

Classis Matters

January February 2016

Member Churches of Classis Georgetown

- ◆ 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

~ pray with thanksgiving for all of the Classis Georgetown churches that are taking part in the Church Renewal Lab.

~pray that host families may be found for those international students with a desire to attend a Christian High School..

~pray for the students from our classis who are presently attending seminary, and encourage others who are thinking about ministry as a career.

Renewal at Fairway CRC

Fairway CRC began a church renewal program in the summer of 2013. Along with Immanuel CRC in Hudsonville and nine other churches in West Michigan we tried to listen to God, our neighborhood, our people, and our own hearts so that we could learn what new ministry and life God might have for us. Why church renewal at Fairway? We were invited into it by Rev. Keith Doornbos, the leader of The Renewal Lab, sponsored by Calvin Theological Seminary.

The Renewal Lab is a two-year program designed for churches that have plateaued or are in decline. It strives to equip those churches to become vibrant, missional communities and it strives to revitalize pastors for leading congregations in that direction. Fairway wasn't in decline. In fact, Fairway was and still is a fun place to be! However, our membership had remained the same for many years. More significantly, we were no longer sure of what we were called to do and be as a congregation. Why does Fairway exist? We couldn't answer that question clearly.

Fairway was a member of the very first cohort of churches in the program. All eleven of us were guinea pigs in the scary process of church renewal, but we have learned so much! God reminded us that Fairway was planted in 1989 as an outreach into our area of Jenison, south of Chicago Drive. God reminded us that he calls every church to be a disciple-making church. God taught us to be honest about our failures, confident in his grace, and courageous in seeking new ways to live and express ancient truth and transforming love. He is moving our people from being members to being disciples. He is moving us from seeing church as a place, an event, an entitlement to being a community of broken-but-being-restored people. He is moving me, Fairway's pastor, from being a resident theologian to being a discipler and missionary trainer.

The renewal process is always at its best when it doesn't merely provide new formulas for doing church but when it leads congregations to listen to the leading of the Holy Spirit and then follow that leading with faith and courage. It has done that for us, and we are learning to listen and then follow.

To be honest, we continue to talk with members who hear the word "renewal" and want to run away! We also have conversations with people who are eager and even impatient for newness and change. We all have a long way to go, but the journey has become richer and more fruitful as we gather around the mission of seeking and growing disciples. Our church's heart is being made more humble and stronger at the same time! (Article submitted by Pastor Dave Den Haan)

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

**Adam blamed Eve,
Eve blamed the snake,
And the snake didn't have
a leg to stand on.**

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Investing in Renewal

For the past three years Classis Georgetown has been heavily invested in congregational strategic planning with a missional focus. This has happened through participation in the Church Renewal Lab at Calvin Theological Seminary. In fact, nearly half of the churches in Classis Georgetown (9 of 20) have been or are involved with the Lab. Those congregations include: Immanuel, Fairway, First, Baldwin Street, Friendship Chapel, Georgetown, Trinity, Twelfth Ave. and Bauer. Interestingly, of the 41 churches that have enrolled in the Renewal Lab since its inception three years ago, one out of four (25%) have come from Classis Georgetown. This clearly indicates a classical passion to raise the bar on being more intentional and more missional in every aspect of ministry.

The purpose of the Church Renewal Lab is to partner with congregations as they join God on his mission of making more and better disciples who transform lives and communities for Christ. The motto of the Renewal Lab is "Change the Atmosphere... Journey to Mission." Changing the atmosphere focuses on the heart (hearts for the lost and disconnected). Journeying to mission focuses on the head (strategic planning for missional renewal).

During the two-year revitalization journey congregations spend six months listening. They listen from above (*what is God saying in his Word about his will and his way?*), from among (*what is the congregation saying about their gifts and passions?*), from outside (*what is the community and culture saying about*

their needs and opportunities?) and from within (*what is the Holy Spirit calling us uniquely to do?*). Out of this listening process a refreshed vision is developed, which is then implemented in every aspect of the congregation's life.

The Church Renewal Lab is a comprehensive project encompassing: quarterly learning labs, team retreats, peer learning environments, coaching, team development, reading and internships. Congregations that choose to participate have found that the two year investment has helped them ask and answer three important questions:

- 1) Who are we "now"?
- 2) Where are we headed?
- 3) How will we get there?

Whether a church is large or small, healthy or struggling, stable or in transition the Lab's process can benefit all.

The cost for participation is approximately \$3,000/year with grants available for small churches. A new cohort of 10-12 churches is launching this June. If you're interested in participating or would like additional information, you are encouraged to contact the director of the Church Renewal Lab, Keith Doornbos at 616-566-4413 or by e-mail at kdoornbos@calvinseminary.edu. You may also benefit from conversations with participating churches listed above. Additionally, you may contact Rev. Larry Doornbos (EverGreen Ministries) who is on the teaching and creative team of the Lab.

Note: In recognition of the partner-

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ship between Georgetown and the CRL a two year classical grant of \$5,000/year has been provided to the Seminary to offset actual expenses which come to \$6,000 per year per church. (Article submitted by Rev. Keith Doornbos, Project Director of the Church Renewal Lab)



Student Fund Committee

College seniors or seminary ready students who are professing members of one of the churches of Classis Georgetown, pursuing ministry in the Christian Reformed Church, and in need of financial assistance, are invited to apply for financial aid for the 2016-2017 school year. Please contact Pastor Stan Drenth, 3903 Canterbury Dr, Hudsonville MI, 49426, phone 616 450-7429. You may also retrieve the forms on the internet under Classis Georgetown – grants and aid. Applications will be accepted until March 15, 2016.

Thank you for communicating this matter to the members of your congregation.

Classis Georgetown Vision Team, Members and Staff

Rev. Mark Bennink
Rev. Larry Doornbos
Rev. Dave Jolman
Rev. Gerry Koning
Rev. Marc Nelesen

Ms. Kathy Jelsema, Classis Asst. Treasurer
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