



**WATERLOO**  
CAMPUS MINISTRY



SERVING UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO AND LAURIER CAMPUSES

## Ministry Newsletter

MAY 2025

**NEW** in 2024-2025

### Mission

WCM is on campuses to listen, pray, worship, and nurture students and faculty in their faith. We provide opportunities for learning, leadership and service to help build a solid foundation and encourage missional expression.

### Vision

WCM is a Christ-centred community that encourages students and faculty to confidently question, discover and grow in a life of faith.



## *In all things, give thanks.*

Another year has come and has just flown by!

With gratitude, I am amazed at what God is doing with WCM. First thanks goes to God for his faithfulness.

Secondly, I would be remiss to not share thanks for your prayers, for financial support and encouragement.

Why not grab yourself a coffee and sit down for a moment to read some stories about connections, new groups and impacts made by faculty and students on the campuses of Waterloo and Laurier. Listen in on what Emerging Leaders have contributed to our community and student leaders have organized for outreaches in our community. Check out our new Mission & Vision statement on the left side of this page too. God has been up to some exciting stuff!

## Inside

- Chaplain's Corner
  - Are you overjoyed by Jesus lately?
- Laurier Campus - Fiction, Fantasy & Faith
- Waterloo Campus - Table Talk Discussions & Grad Fellowship
- Outreach Initiatives in 2024-2025
- Emerging Leaders share about Discipleship & Community Building
- Faculty Staff Book Club
  - Book Club Group & Prayer Group
- Just for fun pics & best wishes graduates!

*Find us on line!*



waterloocampusministry.ca

# Chaplain's Corner



## Overjoyed

Have you ever heard of being overjoyed? As weird as the word sounds, this is what the disciples were when they saw Jesus. After his resurrection, Jesus appeared and showed his hands and side. It says that the "disciples were *overjoyed* when they saw the Lord." (John 20:20) Jesus had risen just like he said he would. They were overjoyed at the miracle of being able to see Jesus again; overjoyed at the miracle of his resurrection and realizing his promises coming true right before their very eyes.

As I look at WCM this past year, I am overjoyed by how Jesus is at work in this community. Jesus demonstrates that he is working miracles of connection, belonging and inclusion. I am overjoyed at the development with Faculty & Staff Groups. We have a Retired Faculty Group that reads really challenging books! But, we also now have a Scripture and Prayer Group on campus at Waterloo (started Winter 2025). We have participants that are Professors, Counsellors, and Operations Team. Usually, we see 6-10 participants each week. They are gathering to read God's word and pray for students and our campus. Amazing!



Thank you Winter student leaders!

### Winter Student Leader Team 2025

Laura Dentz, Timothy Thomas, Scott Adema, Kayla Burmaster, Terrance Chen (left to right).

Our Food Drive and helping at St. John's Kitchen has made us stand out as a group that cares about others and shows it. It has helped us to be an active not passive extension of Christ's compassion in this community.

I have been overjoyed with the new book club at Laurier. The Students that came expanded on the original idea of Harry Potter Book Club. We have read so many different genres and it has been rich - rich dialogue around complex issues of humanity. The students who come are Christian, atheist, culturally Muslim and lapsed faith. I am overjoyed by the relationships which are blossoming with spritual conversations gradually and consistently.

My great prayer is that God will continue to guide me as I minister to these students. I pray that the Holy Spirit will lead us into deeper conversations for all those who are willing to question, discover and grow in a life of faith.

