

# GUELPH CAMPUS MINISTRY

a bridging Christian community



Volume 8, Issue 2

May, 2014

## CAMPUS NOTES



## CONNECTING WITH LOCAL CHURCHES

Over the past year, I have been blessed with the opportunity to serve as the Church Liaison with Guelph Campus Ministry, which is a new student internship. I have really enjoyed getting to know members of local churches better and to learn just how much these churches support our ministry. It has been wonderful to see students really connecting to churches and not just to our campus community. It can be so easy as a student to get caught up in the campus world with exams and student stresses, so it is refreshing to see students reach out and take part in their local churches. The GCM community has such a wide range of talents and skills to offer that can reach so far beyond the walls of our campus. This spans from helping with worship bands to Sunday schools.

GCM is a community that welcomes people from all walks and all denominations. This is seen in the variety of churches that we connect with. Five o'clock on Wednesdays was always a time I looked forward to; it meant that I got to greet and thank the church members who were dropping off crockpots for Community Dinner. The ability to share a meal together once a week is something for which the students of GCM are quite grateful. This year, I have really come to understand just how much dedication it takes from the churches of Guelph to provide this opportunity to us.

GCM has really shown me the meaning behind the passage "For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them" (Matthew 18:20). I have



Drum Circle During Peace Week

learned how important connections to one another and to community are, and am so grateful for the opportunities this internship has presented me with. I now have a better understanding that we are not a stand alone campus community, but a community full and rich in support from people from every stage of life, with a strong connection and support from area churches, without whom we could not be the community that we are.

—Katie Brown  
Student

## A MINISTRY OF SMALL THINGS

One of my favourite things about GCM is how we're always being given opportunities to get involved in the Guelph community. For example, for the past few years GCM has had a student intern position with the Brant Avenue Neighbourhood Group. This year, I was lucky enough to be that student, and over the past two semesters I've learned a lot!

When I first started at Brant, I was so excited to be able to help out in the neighbourhood and make a difference! But the problem was, I had no clue where to begin. For the first



Winterfest at Brant Ave P.S.

few weeks I had the task of writing thank you cards to donors, and it felt like such a letdown because I wasn't shaking up the community with big, radical ideas. I was happy writing the cards, and I knew I was being helpful, but it

didn't feel like I was "making a difference" like I thought I was supposed to. But as time went on, I got the chance to do a lot of different jobs, and I realized that the simple ones were my favourite. Also, I realized that simple things could still have an impact.

For instance, one of my favourite tasks was preparing food for the children's snack program. Although the snacks were all simple and healthy, it took a lot of chopping and sorting to keep the snack pantry stocked and organized. And everyone else at the office

—article cont'd on page 2

### GUELPH CAMPUS MINISTRY



**James VanderBerg**  
**Becca MacDougall**

University of Guelph  
gcm@uoguelph.ca  
519-362-9886 (cell)

## GUYS GROUP: A WOOLY EXPERIENCE

This past year, I've had the very fortunate experience of attending GCM's guys' group. The prospect of a fun night hanging out with friends at the Wooly (a local pub) was what got me to try out 'Beers and Beards' but it was actually the deep and meaningful conversation that had me coming back week after week. Very quickly, it became a place for growth, a place where we could talk about the things that were challenging our faith, a place where we could show our

true selves and thoughts to the community. I found myself becoming much closer friends with the guys in the group, because we were having real conversations (which can be somewhat rare nowadays). The purpose wasn't even to figure out the right answer or even come to some sort of conclusion, it was for us to share our own opinions and to hear and understand everyone else's. Through the guys' group, I think we've all gotten a better understanding of ourselves,

each other and, most importantly, a better understanding of how we can serve God.

I'm starting to think that having a community in which you can share your thoughts is a human need; and with that in mind, I am very glad to be a part of Beers and Beards!

—Nick Lever  
Student



Connecting with SSN and SVC in Raithby

## IS GOD ANGRY? ARE WE ALLOWED TO BE?

Diversity is not something to be feared, especially when it comes to conversations about anger. There is much to be learned from other faith perspectives. Our Christian campus ministry has always been a part of the university's Multi-Faith Resource Team—a team which resists the temptation to only talk about those things that we share in common. Together, we respect the differences between our faith perspectives and try to carve out space for all communities to live out their faith with integrity. This was clearly evident during an event that took place during Faith Week in March. Six different people were invited to speak on the place of anger within their faith tradition, and I was one of them.

Anger is not my favourite subject. As a quasi-pacifist, I would much rather talk about God's forgiveness. And yet, the Old Testament refers to the wrath of God, and Jesus himself gets pissed off in the temple, overturning the tables and

pulling out a whip. Being on this Faith Week panel gave me an opportunity to speak about God's hunger for justice. It gave me a chance to speak about God's new creation and how that new creation serves as a plumb line, revealing to us our present state of inequality. (Isn't that what judgment is all about?) I spoke of a God that cringes at ethnic cleansing and gets frustrated by our inequitable spending habits.

Sitting beside me on the panel, though, were others who didn't always share the same beliefs. The person representing the Sikh tradition noted that their faith community grew out of the violence of another faith tradition. Although they still carry a *kirpan*, that little iron dagger serves as a call to peace. In their faith tradition, there is absolutely no place for anger. The person representing the Islamic tradition spoke of *jihad*, and its proper definition. *Jihad* is quite literally a struggle, born out of some injustice, and is considered a healthy release

of justified anger. The term is even used by those who advocate for women's rights.

All the conversation got me thinking. Is God angry? I do believe that God is upset, even angry, about the world's present state of affairs. Are we allowed to be angry? Though called to be people of love and peace, we, too, should cringe at injustice and revolt against the status quo. The question remains: What should we do with the justified anger that grows within us? My contribution on that Faith Week panel climaxed when I spoke of a God whose response was to send his own Son to suffer with us. Yes, Jesus was a living protest against the injustice of our world, but he did so by giving completely of himself. Are we not called to do the same?

—Jamie VanderBerg  
Campus Minister

## BRANT

cont'd

was way too busy with administration, so it was up to the interns to get the job done. Sorting granola bars isn't glamorous, but it's still easy to see that giving children in the Brant neighbourhood good food to take to school has an impact on their lives.

Another highlight was helping with the after-school kids program every Tuesday. It was so much fun making crafts and playing sports with all the children, but I hope it was more than that for them. I hope they could see that I cared a lot about each of them, and I didn't think any of

them were "bad kids". Hopefully, I helped them to feel important. And that would have an impact for sure!

Next year, I'm definitely going to stay involved with Brant. I don't think I'll accomplish anything radical, but that's okay. If they want someone to read a book to a kindergartener, or cut up celery sticks, then I'm their girl.

—Catherine Leggett  
Student



Cozy Evening at the Winter Retreat

## YOUR DONATIONS CONTRIBUTE TO THE FOLLOWING CAMPUS MINISTRY PROJECTS:

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNSHIPS—\$2000

WORSHIP SERVICES—\$2000

DISCIPLESHIP, INCLUDING WINTER RETREAT—\$1500

HOSPITALITY, INCLUDING COMMUNITY DINNERS—\$1000

ON-CAMPUS SOCIAL JUSTICE INITIATIVES—\$500

Donations can be made online at [www.guelphcm.ca](http://www.guelphcm.ca), or cheques can be made payable to "Guelph Campus Ministry" and sent to: University of Guelph, Raithby House Guelph, ON N1G 2W1