

handbook <sup>for</sup>  
seminary *families*

PROVIDED BY THE MINISTRY WIVES FELLOWSHIP



FOURTH EDITION



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# Introduction



Welcome to Grand Rapids! We are thankful that the Lord has made it possible for you to be part of the PRTS community for a time, and we look forward to getting to know you.

PRTS is committed to providing students with the advice and support that they might need throughout their time here. But there are lots of times, especially if you are married to a student, when you might need answers to questions after office hours, or there may be questions that you feel silly asking the seminary staff.

This handbook tries to answer those questions. The handbook for enrolled seminary students answers questions about academic policies and procedures; this handbook is more concerned with helping you get groceries, finding a playground for your children, or mailing a card to your mother. In compiling this handbook, we have tried to construct a little Grand Rapids survival guide. It is our hope that having this tool in your home will make your adjustment to seminary life a little easier, a little more enjoyable, and a little less confusing.

If you have any comments or suggestions for future editions of this handbook, please email them to [marybeeke@gmail.com](mailto:marybeeke@gmail.com) or [swbarrett1@comcast.net](mailto:swbarrett1@comcast.net). Please use the same addresses to ask a question that we did not answer in this handbook.

In Christ,  
The Ministry Wives Fellowship Team

# Names & Numbers



Registrar's office (housing, health coverage, etc.): (616) 432-3408 or  
(616) 977-0599, ext. 139

PRTS library: (616) 977-0599, ext. 129

RHB bookstore: (616) 977-0889, ext. 127

## Heritage Reformed Congregation

Dr. Joel Beeke: (616) 432-3403

Dr. Maarten Kuivenhoven: (616) 451-0570

540 Crescent St. NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Sunday services: 9:15 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.; Mandarin Service at 2:45 p.m.

## Free Reformed Church

Dr. Gerald Bilkes: (616) 432-3401

Pastor Ian Macleod: (616) 805-3412

Dr. David Murray: (616) 432-3405

950 Ball Ave. NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Sunday services: 9:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.

Plymouth Christian Elementary School: (616) 458-4367

Plymouth Christian High School: (616) 454-9481

# Ministry *W*ives Fellowship



Serving in gospel ministry is a vocation like no other. Being married to a servant of God is also a calling like no other. Scripture teaches that every wife and mother needs training in her calling (Titus 2:4); how much more is this true for a woman married to a man who is dedicated to gospel ministry!

The Ministry Wives Fellowship (MWF) at PRTS is designed to help you in this calling. Faculty, faculty wives, students' wives, and guest speakers share topics that we pray will equip you to serve as helpmeet to your husband. Topics range from introduction to Reformed theology to serving in the church to meeting the demands of the ministry. As a multinational student body, we share our cultural customs with each other. Meetings are held on regular evenings in the seminary building, with presentations and discussion, as well as a social gathering and panel discussion once a semester. We would love to have you join us for enrichment and fellowship.

Whether you are married to a man who came here out of college, or you are adjusting as your husband leaves his former career, the Lord has given you both this season of seminary life to prepare for your new calling. If you are excited about your husband's future work, please come and share that enthusiasm. But if the thought of your husband in public ministry intimidates you, please come and be encouraged and equipped. Either way, please come and learn together with us how to better bless and support our husbands as they serve our risen Lord.

In Him,  
The PRTS Faculty Wives

# Suggested Reading List

## FOR STUDENT WIVES



The books on this list are a selection of works from different centuries and countries. We have chosen them to help you, in your personal study, to develop as a helpmeet suitable to your ministry husband, and to be a counselor to women in your congregation. Many of these books, especially the biographies, are not meant to be read as systematic theologies, creeds, or Reformed confessions. They contain godly examples and much practical, biblical wisdom that will, by grace, prepare and equip you in your particular calling as a pastor's wife. If reading is not naturally appealing to you, try to work through a couple of books each year, perhaps reading along with another student wife to give you a discussion and accountability partner. (Books are available at the PRTS library.)

### **Pastors wives' and missionaries' biographies:**

- Christie, Vance. *John and Betty Stam: Missionary Martyrs*
- Dodds, Elizabeth. *Marriage to a Difficult Man*
- Elliot, Elizabeth. *A Chance to Die: the Life and Legacy of Amy Carmichael*
- Gerstner, Edna. *Idelette*
- Good, James I. *Famous Women of the Reformed Church*
- Haykin, Michael. *The Christian Lover*
- James, Sharon. *Elizabeth Prentiss*
- James, Sharon. *In Trial and in Joy*
- James, Sharon. *My Heart in His Hands: Ann Judson of Burma*
- MacCuish, Dolina. *Luther and His Katie*
- Paton, Maggie. *Letters and Sketches from the New Hebrides*
- Pollock, John. *Hudson and Maria*
- Prentiss, G. L. *Life and Letters of Elizabeth Prentiss*
- Ray, Charles. *Mrs. C. H. Spurgeon*



## Personal Growth:

- Barrett, Michael. *How Can We Grow in Holiness through Reading the Old Testament*
- Barrett, Michael. *How Can We Live Our Faith from the Inside Out*
- Beeke, James and Joel Beeke. *Developing a Healthy Prayer Life*
- Beeke, Joel. *Living by God's Promises*
- Bennett, Arthur. *The Valley of Vision*
- Bonar, Horatius. *God's Way of Holiness*
- Burroughs, Jeremiah. *The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment*
- Henry, Matthew. *A Method for Prayer*
- Owen, John. *Communion with God*
- Owen, John. *The Mortification of Sin*
- Winslow, Mary. *Heaven Opened*
- Winslow, Octavius. *Help Heavenward*

## Practical Issues:

- Alexander, James W. *Thoughts on Family Worship*
- Beeke, Joel. *Bringing the Gospel to Covenant Children*
- Beeke, Joel. *The Family at Church*
- Beeke, Joel. *Family Worship*
- Benton, Ann. *If It's Not Too Much Trouble: the Challenge of the Aged Parent*
- Booth, Randy. *Children of the Promise*
- Boston, Thomas. *The Crook in the Lot*
- Burns, Jabez. *Mothers of the Wise and Good*
- Calvin, John. *Sermons on the Ten Commandments*
- Campbell, Iain. *On the First Day of the Week*
- Challies, Tim. *The Discipline of Spiritual Discernment*
- Challies, Tim. *The Next Story*
- Chanski, Mark. *Womanly Dominion*
- Cornish, Carol. *The Undistracted Widow*
- Croft, Brian & Cara. *The Pastor's Family*
- Durham, James. *The Ten Commandments*
- Eastin, Staci. *The Organized Heart*
- Floyd, Jeana. *10 Things Every Minister's Wife Needs to Know*
- Furman, Gloria. *The Pastor's Wife*
- Guthrie, Nancy. *Holding onto Hope*

