

# ON Broadway

Ann Arbor Christian Reformed Church Newsletter

September 2015

## Serving



OTHERS

### Loving God, Serving People

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

### From the Service Deacons Helping Those in Need

Last year the deacons sent out a survey asking for ways in which you as congregants of AACRC are able to serve others with various needs. In early August, the deacons were privileged to use this resource to coordinate assistance for someone from the Grand Rapids area who required temporary housing while her husband was being treated at a local hospital. We received the request one morning from the church office, and by that afternoon three households offered to help out. It was a blessing to see the willingness of the survey respondents and the coordination of the resources come together to quickly offer the help when needed.

If you did not have the opportunity to fill out the survey but would like to sign up to offer help when needed, please take a look at the categories below and let the deacons know how you would like to help. Or if you or someone you know could use assistance, please let us know so that we may request help from those that responded.

Some examples of ways you can help are moving assistance, yard work, minor appliance repair, computer assistance, providing transportation to church functions, medical appointments, etc., cleaning, household chores, preparing meals, opening up your home to someone from out of town with a loved one in the hospital, etc.

The deacons would like to thank you again for offering to help those in need.

### September 13 Special Offering

#### AACRC Tuition Assistance Fund

Your offering to the AACRC Tuition Assistance fund will be used to assist families who desire a Christian school education for their children but cannot otherwise afford it. The fund offers financial assistance toward the tuition at any local Christian school from kindergarten through high school.

## News & Notes from the Health Ministry Committee

### Vaccinations: an ounce of prevention

Jill Fenske, M.D.



As our attention turns to “back to school” preparations, and resuming our fall schedules, this is a good time to make sure everyone in your family is up-to-date with vaccinations. Thankfully, many infectious illnesses in the United States have become rare due to widespread vaccination. However, in the past few years, we have seen a resurgence of some diseases such as pertussis

(whooping cough), and measles due to greater numbers of unimmunized individuals in our communities. Immunizations can protect us as individuals from these diseases, but they also protect our vulnerable neighbors who may not have received vaccines due to age, allergy, immunosuppression or difficulty accessing healthcare. These individuals rely on “herd immunity,” which requires that a sufficient percentage of the population is immune to the illness, preventing it from being introduced into the community.

There are recommended schedules for childhood and adolescent vaccinations which have been well studied to ensure safety and adequate immunity. As with any medical treatment, there are potential risks

with administration of vaccines, but fortunately bad outcomes are very rare, and physicians agree that the benefits greatly outweigh the risks. You should speak with your family’s physicians for more information regarding the potential side effects of vaccines. It is not recommended to follow an alternative or delayed vaccination schedule, since this can result in less efficient immunity and increased vulnerability to infection.

There are a number of adult immunizations now available for patients with particular medical conditions, or of a certain age. These include vaccinations against shingles, hepatitis, pneumonia, tetanus and pertussis. Ask your physician if you are up-to-date with adult immunizations.

One final reminder: All members of the family six months of age or older should be vaccinated yearly for influenza. Flu shots will soon be available at medical offices and pharmacies.

Additional resources:

CDC website: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vac-gen/why.htm>

*Christianity Today* Article, May 2015, “Why I Still Vaccinate” by Dr. Matthew Loftus

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## Senior Fellowship

*Dykstras & Glovers*

August Bulletin announcements have informed you that a **Seniors Group** is being planned for this year, beginning on Wednesday, September 9, at 1:30 PM. Why a Seniors Group? Investigation has confirmed that there are some 90 church members/attendees that we believe are “old” enough to attend such a group, a group whose goal is to provide people with a place for fellowship, personal growth and just plain fun. We hope to do this in a number of different ways, one that includes inviting people to come and speak regarding personal life experiences that can benefit the group and help us grow together.

We are privileged to have Doctors Luke and Merling Tsai as our first speakers. We have asked them to share insights regarding the publication of their recent book *Raising Our Son with Autism: A Family’s 40-Year Journey*. This engaging book describes the full life Stephen leads despite some of the limitations he has faced and still faces in his home, school, church and community.

