



CALVIN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

2020

approved candidates



Name: Ram S. Aryal

Place of birth: Kathmandu, Nepal

Colleges & Seminaries Attended:

University of North Alabama
B.S., Biology, 2006

University of Saint Joseph
M.S., Biology, 2009

Birmingham Th. Seminary
M.A., Pastoral Leadership, 2013

Calvin Th. Seminary
M. Div., 2017

Internships:

Redeemer PCA, Florence, AL
Aug 2011 - Oct 2012

Thornapple Covenant Church
Sept 2013 - Sept 2015

Thornapple Evangelical
Covenant Church
Grand Rapids, MI
Nepali-speaking Community
Ministry
Minister, Part-time
Oct 2015 - Oct 2016
Minister, Full - time
Nov 2016 - July 2018

Hanley CRC, Grandville, MI
Ministry to Nepali-speaking
Community
Aug 2018 - Current

Languages spoken:

English, Hindi (Indian),
and Nepali

Contact:

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Faith Journey

I was introduced to the gospel message by my hall director in Jacksonville State University, my undergraduate school dorm room in Alabama when I was a freshman. After several weeks of Bible studies, I began to realize that the movie I had watched but was not able to understand as a high school student in Nepal was about Jesus. I was asked if I would like to receive Jesus in faith. I said, "Yes." Then, my Bible Study teacher led me to Christ, gave me a Bible to study, and asked me to join his church. Within a month I received water baptism and made public confession of my faith in front of a Church congregation. Thanks be to God. This happened in October 7, 1997.

During graduate school in 2008, I connected with a Nepali Church planter in Boston. He shared the need for reaching out to the Nepali community people there. Commuting a two-hour drive weekly from Hartford, CT, was worth it for me to see many people coming for the Bible Study and worship in a house church setting. I sensed my call to serve Christ by obeying him wholeheartedly. This call was also confirmed through my wife for me to join Birmingham Theological Seminary (BTS) in Alabama in 2009. Then, I served as a visiting student pastor at Restoration Ranch in North Alabama from July. 2010 until Aug. 2013. The people I served were going through rehab. They came out of drugs, alcohol, and broken families.

In May 2013, I graduated from BTS. An opportunity came open to serve the Nepali-Speaking Community at Thornapple Covenant Church in Grand Rapids as a ministerial intern/staff member. There, I served as a minister of Nepali-speaking Community until the end of July, 2018. I planned and oversaw the weekly Sunday morning worship service, preached/taught, fostered a welcoming environment to both Christians and non-Christians, and equipped and discipled believers from the Nepali Community. I met regularly with pastors, mentors and supervisors. At Calvin Seminary I served as a chapel planning team member for two years. In 2017, I earned my M.Div. from Calvin Theological Seminary.

I have been leading 30-35 Nepali-speaking people for the last seven months. We meet at Hanley Christian Reformed Church for Sunday afternoon worship service in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Community people from both Hindu and Buddhist backgrounds join our small group fellowship.

I am dedicated and diligent student of the Word, with a passion for excellence in preaching. As a servant of Christ, I am committed to serve the marginalized and struggling as well as all other families. I am committed to learning about how faith families are doing. Some of my friends share that the word "stranger" is not in my vocabulary. I treat each person I meet with dignity, genuine concern and interest. I often like to remind people that they are precious in the sight of Christ and that he deeply cares for them. I enjoy spending time with my family.

I hope to pastor a church, a congregation that would like to promote diversity and unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ. I hope to work with pastors, evangelists, and disciple makers of Christ in that community to connect with the unreached English-speaking people and people

Faith Journey (continued)

from other ethnicities. I believe that making disciples, sharing our lives with them and empowering them to help others gain the knowledge of Christ by creating a nurturing spiritual environment could enhance the discipleship process and make us better citizens of the Kingdom.

Jesus Christ is God's Son, Savior and Redeemer of the world. Jesus seeks to save the lost. I have been saved through faith. Jesus is my Lord. This is God's gift for me. "I am not my own, I belong to Christ...my faithful Savior Jesus Christ." I have been forgiven, redeemed and adopted into the family of God in Christ Jesus. I have a commitment to live my faith by sharing the Good News to the unreached, shepherding God's people entrusted to me and to continue lifting up Christ through Worship, Word, Sacraments, fellowship, discipleship, evangelism and prayers.

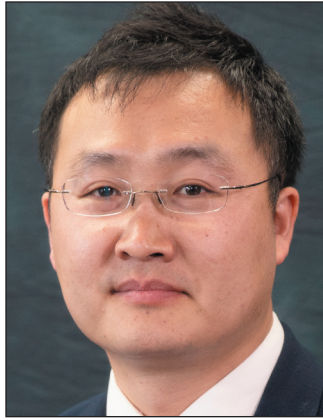
God is love. The Lord Jesus Christ is full of grace and truth. Christ loved us unconditionally and laid down his life for us on the Cross. He called us to love one another. Therefore, we must love each other. I believe that God is calling us to extend His grace and mercy to all who are unknown to the Lord Jesus Christ and do not have relationship with Him.

Ram S. Aryal

Statement of Reason

I am seeking Candidacy and ordination of Word and Sacraments through the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA) for three reasons: First, to feel free to lift up our Triune God by preaching the Word of God, by worshipping God in Spirit and in Truth, by making disciples of Christ, and for building relationships among English-speaking believers through fellowship without regard to race and color, so together with others I may encourage them to continue to grow in their faith with me and to love the Lord our God with all our hearts, souls and minds; and second, to teach and empower believers to spread the Good News of the Gospel among the unreached bilingual Nepali and other people of national/international origin and cultures, speaking many languages; and third, to love the creed, confessions, history, polity, and the cause of Christ for which the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) stands, to support diversity and ecumenism among different denominations because of the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ that the CRC promotes, and to participate in the way Christian Reformed churches and their members support the unreached find and follow our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ram S. Aryal



Name: Namju Bae

Place of birth: Imsil, Jeon-la Buk-do,
Korea

Languages spoken: English, Korean

Education:

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
EPMC, 2020

Midwestern Baptist
Theological Seminary
Kansas City, MO
Ph.D. (Old Testament),
expected May 2024

Internships:

Yebon Korean CRC
Wheeling, IL
September 2006 - Current

Contact:

337-292-9085
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Faith Journey

Whenever I think about the grace that God has given me, I cannot help but thank God for taking care of and leading my whole life. The opportunity that allowed my family to encounter God came about through my older brother's battle with a mysterious disease when he was young. Through various methods, my parents tried to heal my older brother's disease, but no one could help him nor could figure out the cause. During this time, someone recommended that my mother goes to church with my older brother. It was at this time that my mother started going to church with my siblings and me every Sunday. At some point, my older brother was miraculously healed with the grace of God. God called our family to salvation as a result of this incident. After my brother's healing, however, my family stopped going to church except for my mother because my family including me believed that my brother was naturally healed, not by God's grace. For a long time, I completely forgot the presence of God and lived as I wanted.

