to expect one church to take on such a project, but if churches band together, the possibilities increase greatly. Consideration might even be given to following the model found in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. In that federation, a number of presbyteries have appointed what is called "a regional home missionary." It is his task to stimulate outreach in a designated area by developing and increasing the number of church plants. Adapted to our situation, this would see one of the churches in a classis be designated to call such a home missionary and then set him to work investigating possibilities, instructing and encouraging members and churches, and organizing groups of believers in various locations with a view to starting a new church.

## The Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary (CRTS)

It is almost inevitable that all of this talk about vacancies and church plants will lead us sooner or later in the direction of the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary (CRTS) in Hamilton, Ontario. It can be said that the year 2020 started out well for the Seminary. From January 16-18, it hosted another one of its annual conferences. This time the topic was "Discipling the Nations," and those who participated or tuned in were privileged to hear fine presentations by the Revs. Paulin Bedard, Ryan DeJonge, Jeremiah Mhlanga, Arjan de Visser, Matthew Van Luik, Ian Wildeboer, Jim Witteveen, and Tony Zekveld. Both the work of home mission and foreign mission were covered from a variety of angles and gave the hearers a deeper understanding of the challenges, tensions, and issues involved in bringing the gospel to the nations. Once again it was great to be together to learn and to fellowship.

After the regular lectures began again in February, things came to a screeching halt in March. COVID had arrived, and with it – lockdown! Classes had to be cancelled, students were sent home to study, and the teachers had to navigate their way around what is called "online learning." For some this proved to be a greater hurdle than for others, but for all it represented a whole new way of instructing. Nevertheless, the brothers – professors and students alike – rose to the occasion and made

the best of it. New equipment and software were purchased. New approaches were adopted and fine-tuned, and before long the ship called CRTS was back on course.

The result was that another school year could be completed and in September another graduation could be held. Only, it had to be done differently. The crowd had to be shrunk drastically, the participants had to wear masks, and the spectacle had to be viewed online. As a result, there were disappointments for graduates, who so looked forward to the grand event, for family members who could not attend, and for church members who could not make their annual pilgrimage to Hamilton. In spite of all this, the ceremony went on and degrees could be conferred. The graduates, Kelvin Dekker, Aidan Plug, and Daniel Shin, each received a Master of Divinity degree, Tony Zheng a Bachelor of Theology degree, and Vincent Deng a Diploma of Theological Studies.

Since then Kelvin has received and accepted a call to the church of Albany West, Western Australia, Aidan accepted a call to the church of Langley and has since become the Reverend Aidan Plug, and Daniel is deliberating whether to accept the call to Houston, BC or Spring Creek, Ontario. As for Tony and Vincent, the former has entered the Master of Divinity program, while the latter will be returning to China and making use of his new-found skills in his homeland.

The graduation of these five students resulted in the departure of four of them. Thankfully, their places were taken by seven incoming students, bringing the total enrollment to twenty-eight students – the highest ever.

Although Graduation 2020 was already unusual because of COVID restrictions, it also became unusual for another reason, namely the retirement of one professor and the installation of another. Prof. Dr. Gerhard Visscher, who had been Professor of New Testament for nineteen years, decided that it was time for him to transition and for a new man to take over. General Synod 2019 found that new man in the person of the Rev. Dr. William den Hollander. As a result, the teaching team was once again complete.

Another highlight of the year proved to be the Seminary's re-accreditation. Every so many years, the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) visits the colleges, universities, and seminaries that it has accredited to ensure that academic standards are being maintained and proper procedures are followed. While this was supposed to happen through an on-site meeting, the rise of COVID made it into an online affair. Yet not to worry, for the Seminary passed with flying colours and was accredited for another ten years. This represents the longest time period possible. You see, even bad times have silver linings.



## A national ministerial conference

Usually each year there are ministerial conferences in different parts of the continent. The brothers in Ontario meet in Goderich and the brothers from Alberta, British Columbia, Colorado, and Manitoba meet in Cedar Springs, Washington. The Western Ministerial also includes a good number of brothers serving in the United Reformed Churches. In the year 2020 things were done differently, as the first national ministerial conference was organized and held in Burlington, Ontario, on January 14 and 15. At this gathering more than seventy ministers, professors, and seminary students were in attendance. As for the agenda, it was dominated by the topic of "the missional church" and the issues being raised as the result of the rise of missional churches in our federation. Any number of speakers were invited to deal with the pros and cons of various issues. In the end, the consensus was that the issues received a full and fair hearing. We listened to one another. We heard one another. And we went away confident in one another. This is not to say that all of the issues were solved, but we did go away with a better understanding of the challenges of being an outreach church in North America today.

As for the regular regional ministerial meetings in East and West, both have had to be cancelled due to COVID restrictions and border closures. It is to be hoped that 2021 will prove to be a different and more meeting-friendly year.

Perhaps one more thing needs to be mentioned, and it is the fact that some church members and consistories are suspicious of these meetings. Among them there is the fear that ministers are making all kinds of decisions there about the future direction of the churches leading to a sort of "dominocracy" (new word taken from the Dutch for minister or "*dominee*" meaning "rule by ministers."). This negative opinion receives traction because a number of people will add, "and the elders were not present to keep an eye on the ministers."

Well, for those of you who are inclined towards negative or conspiracy thinking, I may be so bold as to say that nothing can be further from the truth! When we come together as ministerial colleagues, as we have been doing for more than thirty years, we come to discuss biblical topics, theological issues, pastoral problems, as well as to share and fellowship together. We have never, ever used these sessions as occasions to plot and plan the future course of the church and how we can drive it in a certain direction. To those who are skeptical, I would plead for some measure of trust in the pastors and ministers of the churches.



Prof. Jakob Geertsema

## In memoriam

### *Prof. Jakob Geertsema*

Dealing with the affairs of the Seminary also brings to mind something else, namely the passing of Prof. Jakob Geertsema at the age of eighty-four on March 31, 2020. After serving the churches of Kantens and Opende-Surhuisterveen in The Netherlands, he came to Canada and served the churches of Carman, Chatham, and Surrey. In 1986, he was installed as Professor of New Testament at CRTS (then known as The Theological College). At the end of December, 2001 he retired and, together with his wife Anneke, enjoyed some good years, even going to China for a number of months to assist in the mission work there, a work that he loved deeply. But then in 2011 his beloved Anneke died, and he continued on alone. Sometime after that cancer struck and took its toll. At the end of March of this year the Lord said "enough," and took his faithful servant home.

I will always remember him as a fine colleague - gracious, kind, warm-hearted, and dedicated to the Lord and to his people. In 1972, when I was entering the ministry, he was the one who examined me in church history, but being "fresh off the boat" as they say of new immigrants and still struggling with

the English language, he asked if he could do it in Dutch. That was fine with me, and off we went. Over the years, we laboured side by side in Surrey, met and worked together at countless major assemblies, and served as governors of the Theological College. All in all, he was a man with a deep pastoral heart who helped my family and countless others navigate the hills and valleys of life.

### ***Sr. I. VanOene***

Another person who died this year was sister Ietje VanOene, who was taken home by the Lord on July 16, 2020 at the age of 100 years. For many years, she was the wife and soulmate of the late Rev. W. W. J. VanOene. The Lord gave them five children, two sons and three daughters, as well as many grandchildren and great grandchildren. One of the sons, Wiechert, died in infancy. She assisted her husband as he served the churches of Oud-Loosdrecht and Schiedam in The Netherlands and the churches of Surrey, Fergus-Guelph, and then Fergus only, in Canada. During his Fergus years he also lectured in church history and church polity at the Theological College. In 1985, he retired and together they moved to the Fraser Valley.

It was there that we got to know her well as a gentle, soft-spoken, and committed believer. For many years, sister VanOene suffered from migraine headaches, and they often made her

life difficult. Many of us thought that she would not live long. Little did we know that the Lord had some surprises in store for the family and us all. When her husband, who was her faithful caregiver, died in 2013, we held our breath and assumed that she would soon follow. Yet it was not to be. She moved into Manoah Manor, pushed her cart around the block almost every day for years, learned to use an iPad, lived for another seven years, and then died five days short of her 101st birthday. Remarkable, indeed!

### ***Sr. Elly Olij Brands***

Sr. VanOene was not the only pastor's wife to be taken home to glory in 2020, the same was also true of sr. Elly Olij Brands. She was married to the Rev. Cor Olij, and with him she served the churches of Ferwerd and Hallum, as well as Bruchertveld in The Netherlands and the church of Orangeville in Canada. The Lord granted them four children - one daughter and three sons - as well as ten grandchildren. After Cor died at the end of 1987, she moved to Hamilton and later married Gerrit Brands, whom she also outlived. To those who knew her she will always be remembered as a warm and caring person and a committed follower of her Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

### **Foreign mission work**

Once again we will approach this sub-heading alphabetically, meaning that we will begin with the mission work that is being done in Brazil.

#### ***Brazil***

For more than four years now the Rev. Jim Witteveen has been serving as a missionary for the Aldergrove church and supporting churches in Brazil. For part of that time he was working together with the Rev. Ken Wieske, but when Rev. Wieske returned from the mission field and accepted a call to St. Albert, Jim went on alone. Thankfully that situation changed in the latter part of 2020 as the Rev. Jonathan Chase accepted the call to work alongside the Rev. Witteveen.

A new wrinkle has, however, come into the planning. Ever since he accepted the call in 2016 and before that even, the Rev. Witteveen and his wife Nallely have been attempting to adopt the three native children whom they have been fostering. The hope was that once adoption was approved, they could go together as a family to Brazil to live and minister there. Yet now that hope has been dashed as the native elders have finally refused to agree to the adoption. This means that the Witteveens were presented with a most difficult choice, either go to Brazil

**The ladies of the church in Beberibe, Brazil.**





without them and give these children back to the band and to what amounts to an unknown future or find another way.

For the time being the Mission Board, with the support of the Aldergrove Council, has chosen for that "other way." This means that Pastor Jim has moved back to Canada and is now working out of his tree house study in Abbotsford, BC. There he prepares sermons for the Brazilian churches, develops courses and lectures for John Calvin Seminary, skypes regularly with pastors and students in Brazil, and gives talks over the Internet. In addition, he will also be going to Brazil for extended periods of time two or three times a year. It should also be mentioned that every year the Mission Board will review this approach and evaluate just how well it is working.