- Hammond, George M. *The Case for Family Worship*
- Hartman, Edward. *Homeward Bound*
- Henry, Matthew. *Family Religion*
- James, John Angell. *A Help to Domestic Happiness*
- Kassian, Mary. *Girls Gone Wise in a World Gone Wild*
- Lloyd-Jones, Martyn. *Spiritual Depression: its Causes and Cure*
- Mahaney, Carolyn. *Shopping for Time: how to get it all done and not be overwhelmed*
- Murray, David. *Christians Get Depressed, Too*
- Packer, J. I. *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*
- Palmer, B. M. *Death in the Home*
- Procee, Gerald. *Holy Baptism*
- Ray, Bruce. *Celebrating the Sabbath*
- Robertson, O. Palmer. *The Genesis of Sex*
- Ryle, J. C. *The Duties of Parents*
- Ryle, J. C. *Practical Religion*
- Sommerville, Mary. *One With a Shepherd*
- Spurgeon, Charles. *Only a Prayer Meeting*
- Stewart, Catherine, ed. *Letters to Pastors' Wives*
- Still, William. *Towards Spiritual Maturity*
- Strauch, Alexander. *The Hospitality Commands*
- Tripp, Paul David. *Age of Opportunity*
- Tripp, Paul David. *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*
- Tripp, Ted. *Shepherding a Child's Heart*
- Welch, Edward T. *Blame it on the Brain*
- Welch, Edward T. *Depression: A Stubborn Darkness*
- Welch, Edward T. *Running Scared: Fear, anxiety and the God of Rest*
- Welch, Edward T. *When People are Big and God is Small*
- Wolfe, Paul. *My God is True: Lessons Learned on Cancer's Dark Road*

# Useful *W*bsites

## FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE PASTORS' WIVES



These are websites that we at MWF recommend. Although we do not endorse everything that is on any of these sites and assume that each person will exercise her own discretion, we hope they will be an encouragement and blessing.

- Pastors' Wives — Surviving in the Fishbowl  
<http://www.pastorswives.org>
- Pastors' Wives.net  
<http://pastorswife.com>
- Adult Class (by Dr. Joel R. Beeke and others)  
<http://www.sermonaudio.com/search.asp?keyword=Family+Living&selectsearch=>
- The Parsonage (Focus on the Family)  
<http://www.parsonage.org>
- Titus2talk—For Discovery and Recovery of Biblical Womanhood (no posts since 2009, but what was put on is very useful)  
<http://titus2talk.blogspot.com/>

# Web *A*rticles



This will be updated on the MWF website as useful articles come up.

- From Crosswalk website  
<http://www.crosswalk.com>
- How Could I Ever Be A Pastor's Wife? by Patricia Clawson  
[http://www.opc.org/new\\_horizons/NH05/08b.html](http://www.opc.org/new_horizons/NH05/08b.html)

## **PRTS student wives' blogs**

- PRTS Wives' Blog  
<http://puritanwives.blogspot.com/>



### **Food Pantry**

A food pantry, a ministry of the HRC, is available to students and their families who have limited income. You must fill out an application form in order to use the pantry. You will then be assigned a time to utilize this ministry between 12:00 and 6:00 on Tuesday afternoons. See the registrar's office for the application form and for further guidelines in using this ministry.

### **Heritage Hill Outreach Store**

Located at 935 East Fulton (616) 235-8151, this ministry is sponsored by the Heritage Reformed Congregation. The thrift store offers free clothing to PRTS families. Be sure to let them know you are a PRTS student when using this ministry.

### **Regenerate—A Thrift Shop ([regeneratethrift.com](http://regeneratethrift.com))**

Located at 4390 Chicago Dr., Grandville, MI 49418 (616) 498-2551, Regenerate donates all their profits to the PRTS Scholarship Fund. Clothing and household goods are tastefully presented and reasonably priced. Please volunteer to support this cause (and receive 20% off when you are working).

### **Furnishings For Your Home**

The PRTS community has a supply of home furnishings that is available for students and their families to use while attending PRTS, including beds, couches, chairs, tables, kitchen supplies, and more. The students usually gather to help each other move into their homes. Contact Mrs. Julie Wielhouwer at (616) 890-5621.

### **Library**

The library at PRTS has a great section for children as well as several resources for women. Family members of seminary students may also apply for library cards. See Laura Ladwig at the library for more information.

# Grocery Stores & Pharmacy Shopping



IN THE PRTS NEIGHBORHOOD:

## **Meijer**

Meijer is a regional grocery store started in Michigan, but it offers much more than food. In addition to groceries, they also have a pharmacy and carry a wide array of housewares, clothing, and just about anything else you may need. They have a great grocery area and run good sales each week. Their store brand items are also excellent. There are Meijer stores all over Grand Rapids, but the closest to the seminary is at Knapp's Corner at the corner of Knapp and the Beltline (basically north of the seminary).

## **Family Fare**

Family Fare Supermarkets are another option you may want to consider. The Spartan Stores company is based out of Grand Rapids and their store brand, Spartan, is also good quality. They, too, run good weekly sales. The closest one to the seminary is west on Leonard at the corner of Leonard and Fuller.

## **D&W Fresh Market**

D&W Fresh Market is another chain of grocery stores owned by Spartan Stores, but tends to be more expensive. The closest one is located across the intersection from Meijer at the intersection of Knapp and the Beltline. They have a lovely fresh produce section. They will send out coupons occasionally that offer some good discounts.

## **Aldi**

Aldi is another option you may want to consider if you are looking for good food bargains. Aldi offers good prices, but it is no-frills shopping. Their brands are not the best known, but are still of good quality. To get a cart you have to deposit a quarter, which you can get back when you are done.

There are no grocery bags, but you can pick up boxes there if you need them. They accept credit cards, debit cards, and cash.

Hours of Operation: Monday–Saturday, 9 a.m.–8 p.m.

There is an Aldi near the seminary at Knapp’s Corner,  
at 3101 Knapp Street, NE.

IN GRAND RAPIDS:

### **Wal-Mart**

Almost everyone knows what Wal-Mart is, but for those of you who don’t... Wal-Mart carries just about everything you could want and great prices to go with it. Wal-Mart can be very crowded and almost hectic, but if you are willing to persevere you can get some good deals. The closest Wal-Mart is on Alpine. The quickest way to get there is to get on I-96 West and stay on it until you get to the Alpine exit. Head north and it will be on the left.

### **Sam’s Club**

If you like buying groceries in bulk, you could try using Sam’s Club. You do have to buy a club card to get in; if you don’t use this store regularly it may not be worth the money. There are good deals, but you have to keep a close eye on the amounts you are purchasing. The closest Sam’s Club is also on Alpine, right next to Wal-Mart.

