

## COUNCIL UPDATE - January 25, 2024

### Christmas gift-wrapping

We raised a total of \$7,574.53 from the gift wrapping at the mall. From this total raised:

- \$1,000 was for Halton's Women's Place
- \$1,000 was for Food4Kids
- \$3,790 was for Refugee sponsorship
- The remainder will be used to support youth going on mission trips, CYDC continuing education, and supply purchases.

Thank you to the youth and everyone who participated in this annual event and in serving our community.

### Search Committee

Our search committee continues to work diligently to identify a pastor for our church. Considering the high level of vacancy within the CRC churches, this search process has been quite challenging and we thank our Search committee for their perseverance and hard work. They have also recommended that we submit a request to Calvin College for an "intern" to serve as a pastor at our church for a 10-week period this summer. Please continue to uphold our Search committee members and their work in your prayers. Your hard-working Search committee members are: William Nightingale, Allison Roffel, Aviva Rothman-Wielinga, Len Siderius, Irene Simpson, Erin Vandenberg, Herb Westerveld, Shannon Vandermeer.

### Human Sexuality Report (HSR)

Council continues to have conversations and dialogues on the Human Sexuality Report (HSR) and Synod related decisions. As previously mentioned, our church is a local church in good standing with the denomination, which means that we "promise to submit to the church's judgment and authority." However, equally important, if not more so, is how we show grace and love, and provide pastoral care and support to those who feel that they are negatively affected by this Synod decision.

As we focus on grace and building community, we have been involved in a number of projects and initiatives. We are participating in the Classis Toronto pilot project on hospitality to learn about best practices to be more effective in welcoming and enfolding people from the LGBTQ+ community within the context of Synod's decisions. We discussed experiences encountered in different churches within Classis Toronto. Ultimately, the goal of this project is about being a healthy congregation that embodies the presence of Jesus.

Also, within our church, an ad hoc education committee is actively working in researching and gathering resources on topics of unchastity, starting with pornography. Council Executive has also purchased some educational videos relating to human sexuality from the Centre for Faith and Sexuality. We plan to use these as resources for evening sessions or small group discussions. Council is also currently reviewing and updating our marriage policy.

As a church, we want to be God-honouring and to show love and grace to everyone. We have always tried to create a safe and welcoming place for everyone, and we continue to explore how we can become an even more welcoming environment for us and the community, while remaining faithful to biblical teaching. Please continue to pray that our God will grant us wisdom as we serve Him and bless one another.

### Kitchen Renovation

Council has recently approved the plan to renovate and upgrade our upstairs kitchen so that we may offer more outreach programs such as hosting community breakfasts. This initiative came from the work we have done with our congregation on Asset Mapping and Discerning His Direction. The target start for this renovation project is April 1, 2024 and it will take roughly 7-8 weeks to complete it. During this renovation period, the upstairs kitchen will not be accessible to us. However, we plan to continue having coffee fellowship during this time by utilizing the downstairs kitchen for coffee and juice preparation. We look forward to having a truly functioning kitchen to allow for more effective ministry opportunities.

### The Lord's Supper

It is a common and acceptable practice, with Classis approval, for vacant churches to have ordained office-bearers to administer the Lord's Supper. At the last Council meeting, we approved the following current office-bearers: William Nightingale, Paul Zomer and Bob DeVries to administer the sacraments in our church. Their names will be submitted to Classis for approval at their meeting on Feb. 21, 2024.

### Prayer Ministry

Prayer Ministry will re-start soon. Berny and Irene Menken continue to lead and coordinate this wonderful ministry within our church. Anyone who would like to be involved in this ministry is encouraged to contact either Berny or Irene Menken.

### Lent and Easter services

Our worship coordinator and planners prepared a wonderful sermon series over the Advent and Christmas season on the theme of "Dwell: The Story of Immanuel", which were read by Mike Glockner and Bob DeVries. Over the Lent and Easter season, our worship planners will be crafting another reading series based on "The Seven Last Sayings of Jesus." Mike Glockner has once again graciously agreed to read these sermons during this time.

### Fellowship events

Our creative worship committee is working on several fellowship ideas for this year. Please stay tuned for more information in the coming weeks on some potluck events, intergenerational/fellowship Sundays, BBQ etc.

In His Service  
GCRC Council