Meanwhile, the Rev. Jon Chase and his wife Dani, together with their two children, are spending some time in Aldergrove in preparation for their move to Brazil in 2021. They will use the present time to meet with the Board, prepare for the birth of their third child, and connect with the Witteveens. Thankfully, Rev. Chase will not have to spend a great deal of time learning the language as he is already fluent in Portuguese.

### *China*

From Brazil we move on to China and to an entirely different situation. In the former country citizens are free to choose any religion for their own and can worship accordingly, in the latter that is not the case, as the government seeks to determine who, what, where, and how you can worship. At the same time, Christians who are not members of the officially government recognized and controlled Three Self Churches are considered to be in violation of the law. Needless to say, this makes things very difficult for many believers, also for those who seek to be members of a Reformed church.

In spite of that, the work goes on. Our missionary, Pastor Frank (obviously not his Chinese name) continues to spearhead the work of spreading the gospel in China on behalf of the Cloverdale and Langley churches, as well as partnering and supporting churches in Canada and Australia. Part of his work consists of ministering to the needs of a local Vancouver-based Chinese church, and part of his work is to go to China and minister there. Obviously, the work in China with its one and a half billion people dwarfs the local work in Canada.

At the moment, due again to COVID, there is very limited travel between Canada and China. As a result, almost all of 2020 has been spent using different means to maintain contact with the churches in China. Thankfully, the telephone still works well and there are any number of companies that facilitate online

communication and that has proven to be of great benefit. The result is that Pastor Frank spends a good part of his week on the Internet contacting and being contacted by believers and church leaders in China. Online courses are also being offered. Recently a twelve-week workshop on preaching was held and is now taking a break. Presently a course on church government is going on. In between there have been many information meetings with new churches seeking to join with other Reformed churches in that land. One transitional classis is up and operating, a second is in the planning stages. More than one hundred students are enrolled and working through the curriculum of the Reformed Bible College. Sr. Helen faithfully oversees their



Preaching at the Jireh Reformed Church in Cagayan de Oro in Mindanao, Philippines.

work and monitors their progress. Meanwhile, sr. Jean and a number of freelancers continue to translate books, articles, and sermons and expand the material offered on the website. It has become a huge reservoir of Reformed resources in Chinese-Mandarin. So, if you have a Chinese friend or co-worker, direct them to [chinesereformedchurch.com](http://chinesereformedchurch.com).

All of this illustrates that even in times of persecution the Son of God continues to "gather, defend, and preserve" his church. Of course, the fervent prayer of many is that the Chinese government will soften its restrictions and allow for true freedom of religion and worship. In the meantime, Pastor Frank and others are working within the present restrictions. The churches are taught to respect the government and to esteem those who rule over them. They are advised to avoid confrontation. Unlike some Reformed and Presbyterian churches, who have been in the face of the government, the importance of honouring,

praying, and obeying those in authority is being stressed. If the apostle Peter urged the Roman believers “to honor the emperor” (1 Pet 2:178), probably meaning that despicable emperor Nero, should Christians in China react in a different or more belligerent fashion?

### ***Mexico***

Third on our list of countries where mission work is happening is Mexico. There the churches of Abbotsford and Vernon are active through their missionary worker, br. Scott Bredenhof. Up until now he has been spending a lot of time on learning the language and the culture, but now the time for actual outreach in the community has arrived.

At present the Bredenhofs are making the city of Queretaro their home and mission field. They are busy establishing and growing their contacts with their neighbours in the San Francisquito community. Food parcels have been put together and distributed in the community as the COVID pandemic means that many are out of work and lacking even the basics. Literature distribution has begun using booklets that contain the gospel of John. Scott has even been out to breakfast with the local yoga class.

### ***Papua New Guinea***

The church at Toronto continues to head up the mission work being done by our churches in Papua New Guinea. For this work they have called the Rev. Cornelis Kleyn and his wife Greta, as well as br. and sr. Mark and Liz Mulder. Both couples live in Port Moresby and both are very much involved in the teaching that goes on at the Bible College. A highlight of 2020 was the birth of a healthy baby girl called Elizabeth Tamar to Rev. and Mrs. Kleyn. Another highlight was a visit from the DeJonge family, who are living across the mountains in Lae. Pastor Ryan was scheduled to teach some courses at the College and he took along his wife Ruth and their children. Needless to say, a great time of fellowship was had by all.

Living in a different culture as the Kleyns and Mulders are doing brings with it many challenges and often represents a steep learning curve. Mark Mulder writes, “Liz and I continue to enjoy the work that we’ve been called to do. There is no end to the learning and adapting that we both need to do in this culture, and that is a very stimulating thing for both of us. The longer we are here the more we realise we don’t actually know that much. We are thankful that our national brothers and sisters are accepting of us, despite our weaknesses. We are thankful

that God is using us to further the cause of his kingdom here in Papua New Guinea.” For more helpful insights into life and ministry in PNG, our readers are urged to read the updates that Mark and Liz Mulder write regularly and that appear on the website of the Canadian Reformed Missions Association.

### ***The Philippines***

The Providence church in Hamilton has been involved for some time with theological training in the Philippines under the name “Theological Assistance to the Philippines” (TAP). Earlier in the year brs. Joe Bontekoe and John Langendoen, who travel there every year, were joined by the Rev. Richard Aasman, emeritus pastor of the Providence-Edmonton church. He lectured on the book of Revelation to a group of Filipino pastors.

One of the churches with which contact has been maintained is the Jireh Reformed Church. This church has a student called Kim Lapez who is studying at CRTS in Hamilton. Other churches are also coming in contact with Jireh church and TAP, and the result is that more and more local pastors are being trained in the Reformed faith. For an inspirational account of coming to the Reformed faith, read what Pastor Jac writes on the Canadian Reformed Missions Association website under TAP.

### ***South Africa***

Moving to the other side of the world, we come to South Africa. As such the Canadian Reformed Churches do not have any missionaries actually working in that country; however, we do have a minister/missionary working in Canada to advance the gospel in South Africa. The Rev. Ryan Kampen has been called by the Dunnville church to work as editor for the Reformational Study Centre located in South Africa. Most of his time is spent expanding the resources available on the Christian Library.

The Christian Library was originally set up to act as a way for impoverished African pastors to access material for preparing their sermons. Often living in remote areas and without a book allowance, these men find it really difficult to access the literary resources they need. By logging into the Library website, they can find all sorts of commentaries and articles for free. As a result, thousands of pastors across the continent have signed up and make regular use of the material provided. Naturally, it is hoped that in this way the quality of their sermons will improve and benefit God’s people.

Thankfully, the Rev. Kampen does not have to do this work alone but is assisted by a great many volunteers who translate material from all sorts of languages into English. Thus, on an

almost daily basis, the website grows and supplies a wealth of material to pastors who would otherwise be severely limited in their pastoral work.

### **West Timor**

Far, far away to the east of South Africa lies the nation of Indonesia where the church at Smithville is busy doing mission work in West Timor. Some years ago, it called the Rev. Edwer Dethan to take up this work and under his leadership it has continued to grow. A seminary was started, pastors were trained, churches were established, and a federation was born. Yet the list of needs remains. Currently the Seminary that began in 2007 is in need of some serious expansion and renovation. The enrollment of eighty students is putting the present structures under stress. Hence a fundraiser has begun to complete a three-storey unfinished building. The aim is to increase the number of classrooms and to expand the library space.

In addition to a seminary, the Rev. Edwer is also involved in overseeing the radio broadcasting program which operates Radio Sahabat 102.7 FM. Paul and a number of students are involved in this work of putting music, ads, sermonettes, and pre-recorded interviews on the air waves. At last count they had at least five thousand listeners.

Operating an orphanage called New Hope also belongs to the work being done, although this last venture is mostly under the care of sister Femmy Dethan. The rise of COVID has had a big impact on the students, the teachers, and their counsellors at the Elpida School. An added problem is that often there is no money to purchase the online data that students need. In addition to these challenges, West Timor also experienced a time of severe drought and high winds in 2020. The results are poor crops, more bush fires, and low water levels. Fundraising attempts are ongoing to meet some of these needs. Donations can be sent to [smithvillecanrc.treasurer@gmail.com](mailto:smithvillecanrc.treasurer@gmail.com) with the password answer being "Timor."

### **Publications**

Moving on to an entirely different topic, we come to Reformed publications. Recently various books have been authored and edited by Canadian Reformed ministers. Pride of place in this regard goes to the Rev. Peter Holtvlüwer, who devoted the last number of years to producing both a devotional and an extensive four volume commentary on the Psalms called *Christ's Psalms, Our Psalms*. He planned the project and recruited the contributors. He edited the material that came in and made it consistent in format and content. All in all, a huge labour. Our



West Timor, Indonesia

thanks to you and to the sixteen pastors who contributed to this massive endeavour! It's good to see that it is also garnering favourable reviews from hither and yon.

Another author to be commended is the Rev. Clarence Bouwman, who revised his original work on the Canons of Dort and called it *God's Glorious GODness*. It is a 331-page commentary and can be ordered from [heritageresources.ca](http://heritageresources.ca). With the appearance of this work, and the older work by the Rev. Arthur VanDelden called *Lest Any Man Should Boast*, we now have two fine explanations on the Canons.

Our attention should also be directed to *Reformed Perspective*, a monthly magazine edited by br. Jon Dykstra. Every issue discusses relevant and up-to-date topics and attempts to do so from a Reformed world and life view. In addition, it is free and can be picked up in the foyer of each of our churches. Please take the time to read it and learn what it has to say about current affairs and trends. Our thanks to Jon and his contributors for the work that they are doing.

That in turn brings me to *Clarion*. We don't often toot our own horn but I, as editor, do want to thank my faithful co-editors: Peter Holtvlüwer, Eric Kampen, Matthew Van Luik, and Jason Vanvliet; the lady who does so much work behind the scenes, Laura Veenendaal, our indispensable Managing Editor; and

William Gortemaker, our fine printer and publisher. A word of appreciation also goes out to all of our other contributors. Finally, to our faithful readers, a warm "Thank You!" It remains a formidable challenge to publish a magazine every two weeks, and if you were to take all twenty-five issues of 2020, you would see a good size pile of printed paper. As a magazine we are the first to admit that we are far from perfect, but we strive to serve our church community to the best of our abilities and so to strengthen the ties between us.

## Christian education

This COVID year has been an especially challenging year for schools, teachers, students, and parents. First, there was the school shutdown in March, then learning had to be moved for a time from the classroom to the family room, and then, before schools could re-start, a whole set of new health requirements came down from local governments and health authorities. It all required a lot of extra work on the part of school boards and teachers. In addition, there was economic hardship as many teaching assistants had to be let go and were without pay.