Until meeting God again, I wasted my whole adolescent period, mostly hanging out with my friends. At that time, there were many friends near me but I always felt alone, and nothing satisfied me. I decided to change my bad behavior several times, but my efforts were useless. While I was regretting my behavior countless times, my high school life passed in the twinkle of an eye and finally the time to go to university approached me. Even though I received admissions from some schools, instead of going to a university, I knew I needed to have some time to reflect on my thoughts and to thoroughly find my vision and goal. If I attended a university without any resolutions or goals, I knew I would again waste valuable time without purpose. Thus, I was looking for a place where it was quiet, with no people, and where I could live alone. Sometimes, I heard from my mother that prayer centers are typically in remote regions away from the city. Thus, I decided to stay for a year at a prayer center in a remote region, to focus on making a plan for the future and to reflect on myself. While staying there for a year, even though I did not believe in God at that time, I attended worship three times a day with no reason. Attending worship brought me an unexpected result; it led me to know about God, and I could finally find satisfaction in God. Furthermore, I realized the fact that God had led me to the prayer center. Finally, I was able to find my visions and goals by praying and attending worship services.

Namju Bae

Statement of Reason

The reason I am seeking a candidacy at the CRC is that I believe that God called me to serve people through their teachings and approach to the word of God. To be honest, I was originally going to be ordained through a different denomination but along this journey God whispered to me and showed me another possible path, one that follows the CRC.

My primary goal since moving to America from Korea was to focus on my academic studies and to determine the best school form which to achieve my Ph.D. Due to the recent transfers related to my schooling, I found it a challenge to stay in one place for an extended period of time. This brought me a great deal of stress and uncertainty, but because of my steadfast prayers and determination for a better future, God has led me to make the right decision to pursue the CRC with an open heart and mind.

After finding the proper school for my Ph.D. program, I was on a journey to find a year long volunteering position at a local church. Luckily, my dearest friend introduced me to his CRC church and this is also where I call my home away from home. The year I spent there had a profound impact on my decision to pursue the CRC. I truly believe the more time I devote to the CRC, the more I see miracles from God. My path is clear and bright and I am grateful for the opportunities from which I have been granted over the past year. Being able to serve God as a Minister of Word at the CRC would solidify my purpose in life.

Namju Bae



Name: Maria Beversluis

Place of birth: Grand Rapids, MI

Education:

Calvin College
Grand Rapids, MI
B.A., English, 2006

Regent College
Vancouver, BC
M.Div., 2011

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
EPMC, 2012

Internships:

Clinical Pastoral Education
St. Paul's Hospital
Vancouver, BC
May - July 2008

Contact:

616-238-3749
mariabeverluis@gmail.com

Faith Journey

My love for Christ and for the church began at a young age. At my home church, Church of the Servant in Grand Rapids, MI I grew to love participating in the liturgies and worship of the church. The Children in Worship program that I was raised in welcomed me into the stories of the Bible—and helped me to know that the God of these stories is real, and I am part of the story too. My faith is built on a solid biblical foundation.

Music was a big part of my childhood and adolescence, and through choirs especially I got my first real taste of being part of a community, contributing my voice to making something beautiful and bigger than myself, and I consider this good practice for being part of the church. So much of the music in the choral tradition is sacred music, and that shaped my faith into something that is connected to the broad and diverse church, through time and across many cultures and languages.

I did my seminary training at Regent College in Vancouver, BC, Canada. While I was there lots of questions were answered, and of course, lots more questions were raised. I studied with students from around the globe, and from a broad range of Christian traditions. My faith embraces mystery; if God exists (I believe God exists!) then God is bigger than we can ever know, and the church, too, is bigger and broader than our own congregation or denomination.

Some of my most formative experiences of faith have been in community and connected to the land. Through L'Abri and A Rocha I have been given a taste of the richness of Christian community—a foretaste of the kingdom! Those experiences have also prompted me to work so that other people can know the life-giving hospitality of community. My faith is rooted in community and the goodness of God's creation.

During my hospital chaplaincy internship in Vancouver I was formed as a pastoral caregiver. I witnessed the struggle of life and death as physical limitations and illness meet with spiritual and emotional struggle. My faith takes seriously the fact that we are embodied beings, whose souls cannot be separated from our physical selves.

I am a mother to 3 children, and being a parent has given me so much life, so much courage to live in pursuit of righteousness, and so much joy. I take the joy that I find with my children and through that I understand that God—Father, Son, Spirit—likewise takes joy in us. My faith is in a personal God who delighted to create us, to know us, to forgive us! And God invites us—me!—into relationship, where we are loved and forgiven.

Maria Beversluis

Statement of Reason

I love Jesus, and I desire to serve the church as a Minister of the Word. I love the Creator, I love the creation, and I want to invite the people of God to continually get more acquainted with the Life and the Word that God offers. The Christian Reformed Church has always been my church home, and I seek to be eligible for ordination in this church in order to serve the church body that I know and love.

Maria Beversluis



Name: David Bouma

Place of birth: Agana, Guam

Education:

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
M.Div., May 2019

Internships:

Hahn-In CRC
Grand Rapids, MI
June 2017 - July 2017

Hanford CRC
Hanford, CA
June 2018 - August 2018

Contact:

847-542-0367
dtb097@calvinseminary.edu

Faith Journey

I grew up in a family where God was known and loved. My father was a Navy chaplain, previously having served a CRC congregation in South Haven, Michigan, and my mother a psychiatric nurse who pursued her passion to provide care to those struggling with mental illness. Together they raised my older brother, my younger sister, and me, loving us and teaching us what it was to follow Christ. However, my faith had not been tried and tested. For a good part of my life, my faith was passive. I just assumed that God was there and that he was at work.

I was a good student, and I had a particular passion for the sciences. I loved learning about how life worked in biology in particular, and decided to make that my major. I recall wanting to be involved in animal behavior, to study the way that God's creatures interacted and lived their lives. During college, my faith was reformed into something new, something much stronger and more alive than it had been before. My sophomore year I began to feel God's call as I was able to serve as a sort of counselor/companion for other young men on my floor. I found great joy in the deep conversations, and the chance to bear with people in their struggle.