### **Costco**

Costco is similar to Sam’s Club, selling food and household items in bulk. They carry about the same items as Sam’s Club and you will need to purchase a club card to get in. The closest Costco is on 28th St. Take I-96 East until you get to the 28th St. exit. Head west on 28th St. and it will be almost immediately on the left near Office Max.

### **“Dollar” Stores (Family Dollar, Dollar Tree)**

Dollar stores are popular with everyone. There are so many different types that we are just going to group them all together. Just about everything in them is \$1. Most of these stores have limited food sections, but you can get some good deals. Some of their household cleaning supplies are very good deals. Warning: most of these “Dollar” stores do not accept coupons!

The closest store to the seminary:

Dollar Tree

1621 Leonard St. NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49505 (616) 742-2654

## **Big Lots**

Big Lots is known as “the nation’s largest broad line closeout retailer.” They sell a broad range of high-quality, brand-name products, including consumables (groceries!), seasonal items, furniture, house wares, toys, electronics, home decor, tools and gifts. Visit [www.biglots.com](http://www.biglots.com) to see the grocery specials for the week.

Locations: 1) 3464 Plainfield Ave. NE, Grand Rapids, MI, (616) 364-1501;  
2) 958 28th Street SW, Wyoming, MI, (616) 249-1887

## PHARMACIES WITH LIMITED FOOD SECTIONS:

### **Walgreens**

The closest is at the corner of Knapp and Fuller. Most pharmacies close at either 5:00 or 9:00 but there is a 24-hour Pharmacy at the Walgreens on Plainfield.

### **CVS**

The closest is at the corner of Leonard and Fuller.

## OTHER GROCERY OPTIONS:

### **Farmers Market**

The Fulton Street Farmers Market is open the first Saturday of May through the last Saturday before Christmas on the following days and times: Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday, 8:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m. From January through April they are only open on Saturdays from 10:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

Fulton Street Farmers Market  
1147 E. Fulton St., Grand Rapids  
[www.fultonstreetmarket.org](http://www.fultonstreetmarket.org)

### **Country Life Natural Foods**

For those of you who may be interested in buying some natural and organic items in bulk, you may want to consider joining a group of seminary-connected wives who together order items through the Country Life Natural Foods Catalog. We can get a catalog to you if you are interested. Country Life offers a great variety of natural, organic, and sometimes hard-to-find food items. They offer dried fruits, nuts, grains, flours, granola mixes, honey, maple syrup, etc. This is bulk ordering, so you may need to be ready to store some food items.



The minimum order required for the group is \$400, which usually is not too hard to achieve. We order approximately every 3–4 months, and the order is delivered to the seminary. If you would be interested in ordering please contact Michelle Bilkes at [bilkes@att.net](mailto:bilkes@att.net). You can also check out Country Life Natural Foods at [www.clnf.org](http://www.clnf.org).

# Thrift Shopping

THE ART OF LIVING WITH THRIFT JOYFULLY THROUGH FAITH



Living in the ministry means (for most of us) that we will not have an unlimited budget with which to feed and clothe our families. We will not have extra money for the “fun things”; there will not be what people call “discretionary money.”

However, that has not stopped many of us from finding ways to be able to acquire what is needed during the many phases of family living. I will be happy to share with you, how, by God’s wonderful provision, just at the right times, we have been able to purchase all that has been needed (and much more) to provide for our family, go camping, extend hospitality to many, and open our homes to strangers, with enough beds, etc., for them to sleep in.

Going to a thrift store was always an adventure for us as a family when the children were younger. Once all the children were buckled in, I would ask the children to remind me what we were looking for that particular day. We then would pray together, asking that the Lord would provide for us what He thought we needed. And then, off to our treasure hunt.

As the children grew up, some decided that mission/thrift stores were beneath them, and they would stay in the car. When they had to begin to purchase their own things, “thrifting” didn’t seem so bad. My children drew the line with “dumpster hopping.”

In order for the children to have a little spending money of their own to spend on our “thrifting days,” we would collect bottles and cans by the side of the road for a few afternoons.

There are so many stories to tell about what and how the Lord provided for us! What happy memories we all share from going to find just the right things. I hope that this list is of some help and enjoyment for your families.

—Linda Lanning

## THRIFT STORES

### **Heritage Hill Outreach Ministry**

935 Fulton St. E, Grand Rapids, MI 49503 • (616) 235-8151  
*(This is run by the Heritage Reformed Congregation. Mention that you are a PRTS student and you may receive goods for free.)*

### **Regenerate—A Thrift Shop** ([www.regeneratethrift.com](http://www.regeneratethrift.com))

*(This store raises funds for PRTS scholarships. Please volunteer your time.)*  
4390 Chicago Dr., Grandville, MI 49418 • (616) 498-2551

### **Bethany's Thrift Store**

([www.bethany.org/other-services/bethanys-thrift-store](http://www.bethany.org/other-services/bethanys-thrift-store))  
2820 29th St. SE, Grand Rapids, MI • (616) 254-7777

### **Goodwill**

1655 4 Mile Road NE Grand Rapids, MI 49525 (616) 890-6877	3270 29th St. SE Grand Rapids, MI 49508 (616) 975-4196
2345 E. Beltline, NE Grand Rapids, MI 49525 (616) 466-7949	956 Michigan St. NE Grand Rapids, MI 49503 (616) 885-1485

### **Little Posh** (consignment store, children's & maternity clothes and gear)

3140 Plainfield Ave. NE, Grand Rapids, MI • (616) 363-7929

### **Love INC** ([www.loveinthenameofchrist.org](http://www.loveinthenameofchrist.org))

3300 Van Buren St., Hudsonville, MI • (616) 662-3300

### **Mel Trotter** ([www.meltrotter.org/store](http://www.meltrotter.org/store)) Regular thrift store, plus used cars

538 S. State St. Sparta, MI 49345 (616) 887-4021	7500 Cottonwood Dr., Suite D Jennison, MI 49428 (616) 667-9820
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### **New 2 You** ([www.new2youshoppe.com](http://www.new2youshoppe.com))

2929 29th St. SE, Grand Rapids, MI • (616) 942-2929

### **Nice Twice**

2852 28th St. SW, Grandville, MI 49418 • (616) 249-2020

**Once Upon a Child** (consignment store, children's clothes and gear)

1286 28th St. SW  
Wyoming, MI  
(616) 531-5715

3343 Alpine Ave. NW  
Grand Rapids, MI  
(616) 784-5004

**Salvation Army** ([www.salvationarmyusa.org](http://www.salvationarmyusa.org))

4160 Plainfield Ave. NE  
Grand Rapids, MI  
(888) 868-9305

4281 28th St. SE  
Grand Rapids, MI  
(616) 942-2929

1491 Division Ave. S  
Grand Rapids, MI  
(616) 452-3133

**Savannah Fine Consignments** (Nice used women's clothes)

7649 Riverview Dr., Jenison, MI 49428 • (616) 667-9923  
Open weekdays 10 a.m.–6 p.m. and Saturday 10 a.m.–4 p.m.

**St. Vincent DePaul** (upstairs) ([www.svdpusa.org](http://www.svdpusa.org))

1314 Division Ave. S, Grand Rapids, MI • (616) 452-1408

**Valueland**

2640 Burlingame Ave. SW  
Wyoming, MI  
(616) 534-3233

949 Four Mile Rd. NW  
Walker, MI  
(616) 784-3633

**Worldwide Gift and Thrift**

1454 28th St. SE  
Grand Rapids, MI  
(616) 243-5310

**AREA GARAGE SALES!**

You can find a listing of times and dates of local garage sales at [www.craigslist.com](http://www.craigslist.com).

