

December 2023

CHRISTIAN REFORMED CAMPUS MINISTRY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

GRADUATE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP (GCF)



This fall, Graduate Christian Fellowship has focused on themes from Jeremiah 29, considering how God is working things for good (even in hard times like exile—or grad studies), and how we are called to seek the welfare of the city we are in. This has led to conversations on faith and culture, homelessness, bike lanes and urban planning, the environmental crisis, as well as further Bible studies from Jeremiah. We also explored the city on our annual fall hike: a walk through High Park and along the waterfront, ending with a cookout in a backyard fire pit.

Two GCF members wrapping up their grad studies shared their stories this fall and reflected on how their faith and lives were shaped through their programs. They were able to articulate the pressure they felt in grad school and the harmful voices that suggested their worth was defined by their academic performance. They shared ways they learned to connect to friends and faith communities to find other places of meaning. Some of our newer members indicated how helpful these stories were, as they fit with what they had experienced in grad school, but had not yet been able to put into words. It is one of the gifts of GCF when this kind of hard-won wisdom can be passed to newer students.

WINE BEFORE BREAKFAST (WBB)

This August, Wine Before Breakfast's rich 22-year ministry came to a close. The low attendance and a lack of connection with this generation of students since Covid felt like the nudging of the Spirit to make space for something new.

Our final service took place in Trinity College chapel in late August. Instead of having a preacher, we reflected as a group, discussing Scripture and the ending of the ministry with both joy and sadness. Deb closed the service with a tearful rendition of Martyn Joseph's "Whoever It Was That Brought Me Here Will Have to Take Me Home," which is a long-time WBB favourite. Deb said, afterward, that her performer-self was horrified by her emotions impeding her delivery of the song, but her WBB- community-member-self was deeply blessed by the space and safety to be vulnerable enough to grieve openly. In the end, it was a wonderful, meaningful and weighty service. Not unlike most WBB services. Truly the end of an era.

The timing of WBB ending corresponds well with Deb's leaving the campus ministry staff in order to take on a new ministry opportunity with the Anglican Diocese of Toronto.



We are grateful for her and the gifts she shared with WBB over the past 14 years, and are honoured to have fostered her growth as a campus minister. We wish her all the best in the ministry she is called to do with the Anglican Diocese.

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/>

PARTNERING WITH THE ECCUMENICAL CHAPLAINCY

Last year, we partnered with the [Ecumenical Chaplaincy at U of T](#) to facilitate weekly Taizé services at Knox College during Lent. This service offered students and faculty a quiet space to reflect, unburden, and worship in the middle of each week. It was a delight to work together, and we looked forward to more such opportunities.



This past semester, we hosted a Tuesday evening meal and discussion together: Faith, Food & Friends. This gathering provided opportunity to hear different perspectives on multiple topics, as well as to experience different kinds of prayers, such as Deb leading us in dinner church. This coming semester the discussions will focus around the film series, The Chosen, providing opportunity for people to see and explore the gospel in new ways.

We look forward to continued partnership with ECUT, following God's calling to serve students and faculty here on campus.

NEW EMERGING LEADER: HANNAH

After two years of involvement at GCF, Hannah Foulger has stepped forward into the role of Emerging Leader. A recent graduate of the Creative Writing MFA program at the University of Guelph, she is focusing on facilitating an evolving communications strategy for the campus ministries, including social media. Building on the work of Wine Before Breakfast, she will be using social media to promote programs and to spiritually nourish people through the week. She is also updating the website, refreshing it for this current season of the ministry.



In the new year, she will be giving a presentation on the intersections of art and faith, and where they might be entangled in social justice. Follow us on Instagram and Facebook @gcfuoft to see what she's been up to!

SILENT RETREAT

On January 27, 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.



MINISTRY UPDATE

It has once again been a season of transition in the ministry. We've let go of programs and said good-bye to people; we've also tried out new ideas, connected in new ways to UofT, and welcomed a new emerging leader and new students. We have [said good-bye to Deb](#) and started working with Hannah, our new emerging leader. We've ended Wine Before Breakfast but have been working with other campus ministries at UofT to try new programming and events, such as a Back-to-school BBQ for Christian students and Faith, Food, and Friends.

With a number of people within Graduate Christian Fellowship recently finishing their programs, we entered the fall with extra uncertainty. We are glad that new people have connected to the ministry, and we are thankful for the community that is forming. We look forward to more thoughtful discussions in the new year, along with a Silent Retreat and a book study on faith and neurodiversity.

Thank you for your support of the ministry through your participation, prayers, and financial support. This season has been challenging at times, but we are hopeful that all of the changes will help us grow in awareness of how the ministry can join in what God is already doing at UofT.
- Brenda Kronemeijer-Heyink, Carol Scovil, and Hannah Foulger



Follow us on Facebook & Instagram!
@gcfuoft