

December 2024

CHRISTIAN REFORMED CAMPUS MINISTRY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

GRADUATE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP (GCF)



This semester at Graduate Christian Fellowship (GCF) felt full of life and blessings. We had a dozen new students check out GCF in the first half of term, and several have made this community their home. We engaged in deep and meaningful conversations about grace, power, hell, anxiety and more. These rich discussions are the result of our Bible studies on parables (from both the New and Old Testaments) and hearing from participants' personal experiences. And there has also been space for games, laughter, worship and song, prayers, and reflections on how art can feed our faith. Through it all, our discussions have remained grounded in grace and curiosity, creating space for diverse and holy convictions.

We were so grateful that our emerging leaders, Rowena and Nick, both shared the story of their faith journeys, and how they were shaped by their academic path and life experiences. They come from different faith traditions, yet both could speak to the ways God has been present and shaping them in their journeys. They have modelled, with their different perspectives, how to disagree respectfully, show up authentically, and listen deeply. Their leadership is a powerful testament to the way God works in and through us, even in the most challenging discussions.

MINISTRY UPDATE

As a ministry we continue to determine how best to be present with people and pay attention to how God is working. This involves providing programming and pastoral care, and it also includes collaboration and adaptation. Some things we do year after year, like our annual fall hike (see pictures) and some things are new, like hosting a Saturday afternoon soup-making event to prepare dinner for the coming weeks at GCF.

We continue to host conversations around The Chosen, in partnership with Ecumenical Chaplaincy at the University of Toronto and St Michael's campus ministry. We've also joined these campus ministries to offer daily prayers with and for Toronto School of Theology students, as well as to host a Taizé service, in partnership with St. Basil's Catholic Parish.

We are also developing a stronger relationship with the University of Toronto. We've become recognized as an official student group and Brenda has become recognized as an official faith leader. This has meant showing up at the Multi-Faith Centre for different programming and paying attention to how we can best represent Christianity to the campus.



The Christian Reformed Campus Ministry at the University of Toronto is graciously supported by the churches of Classis Toronto, as well as the generous support of our campus ministry communities, alumni, and friends.

If you'd like to donate to the ministry, you can do that online or by sending cheques to our address:
Christian Reformed Campus Ministries at U of T, TST, 47 Queen's Park Cres. E, Toronto, Ont. M5S 2C3
For more information about donating and the ministry, see <http://crc.sa.utoronto.ca/donate/>

GOD'S TIMING

At one event at the Multi-Faith Centre, a student asked if Brenda could get her a Bible, ideally a King James Version as she'd loved the poetic language of it from her time at a Catholic high school. That same week, Carol brought into the office a bag of books that an alum had gifted us months ago. At the bottom of the bag was a beautiful New King James Bible. We couldn't help but be delighted by God's timing of both the question and the arrival of those books.



From our GCF Gathering on Halloween

BRENDA'S SABBATICAL

As much as I love the challenge of adapting to new situations and reaching out to new people, it can also be exhausting. I'm thankful that the ministry has granted me a short sabbatical for the spring. My family and I will be going (back) to the Netherlands where I'll be able to get new ideas for ministry through visiting different campus ministries there and where I'll also be focusing a bit more on my own academic research in the book of Ezekiel.

SILENT RETREAT

On January 25, we are hosting our annual Silent Retreat at St. Andrews by the Lake Anglican Church on Centre Island. Please pray for us, and reach out if you'd like to join us.

EMERGING LEADERS

Rowena: I am currently working on my third and hopefully final year of my MDiv at Emmanuel College in the Toronto School of Theology. Through my studies I am pursuing a call to ministry which feels rooted in the spaces in between and finding the quiet spaces where God is working. My deep love of campus ministry, developed at the University of Guelph, is what first brought me here to GCF; the ways we learn and grow together across differences is



what keeps me in this space now. This community is also a unique space for me to practice wrestling with the weird and messy parts of the Bible that we so often ignore. Being a consistent part of GCF has helped me to gain further confidence in my own scriptural knowledge, which will support my ministry for years to come. My role as an emerging leader in this space has helped to affirm the pastoral elements of my call to ministry while also drawing me into new areas of growth that I hope will support what's to come in my journey.

Nick: I am currently pursuing a MDiv in Pastoral Ministry at Tyndale University and am pursuing ordination in the Christian Reformed Church. After attending the CRC campus ministry at Grand Valley State University during my undergrad, I found myself seeking a similar ministry to connect with when I moved to Toronto over a year ago. Since then I have found the ways that GCF has challenged me in understanding of my faith and its relationship to the world around me to be essential as I continue to develop toward the ministry that God has called me to. Upon being asked to step into the role of



emerging leader last spring, I felt this was a great step toward learning how to navigate ministry with people from a variety of different backgrounds. These experiences have continued to help my gifts to grow and train me for the ministry that God has prepared for me in the coming years.

Follow us on Facebook & Instagram!
@gcfuoft

