

FULLER LIFE

Fuller Avenue Christian Reformed Church

FEBRUARY 2017

For we are God's co-workers;
you are God's field,
God's building.

1 Corinthians 3:9

YOU
BELONG



Fuller Life is the newsletter of the Fuller Avenue Christian Reformed Church

**1239 Fuller Avenue, SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49506**

Published monthly, except July

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January Council Report

By Bill Kooy, Clerk

Liz Rozeboom read Ephesians 2:8, John 3:16, Romans 6:23, Romans 12:6-8, reflected on the joy of gifts, particularly the gift of salvation, and prayed.

Nate introduced Susan Lucasse. Her membership papers have been received from 10th Street Presbyterian. She is working as a tutor at Potters House through Edustaff and has accepted the position of Midwest Coordinator for Interserve USA. She is enjoying being in Michigan again and being able to be close to her parents. She has already been actively involved in the ministry here at Fuller. Susan was welcomed and Marilyn offered a prayer. Casey and Audrey Macintosh have also been involved in the ministry at Fuller and would like to become members. On Sunday, January 8, there was a special Council meeting following the

morning service to welcome them.

We received a letter from the Denomination indicating that Fuller's requested Ministry Share for 2017 is \$78,181.42. The Classis Ministry report noted that Fuller was awarded two Grants for Faith Formation totaling \$5000.

Fuller was the host church for the January Classis meeting on January 19. Pastor Nate and Ken Bratt attended as delegates and several Fuller members helped with the setup and meal. Thanks to all those who helped out.

From the Administration Committee, the recommendation to accept the proposal from Clear Vision Ministries was approved. This proposal is to contract Jack Lynn to assist Fuller develop a detailed plan for helping the church move into the next 3-5 years with a big picture plan for 5-10 years. A Strategic Ministry Planning Team (SMPT) will be formed and Council authorized Pastor Nate to work on forming the committee. On January 7 there was a meeting at church of those under 50 to give the opportunity to discuss reaction and give feedback on the Congregational Assessment and Jack Lynn's presentation. We are encouraged to continually pray as we seek God's will for His church and how we minister to each other

and the neighborhood here at Fuller.

The report from Finance Committee had the good news that we exceeded our giving goal at year end with receipts of \$477,000 and expenses of \$474,000. Many thanks to our congregation and praise be to God for His continued blessing on Fuller. We have received two gifts from the Hendrickson estate totaling about \$94,274. Acknowledgements and appropriate letters of thanks are being sent. If you have suggestions on how these funds should be used to further the ministry at Fuller, please pass them along to any member of the Administration Committee.

From Facilities we heard that there was an emergency repair to the church boiler. We are also experiencing problems with the furnace in the Calvin House and we are getting quotes for replacement. Calvin may be willing to assist with the cost. Also, the supplier of the washroom floor tile has been contacted to help determine the cause of the discoloration.

From the Technology Committee, Matt reported that we have we have purchased a soundboard that should be a significant improvement over our current soundboard and should be connected by the end of January. Derek reported that the website has

been updated and now includes a banner on which we can display current announcements and photos.

The Elders approved the continuation of Evening Services through Memorial Day weekend. The Deacons reported that the new offering envelopes have been implemented and seem to be working out well.

Pastor Nate walked through the Advent season with the sermon series entitled *Great Expectation*. He also led the non-traditional Christmas Eve service. This was well attended including about 60 non-regular attendees. We have begun the new 5 part series on Belonging. Pastor Morris is slowly gaining strength. He is making phone calls, and utilizing email, but he will not make personal visits through February.

Barbara Bjelland reported that the Nursery has been working well and the consistency of the attendants seems to help the children feel more comfortable in nursery. They distributed Christmas bags to the children on December 18. Children's Worship has been going well. Following the children's singing in morning service on December 18, they met together for a Christmas party. Bakers and Boy's Club will begin again in March and we are getting feedback on the Intergenerational Grow

Groups to see how best to continue in the New Year.

Matt Mulder and Derek Ellens partnered with Social Fellowship to host a family movie night with a viewing of *The Polar Express*. They also partnered with the Neighborhood Outreach Committee to host the Christmas Cookie Decorating and Caroling event that was well attended and included delivering some of the cookies to Adams Park and singing Christmas Carols.

Care Group Elder and Deacon Teams met together to discuss their Care Groups.

The next meeting is February 2.



Kids Hope USA

By Co-Directors, Jerry VanVeen and Donna Meyer

Our program is close to the halfway point so this seems like a good time to discuss our program.

