

ON Broadway

Ann Arbor Christian Reformed Church Newsletter

October 2016

Can We Testify?

Pastor John, jgroen@aacrc.org



Syd Hielema is the Team Leader for Faith Formation Ministries in the Christian Reformed Church. He writes in the September issue of the *Banner* that in the last two years he's received many requests about sharing faith stories that go something like this, "Our congregation really struggles with sharing its faith stories. Could you help us take steps to strengthen this practice?"

Very recently in our own congregation someone asked me if we could incorporate faith stories in our worship services as a means of hearing how God, through the Holy Spirit, is working among us so that we as a congregation might be encouraged and strengthened in our faith.

I found it interesting that reading Hielema's column in the *Banner* and receiving the request came within a week of each other. The person making the request was not aware of Hielema's writing about his experience of the same phenomenon.

Hielema writes that in our tradition we are more comfortable sharing opinions than faith stories. I laughed when I read that because I think it's true. I have heard more opinions than faith stories. But I must add, I have heard many faith stories from our members. They are beautiful, edifying, interesting, and worth sharing. Granted, they were all expressed in a setting other than a worship service.

Are we ready to speak our faith stories in a worship service. Are we ready to hear? That is, would you tell a personal faith story, a story of your walk with our Lord, how the Holy Spirit has led you, helped you, taught you? Would you like to hear such stories?

Let me know your response to either of these questions. Thanks.

Loving God, Serving People

Building a community
loved and changed by Jesus,
loving and changing
the world for him.



Hope Clinic Dinner Service

Sharon Reimink

One of the many services offered by Hope Clinic are weekend dinners for anyone who feels they have the need. A high quality, well-prepared meal is offered every Saturday and Sunday, days when other dinner services are not operating. Our congregation has been staffing the dinner service role on the fourth Saturday of each month for the past couple of years. Other churches and service organizations do the same for the rest of the meal times each month.

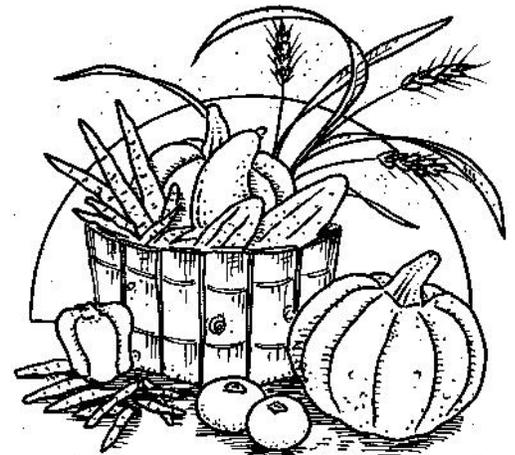
Briefly, what we do is to show up around 3:40 on our designated Saturday, get briefed on how to serve a complete meal usually consisting of meat, vegetable, salad, bread, and dessert, fill the guest's plates at the service window, wash the dishes, mop the floors, and clean the kitchen. This process takes 2 to 2 ½ hours. All food is donated and prepared by others. Volunteers are welcome to eat dinner there and make some contact with the other diners as they wish and feel comfortable. This has been a very straightforward, well organized time of service for everyone. Absolutely no skills are required beyond putting food on a plate and basic cleaning tasks. It helps to have a friendly smile and welcoming spirit.

Does that interest you at all? If so, you would be welcome to join the faithful band of volunteers who share in this ministry. Contact Ron or Sharon Reimink (734-995-1710, rreimink@comcast.net) with any questions or to join in. Youth volunteers, middle school age or above, are welcome to participate.

CAP Produce Run

Matt Admiraal

Did you know that our church doesn't only support the Community Assistance Program (CAP) in Detroit financially, with clothes, and with Thanksgiving Baskets? Each year Ann Arbor CRC and other churches that support CAP each take one month from April through October and do a produce run the first Saturday of that month. This entails going to the Dearborn Farm Market, picking up fresh produce including cabbage, potatoes, onions, and fruit, and then going to CAP and putting this produce in grocery bags. People from the community that are in need then pick up the bags of fresh produce. This year volunteers from our church will be doing the produce run on October 1. This service opportunity takes a short amount of time (we usually leave Ann Arbor at about 6:45am and are usually back to Ann Arbor by 10:00am), and is a great way to help out those in need. It requires a couple of minivans or other large vehicles and about six to eight volunteers to unload the produce at CAP and then bag 100 bags of fresh produce. If this is a service event that you would be interested in doing in the future, please contact Mark Doorlag or Matt Admiraal.



Health Ministry News

Barb Okonkwo, RN, FCN



The cover story in the most recent (September 2016) AARP Bulletin examines “12 ways the health care system may be harming you”. Number 5 on this list is “Dismal Discharge Planning”

The article states that at time of hospital discharge patients are at “one of the most challenging and dangerous junctures in medicine.”

