

## Member

- ◆ Alive Ministries
- ◆ Baldwin Street CRC
- ◆ Bauer CRC
- ◆ Cottonwood Church
- ◆ Evergreen Ministries
- ◆ Fairway CRC
- ◆ First Hudsonville CRC
- ◆ First Jenison CRC
- ◆ Forest Grove CRC
- ◆ Friendship Chapel
- ◆ Georgetown CRC
- ◆ Hillcrest CRC
- ◆ Immanuel CRC
- ◆ Jamestown CRC
- ◆ Messiah CRC
- ◆ Ridgewood CRC
- ◆ Searchlight Ministries
- ◆ Trinity CRC
- ◆ Twelfth Avenue CRC
- ◆ Zutphen CRC



## Praises . . . and Prayer requests

~praise God with Hillcrest CRC as Mr. Kevin Van Wyhe begins his work as their youth pastor, under the title of "Commissioned Pastor" in the CRC.

~pray for safety for all of our church family members that are serving in the military, both those that are far from home and those that are not so far.

~praise God for those who open their hearts and lives to refugee families, and pray that all may be filled with acceptance, encouragement, and love.

## Collaborative Relationships (10:24 Teams) Part 5

10:24 Teams are a very important feature of developing collaborative relationships; one of the five values that were adopted by Classis Georgetown at its September 15, 2011, meeting. The past two issues of this newsletter featured thoughts from a 10:24 Team member and reflections from a recipient of a visit, both pastors. This issue contains reflections from **Mr. Doug Haveman and Mr. Merle Koops, both of whom are in leadership roles at 12th Avenue Christian Reformed Church**, which asked for and received a visit from a 10:24 Team.

Since 12th Avenue had just completed their re-visioning process, some of their leaders had reservations about what a 10:24 Team could do for them. Due to Pastor Mark's prayerful persistence, and after learning more about the objectives and likely benefits of participating, they were connected with the 10:24 Team of Mr. Floyd Brouwer and the Rev. Josh Van Drunen.

The initial meeting consisted of five people, Pastor Mark, Haveman, Koops, Brouwer and Pastor Josh. During this meeting it soon became apparent that Brouwer and Pastor Josh had a real caring commitment to the spiritual health and well-being of its church.

At the second meeting the full Council and Vision Advisory Team attended and participated. The meeting was informal and discussion focused on ways to implement 12th Avenue's new Mission and Vision statements. The participants were asked to discuss events that brought joy to 12th Avenue over the past 5 years in addition to events that were challenging during that same time period. It was much easier to list the joys and blessings than it was to list the challenges faced. However, the 12th Avenue leaders soon realized that other congregations are also challenged with many of the same things that they are facing.

As a group we realized that the Spirit continues to be active at 12th Avenue and that the 10:24 experience is a process. We look forward to getting our initial feedback from Pastor Josh and Brouwer, as well as follow-up sessions with them. The prayer of Haveman and Koops is that the 10:24 team may be a resource for Classis as most congregations struggle with similar challenges. We are encouraged that God has plans for our congregation and we thank Classis Georgetown for the opportunity to work with the 10:24 Team of Pastor Josh and Brouwer.

**As a pastor or church leader you are encouraged to contact Tricia Bosma, the 10:24 Coordinator for Classis Georgetown, at [1024coordinator@gmail.com](mailto:1024coordinator@gmail.com), either to request a team or to find out more information on being part of a 10:24 Team.**

*"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds."  
Hebrews 10:24.*

## Vision Statement Classis Georgetown

**Classis Georgetown is a community of Christian Reformed Churches in Eastern Ottawa County who live and minister together, in Christ, to transform lives and communities.**

## Classis Values

### Healthy Leaders

We equip leaders to transform lives and communities.

### Collaborative Relationships

We call out the strengths of each church and pursue ministry together to create new ways of transforming lives and communities.

### Empowering Worship

We celebrate and are sustained by God's presence as he transforms lives and communities.

### Daring Hospitality

We welcome the stranger in ways that transform lives and communities.

### Risky Compassion

We extend uncommon generosity to the suffering and work to eliminate the causes of that suffering in order to transform lives and communities.

## Church Sign

A good example  
has  
twice the value  
of good advice.

