

ON Broadway

Ann Arbor Christian Reformed Church Newsletter

September 2017

Highlights from the Stephen Ministry Training Event

Stephen Ministry Leadership Team

Louise Gruppen and Marian Ijzerman were among 284 pastors and church leaders from the US, Canada and Japan at a Stephen Series Leader's Training Course (LTC) in Dallas, Texas in July.

"It was a wonderful experience to be with Christians from 36 denominations (!), all there to learn more about sharing Christ's love with hurting people," said Louise.

The fast-paced weeklong course began on Sunday evening, July 9, and concluded the following Saturday at noon.

"There was so much material to absorb during the week. But everything was so well organized and presented that it made it possible to keep up. And the 3,000-page Leader's Manual we received at the conference walked us through the entire Stephen Ministry system," said Marian.

Stephen Leaders direct Stephen Ministry in the congregation. They are the ones who recruit, select, train and supervise Stephen Ministers, and they locate people with needs for care and match them with a Stephen Minister. They also build awareness regarding Stephen Ministry in the congregation and community.

The training at an LTC differs from the 50 hours of Stephen Minister training in the congregation because the LTC focuses on the administrative and supervisory aspects of Stephen Ministry. The Stephen Minister training we offer here at AACRC focuses on the actual caregiving skills Stephen Ministers will use in their caring relationships.

"We heard from many conference participants about the importance of Stephen Ministry in their congregations and also watched a number of video testimonials that spoke to the healing nature of having a one-on-one Christian caring relationship during a difficult time," said Louise. "We encourage everyone at AACRC to support, turn to, or become involved with Stephen Ministry in whatever way they can," said Marian.

If you would like more information about Stephen Ministry, how to receive care from a Stephen Minister, or how to become a Stephen Minister, contact the pastors, Louise or Marian. More information is also available on the Stephen Ministry page of our website.

Marian Ijzerman (left)
Kenneth Haugk (founder and Executive Director of
Stephen Ministries, center)
Louise Gruppen (right)



Reflections from *Inspire 2017*

Barb Fichtenberg

From August 3-5, the Christian Reformed Church in North America hosted its first *Inspire* event at the Detroit Renaissance Center. This binational event was for the purpose of energizing, informing and inspiring leaders and volunteers from churches all across the U.S. and Canada. The 840 attendees had the opportunity to choose from 66 different breakout sessions and four workshops on a wide variety of topics, including worship, children's ministry, faith formation, intergenerational leadership, poverty, justice, missions, hospitality, immigrants, racial unity, ministry to those with disabilities, technology, stewardship, listening, Bible discovery, evangelism, prayer and many others. It was difficult to choose! In addition, there were 4 excellent plenary sessions, vendor displays to look at, Detroit-themed meals, and a number of other activities.

We had 15 AACRC folks who attended the event. It was a great time of fellowship and getting to know each other better. We also enjoyed sharing what we were learning with each other. Now we would like to share some of our thoughts with the rest of the congregation. Here are some reflections:

From Jen Boes

As I reflect on *Inspire 2017* I find themes spiraling through conversations and experiences. Richard Mouw opened the conference talking about how creation happens every day—God did it over and over again and so do we. Each day we listen, listen to priorities in our neighborhood (or church or Council) in order to live as intentional Christians in community. Then we need to communicate, and set goals, and communicate some more. And work to create the kind of community God calls us to. Whether imagining what Ann Arbor needs right now, or what our church's priorities are, or what Council should focus on, or what I should be doing, this spiral continues. Listen. What does A2 need? Communicate. Listen. What gifts do we bring? Communicate. Set goals. Communicate again. Listen again. And in the midst of a broken church and broken community and broken world, become the light that God has sent us to be.

