

newsLetter
SUMMER 2026



Covenant
CANADIAN REFORMED TEACHERS COLLEGE

"...tell the next generation..."

PSALM 78:4



from the principal

DR. CHRISTINE VAN HALEN-FABER

The summer edition of the CCRTC Newsletter offers a wonderful opportunity to reflect on the special events that could take place during the last few months of the 2025-2026 academic year:

Courses were completed, course evaluations were conducted, teacher candidates wrote exams and finalized assignments, faculty members were busy with marking, and the office administration prepared transcripts and wrapped up the year. In the midst of these academic activities, the Student Council even found time for an in-house farewell event for the graduating class, followed by the public commencement during which diplomas were conferred on the eight members who constitute the Class of '26.

Engaging in reflective practice also means looking back in order to look ahead. During May and June, the full-time faculty met regularly to review the year and to discuss

various projects that had, have, or will have their attention. Dr. Jack Huizenga, in his role as Academic Dean, finalized teaching assignments and timetables for next year, Dr. Menco Wieske made initial arrangements for practicum placements, while Mr. Mark den Hollander and Mr. Lennart de Visser were also busy with their respective doctoral studies on top of everything else. Throughout all this, the term "transition planning" was mentioned with increasing frequency as the current Principal prepares to sign off and hand over the leadership baton to Mr. John Wynia, who in turn is preparing way for Mr. Stephen DeBoer who will be his successor as Coordinator of the Compass League of Reformed Schools effective August 2027. We are thankful for the good spirit of cooperation that exists between the three organizations and we pray for a blessing as Emmanuel Christian High School searches to fill the Principal vacancy.

As we wrap up the year in earnest, we

look forward to a refreshing break and then to welcoming 35 students to start the 2026-2027 academic year on September 8th, Lord willing – knowing that the beautiful task of "... telling the next generation" (Psalm 78) continues until the day of Christ's return.

In the meantime, we covet your continued prayerful and financial support: Covenant education is a communal effort to the praise of God's glory!

A Personal Thank You!

I express my heartfelt appreciation to the Board of Governors for initiating a wonderful Open House/Retirement event and to the organizing committee (Michelle Helder, Jennifer Lof, Nancy Vandenbos, and Lysie Alkema) for making it happen. It has been a privilege to serve Reformed Christian education for 52 years, including the past 33 years as a faculty member at CCRTC and 27 years as Principal. I thank the LORD for his goodness, faithfulness, and grace experienced during all these years: Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

Christine van Halen-Faber

W.A.T.C.H. Report

Greetings once again from W.A.T.C.H.! Writing this little contribution for the newsletter every year is a sure sign that summer is very near. The ladies who represent W.A.T.C.H. in various congregations across the country worked diligently once again to raise funds for the College. (If your congregation does not have a representative yet, we would love to have you join us. Please email us at watchhamilton1@gmail.com for more

information.) The funds given to CCRTC are used to purchase items that enhance academic life but are not included in the regular operating expenses. Past purchases include large screens to facilitate virtual meetings, shelving in the library and furniture for both student and staff common rooms. This year's efforts were blessed and we were able to present the Principal, Dr. C. van Halen-Faber, with a cheque of \$8000.00 at the recent graduation ceremony.



We thank each and every one of you who contributed - every little bit counts! Above all, we thank our heavenly Father for His provision every day!

On behalf of W.A.T.C.H.,

Beth Stel (Chair)

Chandra Vanderboom (Treasurer)

Jo-Ann Van Iperen (Secretary)

Monica Reimer (Member-at-Large)

Eleanor Boeringa (CCRTC Liaison)

GRADUATION 2026

LENNART DE VISSER

The graduation ceremony for the Class of 2026 was held at Cornerstone Canadian Reformed Church on May 20, 2026. The evening was

opened by Board Chairman, Darren Kuik, who congratulated the graduands on their successful completion of their respective programs of study. Mr. Kuik noted that this was a significant year for CCRTC, particularly in light of the upcoming retirement of Christine van Halen-Faber as CCRTC Principal and CEO, as well as the Ontario College of Teachers' decision to deny accreditation to CCRTC's proposed Bachelor of Education degree. It is encouraging to go forward with hope and confidence in our sovereign LORD who we trust will bless CCRTC's striving to be the definitive source of Reformed teacher training.

The keynote address was delivered by Mr. Henk Nobel. Drawing from Psalm 104, graduands were called to "be amazed!" There is much in our world that is routine and predictable, like water flowing downhill, fruit growing on trees, and bats using

echolocation. Too often, what is familiar and normal to us becomes boring. We ought to be amazed! Human beings can describe creation but these labels do not explain why these elements function or how God brought it into being. The world goes into extremes; some only see the universe as mechanical and routine while others worship creation. Christians must do neither. Rather, we must be amazed at what we see in creation and then worship the Creator.

The call to "be amazed" applies also to human work, like teaching (cf. Psalm 104:23). Mr. Nobel encouraged the graduands to remember to be amazed also in the challenging and repetitive efforts in teaching, including late-night marking and planning for the next day's lessons. These moments are not interruptions but part of the teacher's vocation. Here too, we are called to be amazed and echo the closing words of Psalm 104: "I will sing to the LORD as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have being."

In her Principal's address, Dr. van Halen-Faber commented that a ceremony like this involves looking back (graduation)

and looking forward (commencement). As different flowers make up a beautiful bouquet, each individual was a valuable and integral part of the Class of 2026.

