



Northwest RLRI 2026 Featured Speakers – Pullman, WA

Friday

January 16

Host

Curtiss Gibbs, M.Div

Curtiss Gibbs joined the CVM team as a Region Rep in 2017. He serves as our West Region Rep, after having spent 5 years serving as the Northeast Rep. Previously, Curtiss served in pastoral ministry for 13 years in the local church, mostly focused on youth, college students, and missions. He studied at the University of Georgia for his undergraduate degree and at Fuller Theological Seminary for his Master of Divinity. Curtiss loves connecting people to their calling and working to see individuals and groups thrive as they serve God. He and his wife, Shannon, have been married since 2003, and love to spend time outdoors and in the company of family and friends.

cgibbs@cvm.org

Shane Rootes, PhD

Shane Rootes serves as CEO of Christian Veterinary Mission, inspiring veterinarians worldwide to live out their calling where faith and skill meet in service. A transformational leader with more than two decades of global experience, he is passionate about advancing mission, mentorship, and impact through the veterinary profession. Shane Rootes serves as the CEO of Christian Veterinary Mission (CVM), bringing over 25 years of global nonprofit leadership to the role. A visionary grounded in compassion, Shane has walked alongside communities in crisis, led cross-cultural teams, and witnessed the power of faith in action. He believes leadership begins with listening and that healing starts with presence. Whether in a remote village or a boardroom, Shane's heart beats for holistic care, courageous collaboration, and building what lasts. Shane is married to Miriam, and together they are raising four incredible children who remind him daily of what truly matters. He's passionate about equipping others to live out their calling while guiding CVM's growth with integrity, humility, and bold vision. Now leading CVM into its next chapter of global impact, Shane remains committed to honoring the sacred mission of Christ-centered veterinary service; because love leaves a legacy, and service speaks louder than words. Email: srootes@cvm.org

Saturday

January 17

Session I

Pastor Chris Chan

the call of God, Pastor Chris Chan and his wife relocated from California to the Pacific Northwest to plant a church primarily among foreign students. Starting with just five college students the work grew to become a multi-site, multi-ethnic church of several hundred congregants. Many of his former church members had moved back to their homeland after their higher education in the U.S. and were serving as pastors of churches and successful entrepreneurs in major cities in Indonesia. Besides pastoring a local church in Seattle, Pastor Chris had also traveled extensively conducting pastors' conferences and crusades in nations of Pakistan, India, Indonesia and Africa. He had led a few short-term mission trips to Indonesia. Chris is a skilled pastor and teacher with a strong passion for touching and transforming young people with the love of Christ. Chris graduated from Fresno State University with a Bachelor's in Business Administration (summa cum laude). He is a Certified Public Accountant from California and Washington and has two graduate business degrees from Santa Clara University (MBA) and Golden Gate University (MS in Taxation). His theological degrees include a B.A. in Biblical Studies from Northern California Bible College and a MAT from Fuller Theological Seminary. He is a Doctor of Ministry candidate at Regent University (ABD). Presently, Pastor Chris is serving as the controller of Christian Veterinary Mission.

cchan@cvm.org.

Liz Neveau, DVM

Liz graduated from Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine in 2004. She began her career as an Equine intern at the LSU Equine clinic then worked in an equine ambulatory practice in Baton Rouge, Louisiana for one year. After that, she met my husband and moved home to Texas where she practiced at various small animal practices and had her first child. In 2012, they moved to rural northeastern Oregon. She served at a mixed animal general and emergency practice in Wallowa County, until moving to Umatilla Co. Liz enjoys practicing top quality, practical medicine focusing on caring for the beloved animals of her neighbors. She has worked on many species but primarily sees cats, dogs, and horses, and she would be the first to tell you that her knowledge of things with feathers and scales is most limited – she's much more confident with hooves and paws. Liz is currently licensed to practice in Oregon and Washington. She loves connecting with students in the Northwest and has served on several short-term mission trips with CVM.

Session II

Steve Smith, DVM

Steve is a board-certified veterinary pathologist, associate director of the Montana Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory, and teaching professor with the Washington State University College of Veterinary Medicine and the Montana Veterinary Medicine Program based in Bozeman, Montana. Steve attended veterinary school at UC Davis and did a pathology residency at Oklahoma State. He has had the privilege and opportunity to be involved with veterinary medicine in various capacities with both CVM and other organizations in Ecuador, Thailand, Nepal, Mongolia, and Bhutan. Steve loves to teach, especially the opportunity to share spiritual truth in conjunction with veterinary knowledge, and lives on a small hobby farm with his wife and three children.

Daniel Graham, DVM, MA, PgCert

Dr. Graham graduated from Oregon State University's veterinary school in 2009, worked in small animal practice, and then moved with his wife, Rachel, to Soroti, Uganda in 2012 where they served for 9 years. Daniel's work was in the areas of community development, discipleship, and ministry training. Daniel and Rachel have one son, Nathan. Along the way, Daniel also completed a Postgraduate Certificate in International Animal Health and a Masters in Global Leadership. He currently serves as CVM's Assistant Director of Missions to strategize our missions engagement around the world and support the mobilization of new cross-cultural workers.

