



WATERLOO

CAMPUS MINISTRY

question ~ discover ~ grow
in a life of faith.

Annual Report to Classis Huron- May 2026

As the spring rains come and we look forward to another growing season, we are reminded that the process of planting, growing and harvesting requires consistent time, care and effort. The same is true at Waterloo Campus Ministry. Through consistent time, care and effort the work of the ministry has grown. We have had a fruitful year of spiritual growth and connection.

Waterloo Campus Ministry primarily serves the students who call University of Waterloo and Laurier home, with some students from Conestoga partaking in our programming as well.

Across all programs including the Weekly Table Talk, Book Clubs, Grad Fellowship and Faculty & Staff groups, WCM has grown to approximately fifty participants. This growth has come through our attention to the mission for this ministry: *to be present on the college and university campuses to listen, pray, worship, and nurture. WCM provides opportunities for learning, leadership, and service, to help build a solid foundation for lives of faith and missional expression in students and faculty.* Through this mission, we have attended to the reformed tradition through placing a high value on the authority of scriptures; we have given time to assessing how our lives ought to be impacted by the reading of scripture, we have engaged in gospel in hospitality with fellow students on campus and we have encouraged one another to love God and love our neighbours more.

We are a community that listens.

Our weekly gathering at the University of Waterloo is called Table Talk. This is a space for students to not just talk, but learn to listen to others. This past year, a student



intern leader took on the role to create discussion questions for students to engage in over a light supper. This past Winter we explored the prevalence and relevance of the seven virtues in their world. This included weeks of discussion on wisdom, prudence, justice, fortitude, self control, hope, faith and love. Through both speaking and listening, students were gaining a perspective on how essential virtues are in our everyday lives. Most importantly, this was a space for developing relationships with others who may not be connected with a church. These students have been nurtured in our community so that when their curiosity about Christian faith becomes more active, there is the hope that they will turn to us on campus or to a local church if they are no longer at university.

Learning to listen on the Laurier Campus happens at the *Fiction, Fantasy and Faith group*. This group of students meets weekly to discuss fictional books like a typical book club. There is always insight into what it means to be human and some connections to make with our faith. This group started out small in September, but it has gained members over the course of the year.

We have been challenged with the problems of being human by reading more classics like that of *The Stranger* by Albert Camus, *Waiting for Godot* by Samuel Beckett and modern fiction pieces like *Scythe* by Neil Shusterman and *Convenience Store Woman*, Sayaka Murata. The joy in this group is that most of them are first and second year students, so there will be time to develop relationships with these students and cultivate some spiritual conversation over a few years.



We are a community of nurture and prayer.

Prayer and nurture at WCM happens during the many book clubs that are offered over the course of the year. In the fall, we were nurtured in our *UW Book Reading Club* by Brother Laurence's, ***Practicing the Presence of God.***

In the Winter term, we took a *Bible Reading Book Challenge* at both the University of Waterloo and Laurier. Across both groups, 14 students were moved to read the Bible this winter. that moved us through the first five books of the Bible and

then finished with the Book of Matthew. Students engaged to the best of their ability with the reading challenge and even though they may have skimmed and skipped a bit, their appreciation for the books of the Torah and the connections to Matthew were substantial.



The Grad Fellowship group did a specific read of CS Lewis' *Surprised by Joy* and gained insight into the work of his heart being changed from an atheist to a Christian. When the students wrap up their discussions, they engage in prayer for one another related to the stressors of their graduate school work, TA of students, defense of a thesis or the challenges of obtaining a job for a work term.

Body and Soul - Heidelberg Catechism Book Club

A small group of students had expressed interest in preparing for the profession of faith. To accommodate this, a small group of students have been reading *Body and Soul - Reclaiming the Heidelberg Catechism*. We are nurturing students from anabaptist traditions in this group and they have refreshed understanding from the confession when it speaks of the assurance of God's provision in our lives and holds to a confidence of being the Lord's body and soul in life and death. We will have completed this book group by the end of April and students looking towards Profession of Faith will be exploring their next steps on that journey in the month of May.



We have an on campus Faculty & Staff Scripture and Prayer

– This is a group that meets on campus every other week and spent the past winter reading an assortment of parables together, discussing and praying with one another. We are delighted to have eight to ten faculty or staff members join us at most meetings. The comment that comes up frequently is that it is wonderful to realize how God has planted so many Christians in this secular institution. Realizing that students are



in such a formative stage of life, there is Christian witness that still surrounds them whether it is by a professor, a counsellor, an administrative support or a plant operations professional. This collection of individuals is evidence that Christ's light is on campus in classrooms, hallways and offices of many kinds.

An off campus retired group of Faculty and Staff Book Club

still met to read and discuss books through the fall and winter terms. Eight retirees come out to our group every other week and discuss a few chapters at a time. This group read *Jesus Changes Everything* by Stephen Hauerhaus in the fall and proceeded to explore *Mercy in the Season of Dying* by Peter Roebbelen in the winter. We



wrap up with the Lord's Prayer at the end of our meetings.

We are a community of Worship. WCM is a place where students are encouraged towards worship. During our Winter Retreat, we were delighted to have a student with gifts for leading worship in our midst. This allowed us to engage with worship songs together as a community.

Offering a service that might serve as a substitute for a Sunday morning worship service is not something that has been pursued with WCM. It is a desire of this community to get students to church on Sunday mornings. It has been encouraging to hear that students are showing up at church on Sunday mornings at Waterloo CRC. Students are also engaged in attending other churches in the area.



Winter Retreat Photos 2026

WCM is living out the mission to be a place where students are learning, leading and serving others.

Student interns have been engaged in learning spiritual disciplines and leading others to practice them this year. Over the course of the year, students have been reading chapters from *Celebration of Disciplines*. From this they have been challenged to read and discuss disciplines of meditation, prayer, silence, submission and fasting. Student leaders put their skills into practice at a weekend retreat in November. Gaining more understanding about these disciplines, the students were more able to support other students at the weekend retreat which offered students time alone for reflection, silence and prayer with God.



WCM is also a place where student leaders challenge other students to love their neighbours by engaging in acts of service. A student intern leader organized the second annual Fall Food Drive which was a phenomenal success. It brought close to 2,500 lbs of food to the University of Waterloo student food bank. As a group, we went to the St. Johns Kitchen in downtown Kitchener to help with preparing lunches, cleaning bathrooms, organizing the food in the pantry and washing dishes. During the winter term, another student intern organized a clothing drive for Ray of Hope which brought in 150 items for those in need.



Fall Food Drive 2025

It has been a joy to see this community of students grow and develop in the ways of listening, praying, nurturing and worshipping together. Through the WCM Spring Newsletter and our video, you will be able to hear from individual students about how this ministry impacted them.

In close, this ministry would not be possible without your support. The students are so grateful for all the love we can give at WCM including all the food, the Christian books, student internships and one-on-one meetings with students. Thank you to the churches of Classis Huron, to Resonate for their financial support, for the CRCMA for student internship grants, for Ingrid and Matt Harpster from WCRC who host many end of term parties and to Waterloo CRC for local support to students through their worship and monthly student lunches.



Thanks for your generosity this past year.
God's blessing to you and your communities.

In Christ's service,
Rev. Melissa Burmaster

