

January 17, 2016

Bethany Christian Reformed Church  
1040 Balfour Street  
P.O. Box 61  
Fenwick, ON L0S 1C0



# Bethany Bugle

## Special points of interest:

- Council Report
- Meal Program
- Conference

## Meal Program



The Congregational Care Team is looking for a person (s) to look after the meal program. If you would be interested in helping to organize occasional meals for people who may be in need, please call Joyce de Roo at 905 386 6719. This is a loving expression of God's care for his people, and you can be a part of it!

### Council Bugle Report

#### Bethany Christian Reformed Church

Meeting: Monday, January 11th, 2016

#### Attendees:

Elders: Zach Beldman, Rudy Boverhof, Hans Dam, George DeRoo, Peter Glasbergen, Ed Slappendel, Pastor Colin Vander Ploeg, Ray VanHuizen, Richard VanLochem, Peter Veldhuizen.

Deacons: Peter Bulk, John Enzlin, Don Terpstra, Frank Vraets

Absent: Leo Devries, George Gritter, Albert Janssen, Jerry Kiers

Chairman George DeRoo opened and welcome with greetings. Scripture reading was 2 Timothy 4, which followed with a discussion on discouragement. As Paul was discouraged at the end of his ministry, we often as office bearers can be discouraged as well. It was noted that our only comfort in life and in death is through Jesus Christ and if we can keep rooted in that truth, like Paul we can remain encouraged. This was followed with a prayer of blessing, intercession and thanksgiving.

Minutes from council meeting held December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2015 received. Motion to accept as presented.

Matters arising from the council meeting minutes.

Vision Team has (3) members that have accepted the position. Waiting for others to accept. Working on developing mandate.

In the not too distant future, Peter Wierenga will provide a refresher on the protocol in the event of a fire or evacuation is needed for the church.

#### New Business.

One of our members has brought up a number of concerns regarding Church Safety. (Not to be confused with Safe Church)

Flamed candles throughout the Church. Worship Committee to investigate having electric candles.

String of lights going down the centre of the pews in the event of an evacuation requiring an exit to only one aisle. Worship Committee to consider other options.

Council is requesting Building and Grounds Team to modify their Mandate to address safety concerns and to delegate one of their members as a contact person for safety related issues.

Council will create a Human Resource Team to address staffing issues such as performance reviews and goal setting etc. (2) Individuals will be contacted as team members.

The Executive Director of Hands at Work requested a meeting with the church leadership for the evening of February 13, 2016. Council members to respond their availability for the meeting by January 25, 2016.

Deacons Report - none.

Caregiver Team – Report received for information

Finance Team – No report

Fellowship Team – No report

Buildings and Grounds – Just an update on the sign. Zip Signs are still working on new plates for the bottom. The problem is that they sent the wrong size template for the base. It was one foot larger than the sign. The other issue that occurred is the colour. Instead of matching the capping on the addition it is more of a bluish colour. The committee is not sure what the solution to this is yet but will keep council updated.

Safe Church Team – No report.

Discipleship Team – Request to hold a Gracious Spaciousness session at Bethany. Approved

Library – No report.

Correspondence

Letter from Classis Niagara requesting Meeting Agenda items to be submitted by January 13, 2016. The meeting will be a joint retreat/regular business meeting

### General Contact Information

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#### Office Phone/Administrator

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#### Clerk

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#### Children's Ministry

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#### Custodians

Clarence & Tracy VanSoelen  
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#### Youth Director

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**shalem**  
Mental Health Network

#### CONTACT INFORMATION

Phone: 905-528-0353 or  
Toll-free 1-866-347-0041  
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to be held in Stella, NY, February 26 and 27, 2016. Council members to report on who could attend the meeting by the next Council meeting, February 8, 2016. We need (3) delegates, consisting of (1) Deacon.

Letter from Christian Reformed Missions – CRM is looking for 3 positions to be filled for Missionaries in Africa.

Letter from Christian Reformed Church in Canada – On May 6-8, 2016 in Waterloo, Ontario, a national gathering of the CRC in Canada will take place. We have been requested to nominate an individual from Bethany to represent Classis Niagara. (12) Individuals from Classis Niagara can attend. If you are a person who currently is involved in a ministry within the congregation, dedicated to serving Jesus wherever you find yourself and willing to engage with church and where God is directing it, consider bringing your name forward to council by February 12, 2016. Please give this prayerful consideration.

Request from Jason Wierenga for transfer of membership to Jubilee Fellowship CRC of St. Catharines. Granted

Letter from Glenda Bouwers resigning as the Meal Coordinator for our congregation as she has taken on the position of Regional Disability Advocate for Classis Niagara. Glenda, as a church we thank you for the work you have done in the past and may you be a continued blessing in your new position moving forward.