Please join us whenever you can this year, and be sure to share any ideas that you might have for future meetings with us. We have chosen 1:30 PM on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday afternoon of each month as our regular meeting time and date. So take a moment to enter these Wednesday dates on your calendars. We look forward to an enriching year of activity together.

## Detroit's Afro-American Mission 51st Annual Banquet – April 24, 2015

*Titia VanderMolen, Tim & Char Larsen*

As we headed into Detroit on the evening of April 24th, we anticipated meeting our friends from DAAM, who were celebrating 51 years of God's faithfulness with this ministry in the inner city of Detroit. When we arrived, our car was left in the fenced in parking lot with a guard on duty. We entered the mission and were warmly greeted by a number of people along the way. Prior to dinner we met and talked with people both from the Mission and from other supporting churches.

As has been their custom, once a year in April, the Mission invites members of supporting churches to come and meet with them over a delicious home cooked meal at their Annual Banquet. And what a banquet it was—even the kids like the food! The dining area was filled with guests and there was a lot of conversation around the tables as we heard of many ways in which God is working through and in the people at DAAM. We had the opportunity to talk with several people as dinner was about to be served. But before we ate, Duchess came and stood behind Tim and put her young two-year-old grandson on a chair next to him. She then proceeded to say that before we could eat we had some other business to take care of first. A large silver tray was brought out and placed in front of Tim with chocolate covered fruits and a smaller tree of edible fruits was placed in front of her grandson. She then led the group in a rousing 'birthday rap' as it was both of their birthdays that day! An opening prayer was offered and together we enjoyed a meal lovingly prepared by people of the Mission.

Following the meal, we all moved into the worship space where music by the Brooklyn Tabernacle was playing. The person leading this part of the evening reminded us that "God said: Go spread the Word . . . so we are to do that. Tonight through our singing, the special music, the prayers and the spoken Word may we truly worship our God and be challenged in our commitment." There was a lot of music (piano, harp, men's quartet), prayers, testimonies and the spoken Word. Challenges were given and we were blessed. The guest speaker was Pastor Gregory Alexander from Rosedale Park Baptist Church, supporters of the Mission for many years. He spoke on the theme of DAAM this year: "More of Christ, less of me." (*He must become greater; I must become less. John 3:30*)

Each time we leave D.A.A.M., we have been deeply touched and can't help but reflect on what we just

experienced. We find it hard to even identify with the great needs of some of the people we have met and ask you to continue to pray:

- For the many people D.A.A.M. serves (life is a daily hardship—some with no jobs, no medical insurance);
- For Maud and Duchess Robinson who oversee this ministry and the staff that is dedicated to this ministry. Over the years, many lives have been, and continue to be, impacted;
- For safety, endurance and to be a blessing to others along the way—they are real heroes.

For 51 years the Detroit's Afro-American Mission has been spreading the Light of Jesus' love in the area where they are located! Included in their ministry is a Tuesday noon Bible lesson and meal for the homeless. Summer camp for the neighborhood kids is another highlight, and the list could go on. Our friends at the Mission expressed sincere appreciation that we had taken the time to come and share in this celebration with them and we were thankful to be there. May God continue to give them strength and courage and the vision to keep going as they are faithful to His calling in the inner-city.

*Crisis of belief calls for full commitment to the task, not commitment based on fear of consequences but on dedication to God and His work.*

Henry Blackaby



## W.I.S.H.–Robin & Beth Churchill



Robin & Beth are the new directors of West Indies Self Help (W.I.S.H.) in of La Gonave, Haiti. They will arrive in early September and will be accompanied by their two younger children, Peter and Gaëlle.

Robin has worked for 26 years as a Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) officer and will bring his experience working with hurting people through difficult circumstances to the mission field. Beth has always had a heart for missions and is excited about God's calling to serve cross-culturally. She believes that God has opened the doors and through a variety of home and work experiences feels He has prepared her heart for serving in Haiti.