As this is being written, we are not out of the woods yet. In many places in Canada and the USA a second wave has arrived. There is much talk of a vaccine arriving in the spring of 2021, but the jury is still out on its effectiveness and who will line up to receive it. Hence, uncertainty is the order of the day when it comes to education generally and Christian education in particular.

In spite of all the upheaval, however, there are signs that our schools are rising to the challenge and adapting to the situation. Across the continent, different measures are being taken and, if no COVID cases are detected, the children are back in school. So it is that the vast endeavour called "Christian education" continues to move forward.

Here and there we have some new developments to report. Sadly, one of the oldest Christian schools in our circles, the William of Orange Christian School in Surrey, will be shutting its doors in 2021. The Board took this agonizing decision recently. Declining enrollment in Surrey due mostly to members moving out of the area because of the high price of housing, as well as other reasons, forced their hand. What this means is that the remaining students will be going in the fall of 2021 to the Credo Christian Elementary School in Langley.

In a way all of this is part of a larger plan that has been in the works for some time. In the past, the three school boards in Surrey, Langley, and Abbotsford set up a study committee to

chart a future course for the schools in the Fraser Valley. In due time they came up with a plan, which has since been adopted by the membership. It envisions the closing of William of Orange, the rise of two primary schools and two middle schools in Langley and Yarrow, as well as the construction of a new high school in the Abbotsford area. The next step is to find land in the Abbotsford area and to begin fund raising. All in all, it is expected that the process will take any number of years, so stay tuned.

In Calgary, change is also in the air. The Tyndale Christian School is expanding as there are plans to construct a new gym and additional classrooms. By visiting the *gofundme* page, you can see that a substantial part of the funds has been raised. What this will mean is that the years of sharing the present gym with the church will be coming to an end. At last the school will have a dedicated gym to call its own. No doubt this will simplify life a great deal for all. Elsewhere in the country, I am not aware of any major building projects going on. If there are, please send me an email at [jvisscher@telus.net](mailto:jvisscher@telus.net).

Recently I was told that some changes may be in store for the other school called "Credo," located in Woodbridge, Ontario. Decreasing enrollment there, also due to people moving because of high house prices, may force the board to come up with a whole new plan. We wish them much wisdom!

Connected to all of this is the Covenant Canadian Reformed Teachers College (CCRTC) in Hamilton, Ontario. There board, staff members, and supporters are waiting with bated breath to see what the Ontario government will do with the request to grant the College degree granting status. In preparation for this request, a great deal of work has been done at considerable expense. It is not too much to say that all across the country prayers are being offered that the Lord will move the hearts of the governing authorities. In the meantime, the staff, led by Dr. Christine Van Halen-Faber, continues to educate its students and equip them to become future teachers. After all, we have not just a ministerial shortage in our community but also a teacher shortage.

## Youth camps

COVID has also done a serious number on our summer camps in BC and Ontario. In the face of it, both Stepping Stones (BC) and Campfire! (ON) were so ingenious as to set up online camps, and that, while not being the same thing, still went well. In BC more than a thousand children and adults signed up and participated.

In addition, Stepping Stones Bible Camp in Deroche forged ahead over the spring and summer with the construction of a new main building or clubhouse. The result is that the walls are up, the roof is on, and the building is being finished on the inside. Because the building requirements are such that water for fire suppression needs to be at hand, it was decided to turn the retention pond into a large swimming pool. Fundraising also continues in the hope that the outstanding amount may soon be collected, the work may be completed, and the clubhouse will be open for camp activities in 2021.

It has to be said that in both BC and Ontario the launching of these Bible camps was controversial among some. Over time, however, more and more people have become convinced of the key role that these camps play in the spiritual development of our young people. Many of our present-day church leaders can testify to the special impact that their camp weeks long ago had on their lives and future plans. It is also true that those who attend camp are often their biggest supporters and cheerleaders. More than one grandfather decided to embrace the cause and open up his wallet after seeing what a positive influence it had on the lives of his grandchildren.

### Senior homes

If you were to ask, "Who has been most affected by the onset of COVID?" the unanimous answer would be "our senior citizens." The vast majority of those who have died from the disease have been seniors. Care homes have turned into breeding grounds for the pandemic. As a result, these homes are in almost constant lockdown, visitors are severely restricted if not banned, and all sorts of special procedures and precautions are now in place.

Hence what we now have in many places in our community are homes that are safe but lonely. And that is hard to take. Getting old comes with enough setbacks without adding loneliness to the mix. Little wonder that in a recent poll a large number of seniors said, in effect, "Open up our home! We would rather die of COVID than loneliness!" What a heart-wrenching situation!

What can you do if you have a relative or friend in one of these care homes? Pray for them! Visit them if you can! Send them lots of cards! Buy them an iPad and, if possible, try to communicate over the Internet! In short, do whatever you can to keep up the contact. It really is a matter of life or death for many.

Oh, and do not forget to pray for the staff in these places as well. Thankfully many of our homes are filled with very dedicated workers who are doing their utmost to give good care to the residents. At the same time, they are doing this at considerable risk to themselves, for while it is true that this disease targets especially the elderly, they are not the only ones. Health care workers and younger people are also on the casualty list. Let us go out of our way to encourage the staff, and if there is not enough staff, some of us may have to step into the breach and show the world what love really means.

### Special homes

If care homes for seniors are doing great work in our community, the same can also be said of the special homes for those who have diverse abilities. Whether the name be Anchor, Bethesda, Rehoboth, or something else, these homes fill a great need and have become unique dwelling places for those facing mental



Window at Lighthouse, one of Anchor Association's homes



ARPA school convention in Barrhead, AB

and developmental difficulties. Not only are the residents on the receiving end of good food, a warm bed, a nice room, and daily fellowship, they are often kept busy during the week working or volunteering at businesses in the local area. As a result, many of them are flourishing. What a blessing!

### Political and social action

Although political and social action are not under the supervision of the church, such action does live in the hearts and lives of many of our church members. There is much thankfulness that an organization such as ARPA (The Association of Reformed Political Action) is busy evaluating both provincial and federal legislation, meeting with members of legislatures and the Parliament of Canada, alerting members to concerns and problems, and educating people in the issues of the day. Also in this COVID situation that we are in they are supplying much needed advice and direction when it comes to issues relating to freedom of worship and personal liberties. Kudos to Mark Penninga, André Schutten, Mike Schouten, Tabitha Ewert, Colin Postma, Ed Hoogerdijk, Levi Minderhoud, John Sikkema, Anna Nienhuis, Elyse Vroom, Karen Bandstra, Joanne Deruiter, and Daniel Kanis.

On the Ottawa front it is good to continue to recognize the efforts of those church members who are also Members of Parliament: Tamara Jansen, Tako van Popta, and Arnold Viersen. In addition, there are church members involved in provincial and municipal politics too. Indeed, the more the better. May the Lord bless your labours richly!

### Closing

The time has come to wrap it up. Once again, forgive me for forgetting things. I am not getting any younger, and you all know what that means. Still, if there were some major omissions, I would like to hear from you. Perhaps I can make amends in the coming issues of our magazine. Thanks for supporting *Clarion*. Thanks for reading and God bless you in 2021. May it prove to be for all of you a year wherein we put COVID behind us and continue to grow in the grace of the Lord our God! 🇨🇦



**James Visscher** *Minister emeritus*  
Canadian Reformed Church  
Langley, British Columbia  
[jvisscher@telus.net](mailto:jvisscher@telus.net)

## IN LOVING MEMORY



### Ina Berends (NEE WENDT)

**MAY 18, 1938 TO NOVEMBER 7, 2020**

*The LORD is my Shepherd – Psalm 23  
In His time, our Heavenly Father called home  
to Himself to dwell with Him in eternal glory  
and to experience the fullness of joy.*

*Predeceased by her beloved husband,  
our dear Dad and Opa, Ron Berends,  
of 45 years in July 2018.*

*Our Mom/Oma was so loved, always caring for and supporting others with such kindness and selflessness. Her steadfast love for and complete trust in the Lord was an inspiration to many. We were blessed with an extraordinary Mom and Oma, and we will deeply miss her!*

*Cherished Mom and Oma of:*

Grand Valley, ON: Andrew and Janet Wildeboer  
Ottawa, ON: Josh and Branna Blokhuis  
Fergus, ON: Willem and Michaela (Hutten)  
*Eden*  
Grand Valley, ON: Josiah  
Jenna (Cam Brouwer)  
*Summer*  
Fergus, ON: Bryce Berends  
Terence Berends

Correspondence: 193398 Amaranth East Luther  
Townline, Grand Valley, Ontario, L9W 0N5  
or The Lighthouse: 6528 First Line RR#3,  
Fergus, Ontario N1M 2W4

## Anna (Ans) Christina Deweerdt

(NEE VANGOOLEN)

**FEBRUARY 19, 1952 – OCTOBER 29, 2020**

at the age of 68 years

*"For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then,  
whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's."*

*Romans 14:8b*

After a two year battle with cancer and a lifelong battle with mental illness, the Lord took to Himself his daughter Anna Christina DeWeerdts on October 29, 2020.

She will be greatly missed by her husband of 41 years: Henk DeWeerdts of Abbotsford, BC as well as their two children:

the Netherlands: Christa and Maurits Vermeer  
Abbotsford, BC: Eric DeWeerdts

She was predeceased by her mother Annie (1980) and father Ben (2001) as well as by her brother Douwe Jan (2010) and Chris (2013).

She is survived by her brothers Frans and Bert (Janet).  
Mailing Address: 206 – 32691 Garibaldi Drive Abbotsford, BC V2T 5T7

## Ina Berends (NEE WENDT)

**MAY 18, 1938 – NOVEMBER 7, 2020**

In His infinite wisdom the Lord called home our dear sister-in-law

*"Precious in the sight of the Lord  
is the death of His saints" Ps. 116 : 15*

*Two years ago she was predeceased  
by her husband Ron Berends*

May the Lord comfort her children and family.

Dicky Jansen-Berends (Pete Jansen †2015)  
Ben and Wies Berends-TenHove  
Joanne Berends-VanderPol (Henk Berends †2017)  
Rita DeBoer-Berends (Pete DeBoer †2011)

Cousins:

Dicky Wendt (George Wendt †2016)  
Henk and Diny Wendt

## Klaaske Bultena

*Psalm 121:1 I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord!"*

**JULY 31, 1932-OCTOBER 28, 2020**

In His infinite wisdom and at His appointed time, the Lord called home His child, Klaaske Bultena, our dear mother, grandma and great-grandma.