So as I approached the end of college, I began to consider the possibility that God was calling me to go to seminary. I had begun taking Greek and found reading through the Gospel of Mark in Greek to be a wonderful experience. This, alongside the encouragement of family, friends, and mentors, led me to God's call for me to enter into formal pastoral ministry.

I was unsure where exactly in the ministry I was being led. I found great enjoyment in working with Greek and helping students to learn more of the language when I was a teaching assistant for the class. At the same time, I began to feel pulled towards chaplaincy, the chance to walk with people in the midst of difficult circumstances. As my final year approached, I felt more and more called towards chaplaincy. In order to pursue that leading in my life, I applied to a CPE residency, which is where I have been for the last six months.

While here, I have felt affirmed in my call to hospital chaplaincy. I am blessed with the chance to walk alongside of patient, particularly those who are dealing with cancer as my home unit is oncology. Beyond that, I get to be God's hands and feet throughout the hospital, sharing him and his love with the patients that I encounter. I feel God's call to serve him and his people in the hospital.

David Bouma

Statement of Reason

I am seeking ordination in the CRC as I have felt God's call on my life, both from within and from those that love me and know me best. God has been faithful in the times of greatest struggle and pain in my life, and I believe that often we feel God's presence through the love of those around us. As a hospital chaplain, I hope to share God's presence with those who are faced with the reality that life is fragile and impermanent. I believe that the reformed tradition offers much to those who struggle and long to feel God's presence. Our theology is reliant on a good God who loves us and cares for us, one who steps into a broken world and joins with us in our walk. This is the kind of God I serve, and the one that I wish to show to others.

David Bouma



Name: Richard Britton III

Place of birth: Rockford, IL

Education:

University of Wisconsin-Madison
Madison, WI
B.A. in History, December 2015

Calvin Theological Seminary,
Grand Rapids, MI
M.Div., May 2020

Internships:

Trinity CRC
Grandville, MI
September 2016 - May 2019

First CRC
Hanford, CA
May 2019 - August 2019

Cascade Fellowship CRC
Grand Rapids, MI
September 2019 - present

Contact:

847-594-2721
rabi061@calvinseminary.edu

Faith Journey

I was baptized by my father at Forrester Grove PCA on September 18, 1994. My parents instilled in me a love for God's word and prayed with me daily. In 2002 we moved to Brookfield, WI and joined Brookfield Christian Reformed Church (BCRC). My parents, pastor, and Christian teachers instructed me in the truth of God's Word, taught me to pray, trained me in Christ's way, and taught me to trust God through all circumstances.

I embraced my faith in high school, even when it began to be challenged. A few of my friends were staunch atheists and regularly challenged the Christian faith. God guided me through many tough yet fruitful conversations in which I articulated my faith and gave reasons for my hope in Christ. I continued to grow in my faith as I participated in BCRC's high school youth group.

During University I began attending Cru (Campus Crusade for Christ) meetings and Bible studies and was impressed by how many of my peers were intentionally and passionately studying the Bible and sharing their faith on campus. The fruit of their faith was visible. They were authentically on fire for God, and I wanted that enthusiasm. I began doing in depth Bible study on my own and developing deep Christian friendships.

I spent the summer after my sophomore year living missionally. I moved to Seaside Park, New Jersey with 25 other college students. We integrated ourselves into the community by getting jobs and partnering with a local church to reflect the light of Christ to the area. We spent many nights on the tourist-packed boardwalk asking people about their spiritual beliefs and if we could share our faith with them. We saw God bring many people to faith in Christ through our presence in the community. Throughout the summer, I saw how God could use me to witness to His Kingdom. During this time, I started thinking seriously about full-time ministry.

When I returned to the UW-Madison campus, I became more involved at Geneva Campus Church, a CRC in the heart of campus. Pastor Michael Winnowski disciplined me and guided me towards a seminary education and ministerial vocation.

I've been a student at Calvin Theological Seminary for four years. Throughout that time God has grown my faith and confirmed my calling to ordained ministry. I have a lot of faculty, mentors, and fellow students to thank for helping me become the person I am today. The Holy Spirit is still sanctifying me, showing me the depths of my sin and God's immense grace. The Holy Spirit continually helps me live into my identity as a new creation in Christ. I live for Christ, not for myself. I belong to him body and soul. I look forward to seeing where He takes me in the future and how He uses my God-given gifts to edify the Church.

Richard Britton

Statement of Reason

I am seeking ordination as a Minister of the Word in the CRCNA in response to God's calling to faithfully preach the gospel and use my God-given gifts to help equip God's people for the difficult journey of living out their faith in Christ. In this work, I submit to the infallible Word of God as authoritative for all aspects of life, and the Ecumenical Creeds and Three Forms of Unity as a true interpretation of God's Word. I pray that the Spirit of Truth will conform us to the image of Christ and help us lead others to Christ. May God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven, come, Lord Jesus, come.

Richard Britton



Name: Andrea Bult

Place of birth: O'Leary, Prince
Edward Island, Canada

Languages spoken: English, Dutch

Education:

Dordt College
Sioux Center, IA
B.Ed Secondary Education:
English and Exercise Science,
May 2002

Calvin College
Grand Rapids, MI
Masters of Education:
School Leadership, January 2009

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
M.Div., May 2020

Internships:

Baruch Senior Ministries
Grand Rapids, MI
Feb 2014 - August 2014

Madison Square CRC
Grand Rapids, MI
September 2014 - May 2016

Contact:

616-516-6879
acb016@calvinseminary.edu

Faith Journey

The beginning of my faith journey can be summed up in the words of Paul to Timothy, "I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also." (2 Timothy 1:5). This is so true of my own life, for God has given me a heritage of those who fear His name (Psalm 65).

I was born into difficult circumstances and after three months in foster care, I was adopted by my parents who are Dutch immigrants. We spoke Dutch in our home and our lives orbited around the center of gravity that was Christ and His church. All of my childhood memories have to do with either farming or faith formation. We read the Bible after every meal, we attended Church twice every Sunday because it was a privilege, we were involved in the life of the church throughout the week, and social evenings with my parent's friends often included group-singing from our own set of hymnals. Throughout my childhood, my mother brought me along on all of her visits (which I would now call pastoral care visits) to nursing homes, shut-ins, mothers with new babies, and those recovering from illness or injury. The faith that lived so sincerely in my parents, I hope others are persuaded, now lives in me also.