## LOCAL WEBSITES:

### **[www.groupon.com](http://www.groupon.com)**

Groupon negotiates huge discounts—usually 50–90% off—with popular businesses. They send the deals to thousands of subscribers in their free, daily email, and in turn send the businesses new customers.

### **[www.craigslist.com](http://www.craigslist.com)**

This website is an inexpensive way of acquiring items that you need; it advertises mostly used items that people are selling online. As noted above, it can also be a resource for locating area garage sales.

### **<http://moneysavingmom.com>**

This website is run by a Christian wife and mother who has much experience with living on a budget. She gives a broad range of advice from grocery store deals to managing your money.

Everyday *Life*  
IN GRAND RAPIDS



### **Grand Rapids Public Library**

The Grand Rapids Public Library (GRPL) is not only a place to find books and DVDs, but also many other convenient services as well. In the PRTS area the nearest branch library (The Yankee Clipper) is at the intersection of Leonard and Perkins, 1.2 miles west of the seminary. To get a free library card all you need to do is present a picture ID and proof of address (a utility bill will do). Children can get a card too, but they will still need your picture and proof of address.

Most books are due in 3 weeks and you can usually renew once. Once you are a card holder you can access your account online and renew your books from home.

If there is a book you would like to read, but is not at the library, you can put in a request for them to acquire it from one of the other branches. Times to acquire a book can vary due to availability. Ask one of the librarians for assistance.

The library offers internet access via their on-site computers (1 hr. per day limit for card holders) and wireless connection if you bring a laptop. You can also use their printer: they charge 15 cents per page for b/w and 50 cents per page for color.

The GRPL also offers some computer classes, but these are usually held at the main branch in downtown Grand Rapids. Occasionally a branch will hold special events for children or teens which might be a petting zoo, a book reading, a craft workshop, etc. If you are a card holder and give them your email address, they will notify you of these upcoming events.

The Grand Rapids Public Library also offers the opportunity to check out passes to local museums, zoos, botanical gardens, performing arts venues, and sporting events.

Examples are:

- Frederik Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Park
- Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum
- Grand Rapids Art Museum
- Grand Rapids Children’s Museum
- John Ball Zoo
- Public Museum of Grand Rapids
- Grand Rapids Griffins
- Opera Grand Rapids
- West Michigan Whitecaps

There are some restrictions. Check the [grpl.org](http://grpl.org) website for further details and restrictions.

## **Obtaining a Driver’s License & Registering Your Car in Michigan**

If you change your permanent residence to Michigan, you will need to change to a Michigan driver’s license and register your car in Michigan (which means that you will need to get Michigan license plates).

### **Changing your driver’s license**

If you have a valid driver’s license from another state or Canada, visit a Secretary of State office and:

- Present documentation:
  - 1) One Social Security Number or letter of ineligibility (will accept SS card, W-2 or 1099 form, pay stub with name and SS# printed on it, etc.)
  - 2) Legal Presence Document (could be birth certificate, passport, certificate of citizenship, etc.)
  - 3) At least one Identity Verification (out-of-state driver’s license, marriage license, U.S. court order name change, military ID card, etc. For a woman who has changed her name due to marriage, it is highly recommended that you go with your marriage certificate).
  - 4) Two Proofs of Michigan residency (Utility bill within the last 90 days, account statements from bank within the last 90 days, lease agreements, auto or home insurance policy, etc.)

(There are many other substitutes for these documents. Please go to the [Michigan.gov/sos](http://Michigan.gov/sos) website for more information.)

- Take a vision test and pass the physical standards

- Have your photograph taken
- Pay a \$25 fee and obtain a Temporary Operator's Permit (TOP). The TOP allows you to drive until your Michigan driver's license arrives in the mail.

## **Registering your vehicle & obtaining MI license plates**

Visit the Secretary of State (SOS) office with these documents:

- 1) Current driver's licenses
- 2) Current auto insurance
- 3) Current title (Be sure that all owners listed on the title are present at the SOS office for the transfer of title)

The nearest office to PRTS is 3472 Plainfield Ave. NE. From PRTS get onto I-96 North and take the Plainfield exit. Head north on Plainfield and your destination will be on the right hand side.

Warning: It is difficult to see this building because it is back behind some other buildings. Even the sign on the road is difficult to see. Look for the Payless Shoes building...it is close!

## **Bicycles**

If you need a bicycle for transportation or recreation for you or your family, please email Mary Beeke at [marybeeke@gmail.com](mailto:marybeeke@gmail.com).

## **Important Information Regarding Nonimmigrant Application for a Driver's License or Social Security Number:**

(This information was provided by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement)

New F, M, and J nonimmigrants often apply for a driver's license or Social Security number (SSN) either too early after entering the United States or without the proper documentation. The purpose of the following information is to highlight best practices for incoming F, M, and J nonimmigrants.

### **Purpose:**

One of the first things a new F, M, or J nonimmigrant typically wants to do after entering the United States is get a driver's license or, where appropriate, a Social Security number. Like many things, however, correct timing is everything. The Student and Exchange Visitor Program wants all F, M, or J nonimmigrants eligible for a driver's license or an SSN to have the easiest experience possible.



**Following these six simple tips makes the process go much smoother and saves a lot of time in the end:**

**1. Wait 10 days after you arrive in the United States.** You may want to apply for a driver's license or SSN right away, but be patient. The 10-day wait allows time for all the government databases to update with your arrival information.

**2. Know what you are applying for and if you are eligible.** While you are waiting, talk with your school's designated school official (DSO) or sponsor's responsible officer (RO) or alternate responsible officer (ARO) to learn more about your state's driving rules and regulations. If you want an SSN, have your DSO or RO/ARO confirm that you are eligible before you apply.

**3. Make sure your record in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) is up-to-date and in *Active* status.** SEVIS is the database that contains information for all F, M, and J nonimmigrants in the United States. A DSO manages an F or M nonimmigrant's SEVIS record. An RO/ARO manages an exchange visitor's SEVIS record. The DSO or RO/ARO (whichever applies to you) must place your record in *Active* status when you report to the school or program. Talk with your DSO or RO/ARO before you apply for a license or SSN to make sure your record is *Active* in SEVIS. If your record is not *Active* when you apply, your application will be rejected.