## Joel Huyser - CRWM

In a recent prayer letter Joel talked about his upcoming trip to El Salvador:

“Recently the violence in El Salvador has reached a new high with the gangs trying to enforce a bus strike by assassinating bus drivers who dare get on the road. Our partner Seeds of a New Creation is trying to instill a culture of peace in the middle of all of this violence. Unfortunately, Seeds of a New Creation had to dismiss their director for a moral failing earlier this year. This is my first visit since that happened.” Joel asks for prays for “protection and wisdom in this visit.”

## Missionary Visits & Adult Ed/Sunday School

**October 4:** Dwight Billingsley from Arab American Friendship Center

**October 25:** Sara Chang from Intervarsity Christian Fellowship

**TBD:** Brittany Byrna - To talk about her year with Youth With A Mission

**TBD:** Missions Team – Mission Team Vision – Our process and plans

## Missions Bulletin Board and News from Missionaries

The missions team is exploring ways to present mission news on its bulletin board in the fellowship hall. Take a look and let us know your thoughts ([missions@aacrc.org](mailto:missions@aacrc.org)). Most of the latest news from our missionaries is available on the [aacrc.org](http://aacrc.org) website, but some missionaries request that their news not appear on the internet. We can distribute this via email—let us know what you would like to receive. This news will also be printed for the Missions Notebook, located near the bulletin board.

*Mission Team: Marilyn Cummins, Jim Steenstra, Sean Newman, Teresa Streng, Barbara Fichtenberg, Jenelle Newman*

## The Safe Church Vision

*Karen Lin for the Safe Church Committee  
Ryan Boes, Ross Weener & Melissa Kloostr  
(from [www.crcna.org/safechurch](http://www.crcna.org/safechurch))*

Imagine ...

*In ALL Christian Reformed churches, people are free to worship and grow in a safe place, free from any threat of abuse.*

*Relationships are open and honest; the infinite value of ALL people is honored.*

*Where abuse has occurred, the church ALWAYS responds with compassionate justice that fosters healing.*

Greetings from Ann Arbor Christian Reformed Church Safe Church Ministry! While our congregation has had a Safe Church/Abuse Prevention Policy in place with annual training and review for several years, the Administration Board responded to the CRC's call to expand our definition of what it means to be "safe" by creating the safe church committee approximately a year ago. Part of this entails providing a safe physical and emotional environment for our children and those who may be more vulnerable among us. But abuse, in all its forms, extends beyond the boundaries of our church to affect all of us in many ways.

The statistics are staggering: one in four girls and one in six boys are sexually abused before the age of 18 ([www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/ace/prevalence.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/ace/prevalence.htm)). Every year, Intimate Partner Violence results in an estimated 1,200 deaths and 2 million injuries among women and 600,000 injuries among men ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov))

2008). What can be done to address this? Safe Church Ministry has five guiding goals:

1. policy (to create an environment which prevents abuse including screening, accountability, training and regular review);
2. education;
3. response (to take misconduct seriously);
4. awareness;
5. commitment (for leadership at all levels to commit to the safe church vision).

Education and awareness will be ongoing, and linked to wide-spread education opportunities such as Abuse Awareness Sunday (on September 27, 2015) and Domestic Violence Awareness Month (October). We hope to continue with information throughout the year.

I encourage you to review the CRC's safe church website ([www.crcna.org/safechurch](http://www.crcna.org/safechurch)) and join our journey to create ways we can foster "safety" for ourselves, our family, our church, and the world.

*They will live in safety  
and no one will make them afraid.  
Ezekiel 34:28*



## Save the Date

ADVENT BY CANDLELIGHT, our special evening for all women, will be held on Monday, December 7. Please mark your calendars and pass the date on to family and friends. Questions? Phone Elaine Henke at 662-9571.

