

## 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 for the new Pastor of Congregational Life at Ridgewood CRC, Rev. Bonnie Boote.

~praise God for Rev. Terry Genzink as he retires after 18 years of ministry at Messiah CRC. Pray for him and his wife, Mary, as they prepare for the next chapter in their lives.

~praise God for interim pastors at First Jenison, and Ridgewood, and pray for the ongoing search process at these churches, and at EverGreen Ministries.

~pray for our graduates, that future plans may be realized, whether in further education or in employment.

## Risky Compassion

When considering the call to Forest Grove CRC, I confess that I was congregationalist in my thinking. I weighed the call in a manner focused exclusively on what Forest Grove CRC was doing as a congregation. Classis was there, I thought, to make sure that Forest Grove did its work responsibly and within certain denominationally set boundaries, but that was it...something like a supervisor making sure the workers on the assembly line are doing their work properly. I assumed that Classis Georgetown would be like my previous classis, only in West Michigan and not in Iowa.

Was I ever wrong! There is something unique about Georgetown. When I arrived, a couple of the ministers quickly brought me up to speed. This classis, I learned, was going to engage in ministry as members of one body. (*Note Vision and Values in sidebar.*)

Each classis meeting has one of these values as its theme. This is how it worked on May 16 with the theme of Risky Compassion.

Risky Compassion involves sincere inclusion of those whom our culture tends to reject: people who are differently abled, older, struggle with financial, familial or other hardships. We met at Harbor House, a ministry supported by Classis Georgetown for some time but still a place that many of us have not visited. I learned that even though 1 out of 5 households has someone with a disability of some kind, our world is arranged in such a way that we rarely come into contact with people who have disabilities. As someone who has many of the world's values and prejudices to shed, I knew that this meeting was going to move me out of my comfort zone (Christianese term for being challenged to live according to the gospel).

Rev. Mark Stephenson, from the denomination's Office of Disability Concerns, was thus not brought in for the typical five-minute update with a handout directly after the five-minute update and handout of a couple of other ministries/organizations (during which time delegates become disconnected and inattentive), but rather a 10 or 15 minutes as an integral part of our meeting, upholding the theme. Calvin College might come when the meeting is about Healthy Leaders. World Missions might come when the theme is about Daring Hospitality. On May 16, however, the theme was Risky Compassion and we were all tuned in to what Rev. Stephenson had to say about including all people in Christ's church. What I remember most about his presentation was the tone, that of a gentle and patient teacher. I left the meeting not with a sense of guilt for what we have not done as a congregation or as the larger body of Christ, but rather with a sense of the enormous grace of God who welcomes us and in whose name we have the privilege of welcoming one another.

As members of one body, we lived and worshiped together. At supper, each delegate ate and drank with the residents of Harbor House. As we had conversation with the residents and the caregivers and were allowed to see the individually decorated rooms, we gained more of an appreciation for the image of God in every person. What struck me about the decor was how boldly each room spoke of its occupant, this in contrast to the decor one sees in most other places (including homes and bedrooms) which tends to stress conformity and repress individuality. Every one of us is an irreplaceable part of the body of Christ. Our time of worship included the ministry of the word in an earlier part of the meeting. Rev. Gerry Koning gave us a brief, clear and challenging sermon based on Luke 14 (healing of a man with dropsy and parable of the Great Banquet). At the close of the meeting, we met God in the sacrament of Holy Communion. Together, residents of Harbor House and delegates of Classis Georgetown ate and drank Christ's body and blood. (Continued in next column)

## 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.

As members of one body, the congregations of Classis Georgetown are doing the work of ministry. Since the Classis is part of the larger body of Christ, we seek to work with our denomination-wide ministries as well as ministries that are not directly tied to the Christian Reformed Church in North America. Ministry in our classis is a unique experience at this time, but by God's grace, more classes will adopt similar structures that bring out the strength of doing ministry together for the glory of God who makes us one in Christ and fills us with the same Holy Spirit.

(Rev. Jeff Scripps, Forest Grove Church, contributed this article)

## Living in God's Faithful Promises

Current Classis Georgetown seminarian, Rick Boomsma, continues to grow in both knowledge and trust that God through the work of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, has been calling him for some time. This has been realized through His church, by way of His Word and the Sacraments, particularly infant baptism.

