CONGREGATIONAL ASSISTANCE PLAN (CAP): Shalem Mental Health Network provides professional faith-based counselling services to our church through the CAP ministry. CAP usage is confidential and available to all congregants, at no cost for the first 6 sessions. To book an appt, or for more info, please call Shalem directly at: 905-528-0353, 1-866-347-0041, or text 289-335-3543, or email office@shalemnetwork.org.

Choosing Hope: an Act of Resistance
Have you felt the weight of uncertainty lately? With fast-moving news, rising food costs, political and denominational tensions, and families stretched by conflict or loss, it's easy to feel weary, unsure about what lies ahead. Yet, especially in times like these, hope is not a luxury or a fleeting feeling. Hope is a deliberate act. In this edition of Shalem's monthly Mental Health Matters article, we explore the four dimensions of hope and why it matters. Follow this link to read the whole article including suggestions of small actions that can grow hope in your daily life.

PAUL'S MISSIONARY JOURNEYS IN GREECE (APRIL 3 - 13. 2026): Travel by motor coach (6 days) and cruise ship (3 days) to sites connected with Paul's second and third missionary journeys, as well as visit other major sites of biblical, archaeological, and cultural interest. Jeff Weima, professor at Calvin Theological Seminary and leading Pauline scholar, hosts this inspirational tour. For more information, contact Dr. Weima at 616-328-3110 or weimje@calvinseminary.edu.

Pastor
Ben vanStraten
Tel: 705-341-4114
pastorbenvs@gmail.com

Director of Faith Formation
Patrick Bigelow
Tel: 514-914-7282
jenningscreekfaithformation@proton.me

Treasurer
Chris Terpstra
Tel: 705-878-6025
jenningscreektreasurer@gmail.com

Office Admin
Sarah Cooke
Tel: 705-328-0177
jenningscreekcrc@gmail.com

Jennings Creek Church Office Hours : **Wednesday 11-2:30; Thursday 9-3 & Friday 9-12:30**

Jennings Creek
CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

belong. grow. serve.

This Issue

LORD'S SUPPER SERVICE SCHEDULE: 2026
Sunday, February 8, 2026
Sunday, April 5, 2026 (Easter)
Please join us. Everyone welcome

GROWING IN FAITH:
Family & Faith Formation Night: Thank you to all of our volunteers and participants for making these ministries successful. Truth Seekers, Club Kingdom Builders & Youth are happening at the church Wednesday evenings at 6:30pm.

Ladies Bible Study: Coffee Break runs every Thursday at 9:30am; Nursery is available. Feel free to bring a friend. (Sept. to May). Thank you to all of our leaders.

Precept Bible Study Is happening again on Monday's at 7pm or Tuesday's at 9:30am. Milly Nokes is the leader.

Odyssey takes place every 4th Sunday of the month. Youth are released after the Sermon.

Something for everyone and everyone is welcome!

NEXT MONTH'S COUNCIL MEETING:
Next council meeting will be held on Thursday, Feb. 5th, at 7:30pm. Council packets will be distributed on the Friday prior to the Council Meeting.

Monthly Finance Updates

OFFERING TOTAL RESULTS: DECEMBER 2025

Church Ministry Budget	$36,999.00
Special Offerings	
Heritage Christian School	$2,171.00
Yoluth Unlimited	$215.00
World Renew-World Hunger	$140.00
A Place Called Home	$100.00
Ministry to Seafarers	$25.00
ReFrame Ministries	$190.00
Centre Community Church	$1,962.00
Shalem Mental Health Network	$25.00
Deacons	$1,943.00
Thrive - Chaplaincy Sunday	$115.00
Kawartha Lakes Pregnancy Centre	$300.00
Resonate Global Mission	$165.00
World Renew	$1,006.55
Lindsay Soup Kitchen	$479.75
Kindom Builders/Truth Seekers Reg. Fee	$1,010.00
Walk Thru Bethlehem - Black School Road	$500.00
Facility Rental Income	$500.00
TOTAL INCOME FOR DECEMBER	**$47,846.30**
YEAR-TO-DATE TOTAL	**$424,123.65**

This is the month in summary and includes Sunday morning Offerings, and November's PAR & GIVE App totals.

