

Classis Matters

September October 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 for
the beauty of the fall colors!

~praise God for the cross
cultural ministry that Trinity
CRC has undertaken with
the Somalian church plant..

~ praise God for many lead-
ers in our churches who
have participated in the
Deeper Journey retreats.

~pray for all of the churches
that have been, are, or will
be involved with the Renew-
al Lab journey.

The Renewal Lab

The Congregational Renewal Learning Laboratory (The Renewal Lab) is one of Calvin Seminary's most recent commitments to come alongside congregations and their leaders to strengthen them in fulfilling their call to be God's redeeming presence in their local communities.

The Renewal Lab is a two-year renewal journey providing: eight quarterly renewal courses, a peer-learning environment, congregational involvement, coaching, team development, accountability, and trained interns. (from the CRCNA website). Several churches in Classis Georgetown have taken or are taking this journey, including First Hudsonville CRC.

Pastor Dave Jolman of First Hudsonville reports that the Renewal Lab process has been transformative for him and the congregation. "First Hudsonville is now well into the second year of this renewal journey. We are learning what it means to be an intentionally missional congregation. We are discovering how we can be a community of believers which exists for the glory of God and the sake of others. And as a result of this process we have articulated our mission, vision, values and ministry goals with greater clarity.

First CRC has a long and rich history of over 100 years. That history has given our congregation strong roots. But we know God calls us to continual renewal and new growth. The growing edge for us right now is how to be a church that blesses our community. Our Kids Hope ministry at South Elementary is one of the primary ways we are doing that. This fall we set a goal of having 5 new Kids Hope mentors - we actually got 7!

The Renewal Lab has changed our conversations. And those conversations are changing us - renewing us.

This is only the beginning but we're excited to think of how God will use us to bless this community in the years to come!" (Pastor Dave Jolman, from First Hudsonville CRC, contributed to this article)

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

Be still
and know . . .
then get
up and go.

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“What Does the Lord Your God Ask of You . . . “

It is with deep gratitude to God that the Christian Reformed Church continues to encourage and support the people from all walks of life that answer the call to ministry. The story that follows is another example.

Our story begins in South Haven, MI, where Christopher Bouma was born. His father, Roger Bouma, was the pastor of the Kibbie CRC near South Haven. Two years later his father entered the U. S. Navy as a Chaplain and the family moved to Guam. Even though they lived there for only a few years, Chris was very aware that this was a different culture. This was followed by assignments in South Carolina, Japan, Virginia (2), and Illinois. His father is presently an active duty Navy chaplain stationed with the US Navy in Great Lakes, IL.

By this time the family consisted of the parents, Roger and Charlene, sons Chris and David, and a daughter, Katherine. For the first time they would experience “regular” church life as members of the Fox Valley CRC in Crystal Lake, IL. Their first “regular” school experience came at the same time, since their prior education took place on Navy bases.

After graduating from high school, Chris enrolled in Calvin College. During a freshman religion class, the professor asked if he had ever considered ministry as his field of study. The first seed was sown, but he felt called to biology at that time, even though he had been considering premed. At the same time he began to

reflect on how faith would relate to this field.

While at Calvin, Chris met his future wife, Elisabeth Beenen, a Calvin student from Vermont. They were married the summer after he graduated.

With a biology degree in hand, Chris and Elisabeth moved to Pennsylvania as he had decided to attend Penn State to work on his Master’s Degree in Ecology. Even though this field of

study was his personal choice, he did not find his efforts fulfilling. He would wonder why does this matter, or how does this relate to faith. During the 2 1/2 years they were in Pennsylvania they worshipped with a Presbyterian Church of America congregation. This was just what they needed to nourish their faith. The pastor encouraged them and mentored Chris as he began to feel the call to ministry more and more. After completing his program at Penn State, they returned to Michigan and Calvin Seminary.

During Elisabeth’s first year at Calvin College, her parents sold their dairy farm in Vermont and moved to west Michigan. They began to attend the Forest Grove CRC, and at this time the Bouma’s also began to be involved..

Chris found work in a local greenhouse and Elisabeth was able to use her business degree at a local land-

Classis Georgetown Transition Team
P.O. Box 31
Hudsonville, MI 49426
Phone: 616.669.5051
Email: classisgt@i2k.com
Website: www.classisgeorgetown.com

scaping company. All of the uncertainties of moving, housing, employment, and finances for a return to studies; all fell into place for them. In addition they found competent and capable mentors in Pastor Jeff Scripps, pastor at Forest Grove, and his wife, Michelle. Now the outward calling and the inward calling were both confirmed and Chris was again on the right path. He felt so blessed to be surrounded by Christians when



he came to Calvin College, and he has that same feeling at the seminary. Even though his earlier years of education were in the secular world, he knew already in the third grade why he believed.

As to his reflections on where the CRC is at today, Chris believes that as a denomination “we are both loving God and loving others” which is where he believes God wants us to be.

As to future plans, the next big change will come to the Bouma’s in January, which is when they are expecting their first child. When Chris has completed seminary, he thinks he would like to be a pastor of an established church, but is open to wherever God leads him.

One of many Scripture passages that are helpful to Chris is found in Deuteronomy 10:12-13-”And now, O Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you . . . to observe the Lord’s commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good.”

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
and Web Keeper
Mr. Mel Vander Bie, Classis Treasurer

Rev. Duane VanderBrug, Chair/Facilitator
Ms. Dee VanHeuvelen,
Administrative Ass’t., Stated Clerk, and
Newsletter Editor
Ms. Tricia Bosma, Alternate Stated Clerk