**4. Check your forms.** Check all your forms to make sure your information is correct. This is data integrity. Data integrity is very important because if you have different information on different forms, it will cause delays. Specifically, check your Form I-94, "Arrival/Departure Record," for handwritten information. If the information on your Form I-94 is different than on your passport or Form I-20, "Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status," or Form DS-2019, "Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor (J-1) Status," please see the DMV Fact Sheet for more information.

**5. Wait two days after your DSO or RO/ARO activates your record in SEVIS.** After your DSO or RO/ARO activates your record in SEVIS, you should wait at least two federal business days before you apply for a driver's license or SSN. This gives all the databases time to update with your new information.

**6. Bring all your paperwork.** When you go to the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV)—the common name for a state government office that issues driver's licenses—or to the Social Security office, remember to

bring all your paperwork. For most states, the paperwork includes these documents:

- Form I-20 or Form DS-2019
- Form I-94, "Arrival/Departure Record"
- Passport (with visa, if applicable)
- Proof of legal presence or residence (ask your DSO or RO/ARO what your state requires) For an SSN, you must also bring a letter of employment and an endorsed Form I-20 (for F students). Exchange visitors should consult with their RO/ARO first to make sure the Social Security Administration requires a letter of employment for the J category. These six tips should help you get your driver's license or SSN without having any major problems. If you are interested in specific details about F-2, M-2, or J-2 dependents, please see page 8 of the DMV Fact Sheet. Always talk with your DSO or RO/ARO before you try to apply. Your DSO or RO/ARO may have more information about your particular state. Safe travels!

### **To Learn More:**

- Driving in the United States:  
<http://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/students/resources/driving/>
- Obtaining a Social Security Number (SSN):  
<http://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/students/resources/social-security-number/>
- DMV Fact Sheet:  
[http://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/dmv\\_factsheet.pdf](http://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/dmv_factsheet.pdf)

### **The United States Post Office**

One place you may need to visit occasionally is the US Post Office. Not only do they sell stamps, but also shipping boxes, greeting cards, and post office boxes for rent. The closest office is: 1765 3 Mile Road NE. Head west on Leonard, turn north on Fuller, turn east on Three Mile Rd., and the post office is on the left at about 2/3 of a mile.

Hours:

Monday–Friday: 8:00 a.m.–5:30 p.m.; Saturday: 9:00 a.m.–noon; Sunday: closed

Last Daily Collection:

Monday–Friday: 5:00 p.m.; Saturday: 3:00 p.m.; Sunday: closed

Stamps can also be purchased at Meijer, CVS, and Family Fare.

## **Banking**

There are many financial institutions to choose from. Many students utilize the Lake Michigan Credit Union located at 1820 Leonard Street NE, (616) 242-9790. Also near PRTS is the branch at 2024 Celebration Ave., NE, at Knapp's Corner.

## **Recycling and Garbage Collection in Grand Rapids**

If you own or rent a home you will need to contact the city at <https://www.grandrapidsmi.gov/Residents/Services/Request-Trash-Service> to obtain a garbage bin and to set up an account. There is a cost every time they tip it to empty the bin. You may also reserve a recycle bin for free. For a schedule for garbage pickup (weekly) and recycle pickup (biweekly), see <https://www.grandrapidsmi.gov/Residents/My-Neighborhood>

## **Car Service/Repair**

Mr. Chuck Dykstra, a member of the Free Reformed Church, does car repair at his home. He is willing to work on PRTS students' cars. He charges reasonable prices. If he is not able to fix your car, he will refer you to another shop. His address is 3368 - 3 Mile Rd. NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49525. His phone # is 616-363-9317.

# Medical Information



## Medical Care for Seminary Students and Their Families:

1. In a life-threatening **emergency**, go to the nearest emergency room, or call 911 (remembering that ambulances are expensive).  
Suggested **HOSPITALS**:
  - a. We recommend going to **Mercy Health, St. Mary's Campus** (200 Jefferson SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503, Phone: 616-685-5000) Location is closer. Paperwork is completed for a payment plan or benevolence, depending on your circumstances.
  - b. Second choice, but farther away, **Metro Health Hospital** (formerly Metropolitan Hospital) (5900 Byron Center Ave. SW, Wyoming, MI 49519, Phone: 616-252-7500)
  - c. Near downtown, **Butterworth Hospital** (100 Michigan St. NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503, Phone: 616-391-1774)
  - d. On the southeast side, **Blodgett Hospital** (1840 Wealthy St. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49506, Phone: 616-774-7444)
2. For urgent, but not life-threatening needs, go to Mercy Health **Urgent Care** Center at 1471 East Beltline NE, Suite 201, Grand Rapids; Phone: 616-685-3414; Hours: 7 days a week, 7:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.
3. See **medical protocol** (below) for common problems, and doctor-recommended solutions.
4. If you have a **question**, urgent or not urgent, call one of our nurse contact persons. Identify yourself as a PRTS student and say that you have a medical question.
  - a. Lois VanderStel (616-942-2809; or cell: 616-540-9950)
  - b. Sue Mulder (616-340-1449)
5. **Internet resource for information**: See webMD for an abundance of health information online. [www.webmd.com](http://www.webmd.com)

6. **Canadians** keep their coverage by maintaining an address back home.
7. **Babies** born in the U.S. are automatically placed in the subsidized system.  
**Christie Salazar**, wife of Dr. Greg Salazar is a trained birth and postpartum doula. A doula is a non-clinical role supporting parents through pregnancy, birth and postpartum with informational, emotional and comfort support. She's willing and able to help answer questions, provide resources and referrals to available community resources. You can contact Christie by email at [christie.m.salazar@gmail.com](mailto:christie.m.salazar@gmail.com) or by phone at 616-450-4320.
8. **Services** available:
  - a. **Cherry St. Health Clinic** (Includes 13 clinics. See locations and hours online: <http://www.cherryhealth.org/index.html>.) We recommend you become an established patient here as soon as possible:
    - i. You need to register first by
      1. Proving that you are legally here in the U.S. (ID and student visa)
      2. Proving your income (and/or scholarship amount)
      3. Bring medical records if you have them.
    - ii. They will put you on a sliding scale. Then you can make appointments and be seen. You will pay according to your income. Dental care offered at some locations.
    - iii. It is not for emergencies, but if you are an established patient, you can usually get in on short notice, especially children.
  - b. **Catherine's Health Center**: [www.catherineshc.org](http://www.catherineshc.org), a non-profit community-based health facility dedicated to serving low-income, uninsured residents of the northeast sections of Grand Rapids, primarily those who live in the Creston and Belknap neighborhoods. Supporting the center's activities are a governing board and group of volunteers working to make health care available to those in need. Located at 1211 Lafayette NE, Grand Rapids; Phone: 616-336-8800.
  - c. **GRAPES** (Grand Rapids Area Pediatric Evening Service): An after-hours pediatric urgent care center. If your child's problem cannot wait until regular office hours, you should call your pediatrician's after-hours nurse, and she can authorize a visit to GRAPES (as it is a referral service) if they deem necessary. GRAPES clinic is always staffed by a pediatrician, which med-centers do not generally

have. Spectrum Health, Helen DeVos Children's Hospital, 100 Michigan St. NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503; Phone: 616-391-9000