## Redemption of a (Former?) Racist from Roseland

Rev. Don Postema

*(There has been a lot of conversation about race recently. I thought I would share with you a few thoughts and experiences from my life.)*

I grew up a racist. I was taught to be a racist. You aren't born a racist; you have to be taught. You aren't born hateful or prejudiced. You have to imbibe that from fearful and prejudiced people. I was born and grew up in Roseland on the South Side of Chicago. I lived within a Dutch 'ghetto.' (There were four Christian Reformed churches, two Reformed churches and two Christian grade schools within 10 blocks of each other.) We were surrounded by people of many nationalities. And we all had nicknames for each other ... not always nice names. However, we were walled off from African-American people by an invisible boundary at 95th St. (As you can imagine, we didn't call them 'African-Americans' then!) There was the North Roseland Improvement Association whose real purpose was to keep Black folks from moving south over 95th St. into our neighborhoods.

I learned racism not so much by direct words (though there were quite a few, rather demeaning words) as by attitudes and actions. I knew we didn't want Black people to move next door or down the street. Once in a while, when a Black person wandered into our neighborhood, people would remark: "A black cloud is passing by." One Black boy attended our Christian grade school, whom the principal called "Snowball."

I remember one shameful incident that happened near my house when I was 13 years old: the 1947 Fernwood Park Race Riot, "one of the worst in Chicago history." World War II veterans moved into the Fernwood Park Housing Project, among them some African-American veterans. But the white neighbors did not want "racial integration" in that neighborhood. I remember riding my bike over there with a few of my friends and watching people throw rocks at the houses. It was ugly. It made a real impression on me: How could this happen near my neighborhood? I also remember a group of white folks writing the mayor of Chicago saying that the only way the violence would stop was if the Black folks were moved out. And that from the folks who were perpetrating the violence! I saw how ignorant prejudice was as we tried to eject African-American families from our neighborhoods and our lives.

I learned racism from attitudes and actions in my neighborhood, in my Christian school, and sometimes from some church members. I'd be embarrassed to repeat some of the things they said!

It has taken me a long time to get rid of such attitudes or to be cleansed from such prejudice. (I wonder whether I'll ever be completely free.) I have lived in

foreign countries. Traveled to Africa three times. I was appointed to our denomination's Synodical Committee On Race Relations in 1971 that was given the mandate to rid the Christian Reformed Church of racist attitudes in three years. (An Office of Race Relations still exists!) I went to anti-racism workshops ... and even taught some. What has really helped my attitudes is having an African-American son-in-law and three biracial grandchildren. Now when people make racial slurs, I hear them casting aspersions on members of my family. For about forty-five years, I have had in my office a picture of two babies, one black, one white, with the words: "Daddy, what did you do in the war against racism?" Also a picture of a contemplative Martin Luther King Jr. with the words: "He had a dream—will you share it?" Reminding me every day of my obligation to counter racism in society, in the church, and in myself. It has been a long and challenging process.

Then something happened that was really humbling and overwhelming. Ironically, it happened in a church on 95th St.—Trinity United Church of Christ ["unashamedly Black; unapologetically Christian"]. It is located less than a mile from where I grew up in Roseland. It was 2008 and Trinity was in the media spotlight because a presidential candidate, Sen. Barack Obama, was a member there. Some of his opponents accused Mr. Obama's pastor of making what they considered controversial statements in his sermons.

The more I heard about this church, the more I wondered whether it was a church an African-American young woman, whom I had counseled in Ann Arbor, called me about many years before. She had told me they were studying my book *Space for God: Study and Practice of Spirituality and Prayer*.

So I called the church and found out that they indeed were still using that book. The Communications Pastor told me that in fact for many years it has been, and still is today, part of their core curriculum for church leaders. I expressed to her how unexpected yet gratifying it was that an African-American church was using this rather "white" book written by this former resident of racist Roseland. She also was intrigued and invited me to visit the church some time.

