

Georgetown Christian Reformed Church gets new pastor

One of the largest church congregations in Halton Hills has a new lead minister.

Rev. Thom van Milligen, 52, was officially installed at Georgetown Christian Reformed Church (GCRC) on Aug. 23.

The church, on Trafalgar Rd. north of Maple Ave., was founded in 1957. It is a congregation of about 600 people.

Van Milligen has served as pastor in several Canadian and U.S. churches since 1991 when he got his first charge as a CRC minister at Telkwa, a small community in north B.C.

He comes to Georgetown from New Life CRC in Guelph where he was a co-pastor with his wife, Lesli. She's recently been appointed to work the CRC denomination in Ontario and Eastern Canada on issues and programs with youth and young adults. The couple has been married for 26 years and has two children, Alexandra, 24, a teacher in Memphis, Tenn. and Carol-Anna, 23, a student at the University of Waterloo.

Van Milligen says he's excited with his new charge at Georgetown where he's been acting as interim pastor for several months and now looks forward to developing a presence in the community.

"I've been thinking a lot about how we relate to each other and the calling of the church to help remind people of that. There's a need to fight some of the loneliness and alienation that's part of modern culture, and the message of Christianity applies directly to this."

He says building relationships and extending the welcome of the church are important to him.

Born of Dutch immigrant members of the Christian Reformed Church, Van Milligen spent most of his youth on a farm in Nova Scotia. In earlier years, his father, a carpenter, built homes in Mississauga.

Van Milligen became interested in Chris-



REV THOM VAN MILLIGEN

tian ministry as an undergraduate student at Calvin College in Michigan and over the years has also served as a pastor in a suburb of Detroit and in Cincinnati. The couple holds dual Canadian and U.S. citizenship; he was born in Canada and she in the U.S.

Brian De Boer is the GCRC youth pastor.

Van Milligen replaces Rev. Gary van Leeuwen who moved to Blyth Christian Reformed Church near Goderich.

Apart from worship services and activities devoted to preaching God's Word, the Georgetown church gives substantial funds to charities. Members are also heavily involved in community-wide volunteer activities. As well, the church supports several missionaries and occasionally, sends help teams overseas for building and relief work.

The CRC denomination has about 1,000 congregations in Canada and the U.S. with some 300,000 members. It was originally founded by Dutch immigrants but today is a multi-ethnic denomination.

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