While I went to a public school growing up, I sat under loving teachers in Sunday School, Calvinettes, Teen Club, Catechism, and youth group. I also participated in S.W.I.M (formerly the Summer Workshop in Ministries program). While I did not have a dramatic conversion moment within these experiences, they were like our daily family meals: no culinary masterpieces but the healthy and consistent sustenance I needed, day-to-day-over a long period of time in order to grow in my faith. I was spiritually well fed in my home and church community. When people would ask me if I had been born again, I could joyfully point to my baptism and God's promises that before I was even aware of it, I had been buried with Christ and had risen to a new life with Him.

When I was a teacher in two different high school settings, I was involved in weekly chapel-planning. This sparked something in me. I loved the work of planning worship and preparing gospel messages. I continued to grow in faith and understanding as I worshipped at my church and I can still remember a sermon on Genesis 15 that was such a powerful encounter with Christ for me that it both affirmed God's Covenant promises to me and it reaffirmed my baptismal identity of having died with Christ and risen with Him to new life lived in the Spirit. During a time of staying home with my young children, I began preaching as a lay-person under the leadership of my mentors.

As I began to dig deeper into systematic theology and the doctrines of the church, I fell even more deeply in love with God and His Word. Some people say, "We just need Jesus, not theology." But if someone asks, "Who is Jesus?" Everything you say after that is theology. This is where God is using my teaching background. Sometimes when I think about the beauty and the incomprehensibility of the incarnation or the cross or the resurrection... it is simply overwhelming. God's plan of salvation and His grace for all who believe is such good news for a weary world and I realized that communicating the message of God's kindness which leads to repentance was a call on my life. God had been tending to the seed

Faith Journey (continued)

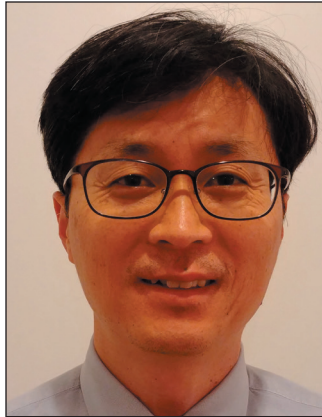
of that call graciously and carefully my entire life, watering it and using others to help it grow. Now I also want to be one who tends to the seeds of faith in people's lives.

Andrea Bult

Statement of Reason

I am seeking candidacy because I sense God's invitation to labor in His harvest fields and that inner call has been affirmed through the outer call of different communities that I have served. I am so grateful for the faith formation I received in my life from the Church, and I want to join in that work of faith formation for the Church. I also hope to do that work in a body that communicates the Gospel with a Reformed accent. I believe the church is the people of God, the body of Christ, and the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. Through the preaching of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments, we are continually strengthened and encouraged as members of that body to fulfill our communal calling of worship, community, and mission.

Andrea Bult



Name: Jaebok Choi

Place of birth: Busan, South Korea

Languages spoken: English, Korean

Education:

Kyungpook National Univ.
Daegu, South Korea
B.S., 1996

Univ. of Nebraska at Omaha
Omaha, NE
M.A. in Biology, 2001

Baylor College of Medicine
Houston, TX
PhD, Biochemistry and
Molecular Biology, 2006

Washington University in St.
Louis, School of Medicine
St. Louis, MO
postdoctoral training, 2006-2009

Calvin Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
M.Div, May 2020

Internships:

Cross-Cultural Internship
National Association of Inter-
Cultural Family Mission
Robertsville, MO
June 2018 - Aug 2018

Pastoral Ministry Internship
Onnuri Presbyterian Church
Maryland Heights, MO
Dec 2017 - Jan 2019

Contact:

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Faith Journey

I understand that God is purposeful and has an intended mission as he established covenants with Noah and Abraham with purpose. Thus, I believe He has led me to theological education at Calvin Theological Seminary (CTS) with a purpose. I know that this training at CTS is part of God's plan even though I do not fully understand the reason, which remains to be discovered. It was around 33 years ago (when I was a middle school student) when I felt God's calling to major in biology. After receiving my PhD in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, I trained as a postdoctoral research associate and worked as Instructor in Transplant Immunology at Washington University in St. Louis, School of Medicine. Since then, I have been working as Assistant Professor in the same school. Therefore, my current interest other than ministry is in biomedical sciences.

Throughout my life, I had always thought that if I had a chance, I would have studied theology. When I was a sophomore in college, I joined the Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship (IVF). It was a great privilege for me to learn and practice an exegetical method called 'inductive bible study'. Since then, I have been reading and studying the Bible with this method over the past 26 years. After graduation, I worked at the Wycliffe Bible Translators (High Wycombe, England) as a volunteer for six months (not as a translator but as a physical worker to help missionaries) (July 1996 – Jan. 1997). I served as a teacher for the adult bible school at the Korean Presbyterian Church of St. Louis for 2.5 years (2007-2009). I gave lectures on "the Cross of Christ" written by John Stott for four semesters and on "Inductive Bible Study" for one semester. In addition, in the same church, I served AWANA clubs as Commander for two years (2011-2013). All of these experiences led me to consider my spiritual gifts and role for ministry and gave me an eagerness to study theology. In addition, several pastors that I have personal relationships with and friends of mine have advised me to study theology. They saw me gifted in teaching the Bible. I finally got the chance in 2013 and joined the CTS. While I have been studying, I could understand better who I am and my own experiences of the fall. Since my scientific work requires me to focus on objective data, I looked down and tried to avoid feelings over the past many years. The Holy Spirit made me realize that true humanity is not all about data but embraces feelings. I learned how important it is to be sensitive to others' feelings and to help to heal their wounds. Grief is a painful lifelong human experience and every single person on earth suffers from loss and has grief. It can be from loss of relationships, role, function, or death. Each person suffers from a unique situation. Thus, everyone needs the Gospel to bring to bear the presence of God on the unique situation and recover from his/her own personalized and internalized experiences of the fall in partnership with the Holy Spirit.

