

CLASSIS MATTERS

A Newsletter of Classis Georgetown of the CRC in North America

September October 2016

Member Churches

- ◆ Alive Ministries
- ◆ Baldwin Street CRC
- ◆ Bauer CRC
- ◆ Cottonwood Church
- ◆ EverGreen Ministries
- ◆ Fairway CRC
- ◆ First Hudsonville CRC
- ◆ Forest Grove CRC
- ◆ Friendship Chapel
- ◆ Georgetown CRC
- ◆ Hillcrest CRC
- ◆ Immanuel CRC
- ◆ Jamestown CRC
- ◆ Messiah CRC
- ◆ Ridgewood CRC
- ◆ Searchlight Ministries
- ◆ Trinity CRC
- ◆ Twelfth Avenue CRC
- ◆ Zutphen CRC

Church Renewal Lab

(Editor's Note: Printed below and on page 2 are two stories of people going places and doing things this past summer that stretched their lives. Maybe these experiences will encourage and inspire you.)

Babysitting Twelve Babies for One Week

"We are home with mixed emotions! We are tired, happy, sad, joyful and missing our littles." Such was the experience this summer for MaryJo Kunz, a member of Alive Ministries, and her daughter, Becca, as they volunteered for childcare at a Young Lives Camp at Timber Wolf Lodge in Lake City, MI. This camp is owned and operated by the world wide Young Life Ministry. The Young Lives camp is for teen age moms and their children. The week is designed to let the moms have some time just being teenagers, while they hear about the love of Jesus.

MaryJo, Becca and the rest of the childcare volunteers arrived on Saturday afternoon. They needed to get themselves settled, learn the proper ways of caring for someone else's child, set up nurseries, meet their nursery team, etc. The girls/babies/mentors arrived the following Sunday afternoon. There were girls/mentors that came from several different states. MaryJo was surprised at the distance some of them traveled to get to camp.

Everyone at camp shares meals, both camp attendees and visitors. Every morning after breakfast and evening after lunch, the volunteers would care for the children while their moms were busy connecting to each other, playing games, spending one on one time with mentors and participating in their club/worship time. They had their own speakers for this week. The last evening of camp, when the girls were in their last club meeting, we packed up their kids and took them into the mom's meeting room. That night the moms were asked to (re)confirm their faith in Jesus and were asked to join him at the table. All of those who chose to do it publicly and were able to speak for themselves and their kids, went up front and then on stage and "sat" at the table with Jesus. Accepting him for the first time or again, there were over 70 young ladies that went up that night. This we were able to watch and then celebrate with them. What an awesome emotional night!

There were about 120 childcare volunteers at camp that week (they turned people away). Volunteers pay for their own way to go to camp, which MaryJo says, tells a lot about how great of a week it is. Volunteers were from the same states as the moms/babies, as they also try to supply a few volunteers. There were approximately 120 girls and about 140 babies/kids. Our nursery group consisted of 11 women and we took care of 12 babies that were 8-10 months old. What a joy!!!

Becca's best friend and friend's mother went last year as childcare volunteers and came back, insisting that Becca and MaryJo go with them this year. Not fully understanding what they were getting into, they went and grew closer in their relationships and closer to Jesus. They got to love some beautiful babies and their mothers. It was a great week. "I am sure that we will be there again next year" is their testimony!!

Vision Statement

Classis Georgetown is a community of Christian Reformed Churches in Eastern Ottawa County who live and minister together, in Christ, to transform lives and communities.

Values

Healthy Leaders

We equip leaders to transform lives and communities.

Collaborative Relationships

We call out the strengths of each church and pursue ministry together to create new ways of transforming lives and communities.

Empowering Worship

We celebrate and are sustained by God's presence as he transforms lives and communities.

Daring Hospitality

We welcome the stranger in ways that transform lives and communities.

Risky Compassion

We extend uncommon generosity to the suffering and work to eliminate the causes of that suffering in order to transform lives and communities.



Praise & Prayer

~pray for the many fall programs that are intended to reach those who need to meet Jesus.

~praise and prayer for the many volunteer workers in His kingdom.

~pray for revival in these times of uncertainty in our country.