**continue reading on the next page**

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In October 2009 my wife, Elaine, and I had the opportunity to accept that invitation. It was a unique experience. This is a large church with some 8,500 members. We got there 45 minutes before the service began yet we would not have found a spot in the huge parking lot if one had not been reserved for us. We were greeted royally, led to a front seat next to the pastor's wife, Mrs. Monica Moss. Many folks welcomed us as a small musical group began singing. Gradually the choir filed in—all 200 members! They sang a lot during the service—and lustily.

About a half hour into the service, Dr. Otis Moss III, the senior pastor, greeted the congregation: "This is the day the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. We give thanks to God for this glorious and marvelous day. Welcome to Trinity—the greatest church this side of the Jordan. We're excited that the Lord woke us up this morning." And then the overwhelming surprise: "We have two very special guests with us today. Generations of Trinitarians have been blessed by the work of this gentleman—work he has done in writing and publishing the book *Space for God*. Dr. Don Postema and his wife Elaine are with us." He invited us to stand as the congregation applauded. "We appreciate you all being here with us. Amen. I also want to mention about Dr. Don ... that when we were going through our 'unique media moment,' [in 2008] Dr. Don took the opportunity to call just to let us know he was praying with us and that he was so moved that we were using his book in our church. And we just appreciate him and his work and his ministry. Amen."

Then came the "Passing of the Peace." People were warned, "If you don't like people hugging on you, you came to the wrong church. We believe in the Holy Hug. So, pass the peace with the hug." Well, the holy hugging lasted for about five minutes, with musicians playing the whole time. Elaine and I have never been hugged so much in any church. Many people came over to express appreciation and love. Pastor Otis gave a hug and some very encouraging words.

Another one of the older pastors shook hands and hugged and said, "I've been teaching your book for over 20 years. It's been in our curriculum forever." "So," I asked, "how did this 'white' book get into this Black church?" He said, "Our former senior pastor introduced the book to our church years ago and taught the first class of 60 people. It's been in our curriculum ever since." I couldn't resist, "Did President Obama study it?" He replied, "Did Obama study it?! He was in my class!"

Well, we sat through the next two hours of this rousing service rather nonplussed, amazed, appreciative. (We

weren't always sitting, I'll tell you!) The welcome and the gratitude were very inspiring—as were the uplifting music and singing, the dancing, the electrifying sermon. A further surprise came from Mrs. Moss who invited us to have lunch with her and pastor Otis in a room off his study. What an interesting conversation we had with them and others who stopped by to meet us. Even the bookstore manager showed up and later showed me my book on a bookstore shelf.

What a heart-warming, redemptive, deeply spiritual experience. As we drove home, I reflected: after 60 years, the people my neighbors despised, honored me. Those we had rejected, accepted me. Those we demeaned, embraced me. Hugs bridged the gap created by fear and prejudice. In that church on 95th St. barriers were broken down; we were divided no more. I felt the relief of reconciliation, the freedom of forgiveness, the joy of hope. Though they all didn't know it, these gracious people had indeed provided redemption for a (hopefully former) racist from Roseland.



### Thank You from Glacier Hills

Thank you for bringing such a meaningful worship service to Glacier Hills. The residents were visibly moved. I cannot overstate how much it means to our residents when the family of God comes to worship with them. Thank you Kelly Van Ee for organizing the program and bringing everyone together. The theme "What a friend we have in Jesus" was perfect for our setting. Thank you Don Postema for your sermon. It was inspired. Ann Van Zomeren, you are truly gifted on piano. Thank you also to the men's quartet—Wow, what talent! To the children who sang in the choir and played instrumental solos, you made the residents' day. To those who read scripture or prayer, to those who helped with wheelchairs, and to those who sat alongside residents and joined in the hymns, thank you for being here. When the Church comes to Glacier Hills, it is tangible proof to our residents that God remembers them. Thank you for being the body of Christ.

For all of us at Glacier Hills,

Gabby VanderMolen.