Session III

Jordan Murray, DVM

Dr. Jordan Murray is a 2015 Washington State grad (Go Cougs!) who spent her first 5 years in mixed animal practice. She and her husband Dillon then moved to Mississippi when he joined the Navy and lived there for 2 years where they had their first daughter, Shiloh. They were happy to move back home to Washington state when his contract was up, and they welcomed their son, named Shepherd, into their family. Dr. Jordan enjoys spending time with her family, reading, traveling, and riding horses.

Fred Van Gorkom, DVM

God blessed Fred and Vicki with 25 years of veterinary development, church planting and mission leadership in Ethiopia. Now with wider focus, Fred is part of a team to mobilize, train, send and mentor long- and short-term veterinary missionaries, especially in Africa. He loves to share what God is doing and to challenge people to pray, go or partner in the Great Commission.

Session IV

Steve Hiett, DVM

Dr. Steven Hiett and his wife Dr. Kim Stender are both 1991 graduates of Washington State University. Their journey together and as veterinarians (with two kids along the way) have taken them through mixed practices in Oregon and California, two terms as overseas fieldworkers with CVM, and currently as owners of a small animal practice in Lebanon, Oregon. It has and continues to be an exciting adventure of faith asking how we can serve Jesus each day regardless of where we find ourselves. While there is enjoyment in attending continuing education meetings learning how to be a better veterinarian, Steve loves Real Life Real Impact retreats where he can meet with others to learn and share how to do life, as a veterinarian, better. Email: emailstevenhiett@gmail.com

Blair de Vries, DVM

Blair completed her undergraduate and professional degrees at Washington State University. Her career has evolved from small animal medicine (private practice and relief) to large animal work on the dairies she owns and operates with her husband. In addition to farming, Dr. de Vries recently served as project veterinarian in the WSDA Animal Health Program, producing a report assessing companion animal welfare issues in Washington State. Dr. de Vries is the past president and former board director of the Washington State Veterinary Medical Association (2020-2023), where she currently serves as a co-facilitator of the WSVMA Power of Ten Leadership Program for early career veterinarians. Outside work, she is passionate about volunteering, outdoor recreation, reading, and exploring other cultures through language, travel, and food. She is grateful to the Lord for His unconditional love and for sharing this life with her spouse, children, and her two herding dogs.

Session V

Allison Hale, DVM

Dr. Allison Hale, a Montana native, earned a Bachelor of Science in Animal Science from the University of Idaho then graduated from Washington State University College of Veterinary Medicine through the cooperative WIMU program. She has practiced mixed animal medicine in southern Idaho since 2020, involved in regional and state organized veterinary medicine as the Magic Valley Veterinary Medical Association President and Idaho Veterinary Medical Association associate board member. She runs a Christian Veterinary Fellowship group for veterinary technician students through the College of Southern Idaho, and enjoys mentoring students. Outside of veterinary medicine, Dr. Hale enjoys exploring Idaho's outdoors via foot, ski, bike, or kayak, as well as traveling to new countries and trying delicious food.

Jill DeSau, DVM

Jill DeSau is a small animal relief veterinarian in the Portland area and has lived in Oregon most of her life. She loves hiking and camping with her husband Greg, has two adult step-children and a beautiful granddaughter named Isabella. They are members of a church in Sherwood and Jill considers her ministry field to be at work with her clients and co-workers. She has served with CVM in through RLRI's and in short-term missions. E-mail: jilldesau@gmail.com

Evening Challenge

Annabelle Zastrow, DVM

Annabelle Zastrow and her husband Shannon have lived in Everett WA since she graduated from the University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine in 2000. Their sons Tyler, 23, and Reed 19, have fled the nest, but always mamma's boys! Dr. Zastrow worked in a 24 hour general medicine and emergency practice for over 20 years until the Lord guided her to start working as a relief vet. Since starting Zastrow Veterinary Relief, she has been busier than ever, enjoying being of service at over 20 hospitals in Snohomish and King Counties. Dr. Zastrow gave her life to Jesus over 20 years ago and she and her family attended New Life Church in Everett for 23 years. She has been a member of CVM since 2017, and enjoys teaching at RLRI and attending CVM conferences (they're the best!). Her gratitude for new life after battling breast cancer (twice!) energizes her daily to share the love and goodness of Christ in her current mission field, from the surgery suite to the exam rooms. She is endlessly thankful to Shannon for surrounding her with the Word of God during dark times. Now over a year cancer free, she sees the privilege of practicing veterinary medicine as an amazing gift, never to be taken lightly or used for personal gain. Rather, for us Christians, called to a higher purpose, it should be used deliberately to humbly serve people in need of our skills. Email: doggiedoc2@me.com

Sunday

January 18

Worship with our Host Church