*Melissa Burmaster*

*m elissab @ waterloocampusministry.ca*

WATERLOOCAMPUSMINISTRY.CA



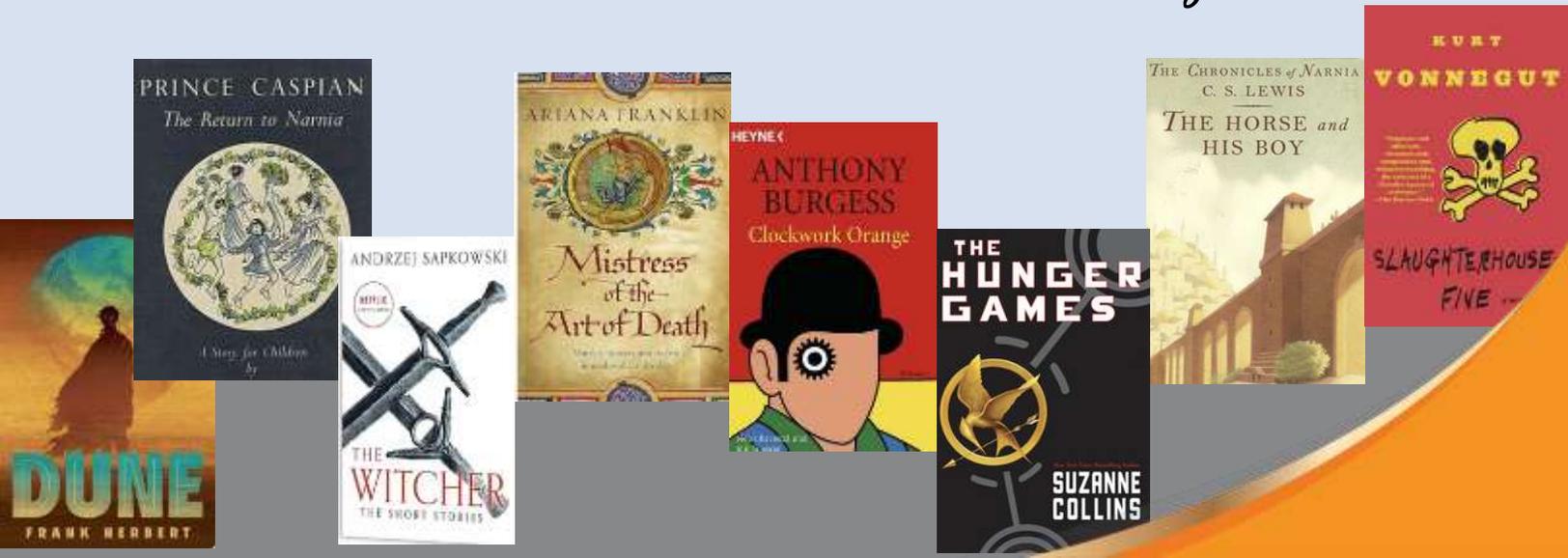
# Laurier Campus Fiction Fantasy & Faith Group

## Forming Connection Through Literature



The Faith, Fiction, and Fantasy Club is a wonderful gathering filled with wonderful people, where through literature such as Chronicles of Narnia and Harry Potter, we question, discover, and grow our faith alongside many other facets of life, Perhaps most importantly, we do these things together. Our club also functions as a place of community, where beyond amazing book talks and good food, one can find support and comfort for any struggles they might be facing, faith based or otherwise. I have personally found invaluable connection through our club, and hope to continue to do so in the future. Here's to praying for new club members who may find that same connection in each other and in faith during our meets!

Zoe Hagen





## Waterloo Campus

### Weekly Gathering - Table Talk

As a new transfer student at Waterloo this year, something I really found valuable from WCM was Table Talk. I loved how it gave us the opportunity each week to challenge our faith and worldview by discussing complex topics together. It was always so interesting to hear other people's perspectives, and it often pushed me to reflect more deeply on my own beliefs. Specifically, when we had numerous guest talk about their faith journeys, it made me realize that everyone's walk with God looks different so we can't compare them. The table talk experience has helped me grow in my faith while also giving me the opportunity to build meaningful relationships and a strong sense of community with some truly amazing people. I've genuinely appreciated the support and connection that Table Talk has provided during my first year at Waterloo.



*Ava Boonstra*

## Grad Fellowship

My name is Shechem. I'm a PhD student in Electrical Engineering from Sri Lanka. I've attended the graduate fellowship group for about two years now. The graduate fellowship group is a wonderful place for me to pose questions and engage in in-depth discussions about the nature of faith and my relationship with it.

I have many questions and doubts, and I am glad to have a group with which I can share those comfortably. I have also been able to build a community of friends among those who attend, which I feel is very important to have as a graduate student in a foreign country.



They have helped me find a sense of belonging. We have most recently been reading Galatians, which has sparked some interesting conversations about the meaning of faith. I truly appreciate the space this group has afforded me to have those conversations.

*Shechem Sumanthiran*



# Emerging Leaders 2024 - 2025



WE ESTABLISH AND NURTURE A VIBRANT, CONNECTED COMMUNITY ON EACH CAMPUS



*KAYLA BURMASTER*

This winter, I had the pleasure of planning Weekend Escape Events for WCM. These events were designed to be inclusive and enjoyable for all skill levels, a place for fostering community among believers while offering a welcoming, comfortable space for those who don't yet know Christ. In today's world, casual community-building events are more important than ever. Research by Domènech-Abella et al. (2019) shows that loneliness can significantly increase feelings of anxiety and depression. Through planning these events, I witnessed firsthand how creating meaningful connections can have a real impact—equipping people with tools to combat loneliness not only during the school term but also beyond.

Board game nights were especially popular this term. These events encouraged friendly competition and offered a unique space for bonding, allowing sides of people to emerge that don't typically show during Table Talk gatherings. The relaxed, playful atmosphere helped attendees feel comfortable being themselves—even a little goofy—which fostered a sense of camaraderie. This camaraderie carried over into Table Talk events, creating a safe space for people to share vulnerable thoughts and ideas about their faith, and deepening connections between both believers and those still exploring faith.

I felt deeply encouraged as relationships strengthened throughout the term, sparked by these simple yet meaningful weekend events. After all, God created us for community and to experience joy. This term, I truly felt that God used me as a vessel to help build that community and share in the joy that comes from deepening relationships with one another.