She was predeceased by her beloved husband Albert, a son-in-law, Henry Stiksma and a granddaughter, Larissa Larson.

Survived by her children  
Gezina and Harry De Boer  
Harry and Hetti Bultena  
Jenny and John Voorhorst

Joyce and (Henry!) Stiksma  
Claire and Greg Larson  
Arlene and John Stiksma

*33 grandchildren and  
76 great-grandchildren*

IN LOVING MEMORY

Anniversary



**Abraham (Abe)  
Lambertus Hartman**

**JUNE 25, 1930 – NOVEMBER 14, 2020**

*"For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. (2 Corinthians 5:1)*

*The Lord, in His infinite wisdom and at His appointed time, called home His child*

Dearly loved by his wife, Henry, of 64 years. He will also be greatly missed by his children, grandchildren and great grandchildren:

- Dave & Lynda Hartman
- Bernice & Henry Oostdyk  
(Diana †2019) & Ben Bouwman
- Jan & Andy Meints
- Deb & Wayne Binkley
- Wayne & Wendy Nicholson  
(Bruce Hartman †2015)

Along with 26 grandchildren and 69 great-grandchildren.

He will also be fondly remembered by many other relatives and friends.

Corresponding address:  
3290 New Street, Unit #405,  
Burlington, ON L7N 1M8  
Email: hennychartman@gmail.com

**Gerry and Anita  
Vandoornik**

(NEE FEENSTRA)

**DECEMBER 30, 1980 ~ 2020**

*"Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD his God." Psalm 146:5*

St. Claude, MB Randy and Joanne VanDoornik,  
*Tijs, Kaitlyn*

Hamilton, ON Dave and Jocelin VanEs

Winnipeg, MB James and Mary-Ellen Vandermeulen  
*Andrew, Reuben, Nathan, Rachel*

*We thank God for His faithfulness and His steadfast love as we celebrate the 40th wedding anniversary of our parents. We thank the LORD for his rich blessings!*

Box 330 St. Claude, Manitoba R0G 1Z0

**PRINCIPAL POSITION**

**Neerlandia Covenant Canadian Reformed School is looking for a principal for the 2021/2022 school year.** Whether you are an experienced principal looking for a change, or a teacher, or a vice principal with the desire and aptitude to lead, we would love to hear from you!

**CONTACT US AT:**  
secretary@covenantschool.ca

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Together in the  
Light of God's Word*



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To learn more about our grade school, congregation and Ontario's most stunning outdoor playground contact:

James Meinen,  
Principal, Harvest School, Owen Sound, ON  
[principal@harvestschool.ca](mailto:principal@harvestschool.ca)



explore new vistas:  
[harvestschool.ca](http://harvestschool.ca)



*"See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone and the one who trusts in Him will never be put to shame." 1 Peter 2:6*

We are inviting applications to fill the position of:

#### Grade 5/6 Teacher (Combined Grades)

due to the joyful news of an impending maternity leave.  
Position available May 1st, 2021.  
(start date is flexible, with the possibility of an August 1st start)

We are also accepting applications for the position of:

#### Special Education Resource Teacher

We are looking to fill this role at 50% with the possibility of additional in-class teaching. Position available August 1st.

Cornerstone operates a K-8 school with double grades and currently has a student body of 86 students. We seek qualified applicants who love to teach and desire to support our community in its mandate to raise our children in the fear of the Lord.

For further details please contact the Principal  
**Mr. John Van Iperen**

Phone 519 837 4092 (school) or 289 527 2102 (home)  
[principal@guelphcornerstone.com](mailto:principal@guelphcornerstone.com)

Applications should be sent to  
**Cornerstone Christian School**  
108 Forest Street, Guelph, ON N1G 1H9  
Attention: **Mr. Joel Linde**  
[edcom.chair@guelphcornerstone.com](mailto:edcom.chair@guelphcornerstone.com)



Wishing You a *Blessed Christmas*  
and a *Happy New Year*

Matt & Lydia Van Andel

visit [outdoorreflections.ca](http://outdoorreflections.ca)



**Principal Vacancy (commencing January 2022)  
John Calvin School, Albany, Western Australia**

The committee of the Albany Free Reformed Church Education Association invites applications for the position of Principal commencing in January 2022, although an earlier handover/training period may be considered.

Our school, located in the beautiful coastal town of Albany, has approximately 210 students ranging from kindergarten to year 10. In general, our students are taught in single stream classes by a team of enthusiastic teachers and support staff. We have excellent support from our parent base, and the wider association.

As a covenantal school we place our trust and hope in our Heavenly Father, that He will assist us in caring for His covenant children, that we may optimally equip them for their service to God and their neighbour.

**Applications close 26 February 2021.**

Applications are to address the following selection criteria:

**Essential**

- Registration with WACOT (or ability to obtain registration)
- Strong commitment to reformed education
- Excellent leadership skills and Christian character
- Promote and protect the Christian ethos and culture of the school through collaborative Christian leadership
- Be an effective team member, able to both accept and provide direction and support
- Ability to communicate with a wide variety of people including parents, board, teachers and students
- Demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of staff, curriculum and student welfare issues
- Demonstrate the ability to lead improvement, innovation and change
- Possess high level adaptability, planning and problem solving skills

**Desirable**

- Demonstrate experience and expertise in the day to day management of a school which will require significant strengths in educational administration and the management of people
- The successful applicant will need to be a confessing member in good standing of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia or a recognized sister church, and will demonstrate in their life a whole hearted commitment to providing Godly support to covenant children.

For further information please contact: Russell 't Hart (Chairman)  
Email: russell.thart@board.jcsa.wa.edu.au  
Phone: +61 404 952 711

**Credo Christian Elementary School**  
21919 52 Ave - Langley, BC - V2Y 2M7  
[www.credochs.com/cees](http://www.credochs.com/cees)

**We Are Hiring for the 2021/2022 School Year**

The Credo Christian Elementary School Board invites applications to fill teaching positions, beginning in September 2021. We encourage anyone interested in joining our committed team of enthusiastic professionals to apply.

As our K-6 school anticipates substantial growth next year, we look forward to hearing from you.

For more information, please contact our Principal, Otto Bouwman.  
Email: [o.bouwman@credoces.org](mailto:o.bouwman@credoces.org)  
Phone: 604-530-1131 (school office) or 360-510-1524 (cell)

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We serve Reformed Christian schools by training the next generation of teachers and are about to enter an exciting period in Covenant Canadian Reformed Teachers College's existence.

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As someone interested in a faculty position you will,

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- display a healthy level of intellectual curiosity within biblical bounds (Prov. 1:5)
- be willing to provide educational leadership at multiple levels

You will be a communicant member in good standing of a Canadian Reformed Church, or of a church with which the federation of Canadian Reformed Churches maintains ecclesiastical fellowship.

You will hold at least a Master's degree preferably in the area of education, you are interested in obtaining a terminal degree, and you have teaching experience in either elementary or secondary school settings.

**EXCITED AND INTERESTED? CONTACT:**  
Dr. Christine van Halen-Faber, PRINCIPAL  
[cvanhalen@covenantteacherscollege.com](mailto:cvanhalen@covenantteacherscollege.com) • 905.385.0634

Learn more about CCRTC's programs at: [www.covenantteacherscollege.com](http://www.covenantteacherscollege.com)



**SEEKING A PASTOR** - Fellowship Church in Burlington, Ontario (a church in the federation of Canadian Reformed Churches) is actively seeking a Pastor whom God has chosen to lead us into the future. Fellowship Church is a family-oriented, multi-generational congregation of about 250 people. We hope to make an impact in the community of Aldershot with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Our motivated and enthusiastic congregation needs a dynamic Pastor to lead us in living out our vision statement: "A vibrant church bringing glory to God through Christ centred worship and energised by the Holy Spirit to reach out in service to our neighbours". We desire a candidate who through prayer and reliance on God's word, can lead, equip, exhort and provide dynamic, practical and relevant preaching and teaching, to our congregation. If you are feeling God's nudging to consider this opportunity, we would love to hear from you. For more information about Fellowship, please visit our website: [fellowshipchurch.ca](http://fellowshipchurch.ca).

**Please send your questions/resume to:** Pastor Search Committee [PSC@fellowshipchurch.ca](mailto:PSC@fellowshipchurch.ca). All correspondence will be treated confidentially.



**Growing In Grace  
Equipping For Excellence  
Learning For Life**

**Dufferin Christian School** invites applications for a full-time co-assistant principal and classroom-teacher position at either the **Elementary Or High School Level** for the 2021-2022 school year.

The successful applicant would have the opportunity to grow their administration skills in a collaborative team environment.

DCS is a K-12 Reformed school with over 260 students located 45 minutes southwest of Winnipeg, Manitoba. It offers a highly supportive community, attractive facilities, competitive wages and a friendly atmosphere.

Applicants must be communicant members of a Canadian Reformed Church or a Church in ecclesiastical fellowship with the same.

Applications should be sent to **Dufferin Christian School**

P.O. Box 1450, Carman, MB, Canada, ROG OJO

Attention: **Mr. Nathan Kok**

Or Emailed To: [principal@dufferinchristian.ca](mailto:principal@dufferinchristian.ca)

For more information, please contact: Principal:

Mr. Nathan Kok at 204-745-2278

Chairman: Mr. Anton Borst at [chairman@dufferinchristian.ca](mailto:chairman@dufferinchristian.ca)



**JOHN CALVIN**  
CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

## TEACHING STAFF APPLICATIONS ARE NOW BEING ACCEPTED

FOR THE 2021/22 SCHOOL YEAR

For more information please contact

Michael Raap, [principal@jcsc.ca](mailto:principal@jcsc.ca)

 [JohnCalvinChristianSchool](https://www.facebook.com/JohnCalvinChristianSchool) | [www.jcss.ca](http://www.jcss.ca)

*For a life of responsible stewardship*

The Board of Cornerstone Christian School in Lynden, Washington invites applications for a full time opening for the 2021/22 school year for:



## Principal

Our school has approximately 120 students in grades 1-12, excellent staff relations, a beautiful and functional facility, and a high level of community support. The Lynden area is an idyllic one, located in the beautiful Pacific Northwest. It has access to a virtual cornucopia of outdoor leisure and recreation activities and yet is within ninety minutes drive of the major urban centers of Vancouver, British Columbia, and Seattle, Washington.

We look to our Heavenly Father for His continued guidance and care in our mission to assist parents in educating the children of the covenant as a part of their preparation for a life of Christ-centered service and stewardship in the kingdom and Church of God.

