

Classis Toronto Prayer Newsletter – December

This monthly prayer newsletter shares with you what is happening in our Classis Toronto churches (22 CR congregations) and our joint ministries. The focus is on what is being celebrated and what the churches and ministries are dreaming God will do among them. Where appropriate, we will also share what challenges are being dealt with. Remember these ministries in prayer in church and at home.

RACE RELATIONS

All Nations Heritage Service

On September 25, about 75 people gathered for a special worship service in recognition of the diversity that is God's church and especially that part of his church called the Christian Reformed Church.

What did we expect from that service? The last few of these held annually in the early fall have been celebrations of the diversity that is growingly visible in the congregations in Classis Toronto; great singing, sermons/talks, and litanies all giving thanks.

There were testimonies presented, some of pain and discrimination based on racism. These were followed by prayers of forgiveness. Rev. Esteban Lugo, director of the Office of Race Relations, spoke at the service, urging us to keep on building the diversity of the CRC in such a way that it might someday reflect the Kingdom of God in all its glorious diversity. It was indeed a very moving service, especially for those with similar experiences to those who testified.

However, some of the feedback after the service reflected some disappointment in the absence of a more celebrative service. Had not their churches welcomed and included all who came? Still, the question could be asked. Is there room for a service focused on contrition and reconciliation?

The Meadowvale community spent much time in prayer, while planning this service. The communion service at the close was a wonderful expression of forgiveness and hope. The gifts given to Rev. Esteban Lugo, US director of Race Relations, and to Steve Kabetu, Canadian director of Race Relations, from a member of Meadowvale were tender expressions of love that were received with joy and hopefulness. May we always be open to each other's expressions and gifts. For a copy of the program of the service see <http://www.classistoronto.org/allnationservice.cfm>

SPRINGDALE CRC, BRADFORD

A Bit of History

Springdale CRC began in 1949 as Westside CRC in the Holland Marsh area, north of Toronto. In 1952 a church was built and with the need for added space they built a new facility in 1997/8 where they currently worship. Springdale is currently served by Rev. Ed Visser who is a Transitional Minister as they prepare to call a new pastor.

Current Situation

In the past couple years Springdale has faced some challenges. Their membership has declined and their finances have become more difficult. They are presently working with the help of their Transitional Pastor to rediscover their identity in Christ. In the process they are beginning to look to the future with renewed hope as they also begin the process of calling a new permanent pastor.

Prayer Requests

1. For renewal of Christian vision and purpose
2. For clarity of who they are in Christ
3. For the search process for a new pastor
4. For stabilization of their member numbers and finances
5. With thanksgiving for over 60 years of ministry
6. With thanksgiving for a transitional pastor

Classis Activities (see www.classistoronto.org)

December 1: Race Relations Team Meeting

December 8: Special Classis Meeting to finalize Classis Toronto's budget, Richmond Hill

December 5: Dr. Brian Walsh book launch

December 13: Deadline for materials for Jan 19 Classis meeting

January 19: Classis Meeting, Meadowvale

January 21: Psalms Project: Teach us to Pray Tour – Light Korean Presb. Church 312 Rexdale Blvd
www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ueli5ZV4CQo