

# Classis Matters

May June 2015

## 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 with  
the Messiah CRC and their  
new pastor, the Rev. Nate  
Meldrim.

~praise God with the con-  
gregation of Forest Grove  
CRC as they enjoy their  
new church building!

~ pray for the Jamestown  
CRC as they make decisions  
about their next pastor.

~praise God for all of the  
opportunities to participate in  
summer mission projects.

## A New Building for Forest Grove CRC

It is amazing how one verse can stick in one's mind throughout a season of life or a major project. Numbers 11:23 has come up often in our discussions. It reads "The LORD answered Moses, "Is the LORD's arm too short? Now you will see whether or not what I say will come true for you." That question is fitting for our smaller and older congregation as we wondered whether to build or wait. If this building project would please the LORD, He would provide.

After much prayer and discussion, we decided to build. The sanctuary was splendid, but stairs everywhere and a deteriorating and less than functional facility were a challenge for all. On April 20, 2014 (Easter Sunday), we had our final service in the old building.

For the next year we worshiped in the morning in a community hall and in the evening, we combined our services with Zutphen CRC, whose members were gracious hosts. During this year, pledges and offerings came in and the work continued. Though this was a trying time for the congregation, through it all the Lord provided. The Christian Reformed Church in North America also helped us out tremendously through it's loan fund.

On April 19, 2015, we held our first service in the new building which was dedicated to the LORD who had once again shown His great faithfulness (the cornerstone says "Great is thy Faithfulness"). We marched into the sanctuary as a congregation singing this song. This new facility is exactly what the congregation needs in its mission. Some things we now enjoy are a projection screen, new sound system, a place for fellowship, classrooms, rooms for staff to work, pastor's study, warming kitchen, new bathrooms, and nursery with a family bathroom. This new facility will be a help as we seek to invite and encourage people to follow Christ and as we seek to glorify God through worship, fellowship, education and witness. We hope to be debt free by year's end.



## A New Pastor for Messiah CRC

He was born in Delaware, baptized in a United Methodist Church, raised in suburban Chicago, and professed his faith as an Episcopalian. Then Rev. Nate Meldrim learned about the Reformed Worldview at Calvin College, where he also met Kristin Deppe. One week after graduation in 2000 they were married. While at Western Seminary, son Andrew was born. Nate's first call was to the Reformed Church in Kinderhook, NY, where son Jonah was born. His second call was to North Blendon Reformed Church, where daughter Lily came home from China at age two. The children attend Hudsonville Christian School, Kristin is an RN, and Nate either spends time with his family or roots for all the Chicago teams except the White Sox. Otherwise, he is fishing in his spot that is ten minutes and a million miles away. Classis Georgetown welcomes the Meldrim family.

## 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

Feeling down?

Look up!

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### God's Faithfulness at Twelfth Avenue CRC

In connection with Twelfth Avenue CRC's 60th Anniversary last fall, the Rev. Mark Bennink preached a series of sermons about God's faithfulness. This is another of the testimonies that were shared during that series, the story of Tom and Sharon Visser.

In the last couple of weeks, Tom and I have been talking a lot about God's faithfulness at Twelfth Avenue CRC. The more we talk the more we see of His faithfulness over the past 60 years. There are numerous times when we have seen and heard it, but there are two experiences that are especially close to our hearts and stand out in our minds, that we want to remind you of.

In December of 1963, God challenged our hearts to mission work through the CRC World Mission's office with a call for missionary teachers to Nigeria. Mr. Al Huijbregste, a member of Twelfth Avenue, and assistant secretary of Foreign Missions at that time, intensified that call when he talked to us and encouraged us to apply. In response to our application, God opened the door and we were accepted as missionaries to go to Nigeria. Even today, we stand amazed at the support and encouragement you showed to us as our departure date was delayed 6-8 weeks due to the death of both of Tom's parents. However, when God opened the door for us to go, He also opened the hearts of the congregation of this church to fully support us financially. At that time missionaries were denominationally supported, but Twelfth Avenue, answered the call by fully supporting us. For the almost 10 years that we were in Nigeria, this church was faithful to their

commitment. However, more importantly, you supported us with your prayers. Along with your prayers and financial support, came many letters and cards. Communication was very slow in those days and letters often took from 1 to 4 weeks to arrive. But you were faithful and this was a great encouragement for us. Through your encouragement we sensed the Holy Spirit verifying weekly that God was blessing our efforts as we worked with the Nigerian people. Each week we eagerly looked forward to your letters that came with a reminder that you along with Rev. Vander Kam, Rev. Hulst, and Rev. Erffmeyer were including us in the congregational prayer each Sunday. We were blessed to be a part of a faithful congregation and God blessed His work through us in Nigeria. We have been witnesses to His faithfulness as we see our former students take leadership roles in the church, schools, government and their own families.

While in Nigeria we also experienced God's faithfulness at the time of the birth of each of our children. Today as we read about the Ebola virus throughout the world, we are vividly reminded of the experience we had in Nigeria while waiting for the birth of our third child, Jane. At that time there was an outbreak of Lassa Fever, in fact, my doctor died as a result of the fever and the hospital I was to go to was closed due to so many deaths. As a result, I was sent to Vom Hospital, which was in a very remote area, and there, as the only patient in the hospi-

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tal, I gave birth to a healthy baby girl. Again God's faithfulness became so real. Even today, our hearts are still thankful for your wonderful support of us while in Nigeria.

And yet another experience where we have seen God's faithfulness through His people at Twelfth Avenue was through your acceptance of my sister, Mary, who had Down's syndrome. Mary taught us many lessons through her life but the relationship of God's people at Twelfth Avenue to Mary was outstanding. As Tom saw your acceptance and inclusion of her, his heart was moved to become an advocate for inclusive education for all God's children at Creston Christian School (in Grand Rapids.



Twelfth Avenue accepted Mary as God's child without any obvious reservations. Before it was "common place" to accept those with disabilities as members of the church, Twelfth Avenue did that very thing through including Mary in Sunday School and even a special catechism class, preparing her to make Public Profession of Faith and becoming a full member of this church. You saw her as a full member and a fellow believer loved by God and cared for by you, His people. It was and continues to be a joy to see the people of this church love and care for those with special needs. It was as if we saw the face of Jesus in each one of you as you loved her and supported her. (Article submitted by Tom and Sharon Visser)

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

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