The successful candidate must be a confessing member in good standing of an American or Canadian Reformed Church, or sister church. Those 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 apply.

**For a list of application requirements and a full position description of this opportunity please contact:**

Tim Faber, Chairman of the Board, [chairman@cornerstoneschool.us](mailto:chairman@cornerstoneschool.us)  
(360) 201-3418 [www.cornerstoneschool.us](http://www.cornerstoneschool.us)



The following selection criteria will be addressed throughout the selection process.

- Ability to foster an atmosphere that will characterize the school as a distinctly Reformed Christian School.
- Be a visionary thinker with the ability to implement the vision and educational goals of the society.
- Experience in teaching and administrative leadership in Reformed education.
- Ability to lead and develop staff to be an effective and high performing team of professionals.
- Have as minimum, an undergraduate degree and recognized teaching diploma.
- Have excellent interpersonal skills with the ability to foster relationships with staff and parents.
- Willingness and ability to build healthy relationships within the greater school and church community in Lynden.



Christmas Blessings from the staff, faculty and students of Redeemer University



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[PRINCIPAL@COVENANTSCHOOL.CA](mailto:PRINCIPAL@COVENANTSCHOOL.CA)  
for more information on compensation for your trip!

## THE ALBERTA ADVANTAGE

Located east of the Rockies and a little over an hour from the bustling hub of Edmonton, Covenant Canadian Reformed School of Neerlandia welcomes you to its quaint rural community.

Dedicated teachers are paramount to meeting Covenant's continued needs and to expand the school and its programs for over 260 enthusiastic covenant children. This is recognized by a supportive community who loves, celebrates, and values its teachers.

Currently accepting applications for Elementary and High School teachers for the 2021/2022 school year.

Learning to Walk Together in  
the **Light of God's Word**  
[COVENANTSCHOOL.CA](http://COVENANTSCHOOL.CA)



**JOHN CALVIN**  
CHRISTIAN SCHOOL



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Fifty years ago the doors of John Calvin School were opened by a small community of believers in Chilliwack BC, committed to covenant education. Today our school has grown to be a thriving body of more than 280 students!

God has richly blessed us through these years. It is our honour to continue the work of educating our children in a manner consistent with God's word.





the best place to teach

**Ebenezer Canadian Reformed School**  
is seeking teachers and invites expressions of interest and applications for the **2021 / 2022** school year.

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For this, and any other questions you may have, contact our principal, Derek Stoffels, at:

(250) 847-3492  
principal@ebenezerschool.com

**DID YOU KNOW** ECRS OFFERS a bursary program for post-secondary students going into teaching. Details on our website.

*Assisting parents in equipping our children to function as prophets, priests, and kings in this world.* [www.ebenezerschool.com](http://www.ebenezerschool.com)



Parkland Immanuel Christian School invites applications for

## Junior High Teacher

PICS offers a vibrant, exciting atmosphere with a strong focus on professional development, collaboration, and relationships. Our mission is to create an environment where everyone is inspired and challenged to use their God-given talents in service to God and their neighbour.

For more information, visit [www.parklandimmanuel.ca/job-postings/](http://www.parklandimmanuel.ca/job-postings/)



**SERVE. TEACH. INSPIRE.**



## ADMISSIONS SEPTEMBER 2021

The Board of Covenant Canadian Reformed Teachers College in Hamilton, Ontario, invites applications from prospective students for the 2021-2022 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, 2021

Those who plan to seek admission in the year 2022-2023 are also encouraged to contact the College as soon as possible.

### FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONTACT:

COVENANT CANADIAN REFORMED TEACHERS COLLEGE  
410 Crerar Drive Hamilton, ON L9A 5K3 905.385.0634 Fax: 905.385.8409

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

### Trinity Reformed Church

of Lethbridge, Alberta is prayerfully seeking a

## Full-Time Pastor of Congregational Life

to serve alongside our Senior Pastor under the guidance of the Consistory in shepherding God's flock. The Pastor of Congregational Life will direct his attention to the counselling needs of the congregation in addition to preaching approximately 25% of the Lord's days. Other aspects of the ministry, such as visitation and education, will be shared with our Senior Pastor. The ideal candidate would have a heart of love for Christ and his people, be an ordained minister of the Word, or ministerial candidate, and be committed to the Reformed faith as expressed in the Three Forms of Unity. Training in Biblical Counselling would be an asset.

Expressions of interest along with a CV can be emailed in confidence to [callingcommittee@trinityurc.ca](mailto:callingcommittee@trinityurc.ca). This position will remain open until a suitable candidate is found.



Wishing you all a  
Merry Christmas  
and a  
Blessed New Year

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GREG VANDERGAAG  
AND STAFF

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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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*And the  
peace of God  
which surpasses  
all understanding,  
will guard your hearts  
and your minds  
in Christ Jesus*

PHILIPPIANS 4:7

**WISHING EVERYONE A JOYOUS SEASON AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR**

FROM DAVE, TED, AND WILL GORTEMAKER





# Seasons Greetings

## FROM THE CHURCHES

### ABBOTSFORD

#### *Canadian Reformed Church*

JOHN AND RENEE VANDEBURGT  
 SHAWN AND ZWANETTE VANDERGAAG  
*Arend, Koraziah, Jaxon, Zahrina*  
 HARRY AND MARIAN DEBOER  
 JACOB AND GRACE KOBES  
 DUANE AND LAURIE HOMAN  
*Larissa, Jordan, Rylan and Addison*  
 ROB AND RUTH BINNENDIJK,  
*Jayden, Logan and Kenley*  
 JENNIE DEKKER  
 MARY AIKEMA  
 JEAN BREUKELMAN  
 KLAAS VANDERLINDE  
 HERMAN AND JANE DRIEGEN  
*Karen*  
 CARL AND JOPPA BYLENGA  
 REV DAVE AND ANNETTE DE BOER  
*Katie, Alex, Josie, Ethan*  
 FENNY KOBES

#### *Pathway Christian Church*

*For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. LUKE 2:11*

*May your hearts be lifted in praise this Christmas as we celebrate the gift of Jesus' birth and the joy He brings in our lives. How blessed we are to share this Christmas time together! May you continue to experience God's blessings for the 2021.*

ROB AND MELANIE BEUKEMA  
*Jayden, Lily*

EMMA BIEUR  
 PATRICK AND ANDIRA BIGO  
*Joshua, Hosea, Jayden, Thomas, Rayna*  
 MIKE AND RIFKA BLOKKER  
*Noah, Samuel, Brooklyn, Desmond*  
 ALLAN AND CONNIE BOEVE  
*Keyanah, Adalia, Makaiya*  
 HENRY AND YOLANDA BOS  
*Landon, Luke, Marcus Carmen, Bennett*  
 WES AND JOANNE BOS  
*Jenna, Nolan, Elias*  
 PAULETTE BOSCH  
 KATRINA BREUKELMAN  
 DETMER AND TERESA DEDDENS  
 MICHAEL DEDDENS  
 AND DANYELLE SCHOUTEN  
 SHAWN DEDDENS  
 TIM AND KRISTI DEHAAN  
*Leila, Sadie, Jake, Eden*  
 HANS AND JANET DELEEUV  
 JON AND RENAE DELEEUV  
*London Austin, Zara, Ivy*  
 GORDON AND HETTY DEWIT  
 DEVON AND CRYSTAL DYKSTRA  
*Carson, Travis, Zachary Mckenna*  
 ELISSA DYKSTRA  
 KEVIN DYKSTRA  
 BAHKEIT AND FANTANA FARRAGALLA  
*Namesa*  
 QUENTIN AND JESS FLOKSTRA  
*Benjamin, Micaiah, Naomi*

HETTIE HEIDELBERG  
 ANDREW AND EMILIA JANSEN  
 ARCHIE AND DIANA KOBES  
 DAVID AND KRISTINA MANS  
*Elijah, Louise, Dorothy*  
 VERONICA KOBES  
 BERT AND RUTH KUIK  
 ED AND JONI LOUWERSE  
*Jaimee, Hudson, Aiden, Emma*  
 JOHN AND JENNY PRUIM  
 BRENT AND SHERYL ROOK  
*Emma, Aria, Sage*  
 JAN AND ADRIA SCHUTTE  
 ANGELINA SHERGI  
 WALTER AND DOLITA SNYDER  
*Benjamin, Leila, Tyrus*  
 JANE STAM  
 LEN AND CHARLENE STAM  
*Chase, Nixon, Cadence, Sylvie, Lincoln*  
 JORDAN AND JAIME STAR  
*Everett*  
 FRED AND ALEXANDRA STRUIK  
*Josephine, August*  
 JASON AND APRIL TOGERETZ  
*Aiden, Noah, Lexi*  
 MARIKA TOGERETZ  
 WALTER AND WILMA TOGERETZ  
*Savannah*  
 PIETER AND WILLEMEN TORENVLET  
 TONY AND ANNE VANDEBURGT  
 BRAD AND ALICIA VANDELFT  
*Landon, Kaedyn, Avery, Oliver, Everett*





*“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!*

JOSH AND JILL VANDELFT  
*Linden*

KEVIN VANDERBOOM AND ALANNA  
SCHUURMANS

ANDREW AND EMMA VANDRIEL

GREG AND MEGAN VANGORKUM  
*Travis, Skye, Rachel*

DAVID AND CARLA VANLAAR  
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*Carter, Hailey, Lauryn*

DANIEL AND LYNNE WRIGHT

JOHN AND RENEE ZIETSMA  
*Mikiah, Ezra, Nadia, Jamir*

MARC AND MADDY ZWAAN

## ALDERGROVE

*Greetings from the following brothers  
and sisters in Aldergrove and from  
the rest of the congregation.*

FRED AND ANN BEINTEMA

JOHN AND GRACE DAM

BRAD AND ANG DE BOER,  
*Kayla, Esther, Ryan, Joel, Weston*

HUGO AND ERICA FEUNEKES  
*and family*

CHRIS AND PEARL HOFF  
*and family*

RICH AND BETTY KLAVER

HENRY AND CLASINA KLOS - DE JONG

HAROLD AND TINA LUDWIG

JACK AND WILMA MARISSSEN

TONY AND MARCELLE TOGERETZ

PETER AND INA VANDEBURGT

HENRY AND JEANETTE VAN DELDEN

ADRIAN AND SHEILA VANDELFT

HENRY AND CORINNE VANDELFT

AUBREY AND JANE VANDERGAAG  
*and family*

NICK AND LISA VANDERVEN  
*Robyn, Lydia and Amy*

CASEY AND RIA VANVLIET

PR. JIM AND NALLELY WITTEVEEN  
*McKinley, Ashton, Jesse  
Destiny, Duke, Rosie*

## ANCASTER

*The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.  
He makes me lie down in green pastures.  
He leads me beside still waters. He restores  
my soul. He leads me in paths of righteous-  
ness for his name's sake (PSALM 23:1-3).*

