



# GET ON BOARD

FALL 2018

## MINISTRY TO SEAFARERS

A ministry of the Christian Reformed Churches in BC and Alberta  
401 E Waterfront Rd, Vancouver, BC V6A 4G9

crcvanportchaplain@gmail.com

 Ministry to Seafarers Vancouver

 @ministrytoseafarersvancouver

**NEW:** [www.ministrytoseafarers.com](http://www.ministrytoseafarers.com)

*From* our Summer Intern, Megan Aperloo:

*Working for the Ministry to Seafarers has been an exciting adventure to say the least. My main "job" consisted of visiting ships, driving seafarers around, helping out with the store, and being a friend to those who needed one. Things I've learned include; how to say hello in many languages, how to eat with a fork and a spoon instead of a knife, and how to impress in a fun round of karaoke. However, the most significant thing I will take away from this summer is the stories of many who were once strangers to me. Throughout the NAMMA webinars and conference I was asked to reflect on Matthew 25:35-40 where amongst all the basic necessities (food, shelter, clothes) being a visitor was put at equal rank. I have visited seafarers in some of the worst and best times of their lives and have been truly amazed at how much a simple visit can be appreciated. I have learned so much through this internship, grown in knowledge and in faith and could not be more thankful for this opportunity. While the internship has officially ended I will still be back, just as a volunteer!*



We were blessed to have Megan Aperloo serve as intern this summer.



*Farwell* from the chair of our MTS. We are grateful for the service of Hank Hamstra as board chair for several years now. He is stepping down this Fall, and sent these words:

*My dear fellow supporters of our Ministry,*

*It has been my honour and privilege to serve as a member of this committee since 2003. As a former seafarer myself, it is my hope that we have served the seafarers that come to our shores well. I feel it is now time for me to step aside as chairperson for the Ministry to Seafarers committee. We have a noble calling to make the Seafarers feel that there is a Christian organization in this Port of Vancouver that welcomes them. It has been my pleasure to work with 3 wonderful chaplains: First Simon Wolfert, then Ernst Devries and now Gary Roosma. God has blessed our committee with devoted ministers.*

*Good-bye for now and God bless all of our devoted supporters.*



Hank Hamstra - Board Chair Member

## *Christmas At Sea*

We are already beginning to prepare for the Christmas season and distributing gifts to the seafarers. To do this we depend on your donations so we can purchase items and prepare the gifts for them. Thanks for sending your donations to: **Ministry to Seafarers - 401 East Waterfront Rd, Vancouver, BC V6A 4G9**

Make cheques payable to: "Ministry to Seafarers, designate to: "Christmas at Sea."

And BTW, we still appreciate knitted toques - both for Christmas gifts, and to give out all through the year.



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### *And* Justice For All

The Ministry to Seafarers is a ministry of Word and deed. We share the Gospel and give out literature. But we also practice the Word by serving seafarers in all kinds of ways. One of the ways we do this is by advocating for them when they are in need.

Last Spring Gary was warned in advance of problems on a ship soon to arrive in port. I (Gary) contacted our local ITF (International Transport workers Federation) to alert them of the issue. When the vessel arrived I boarded the ship to find the ITF worker already on board conducting interviews. I met several of the crew as well, and they began sharing their stories of discrimination and bullying on board by some of the officers, especially the captain.

The ITF worker remained on board that ship from 11 AM until 5 AM the following morning! He said it was the most difficult case he has ever handled, and thanked me for alerting him to the problem. It wasn't fully resolved to his satisfaction, but the situation did improve, and the shipping company was made aware of the issue.

Thankfully cases like this one are rare, especially since the passing of the Maritime Labour Convention of 2006 – of which Canada is a signatory. But in our role as chaplains we are often seen as the first responders for those who are in need. As one seafarer stated recently – “Seafarers chaplains are the visitors we really appreciate and look forward to meeting. Everyone else has an agenda and demands our time and energy. You guys come to serve and give.”

### *Dollars & Sense*

For nearly 5 decades the Ministry to Seafarers has received its primary financial support from the 2 BC Classes, with added support from individuals and some additional offerings from individual churches throughout Western Canada.

Over the next couple of years this situation will be changing, as the classes restructure their finances. For MtS this will mean a reduction in support from the classes – likely a gradual decrease over several years. Therefore, if this ministry is to continue, we will need to see a dramatic increase in the number of offerings received from churches, as well as more individual donations. We'll share more about this change in future newsletters, but please be in prayer for the ministry through this change, and please consider how you and your churches may be able to help us through the change and moving forward. Thank you!



Some guests at our BBQ on June 25 for International Day of the Seafarer.



Gary and his wife, Jennifer, on duty for the BBQ.