- d. **Health Intervention Services** (HIS) ([www.hisgr.org](http://www.hisgr.org)): a Christian, non-profit health center that serves the uninsured. They offer a broad spectrum of medical care including family medicine, urgent care, dental and visual care, and counselling.
- e. Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) ([http://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/0,5885,7-339-71547\\_4860-35199--,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/0,5885,7-339-71547_4860-35199--,00.html)): This website gives information about health care programs available through the government.
- f. **Oasis of Hope Center** (<http://www.ohcgr.org/>) A Christian clinic that seeks to meet basic health needs of the uninsured.
- g. **Dr. Jay Lugthart, M.D.**, Georgetown Medical Center, Family Practice, 670 Baldwin St., Jenison, MI 49428, 616-457-4610. Hours: Mon. through Thur., 9-5; Fri., 9-4, closed Sat. and Sun.:
  - i. Students should consult one of the nurses listed above. If that nurse recommends they see Dr. Lugthart, and it is during clinic hours, call the clinic and talk to the nurse. State that you are a Puritan Seminary student. Some same-day appointments are available. If it is during hours that the clinic is closed, call Mrs. Chelle Lugthart (home: 616-534-0850 or cell: 616-240-5231) and inform her of the situation. She will advise what to do next. The Lugtharts give a discount, but they still need to charge, because there are other doctors in his office. You will be billed the normal rate of \$120. You may bring the bill to Mr. Henk Kleyn for a signature, and you will receive a \$40 discount. You will be responsible for the remaining \$80.
  - ii. If one of the nurses listed above recommends a prescription for a simple antibiotic or a medicine that one normally takes, Dr. Lugthart can call in a prescription.
- h. **Dr. Sarah Stewart**, (3550 Fairlane Ave., SW, Grandville, MI 49418, Phone: 616-534-3920) is a podiatrist (foot doctor), and is willing to take care of foot and ankle issues for PRTS students.
- i. **Dental Care**

The dental clinic at the Grand Rapids Community College offers preventative dental services at a low cost to the public in their clinical teaching program for dental hygienists. More information regarding this service can be found at [grcc.edu/dentalclinic](http://grcc.edu/dentalclinic) or by calling 616-234-4237. Note: these services may not be available in the summer.

The Cherry Street Health Services offers dental care at various locations. For locations and scheduling details go to [www.cherryhealth.org](http://www.cherryhealth.org) or call: 616-776-2120.

Frey Family Dentistry (616) 222-0202  
6220 Jupiter Ave NE, St B, Belmont, MI 49306

j. **Optical Care**

Shop around, or see Eye Glass World (2735 28th St. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49512, Phone: 616-974-2020). You can get an optical exam and purchase glasses here.

## **Treatment of Common Medical Issues**

### **PAIN RELIEF**

Stick to simple pain relief such as **Ibuprofen** or **Acetaminophen**. Avoid the more expensive brand names, such as Tylenol or Motrin. Cheaper and equally effective are Meijer, Walgreens, etc. Both these can be used together, according to the stated dosage directions on packaging for pain, as they work in different ways.

DO NOT exceed the stated dosage.

### **FEVERS**

Reducing the fever and avoiding dehydration is a priority, ESPECIALLY in young children. Give plenty fluids. Give **Acetaminophen** or **Ibuprofen**, according to the stated dosage directions on the packaging.

Please seek medical advice EARLY in the following associated circumstances: headache and vomiting, the appearance of a rash, associated cough and breathlessness, or abdominal pain and vomiting.

If you or your child have ongoing unexplained fever for more than two days, with no improvement, please seek medical advice.

### **VOMITING and/or DIARRHEA**

Most commonly viral infection and often referred to here as “Stomach Flu.” Occasionally food poisoning. Maintaining hydration is essential, especially in children. Infants can become quickly dehydrated.

**Frequent sips** of fluid such as Gatorade (children over 2 years or adults) or Pediatric(child) Electrolyte solution. Both of these can be purchased at Meijer or Walgreens. Ice chips or ice pops for older children or adults work well until liquid is tolerated.

Avoid glassfuls of fluids immediately after vomiting. Avoid fizzy drinks. Do not give food until several hours after tolerating fluids. Crackers, toasted bread, or cereal are good foods to restart eating with. Avoid fruit until symptoms settle.

FREQUENT HAND WASHING REDUCES RISK OF SPREAD TO OTHERS.  
KEEP CHILDREN OFF SCHOOL AND NURSERIES!

If vomiting persists and unable to retain fluids after several hours, seek medical advice.

In infants, seek medical advice EARLY if diapers are DRY, child refuses fluids, refuses breast milk or bottles, or has persistent vomiting.

## **SORE THROATS**

Most sore throats are viral, NOT Strep. infection.

Treat with pain relief and fever reduction. If pain worsens after 48 hours or DIFFICULTY SWALLOWING OR DROOLING seek medical advice.

### ***For ALL medicines, ensure AGE APPROPRIATE and CORRECT DOSAGE.***

*These scenarios are GENERAL. They do not cover each individual circumstance.*

*Responsibility for seeking appropriate medical advice, at your discretion, is your responsibility, not MWFs.*

*Please contact the given medical contacts in your handbook for advice if not sure what to do.*

## **Medical Insurance**

Michigan offers a medical insurance program at little or no cost for children called MI Child or Healthy Kids. Eligibility is generally based on income; however, children with chronic health conditions such as diabetes or asthma do not have eligibility requirements. Forms for enrollment can be picked up at the local YMCA or online (Google: "MI Child"). Note: this service is only available to US citizens or those in possession of a green card.

Also, for those who have no health insurance but some form of paid work and legal residency (visa): most health insurance companies will not take you on if you are not from the US until a 1 year health record has been established. However, the state requires BLUE CROSS, BLUE SHIELD of MICHIGAN to cover you. Contact their office in the city center:

86 Monroe Center St., Grand Rapids, MI

You may want to consider the various Christian cost share health care programs as an alternative to medical insurance. Visit the program websites for more information to see if this is a more affordable option for your family.

[www.medishare.org](http://www.medishare.org)

[www.samaritanministries.org](http://www.samaritanministries.org)

[www.christianhealthcareministries.org](http://www.christianhealthcareministries.org)



# Family *A*ctivities

## IN THE GRAND RAPIDS AREA



Note: Hours and admission prices for the following parks, museums, and zoo are subject to change; check websites for the most current information.