From Norm Fichtenberg

The evidence that, as a denomination, the CRC is committed to racial and cultural diversity, social justice and serving those who are marginalized by society was inspiring. It was inspirational to listen to a former megachurch pastor who, as a result of God's call, now ministers to the spiritual needs of society's outcasts who live in the seedy motel district of town. Inspiration came

from stories of those ministering to Muslims regarding openness to exploring Jesus with Christians within the context of non-proselytizing friendships. The theme of simply being authentically Christian with others and leaving the work of conversion to the Holy Spirit was inspiring.

From Jan Musch

The thing I appreciated most about *Inspire 2017* was the diversity of people who attended. A variety of ages, ministry settings and roles, and ethnic backgrounds were represented, but we were all Christian Reformed and spoke a common language of reformed faith. It was encouraging to be part of *Inspire 2017*; I would go again!

From Larry Gruppen

Lots of things struck me, but one I would highlight was Richard Mouw's distinction of the non-human creation as being pleasing to God, such that "God enjoyed himself for five days before we showed up." Psalm 104 is a celebration of God's love for this non-human creation. Mouw went on to emphasize our responsibilities as stewards of that non-human creation. Then he quoted those wonderful words from G. K. Chesterton

"A child kicks his legs rhythmically through excess, not absence, of life. Because children have abounding vitality, because they are in spirit fierce and free, therefore they want things repeated and unchanged. They always say, "Do it again"; and the grown-up person does it again until he is nearly dead. For grown-up people are not strong. But perhaps God is strong enough to exult in monotony. It is possible that God says every morning, "Do it again" to the sun; and every evening, "Do it again" to the moon. It may not be automatic necessity that makes all daisies alike; it may be that God makes every daisy separately, but has never got tired of making them. It may be that He has the eternal appetite of infancy; for we have sinned and grown old, and our Father is younger than we." G. K. Chesterton, Orthodoxy.

From this description of the beginning, he went to the end, which, he reminded us, is already set and we have won. I loved his analogy of reading a Ludlum thriller to the middle, where everything seemed darkest and most dangerous, and then skipping to the last page to be reassured that everything would turn out alright, before resuming the story. We are in the middle of the story and things can seem dangerous and doubtful, but, we already know the ending and have nothing to fear.

continued on next page

continued from previous page

From Barb Fichtenberg

I was inspired to think about ministry and missions from some different perspectives. The first major theme that impacted me was the importance of listening. It is foundational to ask questions, listen and then trust the Spirit to guide with the next steps. Many of our ministry/mission efforts involve us doing something for people without asking them first what they need. Responses and help given are often not what they need and may even be harmful in the long run. Reciprocity is a critical aspect of missions. If we impose what we think they need, there won't be growth. There must be an attitude of team and partnership.

It was inspiring to hear of different ministries and church plants that put this principle into practice. One such example is the work of Nate Bull and Mark Van Andel, CRC church planters, who have a mission in the Brightmoor neighborhood of Detroit. They have a ministry house there, where the neighbors can come in and get a meal, do their laundry, use the Wi-Fi, take a shower or just hang out. They are building a community in an area where people don't go to church, would never be able to maintain a church building or hire staff. They allow "space" for people to express their needs and feelings. Mark said that he shows up for a Bible study with no agenda. He just sits down and is part of the community. He feels that it is dangerous to program every minute and try to be in control of everything. The Spirit is already at work and we should allow it to happen naturally. They pray with people and help meet needs that arise. They want to be the church before they "do" church. They recognize the importance of building trusting relationships before attempting discipleship. Christians often answer questions that people aren't asking. If you can get them to ask questions about what you're doing, it'll "rock their world!" Nate and Mark stated that the model of house churches is more replicable than traditional churches in many areas. Our nation is becoming less Christian, so we have to look on our neighborhoods as mission fields. We are all called to share the love of Christ with those in our "neighborhoods," which encompasses the places where we live, work, and spend our time.

From Pastor John

It became a joke among the attendees—"Inspired yet?" People asked me the same question on Sunday the day after the conference ended.