Church Family

FEBRUARY 2026 NEWSLETTER:
If you have something that you would like to share with the congregation, please submit to the church office. Deadline for contributions is the Wednesday (9:00am) prior to the end of the month. The Newsletter will be posted online on the 1st Sunday of the month to update everyone on what is going on in our church, community and beyond. There will be a limited amount of copies available on the Welcome Centre for those individuals that do not have internet and for guests.

THE YOUNG ADULT WINTER RETREAT (YAWR) is back again at Maranatha CRC, Woodstock! We would like to encourage all young adults ages 18–30 to join us for this weekend of faith-based discussions, service, fellowship, and funtivities! We are excited to announce that Pastor Harry Frielink from Covenant CRC in Barrie will be leading us in a series of discussions on the importance of Christian friendships. The retreat will take place from January 23 to 25, 2026, with the theme "The Gift of Friendship." Early bird registration is $60. Registration opens December 1st, 2025. Don't miss this chance to grow in faith, build lasting connections, and have fun! For more information or the registration link, follow us on Instagram (yawinterretreat), Facebook (Young Adult Winter Retreat), or email us at ya.retreat.team@gmail.com.

HERITAGE UPDATE:
Gift card profits for the months of **December** was **$3511.02.**
If you would like to purchase gift cards or would like more information, please contact **Hank Bossema at 705-328-2061**.

Precept Bible Study

Precept Bible Study:
"Jesus' Witnesses Empowered by His Holy Spirit", a 16-week study of **ACTS Part 1 (Acts 1 - 12)**
Mondays (7pm) and
Tuesdays, (9:30am)

LESSON 1
January [illegible]
January [illegible] - **DVD**
LESSON 2
January 19/20, 2026
January 26/27 - **DVD**

POSTPONED START AS MILLY IS VERY SICK AT THE MOMENT. WE WILL UPDATE DATES ONCE SHE IS FEELING BETTER.

Annual Stamppot Fun-draiser
"Save The Date"

Saturday Jan 31st, 5–6:30pm
Annual Stamppot Supper Fundraiser for our Christian Education Tuition Assistance Fund
More Details to follow.

"We wanted to create something that's accessible and relational," Rathbun explained. "In these conversations people can wrestle with real-life situations and learn from one another. We also do some training and conversation facilitation, but these conversations are mostly for community learning."

In addition to these safe-church conversations, Thrive makes a wide range of resources available to churches, including The Power to Do Good: The Use and Misuse of Power in the Church training, Responding to Abuse: A Toolkit for Churches (available in English, Spanish, and Korean), and the Safe Church Basics webinar series.

Thrive also offers hands-on guidance for congregations navigating sensitive situations. In instances where abuse is reported, Thrive's role shifts from prevention to response to ensure that survivors are supported and that accountability is upheld. Rathbun emphasizes that this process must be transparent and restorative.

"Response is about truth-telling, justice, and healing," she said. "We journey alongside churches so that survivors are heard and cared for, and so that leadership understands how to respond in ways that build trust."

In addition, the CRCNA has encouraged every classis to establish a safe church team. These teams support education, coordinate the advisory panel process when allegations are brought against church leaders, and provide compassionate guidance for survivors.

Thrive's work aims to ensure that churches are not only places where abuse is prevented but also places where those who have been harmed can find refuge and renewal.

"Our hope," Rathbun reflected, "is that every church becomes a place where people can worship freely, serve safely, and experience the healing presence of Christ in community."

Interested parties can review the topics of upcoming monthly safe church conversations and register to attend here.