### **Frederik Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Park**

Grand Rapids is home to this interesting botanical garden and sculpture park. You can walk their extensive grounds and enjoy the lovely park and huge sculptures. It makes a good day trip for a family. They also host special events throughout the year. This is not far from the seminary, just down the Beltline. Check the public library section for checking out day passes. Check out their website:

Address and information:

1000 East Beltline Avenue NE

Grand Rapids, MI 49525

North of I-96 on East Beltline, between Bradford St. and Leonard St.

Toll-Free: (888) 957-1580

[www.meijergardens.org](http://www.meijergardens.org)

### **Grand Rapids Art Museum**

If you are interested in art, you may want to visit the Grand Rapids Art Museum (GRAM). Located downtown, they have a nice collection of art and host many special events throughout the year. Check the public library section for checking out day passes.

Address and information:

101 Monroe Center

Grand Rapids, MI 49503

(616) 831-1000

[www.artmuseumgr.org](http://www.artmuseumgr.org)

## **Grand Rapids Children's Museum**

You may want to consider an outing to the Grand Rapids Children's Museum. Your children can enjoy an interactive learning environment and have lots of fun, too. The museum offers many exhibits and events for children of all ages.

Address and information:

11 Sheldon Ave., NE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49503  
(616) 235-4726  
[www.grcm.org](http://www.grcm.org)

## **John Ball Zoo**

The kids will like a visit to this zoo. You can see chimpanzees, penguins, lions, snakes, and a whole list of other wildlife. The zoo also hosts special events throughout the year. Check the public library section for checking out day passes.

Address and information:

1300 W. Fulton St.  
Grand Rapids, MI 49505  
(616) 336-4301  
[www.jbzoo.org](http://www.jbzoo.org)

## **Grand Rapids Public Museum**

This museum offers world-class exhibits on history, nature, cultural heritage, and more. Ride a 1928 carousel, walk the old streets of Grand Rapids, catch a show in the planetarium, or eat in the cafe overlooking the Grand River. Visit website for more information on exhibits, becoming a member, directions, and parking.

Address and information:

272 Pearl St. NW  
Grand Rapids, MI 49504  
(616) 456-3977  
[www.grpm.org](http://www.grpm.org)

## **Blandford Nature Center**

Another great activity to consider is the Blandford Nature Center. This is a wonderful place for families to be educated about nature, ecology, and the outdoors, and have fun doing it. Events and educational programs are held throughout the year. Featured onsite are “Heritage Buildings” which are kept as close to original condition as possible. They have a schoolhouse, cabin, blacksmith shop, and other buildings from long ago. Consider making a day of it!

Address and information:

1715 Hillburn Ave. NW  
Grand Rapids, MI 49504  
(west down Leonard St. and then turn north at Hillburn)  
(616) 735-6240  
[www.blandfordnaturecenter.org](http://www.blandfordnaturecenter.org)

ICE SKATING:

## **Rosa Parks**

Rosa Parks ice rink has \$1.00 skating, including skates and free hot chocolate, over the winter months. It is located at the corner of Monroe Ave. and Pearl St. in downtown Grand Rapids.

Address and information:

135 Monroe Center St. NW  
Grand Rapids, MI 49503  
(616) 456-3232  
[www.grcity.us/parks/Pages/ice-skating.aspx](http://www.grcity.us/parks/Pages/ice-skating.aspx)

## **Patterson Ice Rink**

2550 Patterson Ave., SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49546-6327  
(616) 940-1423  
[www.pattersonicecenter.com](http://www.pattersonicecenter.com)

## **Trip to Lake Michigan/Grand Haven**

For a fun and low-cost day trip you might want to take the family to Grand Haven, Michigan, about 45 minutes west of Grand Rapids and just 30 minutes northwest of Holland.

Located on Lake Michigan, Grand Haven features a pier with two lighthouses. You can take a walk on the pier and check out the lighthouses close up. Right next to the pier is a public beach and occasionally you can watch some surfers. Also running up to the pier along the harbor edge is a 2½ mile boardwalk. You can stroll along the boardwalk and watch the boats and waves.

During the summer, take heed to the warning flags—yellow and red indicate dangerous swimming conditions!

If you are considering a visit you may want to go to their website: [www.visitgrandhaven.com](http://www.visitgrandhaven.com).

### **PARKS:**

#### **Grand Rapids Township Park**

Recreation activities are available at the Township Hall Complex on the East Beltline across from Meijer. Comprised of 58 acres, there are three ball fields, a soccer field, sand volley ball, three tennis courts, basketball hoops, handicap accessible playground, and nature trails that can be used for cross country skiing in the winter.

#### **Roselle Park**

Roselle Park is in Ada, about a 5 minute drive from Knapp's Corner. There is a beautiful paved path that takes you right along the river bank. Great for roller blading, jogging, biking, or just walking. At the beginning, there is a restored farm tower with a climbing wall and access inside up many stairs to the top for a lovely view. Along the way are several good fishing spots and picnic tables.

#### **Riverside Park**

Riverside Park on Monroe Ave. has a great walking/biking path as well as nice playgrounds and an 18 hole disc golf course.

OTHER PARKS:

**Huff Park**

**Reed's Lake Park**

OTHER SITES AND ACTIVITIES IN GRAND RAPIDS:

**Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum**

**Hiking Trails**

**U-Pick Fruit Farms and Orchards**

**Comstock Park Ballgames**

**Fish Ladder**

**Walk Around Downtown**

**Bike Paths**

You might want to visit the website: [www.experiencegr.com](http://www.experiencegr.com) which has an extensive list of things that might interest you.

# Home School Resources



## **Home School Building**

A Home School Building is located at:

5625 Burlingame Ave. SW  
Wyoming, MI 49509  
(616) 532-9422

This building is used by many home school groups for various classes and activities. For example, the West Michigan Homeschool Fine Arts Association (WMHFA; <http://www.wmhfa.org/>) utilizes the building on Wednesdays for band, orchestra, and choir. More information can be found at <http://www.homeschoolbuilding.org>.

## **Koinonia Home School**

Koinonia Home School is a Monday group that meets 32 weeks/year to assist homeschooling parents with classes preschool through high school. All classes are taught from a Christian world view and help foster community. They meet at West Cannon Baptist Church, 5760 Cannonsburg Road, NE, Belmont, MI 49306. Check out their website <http://www.koinoniahomeschool.com>. Contact email for the Koinonia group is [koinoniahsg@gmail.com](mailto:koinoniahsg@gmail.com)

Koinonia Homeschool Group address:

5100 Belding Rd. NE,  
Rockford, MI 49341

Contact:

Mrs. Ruth Hoogmoed  
(616) 682-0578  
[koinoniagroup@gmail.com](mailto:koinoniagroup@gmail.com)

# American Holidays



## **Valentine's Day** (February 14)

This day is named after an early Christian minister who continued to officiate at Christian marriages in defiance of a Roman law, and was martyred on February 14th. A Roman Catholic feast day for centuries, Americans now "celebrate" it by giving candy, cards, or roses to their wives or girlfriends.