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

CRAIG AND ARLENE ALKEMA  
*Sid and Delaney, Owen, Abigail*

ADRIAN AND KERRI BARTELS  
*Paiton and Kyle, Blake, Jemma  
Carter, Finnley*

BEN AND INGRID BARTELS

BILL AND ANNEMARIE BARTELS

DAN AND RENA BARTELS  
*Hailey, Samantha and Gus, Tyler,  
William, Christina, Paige, Dayna*

ANNA BARTELS  
*Reuben, Eden, Isaac, Thomas, Joel*

GEORGE AND MARTA BARTELS

JOHN AND WILLIE BARTELS

MIKE AND WILMA BELJES  
*Jordan, Rachel, Jessica*

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Devon, Carlisle, Jordan, Sofia*

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*Marie, Cara, Eli, Jakob, Emmett*

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*Lucas, Noah and Katherine, Elliott,  
Gabriel, Susanna, Angelina*

Nick and Denise Huizing  
*Levi, Jensen, Emilia, Halle*

STEPHEN AND JACKIE KAMPEN  
*Rhone, Keira, Azhure, Xander*

LOUIS AND IRMA OOSTERHOFF

MIKE AND MEAGHAN OOSTERHOFF  
*Ava, Thijs*

BRYAN AND CATHERINE STIEVA  
*Zac, Jacob*

JOHN AND IRENE VANANDEL

ROLAND AND JANICE VANANDEL  
*Ryan*

WADE AND LEANNE VAN BOSTELEN  
*John, Todd*

RICH AND JULIE VANDASSELAAR  
GUS AND SAMANTHA  
*Benjamin, Robert*

SHANE AND NADINE VANVEEN

*and family*

JOHN AND NELLIE VIS

BILL AND JOANNA WIESKE  
*and family*

GARY AND CINDY WIESKE  
*and family*

JACK AND TERESA WIESKE  
*Micah, Luther*

ROB AND ASHLEY WIESKE  
*Ava, Vera, Noah, Londyn  
Brynlee, Olive*

STEF AND DIEN WOUDENBERG

## ATTERCLIFFE

*Wishing you all a wonderful Christmas  
and the LORD's blessings in 2021!*

*And the angel answered her, "The Holy  
Spirit will come upon you, and the power  
of the Most High will overshadow you;  
therefore the child to be born will be called  
Holy, the Son of God." LUKE 1:35*

*"And we know that for those who love God  
all things work together for good... If God  
is for us, who can stand against us? He  
who did not spare His own Son but gave  
Him up for us all, how will He not also  
with Him graciously give us all things?"  
ROMANS 8:28-32*

WICHERT AND IENA AALBERS

WIM AND JOANNE AALBERS  
*Danielle, Connor and Emma, Darryl*

TYLER AND BRITTANY AALBERS

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*Chad and Sarah*

LINDA BARTELS  
*Tonya, Darren*

ANDY AND DEBBIE BLOKKER  
*Natassje*

LAWRENCE AND GERALDINE BLOKKER

LES AND BECKY BLOKKER,  
*Jaime, Anya, Taylor, Carmen, Mika  
Landon*

JIM AND BETTY DEBOER  
*Janell, Erica*

HERMAN AND JOLENE DEHAAN  
*Kaitlyn, Samuel, Jacob, Noah*

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IKE AND HEATHER GROENWOLD

WARREN AND MARY ANN HOEKSEMA

KEN AND LIZ JAGER  
*Jacob and Annika*



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*Best wishes from the staff at Smithers Lumber Yard,  
and may God bless you in 2021*



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Blessed Christmas and a Prosperous New Year 2021*

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*Tristan, Levi, Elijah, Elle, Kaia*

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## 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.*

*"She will bear a son, and you shall call his  
name Jesus, for he will save his people from  
their sins." MATTHEW 1:21*

ED AND ELAINE AIKEMA

DIRK AND TANIA BARENDREGT  
*Maddisyn, Ava, Judah, Genesis*

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*The congregation of Grace Canadian Reformed Church at Brampton thanks everyone for support we received for our mission and ministry here in Brampton and wish you the Lord's blessings in 2021.*

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*Megan*

## BURLINGTON

### *Ebenezer*

*The following members wish all our brothers and sisters in Christ, in Canada and abroad, God's blessing at Christmas and in the New Year.*

STEVE AND GERLINDA BEINTEMA

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*David, Grace*

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### *Fellowship Canadian Reformed church*

*Wishing you a joyous Christmas and the Lord's blessings in 2021*

*For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.*  
LUKE 2:11

CHRIS AND RITA BOSCH

HENK AND JANNY BUIST

AUDREY DEGELDER

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*Kaitlyn*

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## *Rehoboth Canadian Reformed Church Burlington Ontario*

*From the Brothers and Sisters of Rehoboth Church, Christmas Greetings and a Blessed New Year 2021*

*Now may the God of peace sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

1 THESSALONIANS 5: 23

AART AND MARTHA BLOKHUIS.

SUSANNA GROENWOLD.

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## CALGARY

### *Canadian Reformed Church*

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TONY AND ALYSSA DEWIT,  
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## CARMAN WEST

*"For my eyes have seen your salvation that  
you have prepared in the presence of all  
peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles  
and for glory to your people Israel."*  
LUKE 2:30-32

*Wishing you all God's Blessings this  
Christmas and in the New Year.*

HENRY & BETTY BREUKELMAN

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## CHATHAM

### *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!*

*"I will extol the Lord at all times;  
His praise will always be on my lips.  
I will glory in the Lord; let the afflicted  
hear and rejoice. Glorify the Lord  
with me" PSALM 34:1-3*

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*Ethan, Elliot, Simon, Justin*

## CHILLIWACK

### *Canadian Reformed Church*

*The Chilliwack Canadian Reformed  
Church and the following brothers and  
sisters wish you a Blessed Christmas  
and God's Blessing in the year 2021.*

*"Rejoice in the Lord always, I will say it  
again: Rejoice!" PHILIPPIANS 4:4*

CYTHNIA ADMIRAAL

REV. BEN AND WIES BERENDS

NORMAN AND HELEN BYSTERVELD

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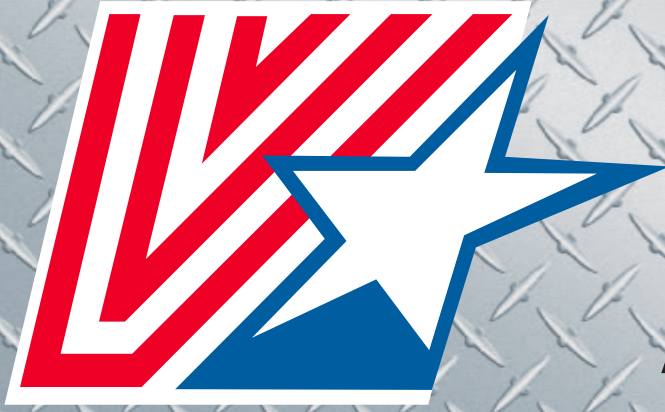
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*Seth, Hazel, Lyla, Jonas and Thomas*

HANK AND DINY WENDT

## COALDALE

*We wish you the Lord's blessings during  
this Christmas season and in the coming  
new year.*

REV. AND DINIE HUIJGEN

*Lars*

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JOHN AND GERTEEN VANDENBERG

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*Nadia*

MIKE AND SYLVIA HOFKAMP

*Brendan, Rebecca, Emily, Jared*

JOHN AND ERNA MOEDT

*and Tristan*

## DENVER

### *Emmanuel American Reformed Church*

*In a loud voice they were saying:  
"Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain  
To receive power and wealth and  
wisdom and strength and honor  
and glory and praise!"*

REVELATION 5:12

*May the knowledge that the Savior born  
at Christmas has conquered and sit on  
the throne in heaven be your peace, joy,  
and comfort this holiday season and  
throughout 2021!*

## DEVON

### *Devon Canadian Reformed Church*

*We wish all our brothers and sisters in  
Canada and abroad the Lord's blessing  
and His guidance for 2021.*

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*Owen, Luke & Tarissa, Jenna, Kara,  
Izaak and Kade*

JACK AND MARLENE VANROOTSELAAR

*Tinielle*

*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 —



Wishing you all a blessed Christmas and New Year in 2021! May we all be filled with zeal for Him who sent His son and bore all of our infirmities!

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*Corrine, Tim and Reuben*

## EDMONTON *Immanuel Canadian Reformed Church*

*We wish all of our brothers and sisters in  
Canada and abroad the Lord's blessings  
in 2021.*

BRIAN AND JOLENA DEHAAN  
*Jenna, Kendra, Joey, Joshua, Connor*

ROB AND EMILY DUKER  
*Lydia, Sierra and Jaxon*

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JERRY AND SANDRA DYKSTRA

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JULIUS AND KAREN VANSPRONSEN  
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BURT AND CATHARINA VANDELDEN  
*and family*

GARRY AND CATHY VISSCHER

## *Providence*

*Merry Christmas and a Happy New  
Year from all of us in the Providence  
congregation. We wish you all  
a blessed 2021.*

*"Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust,  
and will not be afraid; for the Lord God  
is my strength and my song, and he has  
become my salvation." ISAIAH 12:2*

RICHARD AND JOANNE AASMAN

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Rennik*

MARTIN AND MARIANNE VAN DER AHE

WES AND JULIE VANHILL  
*Briar*

MRS. JOHANNA WERKMAN

## ELORA *Canadian Reformed Church*

*Be joyful always, pray continually, give  
thanks in all circumstances, for this  
is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

1 THESSALONIANS 5 : 16-18

MR. AND MRS. SIMON AND BETTY  
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MIKE AND DIANA BROERSMA,  
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Alexandra and Reuben,  
Jordan and Serena, Erika,  
Reuben, Isaac*

BERT AND HENRIETTA TENHAGE

GARY AND ALICE VEENMAN

## FERGUS *Maranatha*

*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*

CORNELIS AND RENA BOOT

OLIVER BOOT

HARRY BOUWMAN

JEANNETTE BOUWMAN

DIANE BREUKELMAN

JOHN AND RACHEL BROEKEMA  
*Seth, Joel, Dayna*

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Wishing you a Merry Christmas  
and a Blessed New Year.