Studies indicate that recently discharged patients are both physiologically and psychologically vulnerable. Fatigued, still not feeling great, confronted with instructions about medications, activity, diet and follow-up recommendations patients find it difficult to understand and therefore comply with all that is being said to them.

In a 2009 study it was found that almost 20% of Medicare patients were readmitted to hospital within 30 days of discharge. Because of the increased cost in quality of care as well as dollars to both patients and insurers Medicare has since instituted regulations that penalize most hospitals for higher than expected unplanned 30 day rehospitalization rates. (see below references for more in depth explanation of these regulations).

This whole topic is quite complicated and the reasons for readmission to hospital can be a result of many factors beyond the scope of this article. However, as your parish nurse I wanted to alert you to the importance of paying attention at time of discharge in order to prevent this from being a dangerous time for you.

Ideally you should have an advocate with you when you receive your discharge instructions. Ask the discharging nurse to wait until your advocate arrives before instructions are given. Then:

- repeat the discharge instructions in your own words
- understand all medications you should be taking-- both new and old
- if follow-up appointments are indicated, know if these appointments have been made for you or

must you arrange for them yourself

- if home-care is arranged, either RN or therapy, when should you expect to hear about a first visit and from which agency

If no one is able to be with you at time of discharge to review the instructions with you I am willing to try to be there with you. Or if not then, I could make a visit later on the day of discharge or the day after to go over medications, activity, diet and follow-up instructions.

One of my goals as your parish nurse is that none of you would be readmitted to the hospital because of poor discharge planning and understanding.

http://www.healthaffairs.org/healthpolicybriefs/brief.php?brief_id=102

<https://www.cms.gov/medicare/medicare-fee-for-service-payment/acuteinpatientpps/readmissions-reduction-program.html>)

<http://www.trusteemag.com/articles/868-rethinking-the-hospital-readmissions-reduction-program>

aarp.org/bulletin September 2016



Advent by Candlelight

Elaine Henke

Advent by Candlelight will be held this year on Monday, December 5. All women, including high school girls, are invited to an evening of dessert, music and an inspirational speaker. There will be more details to follow so for now just save this date on your



Dreaming and Doing:

Loving and Serving the World for Jesus In 2016 and Beyond

Teressa Streng

Would you like the opportunity to talk about the mission of our church? We're having a town hall style meeting on Sunday, October 23rd from 3:00 – 4:30 pm to do just that. This is a chance for our community to listen to each other, to celebrate what we are doing already, and to dream about what we could do in 2016 and beyond. Childcare will be available for all ages. Refreshments will be served afterwards.

Here are the questions we'll discuss. Let's pray and consider them as we anticipate our time together.

- What passions or gifts are you using or hoping to use to serve the world in mission?
- How are these passions or gifts connected to the church and the community outside the church?
- How do you understand the church's mission and your involvement in that mission.

Corrections

Maija Kaldjian

Please note the two typing errors in the September *On Broadway* article, "Former Prisoner Becomes Messenger of God:"

1. Line 15 should read: **It is a story of a lay preacher, 70 years of age.**
2. Line 10 from the end should read: Olkkonen emphasizes that **pussy footing** is not worth it. If people are not taught about sin they will not know what grace is.

Undergraduate College Care Packages

Dawn & Arnie Geldermans

Dear friends:

Once again we have the privilege to remember our undergraduate college students that we may not see very often. We do this by sending them a care package. The care packages are full of small items that they need; some baked goods, maybe a fun item, snacks and a note of encouragement from AACRC (that would be you). We will be assembling the 25 care packages on the night of October 19.

There are several ways you can help make this a success and encourage the students.

1. Contribute supplies or provide baked goods. Let us know if you are willing and we will send you a list of what is needed.
2. Come out on the 19th and join the fun of assembling the packages.
3. Write notes of encouragement to the students. You can do this in advance or the night of the 19th. If you wish to write the notes ahead of time, the names of the students are listed below. Please place the notes in an envelope with the students name on it and put it in Mailbox #170.
4. Pray for our students.
5. Do all of the above!!

The students are as follows:

Adela Baker, Taylor Boes, Maia Bolhuis, Clare Brush, Barret Bryson, Sophia Bryson, Brittany Byma, Kyle DeVries, Leanne DeVries, Michael DeZeeuw, Andie Dekker, Michael Dekker, Justin Eekhoff, Kaitlyn Eekhoff, Megan Eekhoff, Lindsie Egedy, Evan Heetderks, Ryan Heetderks, Brandt Hofman, Jane Kokmeyer, Christopher Lloyd, Laurel Machiele, Dawit VanEe, Anita VanderMeulen, and Ryan VanderMeulen.

Please contact Arnie & Dawn Geldermans to get a list of the item(s) that are needed or to find out more: geldermans@comcast.net or 734-995-5463.