*Kayla Burmaster*



*LAURA DENTZ*

Over the Winter of 2025, I had the honour of leading a small group Bible study challenge for WCM. Our goal was to read the New Testament in 60 days—and we did! We would read approximately 4-5 chapters a day and meet once a week to discuss what we had learned or what we were struggling to understand. Framing the challenge with 2 Timothy 3:14-17, we set out to spend more time in God's Word, to have him speak to us, to gain peace amidst the business of school, to develop Godly habits, and to hold each other accountable through it all.

When it was all over, one student simply remarked that she was impressed she had completed the challenge. Another said he learned how important accountability was through this challenge, while others commented that they had learned discipline. I think all of us were better able to see the big picture of the New Testament and understand the story of Scripture because we were reading through it in such a short time. A lot of us also felt that starting the challenge was difficult but by the end we looked forward to that time spent with God every day.

None of us were biblical experts, but we learned so much from reading and from each other. It was a blessing to hold my peers accountable in their faith walks and to have them do the same for me.

*Laura Dentz*



WE QUESTION, DISCOVER, GROW IN GOD'S WORD TOGETHER

# Outreach 2024-2025

As part of Waterloo Campus Ministry, I've been fortunate to participate in impactful outreach projects that strengthen our ties to the broader Waterloo community. During a local food drive, we dropped donation bags at people's homes and were amazed by the response, such as one woman even chasing us down the street asking for five more bags, ultimately filling six large ones herself. Moments like that reflected God's incredible work through the community.

We had the opportunity to volunteer downtown Kitchener at St Johns Kitchen to make meals for and also converse with the homeless in the region, learning stories and gaining perspectives much different than our own. It was a fruitful and powerful experience, allowing us as students to see how God is working in lives of people on much different pathways than ourselves.

*Scott Adema*

## Initiatives this year

ST. JOHN'S KITCHEN, FEBRUARY 2025  
FALL FOOD DRIVE, OCTOBER 2024  
SPRING CLEAN UP, MAY 2024



"AND DON'T FORGET TO DO GOOD AND TO SHARE WITH THOSE IN NEED. THESE ARE THE SACRIFICES THAT PLEASE GOD."

HEBREWS 13:16

# Faculty & Staff Groups



## F & S Book Club Group

About every two weeks, a small group of Christian faculty and staff (as well as a few extras) from Laurier and Waterloo have met for many years to discuss a book. I have been part of this group since 1985. It has been led by the Christian Reformed campus minister, now Melissa. The first rule is that we have a lot of fun having very lively discussions. This year we read "Jesus and the Powers" by N.T. Wright and Michael F. Bird, a very good choice in these turbulent times. The hypothesis explored was whether liberal democracy is the best form of government, dare I say even the "Christian" form of government. Even within liberal democracy, there are many challenges faced by a believer exercising their faith in a political world.

The second term saw us read "Grace Abounds: God's Abundance Against the Fear of Scarcity" a series of writings by Walter Brueggemann edited by Davis Hankins. This was the first time I had read Brueggemann although I had heard much about him over the years. One of the wonderful part of this group is that you read books you might never choose to read yourself. The first half of this book tried hard to integrate the Old Testament narratives into modern concepts of economics (full acknowledgement, I am a former economics professor). This was a tough sell to the group. The second half of the book emphasized the proper response to God's abundance found in the Old Testament and the links to those responses in the New Testament. I rarely leave our meeting without at least one piece of wisdom from this group to carry me through until the next meeting.

*David Johnson*

Emeritus Professor of Economics,  
Wilfrid Laurier University

## Scripture & Prayer Group

Since January, Melissa Burmaster has been hosting a bi-weekly staff and faculty gathering at the University of Waterloo as part of Waterloo Campus Ministry. It has typically been attended by 6-8 people from all over campus (representing different types of administrative, technical, and service staff as well as professors from various academic departments). It is our joy to meet new people at many of these meetings as this new initiative takes root. Carving out a lunch hour at the university for fellowship with other Christians is a time of sanctuary and helps us to be a light in for Christ in the workplace.

During the winter term, we have had opportunity to pray together about matters of concern on campus and in the surrounding community. One of our first meetings was on the day that a communication was received about budgetary issues and possible job losses, and it was good to be able to pray together as we saw the tension this brings throughout the workplace. We have also had opportunity for illuminating dialogue between attendees from a variety of churches and denominations.

Our meetings centred around chapter-by-chapter study of Galatians with each person around the table being to reflect on a favourite verse, an interesting thought, or how this scripture has been meaningful in their lives.

*Philip Schmidt*

Research Assistant Professor in the Department  
of Civil & Environmental Engineering, Elder at  
Water Street Christian Reformed Church

# Community Life with WCM



*Why the Wilderness? (Table Talk discussion topic)*



**Congratulations to this year's Graduating Students**  
Avery, Jenna, Terrance, Casey, Kayla, Phil, Curtis & Jardine