The cynical side of me laughed. Why? Because I entered the weekend thinking that the church was in a difficult place culturally, financially, spiritually. I won't get into all the reasons for my thinking but will say that

with the reading I've done, the people I've spoken to, the church at large is in a hard place. "Will the body of Christ survive?" was, and remains, my big question.

Then I experienced the nuts and bolts of *Inspire*. I met friends I had not seen for years. I encountered people I had never met who spoke into my questions with profound questions and answers. I was moved emotionally in ways I have yet to fathom or know why.

A friend I met first off said to me, "We grew up and were trained in debate. The hard issues of life and the church were discussed in debate mode with losers and winners. We failed to learn how to dialogue." Later one speaker reminded us, "We have experienced the 'paralysis of analysis', it is now time for action."

During the three-day event I saw dialogue practiced and taught.

One workshop I attended was entitled "The Blanket Exercise." No, it was not a workshop on how to make your bed in the morning. It was an exercise in listening to a narration of the interaction between Europeans and Aboriginals in North America from their first contact till the present. You can use these links to discover more - <https://www.crcna.org/BlanketExercise> and <https://www.kairosblanketexercise.org/>.

We learned that the history of the interaction between Europeans and North American Aboriginals resulted in a cultural genocide that was also part of our own denominational history. It was a failure of love. And what we've lost cannot be fathomed.

Like others, (as I discovered later) my first and strong response was tears. I could not speak. What we have lost historically and presently cannot be expressed in words.

My reflections then, and continuing on, centers on the incredible damage we do to each other when we deny each other's basic humanity. When we fail to acknowledge, love, respect, and honor the image of God in each other we decimate each other. Maybe not physically, but definitely emotionally, spiritually and societally. We push others aside. We fail to recognize them as our equals.

There is so much to learn and practice.

We know how to debate and win debates with others. We have failed to learn how to dialogue. We fail to listen to understand and have lost the art of speaking to be understood.

continued on next page

continued from previous page

The next day I sat in a circle of people with one of the facilitators of “The Blanket Exercise” leading us in what was called “A Talking Circle.” She facilitated an experience in which we learned to listen.

The main speakers all reminded me that the future of Christ’s body in Ann Arbor and around the world rests in God’s hands. I must trust God with my own immediate future and the future of Christ’s body here and elsewhere. As I listened to Ruth Padilla De Borst give the closing address I heard a strong call for myself and all attendees to trust. Christ has not abandoned his body and never will.

Moving out of fear into trust has been the stance of the members of Christ’s body throughout its history. We can move out of fear into trust in all areas of our communal and personal lives because Christ is with us and will never abandon us. We can give up trust in our cultural idols and trust that God will provide. Even as we learn to dialogue—in our speaking and listening to one another we can trust that God’s Spirit will guide us.

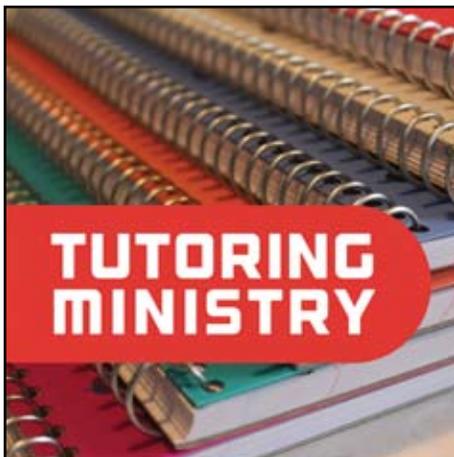
I’m thankful for what I learned and experienced. Christ’s body will thrive. We are called to be the body of Christ here and now.

were’n’t sure about it, but after trying it, really enjoyed it! The students and scholars whom we serve are so grateful to have someone to practice English with. The lessons are all provided ahead of time for you to look them over if you wish to do so. No experience is required. If you speak English and enjoy talking to people, you can do it!