Even so, the journey was not all smooth sailing, as he had his share of trials and tribulations. These experiences continue to contribute to Rick's keen awareness of brokenness, and by the grace of God, are becoming more and more a great gift in bearing witness to a broken world

Rick was born in the southern Grand Rapids area, and at the age of seven his family (parents and siblings, of whom he is second born) moved to the Roosevelt Park area of the city. His entire education was in the Calvin Christian Schools.

Life at home became difficult for Rick and when he was between 6th and 7th grade his parents divorced. Even though he had been a very good student, these unsettling circumstances caused him to neglect his studies while he lived a life of pretense. He always seemed to be able to find things to do that would push him to the edge of getting expelled from school, but he was wise enough to know his limits. For him life was chaos, except that when he attended church he would find a safe place, a haven of peace and comfort.

Rick's family attended Roosevelt Park Community Church, and Mr. Josh Shaarda was his youth pastor. They had personalities that clashed and one time Rick was kicked out of the youth group (for good reason), but in his wisdom Josh allowed him to come back.

The youth group went on a mission trip to the New Orleans area and attended a very small Pentecostal church for worship. There were about 4 people in attendance, plus the youth group. The pastor was

preaching his heart out to this group, teaching them about being honest and open as they lived their lives for the Lord. Rick remembers lying on the floor and the reality of not living into his baptism, nor living a Christ-like life hit him. A short time later while still at this retreat, he remembers sitting on a porch and coming to grips with the realization that he could no longer live this way. He now had built a significant relationship with Josh, who supported and encouraged Rick and prayed with him.

When they arrived back home from this trip, Rick spoke with each of his friends and explained that he had changed, and he could no longer live a life that did not reflect his baptism. Many of those friendships ended at that point.

For Rick it was time to begin thinking about college. He didn't want to attend the same college that many of his classmates were going, so he contacted Reformed Bible College (now Kuyper College). They asked about his grade point average, which was 1.9 at the time, and said that in order for him to be accepted at RBC he would have to prove himself. At the end of his high school career his G.P.A. had risen to 4.0. His following 4 years were spent at RBC.

This college provided Rick an education and a degree in Biblical Studies. It is also the place where he met his wife, Annie Alvarez, who is from Honduras, and who graduated with the same degree a year later. They are now the parents of son Brady, 6, and daughter, Natalie, 4. They are home schooled. This family will number five after a third child is born in November.

After his graduation, Rick spent one year at Calvin Seminary before deciding that what he really needed to do was to get some



Rick, Annie, Brady and Natalie Boomsma

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experience working in the church. He had been working at Rogers Heights CRC as a youth pastor, and now he and Annie moved to Washington state, where he worked as a youth pastor at the First Christian Reformed Church of Seattle. A professor at a local university by the name of Markus Von Steinfort, was part time staff at this church and began to disciple and teach in Rick's life, especially in the area of theology, an area that had already been invigorating to his mind and heart. Becoming close friends and having Prof. Von Steinfort as a mentor gave Rick the confirmation of his calling that he felt he needed.

Now it was time for Rick and Annie to move back to Grand Rapids and classes at Calvin Seminary. He had stints as youth pastor at South Blendon RCA, and Fairway CRC, all in the western Michigan area. While at Calvin Seminary he has experienced summer ministry at Fond du lac, Wisconsin, a church plant and Fresno, California, in central California. This summer they plan to minister at the Alameda, CRC, also in central California.

For Rick, the academic part of ministry is most rewarding. He appreciates the theologians that have left their mark on the church across time and space. As for his role in the church, he sees it defined by the Word and the sacraments. He sees himself both serving and standing behind; the work as both comforting and terrifying.

God continues to increase his love for the Church for who she is and where she is at, and though she is often unfaithful she remains' Rick's spiritual mother and God's gracious promises continue to be held out to His church.

Rick and his family live with his father and stepmom while in this area. When he graduates next year they are free from physical attachments and are willing to go wherever God leads them.

### Classis Georgetown Transition Team, Members, and Staff

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