## “I Know That My Redeemer Lives”

Every now and then a group of Christians meet together and request someone to share his or her testimony. A common response is that “I don’t really have a personal testimony, since I did not have a dramatic conversion experience.” But the truth is that however we came to have a relationship with the Lord, our story is our testimony. This is the testimony of **Dirk Koetje** of Hudsonville.

Dirk and his younger sister, Maggie, were born and raised in the Hudsonville area, where his parents, Don and Pam, continue to live. His family attended a Reformed Church and his education was at Hudsonville Christian School and Unity Christian High School. He attended Grand Valley State University, but after one year transferred to Davenport University where he received his Bachelor’s Degree in Business. His father has a heating and cooling business in this area. Since he enjoyed working with him, the plan was that he would become part of that business. Up to this point, this story could be the same as that of many other people by changing names and places.

But there was another thread in his life that was being woven and would influence his future. He did go to work for his dad after receiving his degree from Davenport, and thoroughly enjoyed this type of work. There began to be a restlessness within him, however, that he was not using his gifts as he should. He was beginning to feel a call to ministry, but was very good at ignoring it.

He did not plan to go to seminary, but there were several things that pointed him in that direction. One especially sticks out in Dirk’s mind. His grandparents lived in the McBain, MI area, and he would go up there with his family frequently. Grandpa and Grandma Nederhoed attended the Highland Christian Reformed Church in

Marion, Michigan. If the Koetje family was there on Sunday they would attend with them. When he was in middle school he remembers saying to his mother that someday he wanted to be a pastor at this church. He also loves the outdoors, especially hunting. Maybe in his young mind he thought that he could hunt during the week and preach on Sundays.

As Dirk kept working with his dad, the feelings of being in ministry continued to grow. Calvin Seminary was hosting a visiting day for interested students. He attended rather reluctantly, fully expecting that this was not what he was going to do. As he entered the chapel, which was part of the planned program that day, he looked around him. Directly behind him stood the Rev. Keith Mannes, the pastor of Highland CRC, the very church his grandparents attended and where he said he wanted to pastor someday. This convinced him that it was a further sign from God confirming his calling. Other doors continued to open, the finances fell into place, and soon he was a full time student at Calvin Seminary, studying for the ministry.

Dirk met his wife, Erin, while both were high school students at Unity. She was a member of an area CRC where they were married. Sometime later they decided to accompany his grandma to Cottonwood Church where she was a member. His grandpa had passed away, and their intent was to help her through this difficult time. It was on this visit that they met several young couples that they knew from high school. Soon they were invited to a Bible study group. The decision was made together to attend, and eventually they become members of Cottonwood.

This church gave Dirk and Erin a place to grow spiritually, both individually and as a

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couple. It was also the place where their two children were baptized, Adrie, aged 2 1/2, and Brooks, just one month old.

There are numerous people and events that have influenced and encouraged Dirk on this journey. He is very grateful for all the support that his pastor, the Rev. Matt Palsrok has given him. He counts this as a special blessing. He served an internship at Baldwin Street CRC last year during the pastor’s sabbatical, and to this church he is deeply grateful for all he learned. Other staff and members at Cottonwood have also been kind, caring and encouraging.



Dirk has a high regard for the foundations of the CRC, including the catechism and the confessions. He also appreciates the importance that is placed on Christian education, and family values.

An important issue in the CRC today, Dirk thinks, is our youth. He knows them well, having worked in youth ministry at Cottonwood for four years. He believes that while they are in the world, they need to be encouraged to not be part of the world. He believes that they are hungry for the Bible, and that we need to listen to them and respect them. And as adults, we need to “do church” well, take it seriously, and give it our very best efforts.

Job 19:25-27 is a Bible passage that is a favorite of Dirk. “I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me.”

These words will serve him well as he plans to enter pastoral ministry this summer.

### Classis Georgetown Transition Team, Members and Staff

Rev. Mark Bennink  
Rev. Dave Den Haan  
Rev. Gerry Koning  
Rev. Marc Nelesen  
Rev. Josh Van Druenen

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Ms. Kathy Jelsema, Classis Asst. Treasurer and Web Keeper  
Mr. Harold Postma, Classis Clerk

Mr. Mel Vander Bie, Classis Treasurer  
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