Kristyn deNooyer, Thrive

Thrive

2026 CALL TO PRAYER AND FASTING

An individual stands with their hands folded on the front of a church pew. Courtesy of Pixaby.
We are living during what is becoming an inflection point in the history of the CRCNA. What is an "inflection point?" In short, a time of significant change. We have weathered a lot together. At recent Synod gatherings, we have named our growing desire for God to bring renewal and to see a renewed passion for church planting continue to grow in our denomination.

In response to Synods 2023 and 2025, Thrive and Resonate Global Mission, in collaboration with the Office of General Secretary, are taking the lead to develop strategic plans for church renewal and church planting in the CRCNA.

Throughout the history of the church, extraordinary prayer and fasting have been an integral part of God's people uniting together for renewed passion for God's mission. As we seek to catalyze the CRCNA for renewal and for growing our church planting efforts for the next decade and beyond, we believe it is critical to issue a call to prayer and fasting as an integral part of our strategies. We see the Spirit of God already at work in our denomination renewing prayer for God to raise up leaders and renew us in mission. Starting in January 2026, we are planning to issue a weekly call to prayer and fasting that will invite others into this emerging movement of the Spirit. If you would like to join us, please complete this form and we will add it to our weekly email distribution list.

Serving together,
Elaine May, Thrive Congregational Renewal Leader
Jon Hoekema, Office of General Secretary, Prayer Shepherd
Tim Sheridan, Resonate Director of Church Planting

unforeseen issues on board that we have had to deal with, and we have not had the possibility to relax around Christmas.

But we saved the presents from your organizations for Christmas eve. I put them all under the Christmas tree in the morning - and I had numbered all presents and each crew member also draw a number "from the hat" – then we handed out all presents so they match with a number and opened up the presents together. They where all in homemade fabric bags, which are perfect for storing your socks or underwear later on 😊
It was a lot of fun opening the presents and seeing the various items found in the bags. After opening presents we went on to share a good meal prepared by our Chief Cook – with helpers during the day
And Just to explain: in Denmark it is tradition to open presents on Christmas Eve after holding hands, walking around the Christmas tree and singing Christmas Carols.
A heartfelt "Thank You" for your kindness and consideration from all the crew on Torm Strength – you all made a day a little brighter!

Best Regards – and Happy New Year
Line Grave Poulsen
Chief Officer - Torm Strength

Seasons greetings ,
My name is Robinson G Fernandes from India, I am a seafarer for the past 13 years.
I am very greatful for the love, care and concern that the Ministry of Seafarer's has shown me and other Seafarer's in the form of Christmas parcels. I was also touched to receive a hand written Christmas greeting card from Rita at CWL. St Jean de Brebeuf(Montreal ministry to Seafarer's)this is the first Christmas greeting card that I have ever received in my life I will preserve it with me for the rest of my life. I wish I could wish her back the a Merry Christmas too.
Over the years I have experienced a lot warmth and care from the Ministry of Seafarer's and I feel proud as Christian when I see how you portray our faith to the world.
I hope this email finds you well
Once again thank you for your support
God bless

Thrive UPDATE:

STRENGTHENING A CULTURE OF SAFE CHURCHES

A yellow road side that reads *"safe place"*
Thrive, the congregational support agency of the CRCNA, continues to expand its work of equipping congregations in abuse awareness, prevention, and response. The goal, says Thrive safe church consultant Julia Rathbun, is to build communities where "the value of every person is honored and people are free to worship and grow without fear."

This vision calls for safety not as an administrative checkbox but as a cultural commitment woven into the fabric of congregational life. "A truly safe church isn't just one that reacts well when harm occurs," Rathbun explained. "It's one that proactively builds trust, accountability, and respect into its daily rhythms of ministry."

Thrive emphasizes that a safe church includes not only protecting children and preventing domestic harm but also understanding more subtle forms of abuse of power, such as emotional, psychological, or spiritual mistreatment, that undermine community trust and congregational health.

