

Guelph Campus Ministry

A ministry of the Christian Reformed Church at the University of Guelph



Our Mission:

To be a community where all who are curious about life and God wrestle with scripture and are challenged to root their identity in Christ.

A Very Special Newsletter: Celebrating 50 years!

By Sara DeMoor, Campus Minister

GCM started 50 years ago as Huron Campus Ministry, a joint initiative by the CRC across the University of Guelph, University of Waterloo, and Wilfrid Laurier University campuses. Today, Huron Campus Ministry exists as two separate entities - Guelph Campus Ministry and Waterloo Campus Ministry - but we remain linked in friendship and in a shared desire to be a space for faith formation and academic faithfulness on our university campuses. Currently, we have an extra special connection with WCM, as their interim campus minister is Melissa Burmaster, who provided leadership to GCM during my sabbatical earlier this year. The GCM interns and I also recently had the opportunity to join the WCM interns and Melissa, as well as many other CRC campus ministers and student leaders, at a student leadership retreat at Muskoka Woods.

Given our long history with WCM it was natural for us to come together to celebrate our joint 50th anniversary this year. We are incredibly grateful to campus ministry alumni Cathy Cranbury, Marge Siertsema (a current GCM board member), and Laura Machry for all of their hard work on this event, as well as the entire planning committee and all of the volunteers who made the actual day possible. In this newsletter you will find reflections on 50 years of HCM/GCM/WCM history, photos from those 50 years and from the celebration event, and an invitation to contribute to the legacy project we are fundraising for to celebrate our anniversary. You will also, of course find updates on what GCM has looked like this semester.



Sara and Laura Machry celebrating in front of the balloon arch created by the GCM interns.

Sara with Rev. Ed Den Haan, GCM's first campus minister (1977-2005)



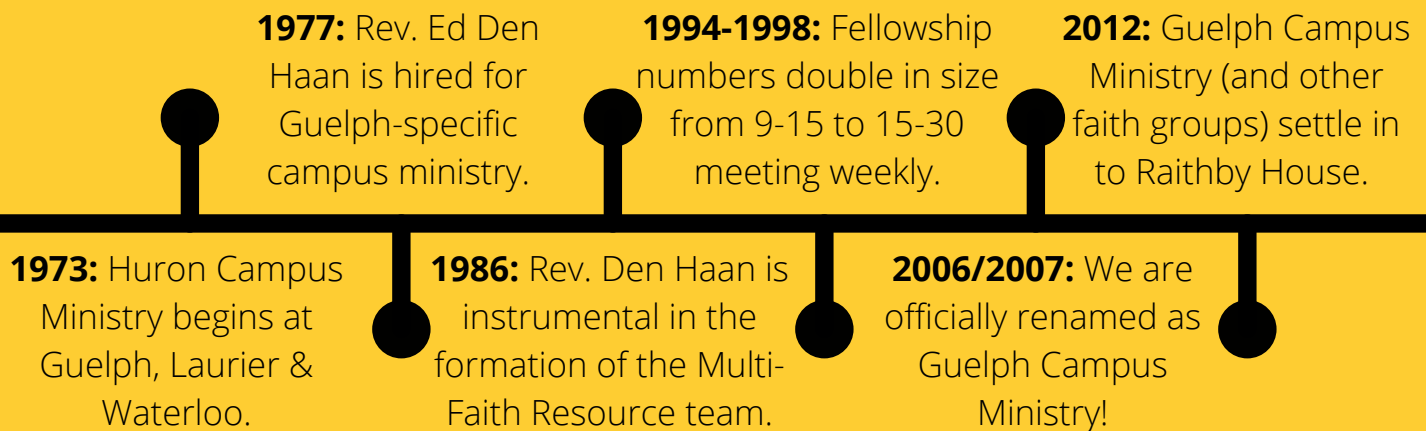
GCM/WCM 50th Anniversary Celebration Overview

On October 14, 2023, over **150** friends, alumni, and supporters of the Guelph and Waterloo Campus Ministries gathered with us to celebrate at Water Street Church in Guelph. We were thrilled to have in attendance Joanne and Jake Bakelaar; Jake was the elder at Water Street Church (formerly First CRC) who was tasked with providing pastoral care for CRC students attending UofG in 1973--and, unbeknownst to him, effectively started a campus ministry! Reverend Ed Den Haan, is GCM's first (and longest-serving) campus minister, and many alumni were overjoyed to reconnect with Ed and his wife Willene.

