



CALVIN CRC'S CONGREGATIONAL LIFE MINI-NEWSLETTER

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SEPT - DEC 2010

Many of the ministries of Calvin CRC have started up and events are up and coming within the life of this Congregation in the next couple of months. In this mini newsletter you will find articles on CIA/ETM, Coffee Break, Boys Club and GEMS, Men's Life Group, and Bethany's summer South Africa adventure. Other ministry initiatives will be highlighted in the new year. Enjoy!

MY AFRICAN CONSERVATION EXPERIENCE

Bethany V., daughter to Brian and Ruth V., spent six weeks in South Africa this past summer. I asked her if she would share this experience with us and she agreed. What follows are her reflections on that experience....



Hey everyone!

I'm Bethany, and I am currently attending the University of Guelph, majoring in Animal Biology. While I'm pretty sure that I want to work with animals in the future, I do not yet know in what way that will be (vet or otherwise) and so, for now, I'm just taking things day by day and trying to get as much experience working with animals as I can.

As some of you may know, this past summer I had the privilege of getting some very unique animal experience when I went on a six week excursion to South Africa. My sister, Holly, was with me for the first two weeks as well.

We went with an organization called ACE (African Conservation Experience) whose main purpose is to connect people with different animal related projects in southern Africa in order to learn more about African wildlife and the various aspects and issues of their care, welfare and conservation. They have projects involving research, tracking, reha-

bilitation, marine wildlife, equine adventures, veterinarian work, and so much more. I wanted to get as much out of my 6 weeks as possible, so I decided to go on two different projects:

Shimongwe Veterinarian Project - For 4 weeks, I was working alongside an experienced wildlife vet, Dr. Niel



Kriel, in Ellisras, South Africa with 2-3 other volunteers. Every day was different with Niel. We'd usually start off the day by going to his small

animal clinic where we'd see dogs, cats, the occasion chameleon, and even young antelope. From there we would usually go out to calls from the surrounding game farms, which are essentially fenced off portions of the African bushveld in which famers keep and raise wildlife: mostly various species of antelope (kudu, sable, impala, wildebeest, nyala, etc.) but also giraffe, white rhino, ostrich, zebra, buffalo and more. Mostly we were capturing these animals and moving them, either to different farms, different areas of the same farm, or to auctions. Occasionally, though, Niel would get calls about sick or injured animals that we would go to treat. We even went to a White Lion Breeding Program one day to help out with a couple of the lions! Everything was pretty hands on, which is exactly what I had been hoping for. The other volunteers and I would help in giving various injections, restraining, and

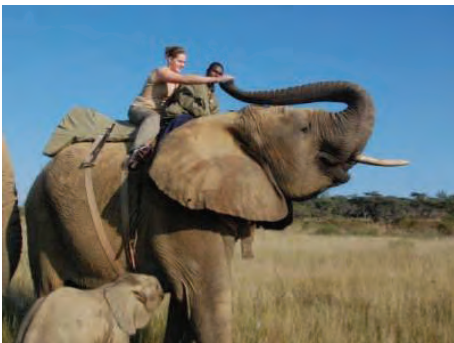
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carrying of the animals we worked with. Naturally there wasn't always something we could help with – these animals are strong and can be very dangerous! But overall it was a very educational and rewarding experience.

Moholoholo Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre – For the last 2 weeks of my trip I was with about 12 other volunteers, helping in the daily care of various animals at the rehab centre, which was in Hoedspruit, South Africa, fairly close to Kruger National Park. There was everything there from lions, leopards and cheetahs, to African wild dogs and hyenas, to a number of species of eagles, owls and other birds. The highlight of this part of my trip would have to be “cub-sitting” the two baby cheetahs named Pinky and Brain. Besides the daily feeding, cleaning and interacting with the animals, a big part of being here was going on bushwalks and game drives through the surrounding nature reserves, as well as attending talks on the conservation of wildlife. It was during these activities that I really learned a lot about Africa and all the issues involved in conserving the habitat and the animals in it, things that you just can't get the same perspective on from North America.