"The reality is that abuse can take many forms, and sometimes it happens in ways that are hard to name," said Rathbun. "We want church leaders to have the language and tools to recognize these dynamics before they cause deep damage."

With this priority in mind, Thrive works to equip congregations before harm occurs by offering training, policy-review support, and resources designed to help local churches create environments where safety and transparency are normalized.

"Prevention is the most powerful tool we have," Rathbun said. "When congregations talk openly about safety, review their policies regularly, and create space for accountability, they dramatically reduce the risk of harm."

She encourages churches to see abuse prevention as part of their discipleship and ministry identity.

To deepen engagement across the denomination, Thrive recently launched a new initiative: monthly safe-church conversations. These opportunities for dialogue serve as an open invitation to pastors, church staff, volunteers, and members who care about abuse awareness, prevention, and response to learn about one topic each month, ask questions, and share experiences.

SENIORS CHRISTMAS DINNER

A huge thank you from the Seniors to our Deacons for an enjoyable Christmas Dinner on Friday, December 5th. The meal was absolutely delicious and a wonderful social time! Your love for your Lord in serving, has certainly warmed our hearts. You are appreciated!!! A very special thank you to Terri-Lee VanHalteren for organizing this event and for asking me, Lena, to be the MC and for Bill and I to do the decorating in the fellowship hall. It was our privilege and joy. We also give a special thank you to Marilyn Kuiperij for being our pianist. You help make our Christmas carolling extra special.

~ photos submitted by Lena Wilms

KAWARTHA MISSION CHRISTMAS

~ photos submitted by Lena Wilms

KAWARTHA MISSION CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON; Kawartha Mission has been a wonderful blessing to so many in our community and out in the third world community.
We celebrated Christ's Birth and the generosity of our donors and volunteers by hosting a Christmas Potluck on Wednesday, Dec. 10th.
Due to inclement weather, not everyone was able to attend. Those who were able to come, had a very enjoyable time and we were able to enjoy a delicious meal together.
We had a fun gift game, so everyone went home with a prize.
We hosted a Silent Auction and it was very successful. We raised $547. to help pay for expenses for supplies etc. for KM.
A special thank you to Terri-Lee VanHalteren for playing the piano while we sang the Christmas Carols.
Lena Wilm as MC. Silent Auction Items! A delicious meal!

new year.
We welcomed several groups and other volunteers during the month who helped sort and pack Christmas parcels.

Further Reading

New:
Strategic Planning Goals: Update
Education Goal - To introduce 50 new people each year, within the wider Montreal community, to port ministry and M2S in the next 5 years leading to increased support. Year-to-date total: 287
Pierre Elliott Trudeau Elementary School: We expanded our partnership with the school by hosting one of their field trips. By paying to participate in Free Dress Day, students raised $462 towards the contents of Christmas Parcels for seafarers.
Grade 4: Three classes of grade 4 students (41 students in all) came on an educational tour. We divided them into groups of 3. They had a tour of the port in our bus. They also toured the Seafarers' Centre, prepared cards and Christmas parcels and decorated Christmas ornaments. One teacher said she appreciated the tactile nature of the visit and that students learn better when they are working with their hands.
Grade 5 & 6: As we did last year, Patty and David visited the school to talk to 72 students about our work with seafarers. The students upped their involvement this year by packing parcels in bags that they had painted during their free time in school. They also made Christmas ornaments and beautiful cards. One teacher said she hoped we would be back next year. We could see the difference between this year and last year in terms of how much the students knew or remembered from our visit last year.
Calvin CRC Men's Group (7 people): Michelle took them on a tour of the port. Over lunch, we talked more about our work and then spent time packing parcels. It's of note that Doug VandeKamp came to volunteer in 2023 and then brought a group back with him this year. In person connections work best!
Various individuals (3 people): A few people reached out to ask about volunteering over Christmas. We are always happy to oblige.
When groups see our work up close, it leads to good questions and interesting conversations. This is a practice we will definitely continue. Even though it's more work for us in one sense (planning, prep, accompaniment), it's more memorable for the people visiting and the message of what we do is clearer. We are happy to have exceeded our goal and will stretch ourselves next year when estimating how many people we will introduce to our work.