Over the past years, I have kept praying to discern if I am called to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament. I believe I am since there is a church (Onnuri Presbyterian Church at Trinity CRC in St. Louis, MO) that is calling me to serve as an ordained pastor. Nonetheless, I still need to discern what to do after graduation and ordination. My initial plan when I started studying at CTS was to work as a full-time professor at Washington University School of Medicine and preach as a part-time

Faith Journey (continued)

minister. I thought I could do both. For the past 7 years, however, I have realized that I am not full of energy anymore. I am getting old and maybe too old to do both – maybe I am called to do both as a part-time scientist and pastor or only one of these two full-time positions. At any rate, I am grateful that God guided me to study both science and theology. I feel I become closer to a human, a more restored human, a little closer to true humanity. Although “I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord” (Phil. 3:8), through science, I have become more objective and developed logical thinking and reasoning, which are necessary and helpful for biblical exegesis. And by the grace of God, I am what I am (1 Cor. 15:10).

Jaebok Choi

Statement of Reason

I am seeking ordination in Christian Reformed Church that I may make known the mystery of the Gospel (Eph. 6:19). Teaching/preaching what God has done for us, who God is and who we are is one of the greatest and most glorious works for human beings to be invited to do by God. This Ministry of Word and Sacrament liberates people trapped by sin. I realize that I have a passion for this liberating work and am eager to be faithful to God’s Word and the Ministry of Word and Sacrament. I understand that not many people around me have this passion, eagerness, and seriousness to be faithful for teaching God’s Word and Gospel.

Jaebok Choi



Name: Yoon Chul Choi (Daniel)

Spouse: Ji Yon Hong

Age: 46

Place of Birth: Seoul,
Republic of Korea
Canadian Citizen

College Attended:
International Theological
Baptist Seminary
Buenos Aires, Argentina
Licentiate in Theology, 1996

Seminaries Attended:
Calvin Theological Seminary
M.Div., 2013

Internships:
Health Intervention Service,
Grand Rapids, MI
Summer 2011

Hahn-In CRC,
Grand Rapids, MI
September 2011 — January
2012

Languages: Korean, Spanish,
and English

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Faith Journey

Being born and raised in a faithful Christian family is a providential blessing that the Lord planned to build my Christian faith.

Learning how to be in the presence of God was what formed me during my adolescence. However, it was in my teens when I perceived and felt the love for pastoral ministry. It happened when I was in junior high school; I have a memory of preaching the Gospel to myself in front of the mirror in my tiny restroom. I enjoyed this so much that I often went to preach alone, in preparation for my calling. Almost every time I did this, I felt profoundly passionate about bringing people back to Jesus for salvation through the ministry.

The Lord invited me to enter into communion with him through his Word. My faith was solidified in Scripture through personal devotions which led me to dive into the presence of the Lord. Studying the Gospel of John, I came to understand that God is the One who created me, and that the ultimate goal of my life is to glorify Him, and one day I will live in his presence forever. This marked the direction of the view of my life.

The love to serve the Lord, Jesus Christ, and his church and the plan of God inviting me through the ministry was confirmed when two pastors suggested to me to get theological preparation which led me to take undergraduate studies as a Theology major. However, not all of my faith journey was well paved; rather a stormy time was waiting for me to reflect and discern what I would do in my life. After finishing my undergraduate degree, I moved to Canada with my lovely wife to pursue an extra step of preparation of study in the Master of Divinity Program at Regent College in Vancouver. We never could foresee the oncoming financial difficulty. My supporters had financial problem and they could no longer support us. We decided to jump from the school into the world. We worked hard, but saving enough to resume the study seemed illusory. The farther we went from the call to ministry; the more we felt the force that was pulling us back.

Visiting Weaver Creek Hatchery in BC and observing thousands of salmon swimming against the current and jumping over many the obstacles was a deeply impressive experience. Some salmon accidentally swam to the wrong place, where they faced death or being eaten alive by seagulls or other animals. Even though the salmon went forward in only one direction to lay their eggs, the direction was always up the river, to create new life. The image of the salmon after achieving this life goal was nothing beautiful. All of them had wounded mouths, cut fins, and torn tails, but for this reason each one of them deserved respect because they had poured out everything they had into being what they were born to be. It helped us to reflect deeply on the journey of our call to pastoral ministry that we had deep in our hearts. After praying to God for guidance, and with full conviction, we decided to proceed to Calvin Theological Seminary to continue our preparation for the call to ministry. The study time at Calvin was the hardest study time in my life. However, joy and thanksgiving flowed continuously in my heart. The Lord was faithful in renewing the hope that we had lost.

My goal is to use the gift and the preparation that I received to serve the people, the church, the body of Christ, so that they can live an abundant

Faith Journey (continued)

life in a relationship with God and with others, and consequently they can grow healthy and maturely in the knowledge and in faith of God.

Yoon Chul Choi (Daniel)

Statement of Reason

Since the early stage of my life, I felt love for the church. Throughout my faith journey He confirmed his calling to be and walk together with his loved church. I believe God has called me to serve His church through ordained ministry and as a step to follow this call I am pursuing candidacy in the Christian Reformed Church because I believe that the reformed doctrines represent the Scripture best. In my journey in Christian Reformed Church, I have found confidence as a place to serve, to love, and to grow together in the truth of Word of God and in his immeasurable grace and love of God.

Yoon Chul Choi (Daniel)



Name: Erik deLange

Place of birth: Grand Rapids, MI

Education:

Regent College
Vancouver, BC
M.A., May 2019

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
M.Div., expected Dec 2020

Internships:

Blythefield CRC
Rockford, MI
Sept 2018 - May 2020

Contact:

778-791-4788
ed022@calvinseminary.edu

Faith Journey

I was raised Christian Reformed and grew up going to church twice on Sundays and sometimes as much as 5 times in a Holiday weekend such as New Years or Easter. I was helpfully pointed to scripture throughout my growing years whenever a question came up and was disciplined in the Heidelberg Catechism every Tuesday evening of the school year. These Reformed values were helpful guideposts on my journey of faith, but never quite met the deep longing of my heart.

In undergrad I studied Theatre and Acting for a number of years, eventually finding deep meaning in the expansive world of Philosophy. I eventually followed my seeking heart and mind to a Masters of Arts degree at Regent College where I was able to bring together my love of acting and thinking by taking several courses in the “Christianity & The Arts” program, even writing, acting in, and directing several short films along the way.

The most powerful moment for me of my faith journey was in a Skype call with my mom on Christmas after my first semester at Regent, debating with her about the doctrine of Limited Atonement. In the course of the conversation, God touched my heart and assured me that I belonged to him in a covenant that was as deeply personal and intimate as a marriage. From that point on, God has recontextualized my faith journey from one of deep longing, marked by skepticism and bitterness, to one of an ever-deepening satisfaction in Him, a loving faith seeking greater understanding.