## **Memorial Day** (last Monday in May)

This is a day that commemorates the sacrifices made by men and women in the American armed forces, especially in the foreign wars that the US has waged. Many Americans use the day off work as a day to do yard work, picnic, and relax with family and friends. Many also attend a parade and some visit a cemetery to remember those lost in battle.

## **Independence Day** (July 4th)

The 4th is the biggest national holiday in America. It celebrates the anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776, which made America its own nation, no longer a colony of Great Britain. Fireworks, parades, barbecues, picnics, and family time are hallmarks of this holiday.

## **Labor Day** (first Monday in September)

This federal holiday officially honors the nation's working people, often with parades. But for most Americans, it is the last day of holidays before the school year begins.

## **Reformation Day/Halloween** (October 31)

Protestants call this day "Reformation Day," as they recognize the date as the anniversary of the beginning of Martin Luther's formal protests against the Roman Catholic Church in 1517, and some churches hold worship services.

While people do not get time off of work or school for Halloween, this “holiday” has become increasingly popular. Formerly a Roman Catholic feast day, that of All Saints, Halloween is returning to its pre-Catholic, pagan roots as a festival of the dead. Although still associated with children dressing up and going door to door for candy, it is increasingly dark, morbid, and pagan.

### **Thanksgiving** (4th Thursday in November)

The biggest family holiday of the American year, Thanksgiving commemorates the Pilgrims’ first successful harvest in the American colonies in 1621. Roast turkey, pumpkin pie, apple cider, and other traditional foods abound, and Reformed congregations often hold worship services.

### **Christmas** (December 25)

In America, secular society is trying to make Christmas an entirely non-Christian holiday, revolving around lots of gifts, decorations, food, time off work, Santa Claus, and reindeer. Their goal is to remove any reference to the birth and work of Christ from this season, for example, replacing, “Merry Christmas” with “Happy Holidays.” Christian communities in the States have different approaches to Christmas. A few view it as a Roman Catholic feast day, and treat December 25th like any other day of the year, saving commemoration of Christ’s birth for weekly Lord’s Day worship. Some believers see it as a God-given opportunity to spend time with family and friends (as they would Memorial Day, or Labor Day), and also take the opportunity to witness to unbelieving family, as Americans still tend to be open to “spiritual things” at this time of year. Other Christians view it as an opportunity to commemorate Christ’s birth with Christ’s church, and proclaim the incarnation from the pulpit not only on the 25th, but also on the Lord’s Days leading up to it. Please speak with your pastor or an elder to better understand how your congregation observes this holiday.



# Miscellaneous

(MEDIA, WEATHER)



## Christian Radio

FM 102.9 offers a selection of Christian music all day, with an emphasis on traditional sounds after 8 p.m. weekdays and on Sundays. There is also a select group of Bible teaching programs spread throughout the day and night. FM 91.3 also offers music. FM 89.3 has good Christian content as well. FM 91.7 offers a Christian perspective on current events.

## Newspaper

The local newspaper is *The Grand Rapids Press*. The website to subscribe is <http://www.grpress.com/subscriptions/>. You can also access local news online at [www.mlive.com](http://www.mlive.com), or [fox17online.com](http://fox17online.com).

## Weather

Michigan weather varies from an average temperature of 83° F in the summer to 18° F in the winter. Along with varied temperatures there is the possibility of stormy weather ranging from snow and ice in the winter to heavy thunderstorms with the possibility of tornados in spring and summer. It is a good idea to keep candles, flashlights, and a battery radio on hand in case of a power outage. These can occur with snow or ice storms or during thunderstorms with strong winds and lightning. The city of Grand Rapids is also equipped with tornado sirens that will sound when a tornado has been sighted around the area. If you hear it during a storm, go to the lowest level in the building (basement, if possible), to an interior room away from windows and doors. Please note that the city of Grand Rapids tests the sirens at noon the first Friday of each month from April to October.

Websites for weather prediction:

[www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com)

[www.weather.gov](http://www.weather.gov)

[www.accuweather.com](http://www.accuweather.com)

## Temperature

Using a different temperature scale can be very confusing. To convert Celsius to Fahrenheit, multiply by 9, then divide by 5, then add 32. To convert F. to C., deduct 32, then multiply by 5, then divide by 9. But there are some temperature conversions that are easy to memorize that can help you understand what temperature you're dealing with without doing a lot of mental math:

100°C	=	212°F	(boiling)
40°C	=	104°F	
37°C	=	98.6°F	(body temperature)
23°C	=	73°F	(room temperature)
16°C	=	61°F	
0°C	=	32°F	(freezing)
-40°C	=	-40°F	

The Celsius and Fahrenheit scales "meet" at -40°.

## Bible Studies

In addition to your local congregation, Bible studies are sometimes available with other groups. Both Heritage Reformed Church and Free Reformed Church offer women's Bible studies and are open to everyone. Plymouth Manor often has one for the residents, led by a seminary student, and the seminary student wives sometimes get together informally for study. Asking around is the best way to find out about these.

## Missions/Outreach

Local congregations have their own outreach programs and short-term missions. There are also opportunities for witnessing and ministry in schools, nursing homes, and inner city missions, such as Mel Trotter.

## Choir

Heritage Voices invites those with singing abilities to join them September to May. Contact [marybeeke@gmail.com](mailto:marybeeke@gmail.com) for information.

## English as a Second Language

The churches/school below offer English as a Second Language classes. You can call them for more details.

Church of the Servant CRC  
3190 Burton Street, SE

Grand Rapids, MI 49546  
616-956-7611

Woodlawn CRC  
3190 Burton Street, SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49546  
616-942-8406

Both of the above churches offer the classes at no charge and also have childcare

Beckwith School for Adult Education  
(through Grand Rapids Public Schools)

2405 Leonard Street, NE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49505  
616-819-2734

(there is a \$20 or \$25 fee to sign up; however, you pay nothing  
after the sign-up fee)

## **Emergencies**

If you have an emergency (something that requires the *immediate* presence of firefighters, police, or an ambulance), dial 911 on your phone. The person answering will ask what sort of help you need, where you live, and will remain on the line with you (if possible) until the emergency services arrive.

## **Wedding Photography**

Mikayla Bronkema, a local student wife, has a photography business for weddings, corporate, and lifestyle. Her website is <https://imagerybymikaylaj.com>. Mikayla's contact information is 616-298-4547 and [imagery.mikaylaj@gmail.com](mailto:imagery.mikaylaj@gmail.com). She is available Monday, Thursday, and Friday evenings.