All in all, those 6 weeks were some of the best moments of my life, and I highly doubt I will be forgetting them any time soon. I went to South Africa expecting to learn a bit about animals, get some hands-on experience, and maybe get a little closer in making my decision about pursuing vet school. However, while I haven't come home suddenly knowing exactly what I want to do with my life, I have learned so much more and in so many different areas than I ever would have expected. Not only do I now know what many of the different species of antelope are in South Africa and what's involved in moving them and all that kind of stuff, I have learned about South African culture, lived in it and experienced what it has to offer. I've been exposed to the difficulties of being in a country with so many distinct backgrounds and a history of apartheid, and realized how blessed we are to live in a nation like Canada. I've had tough times and great times, and seen God provide for me in both. I've talked with people from around the world, those who have no belief in God and those who were praising him for bringing other Christians into their home, even if just for a few weeks. I've lived, laughed, loved and learned - South Africa now has a special place in my heart.



This trip met and surpassed my expectations by far, and I'm so glad that I've had this opportunity to share my experiences with you, even if it is brief compared to what I could tell you. All I have left to say is thank you for taking the time to read this; I hope you've enjoyed this little piece of an African adventure. God Bless





Our Youth Ministries have begun once again. This year we are once again rotating on Tuesday evenings between CIA (grades 9–11) and CIA/ETM (grades 7–11). Our CIA/ETM evenings are more light hearted, and as you can see from the picture above, we have a good number coming out.

CIA meetings are a bit more serious. We are going through a book by Ron de B. called “Out of the Pickle Jar.” It covers different elements of teenage sexuality from a Christian perspective. For the most part the group is liking it, but at times there are some confused, and yes, embar-

rassed faces in the room. In the new year we hope to host an evening in which we invite different segments of our married population to share with us their thoughts and experience on dating and marriage. We hope you will consider participating if you are asked. :)



YOUTH ROOM GETS A FACE LIFT

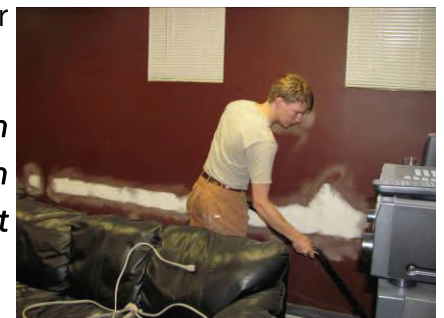


Several years ago CIA painted the youth room and we have enjoyed those colors ever since. However, some of our newer CIA members wished to brighten up the room by repainting it. It seemed like a good time to do just that so a couple of weeks ago Ken V. did some work patching up the dents and sanding, and others



in the group cleaned up the dust and put on a coat of primer. Soon the new colors will go on, so come down to the youth room some time to enjoy their handy work.

We are looking for two more couches to place in the youth room, so if you have one that's still in good condition, and want to part with it, just let Pastor Ron know. Thanks.



Every other Thursday evening you will hear the sound of six loud, but excited, boys who just love coming out to the Boy's Club. With 5 adult male leaders, the ratio of child to adult is pretty much 1:1. I've seen many great things happen at boys club; things that I wish I could have done when I was in Cadets. Thank you Boy's Club leaders for the work you do with our boys.



GEMS



At the same time you hear those boys entering the doors of Calvin CRC every other Thursday evening, you will also hear a lot more young female voices racing through the basement halls. Our GEMS club meets at the same time as boy's club, and there are about 15–17 of them. They are split up into 4 different groups, as you see in these pictures.



I know from my daughter that she really enjoys going to GEMS, and really likes her counsellor. We will be losing Margaret S. in December, due to her being due.



So, if there is anyone who would be willing to join the team of counsellors, we could really use one more. Simply talk to Pastor Ron Hosmar, or Margaret S. Thanks Adult Counsellors for giving of your time and talents to these girls.



In addition to Boy's Club and GEMS happening every other Thursday, you will also find one room filled with guys who just love to drink coffee/juice, eat donuts, and discuss issues of faith and life together. They are always open to other men joining the group, so if you happen to have one of your kids in GEMS and/or Boy's Club and wanted to stick around for a while, why not consider spending time with these guys. :)



COFFEE BREAK



Every Wednesday morning you will find many women of Calvin, and some not from here, gathering together over coffee beginning at 9:30 am. At about 10 am, Annet will announce that it's time to break off into the two Bible discussions that now take place. Thanks Annet for agreeing to oversee Coffee Break for this year and provide women of Calvin a place to meet and grow in Christ together.