~thank the Lord for freedom to worship.

CHURCH SIGN:

Sign broken,
message
inside.

Ministry in Sutton, Alaska

(Editor's note: Messiah's Director of Youth Ministries, Fig Vander Molen and Youth Leader, Holly Roon, contributed to this article.)

On July 23, 2016, 26 people from Messiah CRC in Hudsonville left for a mission trip in Sutton, Alaska. The group consisted of adults, youth leaders and students from grades 9-12. The group had connected with Eaglecrest Alaska Mission, an organization in west Michigan, that works with the local people, churches, and organizations in the Sutton community. In many ways they are similar to Love INC, but on a much more basic level.

The first leg of the trip was the bus trip from Hudsonville to Chicago, followed by a flight from Chicago to Anchorage. At the airport we were picked up by the Camp Director with some vans. The place where we were to spend our time was about an hour from the airport.

The reason that Alaska was chosen for this trip is because we always want to provide our students with a chance to see God at work in various contexts; both around the corner and around the globe. We expect our youth group to produce missionaries that will serve in a lot of different places and ways. Seeing a new setting for missions was a huge motivator for this trip. We also had heard great things about this organization/ trip from others. We really liked the West Michigan connections because it helps us maintain a bond with the ministry rather than an arrive/build/depart style trip.

I (Fig), because of my position at Messiah, attend all of our trips. But I was also personally excited about the opportunity to expose students to a less-typical missionary experience. Kids often connect "missionary" with third world countries, learning a new language or serving in inner-city ministry. But in reality, there are many missionary needs in other places within our own country.

I (Holly) went on this trip because I love serving people in other parts of God's world., and it was great to be able to help, not just as an individual, but as a group.

Another thing that made me excited was to be able to go somewhere different with our students. It was important to show them that there are needs elsewhere in the world, and we were able to see some of this first hand.

When we arrived in Sutton, our work focused on four main tasks. The first task was to support existing missionaries and ministries. We wanted to fill in the gaps of service for small churches and ministries by providing help in the name of Christ.

The second task was to accomplish various work projects. Among other things we split wood, repaired drywall, hosted a community meal, put siding on a house, framed a shed, beatified a park, ran a VBS style day camp for neighborhood children, prepared meals for Kingdom Air (a missionary pilot ministry), and more.

The third task of the week was to learn some spiritual lessons. Our focus for the week was on being servant leaders in whatever our community happens to be. Christ calls us all to serve as leaders and we put a lot of those spiritual lessons into practice by serving members of the community and each other. All of our experiences in serving Sutton were fantastic, and we were able to help this community in some amazing ways of service.

The fourth and final task was to reflect on who we are in Christ and on God's purposes for our lives. We were able to experience God's beautiful creation in many ways, including hiking around a gold mine, exploring a glacier, and just sitting in awe at the magnificence of God's creation. Besides the scenery, those on this trip were encouraged to

listen for how God was speaking to them especially in response to what they were learning and seeing.

The highlight of the trip (for Fig) was seeing students learning and sharing about how they want to be spiritual leaders to those around them during "the other 51 weeks of the year," and not just during the experience of the trip. The highlight (for Holly) was being able to grow closer as a group and closer to God together. Seeing the willingness that the students had to work and their work ethic was contagious and was amazing to see. We had the opportunity to sit around the camp fire every night as a group and just talk about our days and about what God is doing in our lives. For me that was the best thing about it all.

One of the unexpected challenges (from Fig) was to see how hard it was for some people to get used to the idea of pausing and reflecting on the trip. Often they were so focused on work, work, work. It was good to see students and leaders alike recognizing that they were intentionally ministering to others and serving them, not just getting a project done.

Another unexpected challenge (from Holly) was just how much the time difference (4 hours) throws you off. She felt tired constantly, but with God and some perseverance all were able to work through it and have a wonderful time.

Both would highly recommend this trip to anyone. The camp and accommodations were fantastic. Building a relationship with a ministry that is headquartered so close make it a ministry connection that is easier to stick with, not just a one time thing. It was a great opportunity to support an existing Christian ministry. In addition, it is a great place to serve others, as well as to grow closer to God, both individually and as a group.

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