As most of you know, our mentoring/tutoring program is part of a national organization involving over a thousand churches. Each church is linked with a neighboring school. Fuller is connected

with Campus Elementary, located a few blocks away, close to the corner of Benjamin and Franklin. It's part of the Grand Rapids Public School system. We have ten mentors, and each one spends an hour a week seeing the same student each week. The students are often behind in reading or math, and helping improve those areas is where much of the tutoring time is spent. But important time is also spent in mentoring, talking about interests, home life, and other personal areas. Building a relationship is instrumental to being effective. This year Maria Lara is the secretary at Campus. It's great to have that familiar, smiling face and positive attitude. At Maria's request we have helped soften the office atmosphere with floor and table lamps via New 2 You. There has not been much turnover of staff, which is very important, because the staff is excellent. And we have established very good relationships with both the office and the teachers. It's impressive how dedicated the teachers and staff are.

This school year we have been able to help in other ways too. Marlene Natelborg again helped us get Christmas food packs for our kids via the generosity of D&W. And thank you so much congregation, for your contribution of gifts that were

placed by the Christmas tree. Those were given in response to specific request of the teachers. We divided them into sixteen shopping bags, one bag per teacher. Those bags contained crayons, pencils, tissue, glue sticks, knit hats, and lots of stuff that were in short supply. Thank you for your exceptional response. On January 29 we are having our annual Kids Hope service. It will be held at 5:00 pm, at Calvin CRC. There will be a collection taken for Campus School field trip expenses, for kids that otherwise would not be able to go. There will be no service at Fuller that evening. Calvin Church also has a Kids Hope program at Campus School. We alternate hosting this program with them. There will be light refreshments served. We also do a combined mentor/mentee bowling party late winter and in the spring we provide flower hanging baskets for the teachers.

Thank you mentors, prayer partners and supporters. Our mentors are Martheen Griffioen, Marilyn Braman, Dan Miller, Carolyn Zwieters, Sue Hollemans, Rog Cornell, Chuck Ippel, Joel Veldheer, Donna Meyer and Jerry VanVeen. Mary Speyer is our prayer partner coordinator. Carolyn Zwieters is our snack coordinator.

Please remember Jeri Hoek, as she was a wonderful person

and a dedicated long term mentor and missed in so many ways.

Facilities Committee Update

By Jerry VanVeen

There have been several improvements to our church facility over the past year. What had been the banner room upstairs for many years has now become Barbara's Bjelland's office, after improvements. And Joel Veldheer built a large closet to hold the banners, located at top of the south stairwell. At Barbara's suggestion, we bought four new fixtures to replace the 60's era exterior lights, facing Fuller Avenue. They are more attractive, much brighter and definitely enhance our front entrance. Thanks to Steve Hollemans for wrapping them in garland and bows over Christmas.

The elevator had its annual tune-up recently, and it seems to be more responsive.

Following the Safe Church policy, we have had windows placed in the interior doors, and locks installed. Thanks to John Straatsma, who performed all of the labor. The protective Plexiglas cover over the large stained glass windows facing Fuller Avenue

was damaged during a storm, and was replaced. Thankfully the expense was covered by our insurance. We decided that as long as we had a lift for the new Plexiglas installation on site, we should paint the eaves, window trim and gutters. So that was done.

Currently we are painting the foyer and the gathering place area.

Sound Equipment Update

By Matt Mulder, on behalf of the Technology Committee

Hello, friends! As you may or may not have noticed, we at Fuller Avenue have recently gotten new sound equipment. This includes a new-to-us sound board purchased from North Street CRC in Zeeland that allows our sound operators to better control various inputs and outputs, including more inputs for microphones and instruments, better control of monitors, the ability to independently control the main loudspeaker in the front of the sanctuary and the speakers in the annex, and the ability to send sound to the basement speakers. We also have run a microphone snake under the floor. This gives us the opportunity to have up to 20 additional inputs at the front of the

sanctuary. These upgrades will help to make our services more efficient and accessible for the operators, participants, congregants, visitors, and those listening to or watching recordings.



Christmas Cookie Decorating Event

By Derek Ellens

It is important for a church to recognize the things that bring people together. Cookie decorating during the Christmas season is definitely one of those things. The outreach committee and Seminary Interns were able to organize a Christmas cookie decorating event with the expertise of Jan Van Veen. This required one long night of baking cookies and mixing icing that turned into a fun evening of laughs and Nintendo Wii. Thankfully Jan was able to bake some cookies at home because the turnout for the event was quite large. Families from the neighborhood walked in to the fellowship hall, despite the snow, and enjoyed some hot chocolate over decorating a box of cookies. As I was

walking around, I saw some very creative adults and children. The cookies were designed as everything from Christmas wreaths to Pokéballs but every cookie brought a smile. Most attendees seemed to be related to children from Bakers and Boys Club.

