

# Guelph Campus Ministry

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



Guelph Campus Ministry

## *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.*

## *In Such A Time As This*

**By Justin Luth, Bachelor of Landscape Architecture, GCM Student Intern 2020-2021**

It's crazy to think that nearly four and a half years have passed since I attended my first GCM event, an O-Week coffee shop crawl, in September of 2017. So much has happened: I have taken 35 different courses, lived in four different houses, worked 3 different summer jobs. In many ways, I think this state of constant change is something that defines the life of a university student, and these past 18 months have only exacerbated this fact.

If you ask me, a real testament to the GCM community and its unwavering commitment to its mission, is that throughout all of the challenges and changes of our circumstances, people have still shown up, because we know that this community matters, and that the efforts we put in to uphold and build this community will be worth it for the next students that come to Guelph. This fall, we have been able to experience some of the good fruit that came from this effort, as we have been able to return (albeit in a somewhat different way) one of our favourite traditions, to gather and eat together at Community Dinner.



Over the course of all these past four and a half years, however, GCM has been a social and spiritual home for me. It has provided an atmosphere of friendship and mutual support, and a space for exploring, struggling, questioning, and digging deep into what it means to be a Christian in such a time as this. Making this even more valuable was the ability to do it alongside my friends and peers, in small groups, one-on-one conversations, over Zoom, and over dinner stuffed into the small living room of Raithby House, GCM's home base on campus. GCM has taught me that being a Christian doesn't have to look exactly the same for every person, and that it is okay, good even, to spend time questioning, lamenting, and deconstructing our faith in order to rebuild it into something that is real, personal, and meaningful.

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## First Year Student Reflections

**By Leah Wonder, First Year Animal Biology Major**

Starting my first year of university as an introvert during a pandemic has made meeting people extremely difficult. One thing that helped me adjust to university life is attending various events hosted by Guelph Campus Ministry. The GCM and ECM (Ecumenical Campus Ministry) Community Dinner became part of my weekly routine at the very beginning of the semester. Community Dinner was not only a place to eat a meal, it also was a place for me to get to know so many different people from various years and multiple programs. It quickly became the favourite part of my week, and I was able to get so many tips for surviving university from the older students.

I also went to the one-day retreat GCM (and ECM) hosted in September at Crieff Hills. This retreat gave me an opportunity to get to know people even more through many different activities, like hikes in the rain, games, and worship. Not only has GCM provided me with a community of people in Guelph, but also with a group of people who believe the same things I do. I am looking forward to deepening these friendships in the coming years.



## *Not/Very Good*

**By Sara DeMoor, Campus Minister**

In Genesis 2:18 we read that in the creation story, before sin has entered God's world, the Lord sees Adam in the very good garden and remarks that it is not good for the human to be alone. I have recalled this verse often throughout these long months of pandemic distancing, and it has rung true over and over again:

It is not good for students to be alone.

It is not good for faculty to be alone.

It is not good for families to be alone.

This semester we rejoiced as restrictions lifted enough that we could be together in person again, on a weekly basis, for regular rhythms of worship, meals, fellowship, retreats, and more. As we practice the spiritual discipline of gratitude together this month, I am overwhelmed with gratitude for our togetherness, and for our faithful God who loves his people and gathers us together in Christian community on and off campus.

It is so very good to be together. Thanks be to God!

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## *Reflections on GCM's Faculty and Staff Bible Study*

**By Rev. David Tigchelaar, Pastor, Water Street CRC**

Did you know that Guelph Campus Ministry (GCM) has had a presence on University of Guelph's (UofG) campus for over fifty years? Motivated by a desire to shape the lives of students, faculty and the culture of the University through the message of Christ's kingdom of grace and truth, GCM's leaders have gathered students, faculty and staff together to wrestle with Scripture, where they are challenged to root their identity in Christ. For the last number of years I have been privileged to be one of those leaders, as a volunteer leader of GCM's Faculty and Staff Bible Study.

I asked those who participate in our weekly Bible study gatherings to reflect on what our time has meant to them. Kim, a graduate student, shared that she and her husband looked forward to studying Scripture every Tuesday, and that this was a spiritually and intellectually engaging and inspiring time. Ken appreciated the thoughtful engagement with God's word, and how it helped him think about the Bible and culture in different ways than he had thought about before.

William Gardner writes, "I had been living and exploring overseas in my retirement, but like so many, was forced by the pandemic to abruptly repatriate. I always look forward to each Tuesday noon for a chance to reconnect on Zoom with members of the campus Christian community. Under Pastor David's leadership it was a valuable time of Bible study, topical discussion, e-fellowship, and prayer for one another.



This reflection comes at the end of my time. I will be moving on to a new ministry calling and will pass the faculty/staff Bible study facilitator's baton off to others who will, we pray, be a part of this good work for the next fifty years and beyond (Deo Valente-God Willing). Peter Schuurman will be facilitating these gatherings next semester. I know the staff and faculty Bible study group will be blessed by Peter. He is a man of deep faith who thoughtfully engages Scripture and combines that with cultural analysis in ways that will bless, challenge and deepen their faith.

When I lead worship, I always say the words of the blessing at the end: "May the Lord bless you. May the Lord keep you. May the Lord shine His face upon you and give you His peace. Amen." Those words resonate because they reflect our deepest longings. We deeply desire the Lord's glory and goodness to be and go with us in every part of our lives. So....I leave with those words in my heart and on my lips as a prayer for Guelph Campus Ministry and for the University of Guelph. May the Lord bless you and keep you...

Pastor David

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Financial Contributions are what makes this ministry happen. GCM is grateful for those whose gifts make our ministry possible at the University of Guelph. Donations can be made online at [www.canadahelps.org](http://www.canadahelps.org) or by pre-authorized payments. Please contact our office at [gcm@uoguelph.ca](mailto:gcm@uoguelph.ca) for the PAD Plan Agreement. You may also send a cheque to: Guelph Campus Ministry Treasurer, c/o Water Street Church, 287 Water St, Guelph, ON N1G 1B6.