Throughout the afternoon, we had the opportunity to hear from several people who shaped and have been shaped by the ministries on the Guelph and Waterloo campuses. We celebrated, reconnected, lamented where appropriate, and, above all, marveled at God's faithfulness on our campuses. Pictures were taken, buttons were made, memories were shared, and delicious food was eaten.



GCM Timeline



Legacy Project: Hospitality at Raithby

We are seeking to enable hospitality and bless the university with a new bench on the Raithby House porch. Raithby House is the home of faith and spirituality on campus at the University of Guelph and the porch is one of GCM's favourite places to gather together as a community. This new bench will feature a plaque marking GCM's 50-year presence on campus.

Funds raised as part of this 50th anniversary Legacy Project will be split evenly between Guelph and Waterloo Campus Ministries.

E-transfer donations to hcmguelph.treasurer@gmail.com with "Legacy Projects" in the memo line. In order to receive a charitable tax receipt, please follow up your e-transfer with an email to the same address with your name and mailing address!



50th Anniversary Reflection

by Anna Masengi, Current GCM Intern

The 50th Anniversary Celebration was a day full of energy, with old friends reuniting, sharing stories and reflecting on the "good old days." As a current student intern for Guelph Campus Ministry, I was grateful for the opportunity to join in the celebration and learn about how GCM's work has impacted so many students throughout the decades. Hearing the stories and meeting some of the alumni allowed me to have a deeper appreciation for the Christian community that GCM and WCM have facilitated.

In these past years, I have found my faith being tested in difficult and significant ways. Belonging to such a diverse and lively community of believers has given me hope; hope that there are others who can struggle with me, hope that God is far from done with me and is inviting us to work with him to bring Shalom, and hope that this world we live in has handprints of God's goodness and love everywhere and in everything. God has been working and will continue to work with GCM and WCM as the anniversary celebration was a tangible display commemorating how Jesus is present in and through campus ministries.

As I continue with my education and career, I now recognize that my connection with GCM is an invitation from God to experience and understand His faithful commitment to His people.



The next few years will require a lot of discernment for me, but I know that my family of GCM and WCM will always support and walk alongside me in the highs and the lows. This community also serves as an encouragement that God is not done and continues His work with and in me. I am deeply grateful for the people, the mentoring, the fellowship, the conversations, and especially the food! My hope is that others will lean into the available Christian resources on campus to connect with other and grow in faith, encouraged to root their identities in Christ.

In Their Own Words...

Excerpts from Speakers at the 50th Celebration

"In September of 1977, I began ministry here [the University of Guelph]. I left congregational ministry for campus ministry. The frontier of campus ministry challenged me to know Christ as Lord and King of All. In my previous pastorates, I had been involved in campus life. Our Reformed tradition fits so well on campus - Universities need to develop universal truth: God's truth. My mission was to support people seeing God in their lives. I loved doing so.

Now, after 50 years of sharing God on campus, we face the future. Secular belief has weakened in facing life's wars, hunger, and strife. God's renewal and wisdom is needed in response to our many difficulties, Campus ministry must meet our problems with the gospel. God's redeeming love is our primary gift."

Rev. Ed Den Haan, Guelph Campus Minister (1977-2005)

"It is with great joy and deep gratitude that we celebrate the 50th anniversary of Huron Campus Ministry today. We can truly say it was a blessing in our lives and an incredible community that formed us, encouraged us and sustained us through the times of questioning, exploring, stretching and growing deeper in our faith journeys, as well as our paths of study leading to our careers."

Marge Siertsema, University of Waterloo Alum & Current GCM Board Member

"What I love/d about my time in Guelph Campus Ministry is that I could finally begin to be honest with myself and others about the impact of my disability on me, because there was never any question about whether I would be included. It didn't matter whether we were gathering on campus, at a student house, on a road trip or on a plane. If people from Guelph Campus Ministry were going anywhere, I could be there. Many students helped make this possible. Their tangible sense of support assured me that I was truly valued by our community. When necessary, on his own, Jamie [GCM's former campus minister] would somehow lift myself and my chair anywhere.