After the event ended, everyone was invited to come along with the Fuller Bunch (20`s and 30`s group) to deliver extra cookies at the Adams Park Apartments. A couple people were interested so we packed the many boxes of cookies into vehicles and drove down the street. During the cookie handout, Matt Mulder displayed some of his musical talent by leading everyone in some Christmas carols on the baritone. Every recipient at Adams Park was very thankful and some new friendships were made. As a church we should remember, Christmas Carols and cookies are the perfect recipe to bring people together.

Blessings



(It is important to our church that our youth stay involved with the church and have someone to connect with. Members of this congregation volunteer to be mentors for our high school students. Here is a summary of one such connection for two of our high school students)

A Christmas Cookie Baking Mentor Event

By Lydia Phelps

On December 23, 2016 Myriam Mitogo, Mrs. VanVeen, Mrs. Braman, and I (Lydia Phelps) met in the church kitchen to make some treats for fire-fighters and police officers around the city. Mrs.

Braman had previously made amazing almond bars, and we also decorated left-over cookies from the church cookie decorating day. Then, we got to baking. Mrs. Van Veen and Myriam made awesome Christmas wreath cookies, and Mrs. Braman and I made some really great chocolate chip cookies. We then delivered four boxes of treat to three fire houses, and one box of treats to an on-duty police officer. It was really fun to spend time with our mentors, and nice to do something for the people who care so much to risk their lives daily for us.

Book Review of Henri Nouwen, *The Return of the Prodigal Son* (1992)

By Dan Miller

I just reread Henri Nouwen's reflections on Rembrandt's famous painting "The Return of the Prodigal Son." (We read the book as a congregation in conjunction with a sermon series on the parable a few years ago.) Nouwen was so captivated by the painting that he spent several hours sitting in front of it at the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg. Nouwen examines each main character in turn--the younger brother, the older brother, and the father. He connects each one

to the life of the artist, to his own life, and to the lives we as Christians are called to lead.

Early in his life, Rembrandt was like the younger brother—self-absorbed and irresponsible. In middle age he was more like the older brother—holding grudges and feeling unappreciated. He painted "Return of the Prodigal" near the end of his life and Nouwen speculates that the image of the gentle and loving father shows that Rembrandt had come to realize that he needed the mercy of a kind and loving God.

Nouwen sees lessons for all Christians in all three characters. At times we act like the younger brother, turning our back on God and looking for love and pleasure in all the wrong places. The father in the parable does not force his younger son to stay just as God sometimes allows his children to wander away from him. As younger brothers, we have to "hit bottom" before we can realize that we are children of God who cannot live without his love and forgiveness.

Sometimes we act like the older brother—obedient, and joyless. We despise "younger brothers" who waste their lives while secretly we envy their enjoyment of pleasures we have denied ourselves out of a sense of duty. As older brothers, we think God owes

us a reward for our faithfulness, which makes it hard for us to repent. We don't see that when we treat God as a taskmaster who will punish us if we don't obey rather than a loving father whom it is joy to serve, we are no better than the brother who runs away. Repentance is harder for older brothers. Unwilling to forgive, they would rather stay outside in the dark and the cold than join the party that the father throws for the wayward brother who came home.

Then there is the father. Nouwen notes that in the painting, the father's two hands are quite different. One is very masculine, one is obviously feminine. He speculates that Rembrandt wanted to show that God both comforts and empowers those who throw themselves into his arms. Nouwen thinks we must stop acting like children, whether younger or older brothers—and start acting like the father who loves both of his sons and welcomes both back into his love. "Be ye perfect, even as your father in heaven is perfect" says Jesus. It is a call to love our enemies, even estranged sons and brothers.

There is much more wisdom in this little book than I can capture in this brief summary. If you read it, I recommend that you have a picture of Rembrandt's painting in view since he makes frequent references to it and seeing it

will add to your enjoyment and understanding of the points Nouwen makes.

Book Review: **A Frontier Team**

By *Connie Scheurwater*

Recently I finished reading this novel by Fuller Avenue Church member Rev. Ruth Romeyn. The book is a historical novel, my favorite type of literature, and therefore a book that I read with much interest. The book is an easy read and I recommend it to anyone who enjoys an interesting story. The action takes place in the late nineteenth century on the American frontier in what was then the Dakota Territory. The main character is a young woman who prepares for service in both the pastoral and medical fields, which was extremely unusual for a woman at that time. She and her husband, both from a large eastern city, are called to minister to a small group of pioneers in an area where there are few of the amenities to which they are accustomed. The dual careers of the main character in medical and pastoral ministry parallel those of author Ruth Romeyn, more than a century later. Ruth has offered to give us more information about her writing, hoping to arouse more interest among Fuller

Avenue Church members. Following are her words.