Throughout my degree at Regent, I worked part time in the Inner City of Vancouver where I made many dear friends across many ethnic, socio-economic, and ecumenical lines that continue to minister to fan the flames of that ever-deeper growth and joy in the Holy Spirit.

The last semester of my Regent degree, I was working a summer internship as an “Artist in Residence” at a Christian Reformed Church in Coquitlam, BC. At the end of that summer I felt a clarion call from God to continue my journey of faith as a minister in the Christian Reformed Church.

Erik Michael deLange

Statement of Reason

I am seeking ordination in the Christian Reformed Church because through my long and storied ecumenical journey of faith, I have somehow continued to find a church home in the CRC wherever I go. The clarion call from God that I mentioned above has been confirmed by many close friends and family members and was in retrospect such an obvious way to bring together all my various passions: writing, teaching, deep thinking, deep God-centered relationships, and desire for bridge-building across ecumenical and socio-economic lines. I see my commitment to ministry in the Christian Reformed Church as an outworking of God’s covenantal commitment to me and I can’t wait to see what he does next.

Erik Michael deLange



Name: Elisabeth DeVries

Date of Birth: 28

Place of Birth: Pella, Iowa

Name of Spouse: Daniel DeVries

Number of Children: 2

Colleges & Seminaries Attended:

Kuyper College
B.S., 2012

Calvin Theological Seminary
M.Div., 2016

Internships:

LaGrave Avenue CRC,
Grand Rapids, MI
June 2013 to September 2013

Mayfair CRC, Grand Rapids, MI
August 2013 to May 2015

Plymouth Heights CRC,
Grand Rapids, MI
June 2015 to August 2015

Contact:

616-218-7909
eadv048@calvinseminary.edu

Faith Journey

The fundamental beliefs of my Christian faith are accurately summed up in the ecumenical creeds and the Reformed confessions. That is to say, I believe in a triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—who created the cosmos, who has gone about the work of redeeming his creation from all that ails it—most definitively in the person and work of Jesus Christ—and who continues that work through the Holy Spirit’s indwelling of the Church—that is, God’s chosen and holy people. I believe that Jesus will return to earth and make his rule fully known. At that time the dead will be brought back to life and creation will be cleansed from all sin and evil. This, I believe, is the Christian hope—not simply that we get to go to heaven when we die, but that heaven and earth will be joined together when Christ returns and God dwells fully with his creation again. In the meantime, I believe that being a Christian means living an abundant life in the power of the Holy Spirit. The way of life that the Bible sets out is not a repressive set of rules to follow, but rather it gives us the parameters within which we are able to flourish as God’s beloved children.

I believe that the Bible is God’s authoritative word and that it is true in all the things that it intends to teach. There are many things in the Bible that are not crystal clear, but God has made clear those things that are necessary for our salvation and for his glory. However, that means that God, in his infinite wisdom, has also given us room for wonder, curiosity, and awe. In those areas of scripture that are not always clear I believe we should exhibit love and charity towards each other insofar as our respective beliefs exhibit love and charity towards creation or those outside the Christian faith.

I suppose I came to believe these things in large part due to my parents who brought me up to love and serve God (Deut. 6:6-7). In the past there have been times when I regretted that I didn’t have a dramatic conversion story that showcased a big act of God in my life. However, I have come to believe that my story is a testament to God’s “ordinary” grace seen in his covenant faithfulness to his people. I was raised in the reformed tradition and baptized as an infant and so I have come to believe that God set a claim on my life in baptism and that I am able to love him because he loved me first.

As a teen/young adult I experienced big doubts about the existence of God, which were crippling at times. My experience with those doubts has deepened my empathy for those outside the Christian faith. I have seen the importance of living the Christian faith with humility so that the gospel of Christ will not be discredited by what I say or how I live. When I experienced doubts I was only discouraged by the anger and fear that I saw in some strands of Christian belief such that I was dissatisfied with Christianity on both a practical and existential level. After being wooed back to faith by some faithful Christians (and ultimately by God’s grace!) I am most concerned that God’s grace and hope for the future would be shown in my life and in my theology – I am less concerned with propagating the finer points of Calvinism, even if I do happen to believe many of those finer points.

Elisabeth DeVries

Statement of Reason

I am seeking candidacy because I believe God is calling me to minister to his people through the administration of the sacraments and the preaching of his word. Through the sacraments and through preaching I want to see people come into contact with God's grace and God's love. I want to serve by giving people the language they need to articulate the sin and evil in their own hearts and in our world. Once they have done that I want to help people see the great grace and hope that the God offers through Jesus Christ and the indwelling of his Holy Spirit.

Elisabeth DeVries



Name: Brad Diekema

Place of Birth: Grand Rapids, MI

Colleges & Seminaries Attended:

Kuyper College
B.S.

Calvin Theological Seminary
M.Div., 2017

Internships:

New Life, Grand Junction, CO
June 2015 - July 2015

Pleasant Street Christian
Reformed Church,
Whitinsville, MA
June 2016 - August 2016

Contact:

616-570-4771
bsd063@calvinseminary.edu

Faith Journey

Though I grew up in a Christian home, God has used experiences to show me who he is. After I accepted Christ as my Lord and Savior, I had this deep desire to live for God in all I did. I began to see those who were the least of these especially those who were bullied. One day God broke my heart and prompted me to hang out at recess with a female classmate, who was bullied and whom everyone found to be super annoying. I obeyed and found that she was not as annoying as everyone thought. Though we did not become friends nor did I continue to hang with her at recess, I experienced God's heart and love for the outcast and the least of these.

Another experience happened at a Teens encountering Christ (TEC) weekend. I entered into the church where TEC was being held with a skeptical heart. What would I get out of TEC. Over the course of the weekend God worked on my skeptical heart. I remember my small group leaders begging and pleading with us to open up assuring us that it was safe. Inside I smirk at their efforts. I reasoned that opening up would be a bad idea. Then on the last day, after reading a letter from my parents praising me how proud they were of the young godly man I was becoming, I broke. I confessed to people who I had only known for forty-eight hours about the deep hypocrisy I was living. That weekend, I deeply experienced God's grace and forgiveness.

I believe that God uses experiences to guide and lead his people. God used my friend Mike to lead me into ministry. One morning, while sipping his coffee and I my hot chocolate, Mike asked me, "Brad, do you know want to know what you are going to be when you grow up?" I shrugged my shoulder and said, "Sure." Mike responded, "You are going to be a youth pastor." I just laughed. Up to that point my career plan was to become a marine biologist. But as I got involved in being a student leader in youth group, the more the idea of vocational ministry appealed to me.