CLASSIS EASTERN CANADA



On Friday, October 22 and Saturday, October 23rd, Classis Eastern Canada met at Calvin CRC. As delegates entered the doors, they were greeted by the smiling faces of Joyce and Pieter. They did a wonderful Job serving as our welcoming hosts.

Classis always opens with worship and devotions. The delegates met in the sanctuary for this.



Calvin's Youth Praise Team led the delegates in worship and John K. did a short devotional and time of prayer with everyone.



Food is always something that help the delegates digest the many issues and discussions that happen on the floor of Classis. The Friendly Hands did not disappoint.

Here you see the delegates during one of the many sessions that went on. Kathy V. was a delegate this year, and her summary report can be found below.



CLASSIS SUMMARY REPORT

The Little Classis that Could

Priorities and difficult choices were common themes at the fall meeting of Classis Eastern Canada, held at Calvin church. Increasing budgets and declining membership, especially in smaller churches, made sustainability a primary concern.

Ministry among the 70,000 university students in Ottawa emerged as a priority. Two current students, ministers, and elders told classis about the critical role that campus ministry plays in shaping lives and leaders. There was a consensus that more focus is needed on young adults in our region. Classis approved the proposal to start a campus ministry in Ottawa. Calvin will have an important role to play – to be discussed at the upcoming congregational meeting.

Classis debated a motion to freeze the budget for three years to manage finances, but chose instead to conduct an operational review of all programs. Using limited funds on strategic priorities will be the driving motive. Good work is done in many areas when churches in Eastern Canada combine re-

sources. Balancing that with the needs of local churches is a challenge. Some areas of the 2010 budget were reduced, as an example of the focus on stewardship of limited resources. Calvin members can have input into the discussion of priorities through our council and the review committee.

Hearing what is achieved by working together is one of the joys of attending classis. Calvin members contribute to and benefit from such diverse ministries as the seafarers ministry, support for youth ministry, supporting future pastors through seminary, missional outreach, and helping to better include persons with disabilities in our churches. As one delegate said, Classis Eastern Canada may be “the little classis that could” do a lot.

Thanks go to the Friendly Hands for hosting with style, as well as to the families who hosted delegates and volunteers who shuttled them to the airport. When Calvin’s Youth Worship Team led worship from the stage and the older generation of elders and pastors sang along in the pews, the goal of all our efforts was clearly in view: **Praise to God through the ages.**



On Sunday, October 31st many family units met in the fellowship hall of Calvin CRC after the AM service for a potluck “get-to-know-you” lunch. There was a mixture of people who were/are fairly new to Calvin, and others who have been around for many years. There were those who were single young adults, and others who were married with no children, or married with lots of children.

We all enjoyed a great meal together, and then played a variation of the “Speed Dating” game. Each family unit, whether you were a unit of one, or many, would take some time around the tables and introduce themselves to other family units. After about 5 minutes, I would ask them all to change tables and find other people they did not know well, and we continued this for about 1/2 hour. It is my hope that many of the introductions helped those who are new to this church community get to know others, and that all will now continue fostering those relationships in the weeks, months, and years to come.



Everyone seemed to enjoy the time and many commented that they wished to do this again. In the new year, I hope that this will happen and more members of Calvin will get the opportunity to know others within the Calvin Church Community.



COUNCIL RETREAT

Back in September, Calvin’s council met for a Saturday to talk about issues of visioning, etc. The morning was spent reflecting on the various ministries that happen here at Calvin and outside it’s walls. It was nice to get an overall picture of what happens here. In the afternoon we tackled what are called the “Parking Lot” issues. These are issues that a smaller group from council will be deliberating over as it tries to do some serious soul searching around the issues that popped up during this day long retreat. A summary of them is here for your review. You will be hearing more about these issues in the near future.

Broader issues being discussed

- ⇒ What is our core identity?
- ⇒ Are people leaving Calvin? Do we care?
- ⇒ We offer the life changing message of the gospel, but are we missing the mark?
- ⇒ How is our culture affecting the behaviour of Calvin’s membership?
- ⇒ Is there spiritual growth in our membership? What should it look like?
- ⇒ What makes us unique as a church?
- ⇒ Why come to Calvin CRC....why not church XYZ?
- ⇒ What does an engrafted, and engaged member of Calvin look like?

