

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.

Starting University Online and With GCM

By Matthew Ypma, First Year B.Sc. (Agr.) Student

As a first year student at the University of Guelph in 2020, all of my classes have been online. Initially I had been looking forward to starting university: not only for the academics, but also for the social opportunities inherent in university life.

However, Covid-19 has impacted the social side of my university experience more than it has impacted the academic side. This social isolation has been very challenging for me and many other students. Guelph Campus Ministry (GCM) has been working to help keep me and many other students connected, giving us a sense of belonging and Christian community. On a Saturday in September, GCM co-hosted an outdoor, physically- distanced fall retreat on the beautiful grounds of Creiff Hills Conference Centre, where over 25 students were able to connect safely in-person for a time of socializing, hikes, and spiritual growth. This event had a big impact on me as I was able to actually meet and get to know new people, which has been next to impossible in my online-only classes.



GCM's Outdoor and Distanced Fall Retreat

Ever since this fall retreat, GCM has become my family at the university, creating a supportive and loving environment. This has been evident in the conversations that I've had, through the events GCM hosts, and through the thoughtful things such as the care packages GCM delivered (and mailed) to students like myself. Through online learning, I have still had some opportunities to meet and have virtual conversations with different people in my classes. I can see God working in my life through some of these conversations when I have the chance to share about my faith.

When I look at the supportive community GCM fosters, I can clearly see God using GCM to help equip students with what we need, in order to share the gospel and live into our calling as (online) students, "knowing that Christ calls us to live faithfully without fear and with hope, stepping into the challenges of our time" (GCM's vision).

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Lamentation and Incarnation

By Sara DeMoor, Campus Minister

One of the Bible studies that GCM offered over Zoom this semester has been reading together the books of Lamentations and Job. The students and I have been reminded each week that Scripture offers powerful examples of God's people crying out for help in times of pain and isolation, when the world around them is crumbling.

Interestingly, the most quoted (and sung!) verses from Lamentations aren't speaking of grief or lament. In the middle of this book of shared pain and tears, we find this sliver of hope in chapter 3:22-23—"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.



Sara and GCM Interns Weekly Meeting

We have been reminded that God's faithfulness and love are reliable in the midst of so much uncertainty in our daily pandemic-affected lives. As we enter Advent and remember the Incarnation – that God became human and lived among us, in the midst of our humanity and hurt – may we embrace this paradox: in these times of disorientation we need opportunities both to lament what is lost and to remind each other of the (Biblical and personal) stories of God's faithfulness to us. I regularly mourn all of the "normal" events and connections that we have lost this semester. And, I continue to marvel at the ways God has been steadfastly loving GCM, through tangible acts of presence and care from our staff, students, and supporters. Great is God's faithfulness!



GCM's Outdoor and Distanced Drop In

Contact Us



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Tedium and Hope: Being an Online University Student

By Leah Hart, 3rd year at U of G, 2019 - 2020 GCM Intern

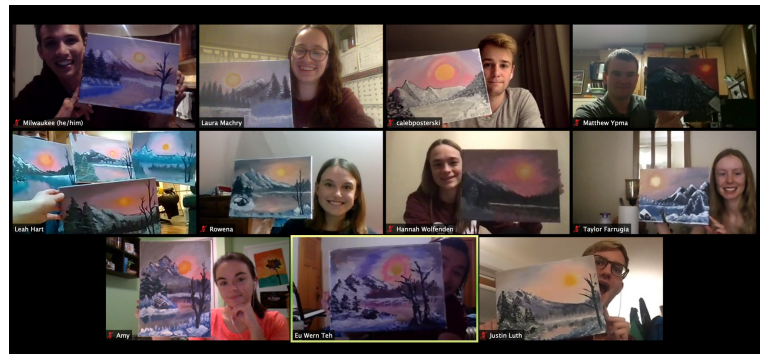
How strange it is that countless students and faculty have had to so quickly adapt to a remote method of studying and learning. Every so often I remember how much the world really has changed for postsecondary students everywhere when I realize that I haven't set foot in a classroom since March, I recognize my classmates by their camera backgrounds, and I quite possibly will never meet in person the professors teaching me this semester.

Amid the confusion of this season, I've experienced many moments of gratitude. Our communities are finding creative ways to stay connected and show care. People are reaching out to each other, and we are learning to be intentional about helping loved ones. These experiences bring me hope.

Online learning is incredibly tedious, though, and learning styles we used to take for granted have become a thousand times more complicated. Ways of sharing ideas, completing group work, and participating have had to be completely reconfigured, and even then it often isn't functional. I'm glad that university is still possible, but this semester everything feels so incredibly distant, and I miss the people and places that no longer see during my daily routine. I've learned it takes a great deal of energy to miss someone, and I feel that energy deficit deeply.

We're trying our best, students and professors alike, and although there is frustration and loss there is also hope--always hope. I can see us looking to the future, especially in the ways of togetherness such as what GCM provides, and I'm so grateful for that kind of support – care packages, paint nights, small groups, and conversations with Sara are all meaningful details that have added hope to a difficult semester.

Still God shows his presence, even as we reconfigure so many things we've taken for granted. I see God in the people around me who are loving and supportive even through the distance. As our situation continues to change, may we always remember to support each other and to offer hope.



GCM Bob Ross Paint Night Via Zoom

Support Guelph Campus Ministry

Financial Contributions are what makes this ministry happen. GCM is grateful for those whose gifts make our ministry possible with University of Guelph students. Donations can be made online at www.canadahelps.org. You may also send a cheque to: Guelph Campus Ministry Treasurer, c/o Water Street Church, 287 Water St, Guelph, ON N1G 1B6.