Then one day in the fall of 2011, after spending a summer questioning my calling into youth ministry, Mike asked me if I had heard about the accelerated M.Div. program that Kuyper College and Calvin Seminary had established. I told him I had. He then said, "I think you need to consider going to seminary." I told him I would think and pray about it. As I prayed about the decision to whether to go to seminary or not, a memory from when I was young came back to me. I recalled writing a note to the pastor asking him if someone else could preach on Sunday night. That someone being me. I realized that this was my earliest thought of pastoral ministry. With the support of my parents, I made the decision to enter into the pre-seminary program at Kuyper College with the intention of going to seminary, earning my M.Div. degree and perusing pastoral ministry in a local church.

As I look back upon my journey, I see God's faithfulness and his guidance in my call to ministry. God used people and experiences to accomplish his will. I know that all the good experiences and even the doubts were part of God's plan to lead me to where I am today. For that I am ever thankful to God. I am excited to see what God has in store for me.

Brad Diekema

Statement of Reason

I grew up in the CRC and want to be a candidate for three reasons. The first reason I am seeking candidacy is that I see a strong desire for unity. I see this in the conversations over tough issues at Synod. I see this in CRC's strides to be a more ecumenical church, which I greatly appreciate because I see this as only increasing the Church's witness to the world. The second reason I am seeking candidacy is because I appreciate and respect how the CRC decides ecclesiastical matters. I appreciate the care that is taken to explore and study issues that are raised. I also appreciate the system that is in place so that local churches and classes have an opportunity provide feedback to Synod. The third reason is that I deeply respect reformed theology and the CRC's particular accent. For all these reasons I see God at work in the CRC and desire to be part of that good and great work.

Brad Diekema



Name: Steven Dykstra

Place of Birth: Ottawa, Ontario

Colleges & Seminaries Attended:
Redeemer University College
B.A., 2007

McMaster Divinity College
M. Div., 2014

Calvin Theological Seminary
EPMC, 2018

Internships:

Inner-City Outreach
Hamilton, Ontario
2010 - 2011

Servant Partners
Bgy. Botocan, Manila,
Philippines
2011

Meeting Place Church
Hamilton, Ontario
2013 - 2014

Meadowlands Fellowship CRC
Program Ministries Director
Ancaster, Ontario
2016 - present

Contact:

905-515-3850
stevedyks@gmail.com

Faith Journey

I have wanted to know and follow God for as long as I can remember. Growing up in a rural, highly religious Christian Reformed Community, my faith expressions and cultural traditions were deeply intertwined. Praying twice a day, reading Scripture at each meal and worshipping with my cousins in church was both a cultural and formative spiritual experience. Within this context, I have never considered myself to be without Christ. I believe that Christ has known me since my birth and claimed me as His own.

As I've striven to follow God's lead in my life, I look back and see three stages of life where my faith was impacted in dramatic ways. Each of these experiences has given me new understanding of God's presence in my life and an overwhelming sense of grace.

While early faith experiences were marked by cultural experience and routine, events like Christian summer camp, and a local youth group provided powerful experiences of the presence of God in my teens. It was at these places I first heard about the Holy Spirit, experienced deep emotional responses to God's love and committed to serving Christ. A central Scripture during this time of my life was Psalm 1, and the affirmation that when one soaks in God's law the way a tree by streams soaks in water, that God's presence and blessing will be with you. I attended 'Facing Your Future' at Calvin Seminary in 2002, and Redeemer University College in 2003 with the intent of becoming a CRC pastor in a local church very much like the one I grew up in.

At Redeemer, I became engaged in a number of urban poor ministries in my twenties. I engaged Kuyperian thought and Christian theology of social justice for the first time. I felt deeply engaged exploring how the Gospels Good News impacts neighbourhoods, communities, families, schools, social systems and policies. Central scriptures in my life at this point included Isaiah 58's and James 1's assertions about justice and worship.

Third, through the more recent transitions into marriage and fatherhood, I re-learned God's heart for me as a Father and rediscovered my identity as His child. In this stage, I clung to passages like John 15 where Jesus reminds us that He is the vine and we are his branches and Matthew 11 where Jesus invites the weary to come to Him. Through this experience and the experience of working in a non-ordained role managing staff and programs in a Christian Reformed Church, I felt a sense of calling to serve the Christian Reformed Church in Reformed ministry.

Steven Dykstra

Statement of Reason

I am applying for candidacy because of God's deep hold in my life. I believe that through the circuitous path of discerning calling and passion, our Sovereign God has brought me to this point. I am passionate about God's word and faith formation. Studying and practicing ministry in my adopted hometown of Hamilton has nurtured a passion in me to explore the unique role that churches play in engaging their communities with the hope and love of Jesus Christ.

Statement of Reason (continued)

Recent (non-ordained) work in a Christian Reformed Church and further studies at Calvin Theological Seminary this past have been vital in confirming my sense of call to ministry in the Christian Reformed Church. Through the sacraments and through preaching I want to see people understand and live into God's Story for their life. I want to preach the grace of Jesus Christ.

Steven Dykstra



Name: Derek Ellens

Place of birth: Hamilton, Ontario

Education:

McMaster University,
Hamilton ON
B.A., Social Sciences, 2016

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids MI
M.Div, 2020

Internships:

Communities First Association
Chicago, IL
July 2016

Dig Program - Calvin Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
July 2016 - Jan. 2019

Fuller Avenue CRC
Grand Rapids, MI
Oct. 2016 - May 2018

Contact:

647-914-5594
ellensdb@gmail.com

Faith Journey

I was born into a family of confessing Christians who embodied Jesus to me in my everyday life. I was also raised by a community of believers through my local church and Christian school. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, using such influences as my parents and church, Jesus has been present in my life for as long as I can remember. While there were moments of rebellion, doubt, and confusion, I have always felt the love of Jesus in my heart. I believe that since birth, Jesus has kept a hold of me and set me apart as His own, symbolized by my baptism.

Even though God's presence and grace is evident throughout my life, there have been some significant road markers on my faith journey in the form of experiences and relationships. The first road marker is an interaction I had with my high school youth leader, Corey. I was trying to present myself as "holy" to Corey but was living an anything but holy lifestyle. He found out through social media and I expected the full weight of shame and accusations to come crashing down on me. When we met, Corey was not angry and didn't cast any shame upon me. He told me that the things I was looking for, my desires, would never be fulfilled if I kept looking in these places. This was my clearest understanding of the Gospel up until that point. I didn't get what I deserved for being a fraud and instead received grace. I was exposed to the truth about the Good Life, life in the Kingdom of Jesus.

