

Ottawa Christian Reformed Campus Chaplaincy

Newsletter Spring 2020

Boxing Day

Chaplains Sid Ypma & Chris Julian work with Housing Services to move students out of residence on short notice.

Reflection in a Time of Covid-19

“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you...” Isaiah 43:2

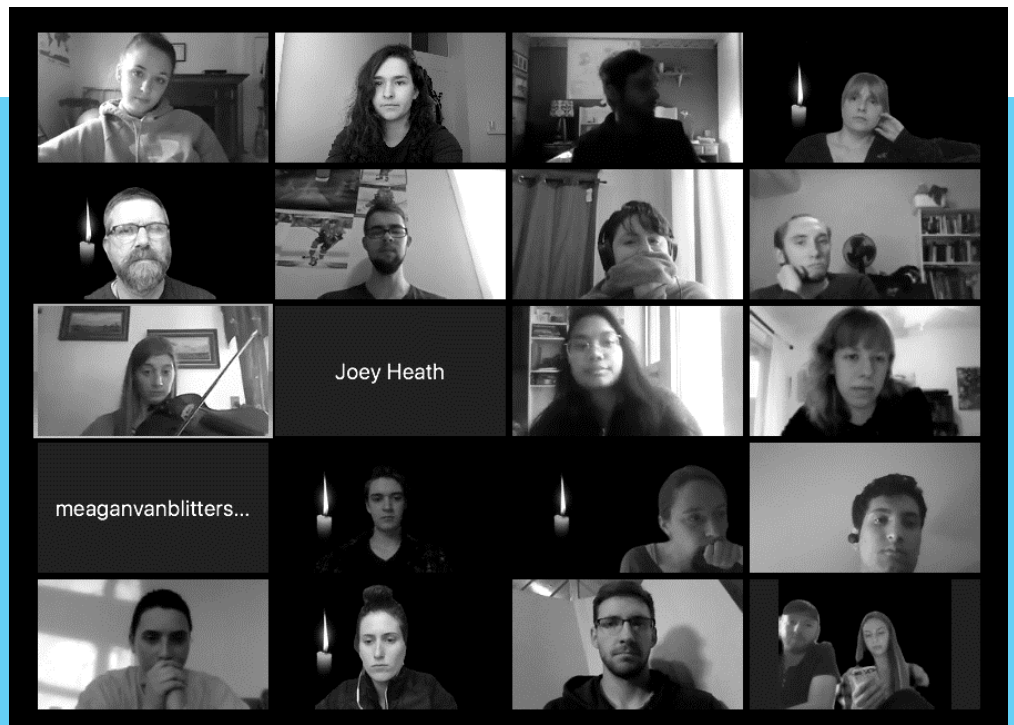
These words from the prophet Isaiah, written to a people living in an uncertain exile, are cross-stitched on an artwork that hangs behind me as I type these words. They are one my wedding texts and over the years, the assurance of God’s words from this text continue to meet me in a variety of circumstances. It seems only fitting that as I work from home, they are but a quick glance over my shoulder.

This was not the end of semester that any of us could have anticipated. In the middle of March students were being sent home and told that they would finish their classes online. For graduating students, it was a disappointing and sudden end of a journey. Many missed good-byes (**con’t on back**)



Zoom Tenebrae Service of Shadows

Usually during Holy Week, the OCRCC hosts a special meal and liturgy that walks us through some aspect of Jesus’ last night with his disciples before his crucifixion. This year, with students having been sent home, our Holy Week gathering and liturgy took place over Zoom. Two students played the tunes of familiar hymns on their viola and violin and the lyrics were spoken rather than sung. While it may not have been our desired format, it was a memorable gathering. The full recording is available on our website.



(*con't from front*) and thank-yous. For international students, there was and is uncertainty about where to go. If one goes home, would coming back even be an option? Summer plans, internships, co-op placements, housing options, all thrown up in the air. For some students, being sent home was not necessarily a place of comfort and new pastoral needs arose for students facing interpersonal trials at home. It has been a time of lament and loss for many.

Of course, the intersection of lament and loss is often where Chaplains live. And while we much prefer to meet face to face and we like to put a hand on a shoulder, with the technology of today, we have still been able to continue to reach out, share conversations, see faces, and pray together in real time. In fact, a curious effect of the quarantine has been an increase in pastoral conversations about non-COVID-19 matters that may otherwise not have happened. And as the school year drew to a close, instead of a decrease in student connections, new Bible studies have begun and student leadership discussions are continuing about how we might reimagine living out Christian community on campus moving forward. Things will not go 'back to normal,' and that may in fact be a blessing.

So, as I sit in my home office, staring at seedlings that will be planted in my garden in short order, the metaphor for ministry is not lost on me. In the midst of this season of lament and loss, I know that God is at work and that something new is growing. We may be passing through waters of Isaiah 43:2, but we know that God is with us. And we know that some of these same waters will be the nourishment for the good of God's creation. "Come Lord, Jesus!" ~ Chaplain Sid Ypma



Music & Musings

This year's Vandergrift Grant supported the efforts of Susanna Heystek (Rocky Mountain House, AB - Music) and Seth Hogeterp (Stittsville, ON - Chemistry) who wanted to create an avenue for playing and discussing music. Once a month musicians and friends gathered to perform originals, favorites and suggested pieces and explored the music from a theological perspective. The goal was to invite all styles of music and ideology into the dialogue. "The greatest joy of music and musings was to see people of different backgrounds - both musical and ideological - come together, share ideas, and create beautiful music in a spontaneous and uplifting way" said Heystek. "There are few opportunities on campus where you get to explore deep questions of faith and music while also building community by playing together and that made M&M unique and wonderful!" said Hogeterp. The OCRCC hopes to continue some form of M&M in the coming year.



Gracefield Winter Retreat

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