Staff & Volunteers

We welcomed several local volunteers who come at this time of year to help sort parcels. We are extremely thankful for the people who faithfully show up at this time of year.
Michelle started writing grant letters to cover the cost of a "Christmas parcel campaign manager" for next year who would oversee everything because it has become a larger endeavor than in the past, largely because of the number of people who give virtual donations which we need to manage.
Michelle took time off after Christmas to visit family. Patty and David also took a few days off here and there during the holidays.
Operations
Inventory distributed from January-December 2024:
TODAY for Seafarers devotionals: 412 (Vol 1); 901 (Vol 2); 473 (Vol 3)
Bibles, New Testaments and other Scripture portions: 34
Christmas Devotionals: 200 (Due to the Canada Post strike, they arrived near the end of the Christmas Parcel campaign. We substituted our seafarer devotionals in the parcels given out earlier.)

Thursday, January 7, 2026:

We gave out the last Christmas parcels today for a total of **1520 parcels** given out. We received many emails and messages expressing thanks, which we are sharing with our supporters. Here are a couple of the emails we received:

Good day
This email is only to thank your organization for the kindness and consideration.
Our Vessel visited Montreal on 12–14th December 25. During our Port stay someone from your organization delivered 19 presents to my deck crew.
When my deck crew brought the bags with presents inside I asked where they had come from, and if the persons bringing the present where still on board.
The answer was no – they just said: I saw on the crew list that you where 19 crew on board, so we brought 19 presents.
It was very cold and snowy at the time.
Our crew is mixed from several countries: Our Captain is from Croatia, Myself and the 3rd officer is from Denmark, Our Chief Engineer, 3rd Engineer and 2nd Officer are all from Philippines, our 2nd Engineer is from Ukraine and the 4th engineer as well as all our Ratings on deck and in engine room are from India – so you can imagine that we all have different traditions regarding Christmas.
We have been working very hard before – and as well as now after Christmas – we have had a lot of

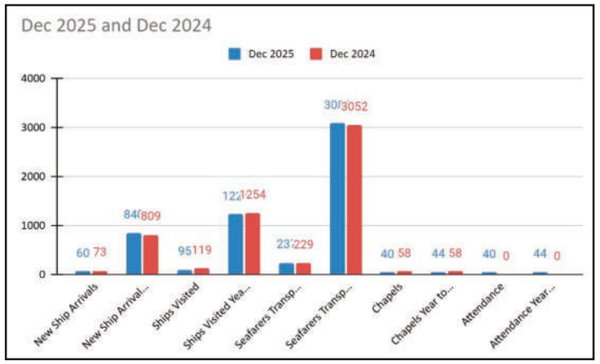
Monthly Report - December 2025

Port Chaplains: Michelle DePooter and David Rozeboom

Administrator & Volunteer Coordinator: Patricia Sarazen

Annual Focus 2025 - *"To be **ordinary people** who encourage **human flourishing** through **love and respect.**"*

Ship and Centre Statistics



Monthly Summary

December was a busy month with Christmas parcels, but less busy with ships because of extremely bad weather in the Atlantic.

A number of our regular ships were delayed by 1–2 weeks mid-December because of storms passing through the North Atlantic. We put together a list of ships that need parcels and their estimated arrival so that we can plan our parcel packing accordingly, but this year we did not need to worry about running out of parcels before the ships arrived. Our regular ships received their gifts after Christmas, and our total gift giving in 2025 was 1512.

Giving Christmas gifts provides opportunity for conversation and seafarers were thankful for the gifts. We received many emails and messages of thanks. Some of the photos and messages can be found here: 2025

Our Christmas Eve service and party was well attended again this year. It is always a good time with seafarers, supporters, family, and volunteers.