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to God  
in the  
Highest

Luke 2:14

*Noel, Noel  
Come and see what God has done  
Noel, Noel  
The story of amazing Love!  
The light of the world, given for us  
Noel*

*Son of God and Son of man  
There before the world began  
Born to suffer, born to save  
Born to raise us from the grave  
Christ the everlasting Lord  
He shall reign forevermore*

Christmas greetings from  
Greg and Jen Devries & family  
Phil and Janice Bultje & family  
Hilco and Ann Tamminga & family



WAYNE AND JULIE VANLEEUEWEN  
*Sean*

HISKE VAN TOL

TONY AND JOANNE VAN TOL  
*Mikkyle*

TERRANCE AND CHARMAINE VIS  
*Andrew, Travis, Jared, Chase*

CHARLES AND LINDA WESTRIK  
*Nicole, Ryan, Joshua, Danielle*

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

### *Fergus North*

*Wishing our Brother's and Sister's  
in the Lord a blessed Christmas season  
and His Guidance in the coming year  
of our Lord 2021.*

#### *Anchor Lighthouse*

*Bryce B, Lindsay K, Katherine N,  
Terence B, Shaelyn K, Dave V.V  
Cameron D, Marsha M,*

JAKE AND ANITA BOUWMAN  
*and family*

BERNARD AND MICHELLE BREUKELMAN  
*and family*

JOHN AND HEATHER BROERSMA  
*Justine and Alex, Gared, Madelyn*

STEPHEN AND JOANNA DEBOER  
*Jordynn, Madison, Micah*

JOHN AND DORIS DEWITT  
*and family*

MARC AND JODY JAGT, BENJAMIN  
*Evan, Mikaia*

TIM AND AMY LINDE  
*Chloe, Kate, Joel, Taya*

BUTCH AND ARELENE MEDEMBLIK  
*and family*

ED AND KATHERINE NIEZEN  
*Miranda and Evan, Claire,  
Tim and Jewel, Mark, Wesley*

ROB AND LYNN NIEZEN  
*Devon*

WILMA SCHEPER

WALTER AND SHELLEY SMITH

RUSS AND VANESSA TAEKEMA  
*Brayden, Trinity, Lexi, Hailey  
Izzy, Dirk*

DAN AND SHELLY VANDERVEEN  
*Noah, Brenna, Adele, Claire*

DOUG AND MARIANNE VANDERVEEN,  
*Korren, Gage, Wyatt, Tess*

BEN AND JO-ANNE VANDERZWAAG

KEVIN AND ANDREA VANDERZWAAG  
*Emily and Calvin, Seth, Josh, Nick,  
Lily, Leah*

### **FLAMBOROUGH** *Redemption Canadian Reformed Church*

*Greetings from the following brothers and  
sisters of Flamborough! We wish all broth-  
ers and sisters in Christ a joyous Christmas  
season and the Lord's blessing and guid-  
ance throughout the New Year.*

JEFF AND EILEEN BREUKELMAN  
*and family*

ROB AND CONNIE HOFKINK  
*Jonathan, Luther*

HERMAN AND JOANNE JANS  
*and family*

JOB AND DONNA SCHENKEL  
*Shannon, Jordan, Tristan,  
Connor, Dylan*

MARC AND MARG SCHUTTEN  
*and family*

HENK AND CHRISTINE VAN HALEN

### **GLANBROOK** *Trinity Canadian Reformed Church*

*We pray that the unity of Christ may  
be with us all in this joyous Christmas  
season, and God's rich blessings for the  
year to come!*

*"Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have  
called you by name, you are mine."*

*Is43:1 "For I know that my Redeemer  
lives, and at the last he will stand upon  
the earth." JB 19:25*

ED AND LISA BAKER  
*Josh and Taylor, Simon, Katrina*

WAYNE AND HILDA BARTELS  
*Jamie, Kenton, Karly, Lorissa  
Rebecka, Waylon*

THEO AND MELANIE BEJES  
*Timothy, Katie, Addison, Maxwell*

PAUL AND IRENE BOERINGA

NELLIE BUITENHUIS

ARIE AND TAMARA DEN HOLLANDER  
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Esther, Jonathan, Andrew, Lydia*

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DEN HOLLANDER

WILLIAM AND DIANE DEN HOLLANDER  
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and Ian, Amy, Cason, Alaynia,  
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Micah, Benjamin, Esther*

TIM AND ELLY HUTTEN  
*Calvin*

MILLIE KNEGY

DEREK AND TINA LANTING  
*Sarah, Terissa, Lydia, Albert,  
John, Hannah, Owen, Elaina, Ian*

DUSTIN AND DANIELLE LUDWIG  
*Simon, Patrick, Oliver, Thomas*

JAMES AND ANGELA MEERVELD  
*Emberly, Mikaela, Calvin*

WAYNE AND AMY MORRIS

PETER AND JOANNE OSTERMEIER

JUSTIN AND MARY-LYNN SCHUTTEN  
*Kyle, Brayden and Kristen  
Natania, Sarah*

GARY AND JACKIE SMID  
*James, Leah, Maria, Timothy  
Seth, Isabelle, Emma*

PETER AND GRACE SMID

DR. JASON AND JANET VAN VLIET  
*Hannah and Marc, Ruth and Mitchell  
Abigail, Philip, Joelle, Jared*

FRITS AND LIEKE VANDERBRUGGHEN

### **GRAND RAPIDS**

REV KEN AND BRENDA KOK  
*Edwin & Michelle, Megan*

PETER AND JANET KINGMA  
*Joshua*

HWANSOO AND MIRIAM KIM  
TERRY AND RITA MEDEMBLIK  
*Patrick*

DEREK AND REBECCA TENHAAF  
*Sophia, Clara, Gemma*

DIRK AND KATHRYN TENHAAF  
*and family*

MIKE AND CHRISSI VANBEEK  
*Christian, Lincoln, Charlotte  
Theodora, Asher*

DERK AND MARIA VANDIJK  
*Hannah, Sarah*

JOHN AND MARTHA VANMIDDELKOOOP  
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Joseph, Wayne, Lauren*

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*Haylee, Taya*



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**The Timothy Project**

A number of years ago, we made you aware of the work of the *Reformational Study Centre* being done by our sister churches in South Africa for furthering the gospel and preparing men for service in the churches. This has been a wonderful opportunity to share the Gospel of Christ with those who otherwise would not hear it. Over the years, this ministry has continued to expand, and every day receives requests for theological material from Christian users in more than 60 countries across the world.

The Vineyard Church in Lincoln has partnered with the Timothy Project to raise the funds to support this ministry that has powerfully affected the lives of so many. *We are writing with the express intent that you prayerfully consider our request for donations to support this worthwhile project.* In Christ, the Timothy Project Committee

**2 Timothy 2:2**  
*"...and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also."*

Cheques may be addressed to Vineyard CanRC with Timothy Project in the memo line and sent to:  
 Vineyard Canadian Reformed Church  
 attn. Elsa DeVries  
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## GRAND VALLEY

### Canadian Reformed Church

*We wish our brothers and sisters in Canada and abroad the Lord's blessing and guidance in the New Year 2021*

*"You have led in your steadfast love the people whom you have redeemed.*

*You have guided them by your strength to your holy abode Ps. 15:13*

ALLAN AND SABRINA BALCH  
*Gabriel*

BILL AND GRACE BALCH

CHRISTINA BALCH

BRANDON AND NELENE BOUWMAN  
*Ezra, Elias*

JACOB AND NELLEKE BRAKKE

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*Anita, Albert*

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*Logan, Jasmine, Curtis, Karli, Lucy, Scarlett, Andrea, Reuben*

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DUCO AND JOYCE FEENSTRA  
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ED AND BERTHA GROEN

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*Darien*

JOHN AND DIANE JONKER

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WES AND CHELSEY KAMPHUIS  
*Mason, Chloe, Harper*

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*Isaiah*

SAM AND MARIAN OKKEMA  
*Taylor, Scott*

DAVID OLIJ

LUTE AND SHIRLEY PRINSEN  
*Kevin, Natasha*

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*Faith*

CURTIS AND BREANNE VANOMMEN

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ALBERT AND GRACE BULTJE

ALAN AND MELANIE DATEMA  
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*Jakob, Micah, Ethan, Madilyn, Jonah*

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WILLIAM AND ELISABETH DYKEMA

PETER AND MARGARET FEENSTRA  
*and family*

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*Emmalyne, Isaac, Daeton, Addison, Kingston, Ainsley*

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JOHN AND JACKIE JOOSSE  
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RYAN AND KRISTIN KINGMA  
*Logan, Tyson, Holden, Rayna Ryland, Greyson*

JOHN AND TONI KOTTELENBERG

YUL AND COBY KRIKKE

STEVE AND SOPHIE LENTING  
*Jacob, Matteus, Caleb, Samuel, Sophia*

DARRYL AND CORRIE LOF

*Jenna, Hailey, Lauren*

RICK AND MICHELLE NORDEMAN

NATHAN AND TARYN VANDERVELDE  
*Leah*

BILL AND LIZ OOSTDYK

MARION OVERBEEK

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*Chloe, Hannah, Emmaline, Rebecca, Noah*

PETER AND DENISE RAVENSBERGEN  
*Kierra, Kaden, Ezra, Elias, Asher, Davina*

GERRY AND SOPHIA SCHULLER

MAYNARD AND SUSAN SMID

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JEFF AND ANNETTE TENHAGE  
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*Justin and Ayden, Rachel and Ethan*

BERT AND JANET VANGOOLEN  
*Jason and Joann van Iperen, Caleb, Kendra, Reuben, Edwin, Emily*

BERT AND HELENA WANDERS

## GUELPH

### 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 2021.*

*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. JOHN 14: 27*

HAROLD AND JOCELYN BOUWMAN  
*Alyssa, Kennedy, Ryan*

MRS RIKA BOUWMAN

KLAAS AND JANNY BOUWMAN

TIM AND AMANDA BRATCHER  
*Isaac, Arietta, Melody*

DALE AND ANNIE DALLINGA

WENDELL AND MARJORIE DALLINGA  
*Dylan, Ian, Aimee, Samantha*

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REV. PETER AND JEANETTE FEENSTRA

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BERT AND ELSA HOPMAN

THEO HOPMAN AND ERICA

# FAITHLINK

FUNERAL CARE

And the Word became  
flesh and **dwelt**  
**among us...**

For from his fullness  
we have all received,  
**grace upon**  
**grace.** >> JOHN 1:14,16