Can you remember back to the first meaningful novel you read, and how you felt when you said *goodbye* to the main characters, and left them between the book covers to rest on the shelf, maybe waiting for another reader?

For me it was *Gone with the Wind*, at age 16. I felt lonely and sad at having to leave Rhett and Scarlett. They had been a part of my life for the better part of a summer.

That's how I felt when I finished writing *A Frontier Team*. The people in the story had been part of my life for 1 ½ years and I then left them between the book covers in a cemetery in Chipps, South Dakota.

But I revisit them often.

A Frontier Team is a story of people settling the frontier of Dakota Territory (what would become South Dakota) in the mid-to-late 1800s and into the 1900s. It is the story of a young couple from “the east” moving west to do pastoral and medical work among the settlers, and how they helped to establish and develop the town of Chipps. It is a story of pushing the boundaries of convention, yet always being respectful of people who view life through a different lens. They face the hardships of frontier life — poverty,

illness, death, unforgiving storms, and ceaseless winds. They also enjoy the beauty of the prairie — wildflowers, cottonwood trees, game, and a horizon that is forever far away.

A personal goal in writing was to have realistic characters. To make them come alive, jump off the page and enter the lives of the readers.

Readers tell me the characters are convincing and real. But there was one question that a reader asked that truly convinced me I had accomplished my goal. She asked, “Did you really read journals as part of your research?”

For, you see, the main character, Mira, keeps journals on various aspects of frontier living—her personal life, her pastoral and medical work, her life as a community leader. She even keeps a journal on the *Brides of Chipps*, many who wore white dresses that her mother, a high society lady from Philadelphia, insisted that she pack in her trunks before heading west. In the epilogue I state that these journals are kept in the Library of Chipps. So, to a reader, it only makes sense that I would have used these journals for research.

Except that this is a novel, fiction, and all the characters and even the town come out of my imagination.

Perhaps the most surprising response is the number of men who have read and enjoyed the book. Surprising because I did not write with male readership in mind.

I invite the people of Fuller to read the book and respond to the story. Perhaps we could have a discussion group some afternoon or evening.

Books are available at Schuler bookstore, or directly from me (at a reduced price).



- 1 Dorothy Naerebout, Maria Lara, Mitogo Opira & Fran Mavindi (1992)
- 3 Sherrie Brown
- 4 Connie Scheurwater
- 5 Brian Turnbull (M)
- 6 Ruth Romeyn, Julian Markiewicz
- 7 Jana (Veldheer) Hoglund
- 8 Patt Van Vels
- 9 Gary & Patt Van Vels (1968)
- 11 Jack Posthumus

- 12 Marlene Natelborg
- 14 Jeff Bolthouse
- 15 Joan Stuursma, Casey Ter Haar
- 16 Marilyn Braman
- 17 Miki De Windt, Mary Ippel
- 19 Christian Posthumus
- 20 Laura Kooy
- 21 Eric Schering (M), Capone Zertuche
- 22 Andrea Rowland
- 24 Barbara Bjelland, Becky Dunne, Fran Mavindi, Sharon Segaar-King (M)
- 25 Maxine Jansz (M)
- 26 Daryl Van Dyken (M)
- 27 Brian Bode, Jossiah Seng
- 28 Charles Jansz (M)

The deadline for the March *Fuller Life* is Sunday, February 19, 2017

Give a Hand-some Valentine to Someone Special. Here's how:



Trace your hand or your child's hand on a piece of construction paper, cut it out, write your sentiment, and then decorate it. You can attach candy or a small object to the hand too!

Brown Bag Delights

Pick up small brown paper bags. Decorate with Valentine scrapbook items, ribbon, stickers, and etc. Write on the bag the name of the person receiving the bag. Fill with small objects like candy hearts, suckers, erasers, small colored pencils, Valentine stickers, and etc. and put in your sentiment.

February 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 7:30 pm: Choir	2 9:30 AM: FAST Friends 1:30 pm: Staff Meeting 7 pm: Council	3	4
5 10 am: Faith Promise & Food Offering for SECOM	6	7 Dream Center Dinner @ Adams Park	8 8 am: Men's Bible Study 7:30 pm: Choir	9	10	11 7 pm: Pinochle
12	13	14	15 7:30 pm: Choir	16	17	18
19	20	21	22 8 am: Men's Bible Study 7:30 pm: Choir	23	24 10:30 am: Paraklesis 6 pm: Community Dinner	25
26	27	28				

FROM

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TO