What I love/d about my time in Guelph Campus Ministry was my ever-expanding sense of community. In the fall of second year, my housemates may have gotten a little mad because I told them that I was throwing a "small pumpkin party". Next thing you know, 100 people were flowing through our doors, many of them my friends from campus ministry."

Chantal Huinink, University of Waterloo & University of Guelph Alum



In Their Own Words, Cont...

Excerpts from Speakers at the 50th Celebration

"In addition to building and nurturing its own community, GCM was at the beginning of what has come to be our dynamic multi-faith work on campus. Not long after I came to campus, I reached out to interview three of the original founding members of the Multi-Faith Resource Team (MFRT), Ed Den Haan, Michael Grand from the Jewish community, and Iftikar Sheikh from the Muslim community. Though we gathered on Zoom because of Covid, there was a remarkable warmth in our "Zoom room" among these three former colleagues. What has stayed with me is a sense of the real friendship that grounded their multi-faith vision nearly 40 years ago, a friendship which deepened over time in their work to come together in shared learning, shared advocacy, and bridge-building as they nurtured a home for faith and spirituality on campus. The MFRT at UofG was one of the first examples of multi-faith collaboration formalized at a Canadian university.

I was inspired by that interview and their storytelling and return to it often when I speak about the multi-faith work we do. Relationship-building provides the context where we can come to trust each other enough to work and struggle together, and where we experience what it means to show up for each other in times of pain and times of joy. I think about that now as we bear witness to the escalating violence in Israel and Gaza and hold the people of the region in prayer.

The relationship-building work that GCM helped to make part of our founding story, and that continues today is, I believe, a spiritual practice, as we hone our skills for noticing the holy in each other and in our world. It is for me a deep sign of hope."

Sonya Wu-Winter, Multi-Faith Programs Coordinator at the University of Guelph



"Sara introduced Sabbath as something not to fear or worry about - not a list of strict rules to follow, but as a gift. It became a topic in our weekly intern meetings and I found a way to make it my own. In undergrad this mostly looked like no school, little to no spending, time for practicing hobbies, and time for reflection/time with God. Keeping the Sabbath Wholly by Marva Dawn was my guidepost and a transformative read for changing my outlook and informing my values.

Eventually, my Sabbath practice followed me into grad school - and I actually attribute it to my getting into grad school. I realized that setting aside and honouring the time was a beautiful act in and of itself. It forced me to stick close to a schedule and use my time efficiently. I also learned that I needed to REST in order to work - rather than the other way around. This created balance in my life."

Anna McMenemy, University of Guelph Alum & Former GCM Intern

Fall 2023 Programming

Orientation Week is always one of the most exciting times of the year on campus! This year, we brought back some favourite orientation week activities including our always popular Coffee Shop Crawl and our beloved Arboretum Adventure. In the Coffee Shop Crawl students have the opportunity to learn to navigate the Guelph bus system downtown and then sample drinks from a variety of local coffee shops. This year our interns supported in leading so that we could divide into smaller groups for increased connection opportunities. At the Arboretum Adventure we explored one of campus' most beautiful locations and then gathered together for a picnic snack.

Community Dinner continues to be a staple in the GCM weekly calendar and is a time where we gather with our friends at the Ecumenical Campus Ministry to share food and friendship. For most of this semester, our dinner time has been followed up by a community read-aloud of *The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis. We even had a chance to try some Turkish Delight together!

Women's Group topics this semester have included Body Image, as well as multiple weeks discussing Women in the Bible. This is a time where all of the GCM women are invited to gather a couple of evenings a month in their coziest clothes for snacks and conversation. We were thrilled this semester in particular that our intern Anna M. was willing to lead one of the weeks.

Several **community-building events** have been organized and facilitated by the GCM interns this semester, including our annual Pumpkin Carving afternoon, an evening participating in trivia night at the campus pub, and even some Frisbee out on Johnston Green.

Finally, we have been so thrilled to join with Christians across campus this semester for regular Friday **Prayer Gatherings**.



Contact Us

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