Some of our tutors have been doing this for years. But we also like to continually add new tutors. One of our newer tutors, Louise Gruppen, shares her experience in becoming a conversation partner after the tutoring sessions ended:

I have been truly blessed by having Chinese conversation partners for the last two years. I definitely believe that I have learned as much as they have, and I’ve been blessed by their friendships. The second year my partner wanted to study the Bible. She was hearing it for the first time, which was exciting and challenging. She had such good questions, and really made me think. The thought of doing this in the past made me quite nervous, but God showed me that it wasn’t my ability, or lack of it, that matters. He will use us to share His love and His word if we depend on Him.

Please contact me if you have questions or would like to be added to our group of tutors at bfichtenberg@hotmail.com or at 734-369-2358. For those who are not available for Tutoring on Tuesdays, we will also need conversation partners after the sessions end. These meetings are arranged at your conversation partner’s and your convenience.



Tuesday Tutoring

Barb Fichtenberg

If you’ve thought about serving as a tutor for our English conversation classes on Tuesday evenings from 7:30 pm to 8:45 pm during September and October, but haven’t signed up yet, I encourage you to give it a try. You are welcome to sign up for just one session to see how you like it. We have had several tutors in the past couple of years who

Loving God, Serving People

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

At the Glacier Hills Senior Living Community where I live we have concerts about twice a week! So I wrote this narrative reflective poem to express some of the magic of music that we experience. I believe this could apply to many other venues from Hill Auditorium to The Ark and even worship. I share it with you to ponder. [Priscilla Johnson arranges for the concerts.]

The Concert

Don Postema

We walk, glide, hobble, ride into the Hanson room
welcomed warmly by Priscilla.
We come with concerns, troubles, pains,
backaches, heartaches, perplexities, struggles,
joys, hopes, dreams.
We pick a good seat and
converse with a friend or a stranger
in a congenial atmosphere
filled with expectation.
We glance over the program,
review the bios of the performers.
The lights dim, the crowd quiets,
the bios become real people—
musicians with impressive talent, technique, imagination, artistry,
all kinds of instruments—
piano, guitar, violin, voice, cello, flute, sax, trumpet, tuba, drums,
oh, the drums!
Classical, jazz, folk, country, bluegrass.
The music begins,
the audience gradually focuses,
absorbed, fascinated by the music
as it swells, pulsates, soars, flows, slows, whispers, ripples, dazzles ...
A spirit fills the room, the energy is contagious,
we seem to relax;
we become one—a community of enjoyment
engrossed in the music, intrigued,
listening, admiring, cheering and applauding
interacting with the musicians and each other.
And during these few pleasurable moments
the troubles we came with slowly fade,
the past doesn't plague us,
the future holds no threats,
the present is serene,
the heartaches subside, the worries dissipate,
the struggles and misery quiet,
the pains slacken, our spirits are unburdened,
and, if only for a brief but delightful time,
we forget what ails us, we leave it all behind.
Relieved.

Music has worked its magic:
our bodies are relaxed, our minds stimulated,
our hearts enthralled, our spirits elevated.
In our oohs and aahs of appreciation
there is excitement and joy and peace and tranquility.
We leave a little lighter, our lives feel full
as we return to our rooms enriched and
grateful to Priscilla for one more inspiring program.



DWELL Sunday School (Pre-K through 8th Grade)

Mary Admiraal

An opportunity for the children and youth in our church and community to **PLAY, IMAGINE, WONDER, MARVEL, and DIVE** into timeless truths in God's big story, using creative storytelling, and engaging activities that allow age appropriate small group interaction to practice what they've learned.