As you take time to reflect this season on the birth of our Saviour, and the ending of this difficult and trying year, may the message of Christmas bring you comfort: Immanuel - God is with us. *May you experience grace upon grace in the year 2021.*



*It's comforting to come home.*



Rick Ludwig



Garnet van Popta



Diane Vanderwoude

TOET HOPMAN,

*Johnathan, Thomas, Sean  
Davín, Kailyynn*

MRS SHIRLEY KNOT

DAVE AND EMMA KUIZENGA  
*Karys, Stef, Nick*

JAKE AND MARG KUIZENGA

GEORGE LODDER AND GRACE  
KNEGT-LODDER

DAVE AND MELANIE NIEZEN  
*Dawson, Carter, Declan, Ryan*

KLAAS AND DARLENE NIJENHUIS  
*David & Anna*

CORNELIS AND MARY POPPE

JOHN AND BRENDA VANAMERONGEN  
*Ethan*

AUSTIN AND BRITTANY VANAMERONGEN  
*Kapri*

LUKE AND JACQUELINE VANDERGAAG  
*Drew, Isabelle*

BERT AND GRACE VANDERWOERD

KEITH AND ANN VAN LEEUWEN

LOYD AND JOANNA VAN LUIK  
*Rachelle, Hein and Juanita,  
Laurissa, Courtney*

PETE AND ANITA VAN ROOTSELAAR

NEIL AND LIZ VAN WEERDEN  
*and family*

GERRY AND HEATHER VAN WOUDEBERG  
*and family*

ANDREW AND THERESA WESTRIK  
*and family*

FRED AND RIKI WESTRIK

JOHN AND ROBIN WESTRIK  
*and family*

### *Living Word Canadian Reformed Church*

*Our faithful and loving Father once again  
leads the way into the new year. Let us  
confidently and joyfully live each day in  
the sufficiency of His grace, trusting Him  
in all things, as we enter 2021. May the  
abundant and undeserved blessings of the  
LORD be yours in the year ahead!*

*“Trust in him at all times, O people;  
pour out your heart before him; God  
is a refuge for us.” PSALM 62:8*

REV. DOUWE AND LIZ AGEMA

BILL DEVRIES

TREVOR AND LINDA DEVRIES  
*and family*

HENRY AND KIM HUTTEN

*Natasha, Brenden, Hunter, Maelle*

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ROGER AND CATIE LEISTRA  
*Silas, Asa, Sullivan, Seth*

HARRY AND DEANNA LINDE  
*Thea, Harlen, Rielle, Ila, Jason*

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*Kenton, Johann, Tederic, Fraser  
Kianna, Cason*

DUANE AND DIANNE WESTRIK  
*and family*

### **HAMILTON** *Cornerstone*

*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*

BRYAN AND TOBI BOS  
*Chlöe and Peter, Cohen and Alayna,  
Lily, Joely*

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HAUN AND KAREN DEJONGES  
*and family*

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*Erin, Matt, Seth*

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*Joel, Liselle, Annesa*

HAROLD AND SHARON MEERVELD  
*Meyer, Minnie, Jim*

RALPH AND TERESA VANDERLAAN

ART AND EBELIEN WITTEN

### *Igreja Reformada do Brasil* *Maceio, AL Brazil*

ABRAM AND CELIA DEGRAAF

*Marba, Jonathan, Mirjam, Arielle*

### *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 your 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  
*and family*

JANE GROENWOLD

JOHN AND JANE HUIZING

PAUL AND MARSHA LEISTRA  
*Rachel,*

ALEXANDRA AND LUKE VANVUUREN,  
*Mark, Joel*

STEVE AND ROSELYN ONLAND  
*Ayden and Justin , Ethan,  
Jonah, Denia*

HERMAN AND CHRISTINA SCHUTTEN

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*Elianna, Carissa, Matthew, Abigail,  
Sophia, Elicia, Kenton*

BERT AND ANNE VANSTRATEN

DOUG AND JOANNE VANVEEN  
*Logan Morris, Chase Morris  
Aria Vanveen*

REV & MRS. WIESKE

### **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

TIM AND MICHELLE DYKSTRA  
*Owen, Morgan, Jase*

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*Casey, Ainsley*

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*Bryce, Finn, Emrie*

TREVOR AND TANYA VANDERMOOREN

*Joel, Reegan, Gregory, Joshua, Connor,  
Janelle, Mikayla*

GILBERT AND LINDA VANLEEUEWEN

## KERWOOD

*We celebrate with you the passing of another year. It brings us closer to "our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ" TITUS 2:13*

MINNIE BLOEMENDAL

JOHN AND CARLA BLOEMENDAL

*Lydia, Rueben, Linnea*

JOANNE BORK

SCOTT BORK

BILL DOKTER

ALIE JANSSENS

JIM AND JACKIE JANSSENS

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CHRIS AND REBECCA VEENEMA

*Lydia, Kara, Rozlyn, Zachary, Brett*

## LANGLEY

### Canadian Reformed Church

*Sending Christmas greetings to you all and wishing you the Lord's continued blessings in the new year.*

*"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope." ROMANS 15:13*

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KAREL AND HILLIE LEGRAND

HAROLD AND ANNETTE LEYENHORST

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## LONDON

### Pilgrim Canadian Reformed Church

*Wishing all our brothers and sisters a blessed holiday season as we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Saviour.*

*"For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given"*

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## LYNDEN

### American Reformed Church

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

*"How blessed are the people whose God is the Lord!" PSALM 144:15*

JIM AND STEPHANIE BAREMAN

*and family*

COR AND KAREN BLANKEN

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*and family*

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# MERRY CHRISTMAS

Many blessings to you and your family as we remember and rejoice in our Saviour's birth.



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# Merry Christmas & wishing you the Lord's blessings in 2021!



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### Neerlandia South

*"For God so loved the world, that He gave  
His only Son, that whoever believes in Him  
should not perish but have eternal life."*

JOHN 3:16

*Blessings and greetings to our fellow believers  
around the world. May God bless you  
and keep you, may He shine His face upon  
you in 2021!*

HENRY AND KATRINA BARENDREGT,  
*Jewel, Kiahna, Troy*

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*Hailey, Sierra, Saige*

## NIAGARA

### South Welland

*Wishing our brothers and sisters a Merry  
Christmas and Blessings in the New year!*

*"Glory to God in the Highest, and on  
earth peace among those with whom  
he is pleased!" LUKE 2:14*

CORNELL AND WILMA FEENSTRA

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*and family*

JAN & KITTY VANZANTEN

NOW MAY THE *God of hope*  
FILL YOU WITH ALL  
*Joy & Peace*  
ROMANS 15:13 NKJV

*Merry Christmas*  
from our family to yours

*"And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." – John 1:11*



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## NOOKSACK VALLEY

### *American Reformed Church*

*We wish all our brothers and sisters in Christ a joyful holiday season and the Lord's blessing for 2021!*

*And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased." LUKE 2:13, 14*

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*Jack, Dane*

## ORANGEVILLE

*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  
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## OWEN SOUND

*We wish a hearty greeting to our brothers and sisters in the church of Christ. May He grant one and all hope and peace as this year draws to a close.*

PASTOR DAVID AND ERIKA POL  
*Isaiah and Silas*

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## SARDIS

*"All things considered, may we all celebrate God's goodness to us again in this past year and may He continue to bless us in 2021!"*

*Season's Greetings from the church at Sardis!*

ANDY & MEGAN ADMIRAAL

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## SMITHERS

*Wishing all our brothers and sisters in the family of Jesus Christ the Lord's blessing during this holiday season and throughout 2020.*

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## SMITHVILLE

### Canadian Reformed Church

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

TINA BARTELS

*Peter, Tracy*

JOHN AND DIANE BOS

*Trevor*

LIZ BOS AND CINDY BOS

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*Ava, Mya, Theo, Sophia*

## ST. ALBERT

*Wishing our brothers and sisters in Christ  
a wonderful Christmas Season and many  
blessings in 2021*

*"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

GORDON AND JENNIFER CAMPBELL

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*Chaim, Kyrie, Natália, Micah  
Asher, Zoë*

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### Maranatha Canadian

### Reformed Church

1950 -2020

*The 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.*

*"May glory be given to God in the  
highest heaven!"*

*And may peace be given to those he is  
pleased with on earth!" LUKE 2:14*

Wishing you all the Lord's blessing in 2021!

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Now, for tomorrow



*Glory*  
to God in  
the highest  
and  
*peace*  
on earth.  
LUKE 2:14

*Merry Christmas*  
and a  
*Blessed New Year*

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*"Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come and has redeemed his people, He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David."* LUKE 2:68

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*Kristen, Jason*

PAUL AND KINSKE DEVOS  
*Nick*

**TINTERN**

*Spring Creek Canadian Reformed Church*

*"Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory."*  
REVELATION 19:6B,7A

*May the Lord surround us all with his love and care during this festive season.*

DERRICK AND ROSALYNN BERGSMA  
*Josiah, Matthew, Brenna, Donovan*

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**TORONTO**

*Bethel*

*"Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!"*  
2 CORINTHIANS 9:15

*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 2021!*

ANDREW AND MARIANN BAARTMAN  
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*We wish all the brothers and sisters around the world Season's Greetings and the Lord's blessings in 2021!*

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**WILLOUGHBY HEIGHTS**

*We wish all our brothers and sisters the Lord's blessing for 2021!*

*"Oh sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth! Sing to the Lord, bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples!"* PSALM 96:1-3

CORY AND EMMA FLOKSTRA

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*Roy, Yannick, Kylian, Nyls, Sophy, Jesper, Ambyr*

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**WINNIPEG**

*Grace Canadian Reformed Church*

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

*Blessed be 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

RICHARD AND LIZ BUIST  
*Eric, Marjorie and Jason*

ALAN AND JANETTE DEWIT  
*and family*

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 you joy and comfort remembering our Saviour's birth and His gift of grace this Christmas season, and throughout 2021.

From our entire team:



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### **YARROW**

*Greetings to our brothers and sisters  
 in the Lord.*

*And the peace of God, which surpasses  
 all understanding, will guard your hearts  
 and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

PHILIPPIANS 4:7

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Wishing you the Lord's blessing in 2021

*Ed & Henrietta VanderLaan  
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*Staff: Maurice Brink, Gary Halbig, Joel Harsevoort, Mark Kottelenberg,  
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this **Christmas** season  
and throughout the **New Year!**



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