

DECEMBER 2025

Advent with GCM

REFLECTIONS
ON HOPE,
PEACE, JOY,
AND LOVE



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.





Finding Hope in First Year

by Emma-Grace, GCM Intern



When I started my first year of university, what I missed the most was mealtimes with my family. We would gather around the table each night and enjoy eating together, recapping our days, and sharing laughter and stories. The biggest culture shock of residence for me was figuring out a meal routine and making sure I didn't just hole myself up in my dorm room to eat alone.

Community dinner was so soul-filling, as it gave me an opportunity to share a meal with others and enjoy conversation. This simple weekly routine filled me with such hope and eased my fears that I would not be able to form new connections or start a life outside my family home.



NOTES FROM GCM STAFF

Many of our GCM students highlight Community Dinner as their favourite part of being involved with GCM. During the school semester, GCM hosts Community Dinner each Wednesday evening alongside our friends from the

Ecumenical Campus Ministry. Crock pots full of delicious, hot food are generously provided by local church communities (or sometimes by alumni, board members, or other supporters) and supplemented with fresh buns and salad. We always have students spilling out of the main meeting room, into the side room, and sometimes even the GCM and ECM offices upstairs. After dinner, many students stick around for "Something After Supper" - often a Bible Study or Scripture Read-Aloud. This semester, we spent four weeks diving into the book of Revelation together.

Community Dinner is one way that GCM equips students with hope, in fulfillment of GCM's vision: **Resilient graduates who know that Christ calls them to live faithfully without fear and with hope, stepping into the challenges of their time.** We believe with confidence that the Lord is faithful, giving meaning to our days and hope to our years.

Isaiah 40: 31 (NIV)

but those who hope in the Lord
will renew their strength.
They will soar on wings like eagles;
they will run and not grow weary,
they will walk and not be faint.





Praying for Peace

by Simon, GCM Intern



This semester GCM hosted a short time of prayer first thing every weekday morning. Morning prayer has been a space in which students and interns have repeatedly prayed and called for peace. It's a theme that comes up regularly, but a few days in particular come to mind.

Specifically, on the mornings of September 21st (International Day of Peace), September 30th (National Day for Truth and Reconciliation) and November 11th (Remembrance Day), we were able to spend 10-15 minutes focusing on learning about and hoping for peace through scripture and prayerful reflection.

Our community strongly believes that Jesus is the Prince of Peace and has instructed us to love others the way he first loved us. As we have reflected on peace, we have spoken often about the self-sacrificial love that Jesus demonstrates directed towards neighbours and enemies alike.



Students gathered around the peace pole on campus, led in prayer by Simon. (Remembrance Day, 2025).

NOTES FROM GCM STAFF

Isaiah 9:6-7 (NIV)

For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Of the greatness of his government and peace
there will be no end.
He will reign on David's throne
and over his kingdom,
establishing and upholding it
with justice and righteousness
from that time on and forever.
The zeal of the Lord Almighty
will accomplish this.

When Simon and some other students suggested a daily morning prayer time this semester, we were instantly on board - but also not sure how it would go. University students are not known for their love of being out of bed, on campus, and ready to engage in prayer at 8am. However, we have been delighted by the response. Not only have students regularly attended morning, many have also stepped forward to take one or more turns leading prayer time. Students have noted that building this routine into their morning not only benefits them spiritually, but also often sets them up to be more productive and feel more connected to the GCM community throughout the day.



Joy and Coffee

by Kennedy, GCM Intern



Mornings are hard - especially when you've been up late the night before studying. What makes it easier is knowing you can be around a community that is always supporting you and also in the same boat. Our regular routine of inviting students to drop-in for Coffee & Conversation is a reason for students to get out of bed early on brisk Friday mornings. Coffee & Conversation keeps everyone in their routines and allows everyone to decompress after a stressful week.

We always have lots of coffee, tea, and hot chocolate to share and often see up 20-30 people come through. This year we have been extra excited to be able to welcome many new people through this event. If you were to peek through the window during Coffee & Conversation, you would see students chatting over their hot drinks, curled up in the corner studying, and even knitting or crocheting.

This semester we have had students volunteer to teach basic knitting and crocheting and have been working together to make a throw blanket to donate to our space. It has been such a joy to create this welcoming environment and to see conversations, friendships, and new skills flourish in our community.

Philippians 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!



NOTES FROM GCM STAFF

GCM is able to bring the number of regular gatherings and special events to our community that we do because of the support of student leaders like Kennedy. Each year, we typically recruit 3-4 students from the GCM community to take on a significant role as GCM interns. These interns meet regularly with GCM staff (Sara and Brianne) to grow in their faith and to provide direction for programming. Each intern also takes on a specific leadership role within some aspect of the GCM ministry - for example, Kennedy leads Coffee & Conversation.



Love and Hospitality

by Kate, GCM Intern



GCM students get a taste of Jesus' love each week through community dinner when churches and other supporters open their kitchens and their hearts to provide a hot meal. Community dinner offers a space for students to come together, enjoy a home-cooked meal, connect with other GCMers, and take a break from their studies. After most community dinners, several students choose to stick around for an evening activity - usually a structured discussion or a Bible study of some kind.

We are always so grateful for the blessing of food provided and talk often of the churches and supporters who prepared the meal for the week. Like most students, GCMers are often juggling the demands of school, stress, and tight finances on a daily basis, along with the loneliness of being away from family and community. These dinners offer a place where students are seen, supported, and nourished physically, spiritually, and emotionally. The fact that meals are provided through the hospitality of supporters means all the more, letting students know that they are not forgotten while on campus.

John 3:16-17

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.



HOW YOU CAN HELP

As this year comes to a close, we know many of you are thinking and praying about where to contribute your time, energy, and financial resources in the new year. With that in mind, we invite you to consider supporting the mission of GCM in one or more of the ways outlined below.

Regular Giving

Whether you pledge \$5, \$25, \$50, or \$100 a month, recurring donations help support the regular rhythms of GCM. Funds are used towards things like purchasing buns and salad for Community Dinner, allowing us to host speakers on campus, and subsidizing the cost of larger events for students with financial need.

Commitment to Prayer

We would be so delighted if you chose to add GCM to your regular prayer routine. To keep up with GCM's current events, we suggest following us on social media or subscribing to our email list for supporters.

Serving on the GCM Board

The GCM Board is integral to guiding our mission and vision and supporting GCM staff. The Board meets roughly once/month and includes community members from supporting churches, as well as GCM alumni. If you are interested in finding out more, please send us an email at gcm@uoguelph.ca.

FALL 2025

Regular Events

GCM welcomed students into community weekly through Community Dinner and Coffee & Conversation, as well as every weekday through Morning Prayer.

Community Service

This semester GCMers contributed to a full day of local community service through the University of Guelph's Project Serve event.

Church Hops

We joined 5 local church congregations from different Christian denominations for worship and discussion.

Faithful Adulting

A highlight of our Faithful Adulting series this semester was bringing in Joe Upfield, a financial planner and GCM supporter, to talk to students about financial stewardship and managing their money.



Contact Us

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