News About a Former AACRC Member

*from Spark,
the Calvin College Alumni Magazine*

Brianna Roth '17 traveled to Lubango, Angola, for eight weeks this summer to experience tropical medicine and health care in a developing nation. While there, the senior nursing major assisted with a marathon surgery weekend at Kalukembe, about 250 kilometers away. While there Brianna discovered that the obstetrician/gynecologist working there was **Priscila Ribeiro Cummings '02**.

"I never dreamed I would find such an incredible connection so far from the U.S. I was literally across the operating table from her, and we squealed in joy and gave each other a high five [upon discovering their Calvin connection]," Brianna wrote. "Thankfully, she was holding the scalpel in her other hand!"

Priscila worshiped with us while a student at UM Medical School, and she served by teaching in our Friendship ministry.



The article below comes to us from a Jewish perspective. The challenge of ending life well is one we all face as human beings. The wisdom found here speaks to us all. I was blessed to read it. I trust you will be as well.

Pastor John

<http://www.aish.com/h/hh/The-Most-Important-Letter-Youll-Write.html>

The Most Important Letter You'll Write

by Sara Debbie Gutfreund

A powerful exercise everyone should do to prepare for the High Holidays.

Dr. VJ Periyakoil has been a geriatrics and palliative care doctor for the last 15 years. She has had numerous conversations with her patients at the end of their lives, and the most common emotion that they express is regret. Regret that they never told the people that they loved how much they cared about them. Regret that they never fixed broken friendships. Regret that they didn't have the courage to forgive others or ask for forgiveness.

One of Dr. Periyakoil's patients was a Marine veteran who had lived a quiet, proud life mostly devoid of emotion. As he was dying, his wife would sit beside him for hours watching him watch television. She told the doctor that in their over-50 years of marriage, her husband had never been much of a talker. But as this Marine combat veteran began to face his own death, he started to speak to Dr. Periyakoil.

He talked about how much he regretted not spending more time with his wife whom he loved dearly. He spoke about how proud he was of his son who had followed in his father's footsteps. But when the doctor mentioned these sentiments to his wife and son, they looked at her with obvious disbelief. They thanked her for her kindness but they insisted that the patient would never say anything like that.

One day Dr. Periyakoil asked the veteran if she could record him when he spoke about his family and then play it back for his wife and son. He agreed and the doctor gave his wife and son the taped letter, which brought tears to their eyes. This man had never been able to tell his wife directly how much he loved her, but he was able to record it.

This moving experience gave Dr. Periyakoil the idea to begin the Stanford Friends and Family Letter Project. It's a free template that is available in eight languages at med.stanford.edu/letter that allows writers to express forgiveness, regret and gratitude.

The letter helps writers complete seven life review tasks: acknowledging important people in our lives, remembering treasured moments, apologizing to those we have hurt, forgiving those who have hurt us and saying "thank you," "I love you" and "good-bye."

One letter-writer wrote to his wife: "Lily, I wish I had loved you more." Others wrote things to their children that they hadn't been able to express to them before. Some participants apologize, like one father who told his daughter, "I'm sorry that I wasn't there for you growing up." Others forgave people in their lives for both unpaid loans and past insults.

There is also a template for those who are healthy. The letter does not have to be shared, and some people use it as a living legacy document which they continue to update as time goes on. This letter reminds me of the work that we are supposed to be doing in this month of Elul:

- Reviewing our lives and our relationships.
- Forgiving others and asking for forgiveness.
- Acknowledging important people in our lives and thanking them.
- Thinking about treasured moments that have brought us to where we are today.
- Having the courage to say "thank you."
- Having the courage to say "I love you."

And finally, coming to terms with something that many of us don't want to think about: "goodbye." Who wants to think about death while they are still healthy? Who wants to accept that our time is limited, and that none of us know how much longer we each have to live? Most of us don't want to think about, much less write about, how we would say goodbye to those that we love.

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In many ways it is too painful to think about how we would say goodbye to this life, to our chance to make a difference here, to the loved ones left behind. But perhaps this last part of the letter is the most important life review task for any of us to complete. Because when we can express what we want to be remembered for, we remind ourselves what we are living for. When we accept that we too will one day have to give an accounting for our lives, we don't take today's opportunities for granted. We can take an honest look at ourselves, at what we did, who we became, and the connections we made or failed to make.

The words of one of the letter writers keep echoing in my mind: "I wish that I had loved you more." I cannot imagine how painful that must have been to write in the days before he died. Because don't we all wish that sometimes? That we had loved more and criticized less? That we had followed our dreams? That we had forgiven and been forgiven? That we had said thank you and learned how to say goodbye?

Writing a life review letter will probably be the most important letter that any of us will ever write. The hardest part is having the courage to begin.

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