Michelle and her family, and David, kept the centre open on Christmas Day and 6 happy seafarers enjoyed their afternoon playing pool and eating snacks.

David had an interesting experience with the family of a seafarer. The family lives in Montreal, and their brother was on a ship that was coming out of the lakes and only stopping in Montreal for a few hours. The family was not on the visitor list, so they were not allowed in the terminal, but the harbour master told David that if the family was with him, they could go in no problem. David met the family, (who had taken an Uber to the port), at 5 in the morning on December 23 and brought them to the ship where they met their brother for the first time in 3 years. Everyone was very thankful.

Michelle had a good conversation with a Dutch chief officer. David had brought gifts to the ship, but didn't realize that the chief officer was a woman, so Michelle went to the ship to bring another gift. The chief officer has been sailing for 30 years, and told Michelle some of her experiences during that time and things she has seen change over time. She mentioned that one of the most interesting experiences she had while sailing happened last year when the ship was sent to pick up cargo from a small Pacific island near Papua New Guinea. The tribes on the island were fighting each other over pigs, so it wasn't safe for the crew to go out, and it was the middle of nowhere, so there really wasn't anyplace for the crew to visit. The cargo they were told to load was non-existent, and they stayed in that port for 3 weeks before sailing. Then they were told to sail very slowly because the owners had not been paid yet for the cargo. Finally they got to India, discharged the cargo, but never found out if the ship owners were paid or what happened to the cargo in the end. The chief officer said it was the first time in 30 years that anything like that had ever happened on one of her ships.

Sometimes a good ship visit is just talking about roses. Michelle had an interesting conversation with a Russian chief officer about his roses and gardening. The ship is one of our regular ships, and when Michelle visited, everyone was busy, except the chief officer. The weather was mentioned and soon the chief officer was showing Michelle photos of his roses in his garden at home, and he quickly moved to discussing grafting fruit trees and describing all the varieties of fruits and roses he has on his property. He talked with Michelle for over an hour, occasionally using Google translate to properly convey horticultural terms.

The Radio Canada journalist visited a ship with David and delivered Christmas parcels. We have not seen her report yet, but we hope it will be available soon.

A journalist from a Catholic magazine interviewed Michelle and visited a ship with her to deliver Christmas gifts. He reported on Stella Maris 25 years ago and was interested in what had changed and what has stayed the same in Port ministry and with seafarers since then. His article will be published in the

~continued on page 7

COFFEE BREAK CHRISTMAS

~ photos submitted by Lena Wilms

COFFEE BREAK CHRISTMAS:

Coffee Break Bible Study enjoyed a lovely Christmas Brunch at our last December meeting.

We enjoyed Christmas Carolling, sharing special Christmas stories and a delicious brunch.

Thank you Carol Pypker for accompanying us on the piano as we sang Christmas Carols.

A delicious brunch.

Some of our ladies also went home with a centerpiece.

We were happy to honor our nursery staff and helpers with a gift of appreciation.

THE ROAD TO BETHLEHEM A DRIVE THROUGH CHRISTMAS STORY 2025

~ photos submitted by Mary W, Jen vS, Kim G,

QR CODES VIDEOS: If you have a QR Code Reader App on your smartphone scan these codes to view the videos of the different stations. Thank you Mary for providing these videos.

THE ROAD TO BETHLEHEM A DRIVE THROUGH CHRISTMAS STORY 2025: Dispite the frigid weather our evening was a tremendous success. It was reported that there was 120 vehicles that went through. What an amazing way to warm the hearts of our community with the love of Jesus Christ. A memorable tribute to His birth. Thank you to everyone that made this evening such a success. Whether you were upfront in one of the sets or you quietly worked behind the scenes before, during and after the production, none of this could have happened without you. As a church family we came together to share the good news of this joyous moment in time. Thank you all so much!