Mr. Mark den Hollander introduced each graduate and the Principal, with the Chairman, presented the Diploma of Education to Hannah Nobel and the Diploma of Teaching to Alisha Balfour, Clarissa Lof, Sarah Pennings, Ilse Ravensbergen, Sarena Reinink, Alana van Weerden, and Megan Vanlperen. Each graduate looks forward to having a classroom of their own in September.

Clarissa Lof delivered the Valedictorian's Address on behalf of her peers. Clarissa reflected on cherished points of learning, expressed the graduates' deep hopes for how God may use them in their vocation, and thanked the many people who supported them during their program of studies, including family, friends, associate teachers, and others.

The support of the community was celebrated and clearly on display throughout the evening. The evening was very well attended, Beth Stel presented a gift of \$8,000 on behalf of W.A.T.C.H., and support from the Harvest Foundation was mentioned with gratitude by multiple speakers. It is with joy and thanks to God that another year of blessing upon CCRTC could be celebrated together.

thank you, tante CHRISTINE

DR. JACK HUIZENGA

When asked to write a farewell to Dr. Christine van Halen-Faber for the summer newsletter, expressing our gratitude for all her work, and to keep it under 450 words – well, that felt a bit daunting.

If for one year we could track the number of committees Christine contributes to, policies written and revised, meetings attended, presentations made, courses taught, not to mention day to day decisions as Principal and CEO of CCRTC, our heads would be spinning. Now take that list, multiply

it by 33+ years and throw in the monumental task of preparing the applications for ministerial consent by the Ministry of Colleges, University, Research Excellence, and Security and accreditation by the Ontario College of Teachers. Where would we begin to express gratitude for Christine's work and commitment?

There is, however, another side to Christine's work and commitment that is perhaps

less tangible but no less appreciated. In her official role as Dean of Students, Christine regularly checks in on each of CCRTC's students throughout the course of the year. Unofficially, Christine's door is always open to students for those times when they are travelling through a bit of a valley and need to talk; the Kleenex box is always nearby. But her encouraging words are not limited to students. The full time faculty at CCRTC are expected to have or pursue a terminal degree. From applying to a PhD or EdD program to defending one's dissertation, Christine happily advises, stimulates discussion, and encourages her colleagues each step of the way. Often

this begins when Christine asks a question out of sincere interest about a colleague's course or research progress, and results in an engaging conversation producing new ideas to pursue. When such conversations end and the faculty member turns to leave, often a follow up question comes such as, "How is your Mom doing?" "Did your wife's appointment go well?" Regardless of how busy she might be, questions like these reveal Christine's care for the person to whom she is speaking.

This sincere care extends beyond students and faculty at CCRTC. Teachers and principals within our Reformed Christian schools always find a willing listener in

Christine. Her experience as a teacher and school principal, along with the godly wisdom the Lord has equipped Christine with, means that people can confidently seek her counsel. Like the godly woman who fears the LORD described in Proverbs 31, Tante Christine faithfully serves the Lord as she cares for her brothers and sisters in Christ.

So we say farewell to Christine by saying "Thank you!" for the way you have used your time, treasures, and talents in service to Reformed Christian education, for the care you have extended to brothers and sisters in Christ both old and young, and fundamentally, the way you have done so to the praise of His glory. Soli deo Gloria.

Reflections

"She sure made an impact on me personally and professionally! Something that stands out to me is her wisdom and care. She was always open to listening and offering thoughtful advice."

"We fondly remember our time in Dr. van Halen-Faber's class as a time filled with laughter – it was an environment of joy! Dr. van Halen-Faber had passion and dedication to her work, she often had great example stories to share, and she always had time to listen and encourage us on our various journeys. We are thankful for her and praise the Lord for the blessing she was to us while at CCRTC."

"Dr. van Halen's love and care for all of her students, past and present, always shone through. The stories she shared about former students inspired us to carry the same compassion and commitment into our own classrooms."

"Dr. van Halen-Faber sat us down in our first year of teachers' College and went straight to the point. She outlined the purpose of teaching and challenged us to think deeply about why we do what we do. Everyone left deeply convinced of the value of Christian education after hearing her insights. These same philosophies still resonate in the halls of our schools today. Thank you for being so passionate all these years!"

"She had a beautiful smile, and she made anyone new walking into the College feel special and seen. Her heart for Reformed education was evident in everything she did."

"Dr. van Halen's banana bread analogy is one that my class, and I'm sure many others, will never forget!"

"Christine was always patient and kind. She loved apples, and was fascinated with how young minds grow and think."

"Dr. van Halen had a remarkable ability to challenge us intellectually while encouraging us personally. Opening devotions, often shaped by her love for music, brought warmth and joy to the whole College."

"I remember how much Dr. van Halen loved a good metaphor. She was someone you could talk to when you needed a listening ear, and she was passionate about helping her students transform into good Reformed teachers."

"Christine loved to use metaphors and similes in her teaching. She had a graceful way of encouraging students to self-reflect. Her love for the Reformed school community spurred others to serve it passionately as well."

"Dr. van Halen balanced sound judgment with real kindness, always knowing exactly what we needed to hear and when we needed to hear it. She taught us that true leadership means sharing your knowledge generously while treating everyone with compassion and care."