Letter from Grace Gospel Church - Divorce Care Flyer. Forwarded to Discipleship Team.

Email from Pelham Syrian Refugee Sponsorship Initiative - form regarding documentation of refugee sponsorship. Passed on to Wendy Vahrmeyer for completion.

Next Council meeting is slated for February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

Peter Glasbergen closed in Prayer.

**Reclaiming Christmas for Abuse Survivors (Part 2): Truth-Telling and Tradition Making  
by Monica Brands, CRC Safe Church Network Guide,  
posted on The Network ([www.network.crcna.org](http://www.network.crcna.org)), used by permission.**

Earlier this month, I wrote a blog about speaking about Christmas in the language abuse survivors understand. Christmas is a painful and difficult time for many people, not just abuse survivors – if we are struggling for any reason, Christmas can be a reminder of the life we wish we had. For abuse survivors, it's a reminder of years and years of sadness. One of the beautiful things about the liturgical calendar is that it reminds us that Christmas only makes sense after Advent – after the season of darkness and waiting, Christmas offers the first glimpse of hope – Jesus' willingness to enter our place of darkest pain.

This is what Christmas should mean, but for many abuse survivors, it can feel like a season where we add insult to injury – a constant reminder that what we hoped for has not come. Christmas is also a season full of triggers – memories of the pain of broken Christmases. If someone has finally had the courage to leave an abusive situation, they may be struggling to rebuild a life, which somehow feels lonelier than the abuse they left behind. Innocent comments from strangers who have no concept of how pain-filled Christmas can be can trigger violent emotions of shame and pain. Completely innocent questions like: 'What are you and your family doing for Christmas?' or 'Are you going home for Christmas?' can be triggers. People who are showing great courage in taking the first steps to rebuild their lives can find such questions a painful reminder of how far they have to go – they may have nowhere to go, they might not be able to afford to travel or have gifts. Too often we talk about Christmas with the assumptions of privilege, leaving people who are not in an emotionally or financially stable situation feeling ashamed and isolated.

Today I want to offer a few concrete suggestions for talking about Christmas differently, in a way that respects the dignity of each person's life and the suffering of our world. If you are making small talk to someone you don't know well, avoid invasive questions. Choose instead a simple, "Are you doing anything for Christmas this year?" This kind of question assumes nothing about the person's life situation, but gives them ownership for their own decisions. Consider an open, no-pressure invite to your home for anyone who might not have a welcoming place to spend Christmas.

An even better goal is to work towards a culture of honest story-telling, including lament. In the November edition of *The Banner*, John Witvliet reminded us that the gospel of Matthew does not tell the story of Jesus' birth without the horror of the death of the innocents. When we refuse to talk about these things at Christmas, we reinforce the narrative that those who are suffering must suffer alone. Abuse survivors will struggle to rebuild their lives and reclaim Christmas in a climate where they cannot even articulate that this is what they are doing. One of the most freeing moments for someone in pain during Christmas is when someone else gives them permission to name that feeling. If just one person has the strength to say, "This Christmas is hard because ...", or, "This year I'm praying for ...", you may suddenly notice the atmosphere becoming more relaxed, more genuine, as others finally dare to speak their truth as well. This kind of vulnerability and truth-telling in a community of support can give abuse survivors the language and tools for reclaiming the time and space of season, and the courage to begin building their own traditions. A culture that is unafraid of leaning into pain can begin to reclaim a season that has



**True Women Conference:** On September 22-24, 2016 (Thursday-Saturday) there will be a women's conference at the *Indianapolis Convention Center* in Indianapolis, Indiana. Speakers include Nancy Leigh DeMoss and Mary Kassian. Keith and Kristyn Getty will be the worship leaders.

"There are 20 seats still available on the bus; they are going quickly. Cost for the bus is \$90CND return. Please make your cheque out to Bethany CRC and give to Lorraine

Wierenga to reserve your seat. Registration for the conference is \$109US/person until May 2. A few H2H leaders will take care of registration in groups of 10 to obtain the lowest price. We plan to do this sometime between now and May 2, hoping the dollar will get a little better!! Hotel reservations are available as Feb 2 and can be booked personally online once they're available. You can cancel your room up to 24 before the conference if you need to. All this info is on the website. Go to [www.truewoman16.com](http://www.truewoman16.com) If you have any questions, talk to Wilma Vahrmeyer, Andrea Veldhuizen, or Lorraine Wierenga. We are so excited to take a bus load of Canadian women to this conference. Join us!! Your heart will be encouraged and challenged!!"