INKLINGS
the newsletter of campus chapel ministries
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One of the greatest joys of being a part of a campus ministry community is watching students and young adults come into their own. We have a front row seat as they use their gifts, follow their passions, discern their callings, and encourage one another along the way. It’s especially exciting when this discovery and development overlaps with needs and opportunities here at the Campus Chapel.

As part of the Chapel Leadership Team, Rebeka Rooks, a Master’s in Urban and Regional Planning student, suggested that the Chapel consider putting in a rain garden. The rain garden initiative, which is popular throughout Washtenaw County, catches rainwater coming off of buildings and structures and traps it before it gets into the stormwater system, helping to reduce pollution in our local rivers and streams while also adding beautiful gardenscapes. This endeavor not only intersected well with Rebeka’s gifts, passion, and calling, but also with the Chapel’s deep commitment to creation care and sustainability. We have always seen projects like this as a faithful working out of what it means to be Christ-followers, so stewarding our stormwater well seemed like the logical next step!

After several conversations with the Chapel Leadership Team and Board, the greenlight was given to move forward on the rain garden. Rebeka carefully developed and executed advertising and recruiting, coordinated planning meetings, and connected with the Washtenaw County Water Resources Commissioner’s Office. The four Chapel Stormwater Stewards meetings were held this spring, and planting has just been completed. Rebeka worked to source a healthy variety of native plants, visiting a local garden center, hitting up the Ann Arbor Plant Swap, and even connecting with other gardeners on Facebook to nab some free plants. Our freshly planted garden contains Beebalm, Wild Strawberries, Purple Cive, Brown Eyed Susans, and Canadian Anemone flowers, as well as Fox Sedge and Dropseed grasses. She also sourced free compost and mulch from the City of Ann Arbor, helping to nourish and protect our newly planted sprouts.

On the final plant day a group of twelve stormwater stewards composed of regular Chapel members and Rebeka’s classmates and friends showed up to join together in the implementation of this vision. We hope that we can continue to nurture these kinds of gifts and strengths in our community members and continue to be a space for creativity, collaboration, and stewardship.
KUDOS AND FAREWELLS

Sam Mann graduated with Master’s of Public Health (MPH) in Environmental Health Promotion and Policy with a certificate in Risk and Human Health. Sam plans on returning to finish a terminal degree at some point in the near(ish) future, but in the immediate future he plans to work for a bit and is currently applying for jobs. In the meantime he is a research scientist focused on teaching novel surgical techniques in cleft lip and palate care and is preparing for the International Cleft Congress this July in Edinburgh, Scotland where he will be presenting 4 papers, one of which he is the lead author. While in Europe Sam plans to work in Denmark for a few weeks before returning to the US. On top of studying, traveling, presenting, and applying for jobs Sam still nurtures his talent for writing and performing music, and while looking to rejoin an opera company, he has started a new band called "Finding Amelia" through PPX Records in Los Angeles.

Rebeka Rooks graduated from the University of Michigan this spring with a Master’s in Urban and Regional Planning. She plans to move east later this summer where she will be starting her career as a transportation planner at AECOM, a Detroit based company. We are grateful for Rebeka’s time at the Chapel, where she served on the Leadership Team, participated in the ProVocation Fellowship, coordinated summer garden care, and helped with Sunday morning liturgy.

Pastor Matt has been chosen to serve a three-year term on the Council of Delegates, the governing board of the Christian Reformed Church (pending Synodical approval this month). He’s not sure if congratulations or condolences are in order (kidding, of course!).

After successfully defending her dissertation in May, Rachel Lenko will graduate with a PhD in Nursing this August. Rachel and her husband Matt will most likely be staying in Ann Arbor while she pursues teaching opportunities in nursing at one of the local colleges or universities. Rachel has used her many gifts to serve the Chapel during her time here, including serving on our Leadership Team and regularly leading liturgy during worship. She was also a member of the UM Interfaith Advisory Board.
As has been the case for so many ministries, the past few years have required a significant pivot for the Center for Faith & Scholarship (CFS). Much of our large-scale and outward-facing programming had to be shelved for a time, including our participation in the Veritas Forum and our ProVocation lunches. What continued were the smaller-scale discussion events targeted toward graduate students. We still had God @ the Pub, even when “the Pub” meant a Zoom room or a socially-distanced gathering on Pastor Matt and Marianne’s back deck with some homebrew. But the conversations were rich, touching on everything from Christian responses to gentrification to the question of the historical Adam and Eve. Our ProVocation Project for theological exploration of vocation started offering workshops related to vocational discernment available both in person and online.

As society moves toward a new phase of endemic COVID, the Chapel Board is taking the opportunity to do some reflection and re-visioning of the CFS. We are asking what strengths and assets we have that can serve the university and the church. How can we equip members of this campus community to be seekers of shalom and agents of reconciliation? Our Reformed articulation of Christianity embraces learning and study, but so do many others; how can ecumenical and even interfaith partnerships strengthen our pursuit of these goals? Please pray for us as we dig into this process over the summer.

And we will return to large-scale public events this fall with a very exciting speaker: Calvin University Professor of History, Kristin Kobes Du Mez! At 7:30 on Wednesday, November 9 (the day after Election Day), she’ll give a free public lecture at Rackham Auditorium. She is the author of the bestseller Jesus and John Wayne, and you may have seen her interviews on CNN or the PBS NewsHour, or read the profile David Brooks wrote of her and others for The New York Times. With her deep commitment to Reformed Christianity and robust scholarly reputation, she is the sort of speaker we hope to bring to campus more often. She’s also a terrific Twitter follow!