BEGINS Sunday, September 10, 2017

9:50—11:05 AM

(Children should report to designated classrooms for singing with their grade level friends at 9:50 am)

Contact: Mary Admiraal at marykutschke@yahoo.com

2017-2018 Sunday School Classroom Locations and Staff

Sonshine Singers: (Kindergarten through First) Room 28 Laura Boonstra

Shepherd's Singers: (Second through Fifth) Room 23 Louise Gruppen, Ann VanZomeran, and Joan Brush

Savior Servant Singers: (Middle and High School) Room 19 Barb Trevethan and Margaret Baker

Preschool: Room 27 Katrina Brehob and Jill Fenske, Janna Wilson and Carmen Kim

Kindergarten/First: Room 29 Deb Weener and Amber Diemer, TBD and Titia Vander Molen

Second/Third: Room 21 Todd and Rachel Redder, Debbie Tuckey and Marilyn Cummins

Fourth: Room 22: Gabby VanderMolen, Wayne VanZomeran, and Martha Kooistra

Fifth: Room 23 Joel Wallinga and Eric Wright

Sixth: Room 12 Downstairs first room on the left across from the Youth Room Margaret and David Baker

Seventh/Eighth: Room 13 Downstairs in the second room on the left from the Youth Room Matt Admiraal and Jim Steenstra

Sunday School team leader: Mary Admiraal



Camping Out in God's Word

Mary Admiraal

This program year (2017-18), our Sunday school ministry team is going to spend time with the children studying God's Word and memorizing it so they begin to develop a "holy habit" that can equip them along their journey of faith. Former children's minister Mary Van Aalsburg says, "When you start immersing children in God's Word at a young age, they keep growing in it." In addition, Scripture study can remind children of basic truths:

God made me. (Psalm 139:14.)

God loves me. (John 3:16)

God is my friend. (John 15:15)

I can trust God. (Proverbs 3:5-6)

I need to obey God's commands. (1 John 5:3)

I need to treat others the way I want to be treated. (Luke 6:31)

The DWELL teaching materials, what our pre-kindergarten through eighth grade Sunday school teachers use, lead students through God's story, emphasize Scripture study, and provide opportunities for memorization. At the end of our program year, the students will have memorized six Scriptures. (See the list below for the Scriptures each grade level will learn.) Geoffrey Caine, author of *Making Connections: Teaching and the Human Brain*, says that meaning should be memorization's goal. Therefore, the Sunday school ministry team will help the children understand the meaning of the Scripture text by connecting the verse to real life, and teachers will share what the text means to them. In addition, they will use games, art, body movement, music, role play, and reflection to help the children memorize the Scripture text.

I would like to invite families and other friends in the Ann Arbor Christian Reformed Church faith community to partner with us to model Scripture study and

memorization. So, how can you get involved? "If it's lived in their life and other people memorize, kids will want to, too," Caine says, "because there's a context where something is familiar and loved." Some other suggestions include:

- Put the words to a Scripture verse to a simple tune and sing it regularly.
- Submit a computer image of the verse(s) being studied to mailbox #43.
- Use a dry erase marker and write the verse on your bathroom mirror.
- Incorporate the verse into your prayers.

It is my desire that our children, their families, and our faith community would come away from this year of Bible study and "...delight in the law of the Lord and meditate on it day and night." (Psalm 1:2) Ultimately my prayer is that, the body of believers at AACRC, will read Scripture, pray Scripture, and share Scripture. If you have any questions please contact Mary Admiraal at 248 278-6101 or marykutschke@yahoo.com.



PLAY (PreK)

Psalm 118:24

Psalm 150:6

Proverbs 3:5

Colossians 3:2

Colossians 3:16

1 John 5:3

IMAGINE (K/1)

Psalm 136:1

Acts 16:31

1 John 4:19

Mark 5:36

Gen. 1:1, 31a

Psalm 46:10

WONDER (2/3)

Gen. 9:12-13

Gen. 6:24-26

Isaiah 41:10

Deut. 10:12-13

Phil. 4:6-7

Psalm 46:1-2

MARVEL (4/5)

Psalm 51:10-12

Matt. 7:7-8

Isaiah 40:29-31

Matt. 6:20-21

1 Cor. 13:1-3

1 Cor 13:4-7

DIVE (6)

Romans 14:8

Gen. 17:7

Ephesians 2:8-9

Isaiah 53:2-6

John 14:15-17

1 John 1:8-10