A second road marker comes from my time in University. In my second year I became a part of the Christian Reformed Campus Ministry after I had avoided it since I had been in the CRC my entire life. I quickly became close with the CRC Chaplain, Michael, who began to explain to me the beautiful nuance of reformed theology. On a backpacking trip I walked behind him and asked him questions about participating in culture and understanding God's call on our lives. He taught me about the redemption of all creation from Colossians 2, including the things I tended to brush off as 'secular'. He continued to walk with me during the rest of my time at University.

The last road marker is more of a prolonged experience in my first year of Seminary. At this time, I was led by the Spirit to interact head-on with God's love for the poor and oppressed. It began with a reading from Mother Teresa in my class on personal formation through theology. Those truths were then built upon at my "cross cultural internship" at a community development organization in Chicago. It seemed that in everything I did God was showing me His heart for the weak. In my personal devotions, I began to see that in almost every other Psalm God declares His care for the marginalized, such as Psalm 146. My faith was now rounded out as I began to see the mission of Jesus was about more than just a personal relationship, but also about communal restoration. In my other internship I pursued ministries that involved declaring the kingdom of God among those often ignored or avoided due ultimately to socio-economic barriers.

Derek Ellens

Statement of Reason

I am called to serve God through full or part-time ministry in the local church. I believe that becoming a minister of the word is the best way for me to use my gifts to serve in the local church. I feel called to serve in the CRC because I consider it my home. Even though I have considered and tried to go to other denominations, God has shown me that the CRC is just as much His body as any other church. I feel called to minister to all generations but especially the young as the North American local church is experiencing a need for revival among its youth. I humbly submit my life in service for Christ's Kingdom.

Derek Ellens



Name: Derek Elmi-Buursma

Place of birth: Grand Rapids, MI

Education:

Calvin College
Grand Rapids, MI
B.A., May 2014

McCormick Theological
Seminary
Chicago, IL
M.Div., May 2018

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
EPMC, 2020

Internships:

Loop Church (CRC)
Chicago, IL
Sept. 2016 - July 2017

Contact:

616-446-1481
derek.w.buursma@gmail.com

Faith Journey

My faith developed in the small, safe, and insular Christian Reformed community and was early on expressed through bedtime prayers, devotions, and my utmost efforts to be nice to others. I was peppered and padded with memory verses, praise songs, and mission trips that, by high school, I felt like I had all the answers. Being a Christian was easy. But discontentment welled up inside of me. Was Christ's calling intended to be so safe, my faith so simple, and the Christian life so comfortable? Even while I asked questioned and explored doubts, the small, simple mustard seed of my faith planted in me by my parents and church community flourished and bore fruit.

At Calvin College I majored in international development and stumbled upon new modes of service, cross-cultural experiences, and inter-faith dialogue. Summer internships at Degage and Bates Place Ministries offered experiential opportunities for structural analysis and community-based solutions to poverty. After college, my wife and I followed the call of Christ to Accra, Ghana. Equipped with degrees in international development and education I sought to instill compassion and cultivate critical thinking skills in Ghana's future leaders through my teaching. This and other opportunities abroad allowed me to not only explore the vibrancy and diversity of cultures and vocation, but wrestle with a big God who was present all over the world. Such experiences prompted within me vigorous and vibrant reflection on Christ's call to radical love and costly discipleship, on faithfulness in a world reflecting divine inspiration yet, marred by human sin.

McCormick Theological Seminary allowed me to reflect back on my upbringing in the Christian Reformed church, critically explore my social location as a white, able-bodied, cisgender male, and more fully discern my call to serve the church and world. At McCormick I experienced a renewed appreciation for the sacramental life of the Church, the ecumenical breadth of the body of believers, and the costly grace experienced in obedience to Jesus Christ.

An internship at Loop Church in Chicago allowed me to experience and practice what I was learning in the classroom. Loop allowed me to explore how God was equipping and calling me to serve the church through worship and outreach. A summer intensive unit of Clinical Pastoral Education at University of Illinois at Chicago Hospital taught me how to sit with, listen to, and pray for vulnerable people. I experienced holiness and grace in the hospital rooms as strangers shared their struggles, doubts, and faith with me. Looking back on my faith journey, God's faithfulness is evident and Christ's presence is real. From the vantage point of providence, I see and trust that God has prepared and equipped me for a call to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with Jesus Christ.

Derek Elmi-Buursma

Statement of Reason

I am seeking candidacy in the Christian Reformed Church because God has called me to immerse myself in the laboratory of grace called church. Through the preaching of the Word, the administration of the sacraments, and the shared hope of resurrection, we are able to experience the life-giving presence of Jesus Christ in our communities. Encountering Christ in church leads us follow Christ into the world, picking up our crosses and ushering in God's kingdom here on earth as it is in heaven.

Derek Elmi-Buursma



Name: Cary Gephart

Place of birth: Crawfordsville, IN

Education:

Johnson University
Knoxville, TN
B.S., Bible Major, 2012

Mid-America Reformed
Seminary
Dyer, IN

M.Div., expected May 2020

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
EPMC, 2020

Internships:

Cottage Grove CRC
South Holland, IL
September 2016 - Present

Commissioned Pastor
Cottage Grove CRC
South Holland, IL
since August of 2018

Contact:

765-366-2022
carygephart@gmail.com

Faith Journey

I was born and raised in a Christian family in Indiana, but not a Reformed Christian family. My church experience was in the Restoration Movement, a tradition whose doctrinal distinctives are baptismal regeneration and a heavy emphasis on the free choice of man in salvation. Sensing a call into the ministry through the influence of my Youth Pastor, I attended a Restoration Movement Bible College named Johnson University where I studied for my undergrad. It was during these years that I was introduced to my future wife Karese. I then graduated in May 2012 from Johnson University with a Bachelor's in Bible/Media.

Following our marriage in August of 2012, I adopted Karese's sons Peyton and Keagan, and through the mentorship of our local pastor, sought full-time pastorate and was called and ordained in December 2013 as the pastor of a small Christian church in Northwest Indiana. As a pastor I began to feel the heaviness of the office of undershepherd that God had placed me in. I started to think often about how James said not many should be teachers because they would receive a stricter judgment and how Paul instructed Timothy to study to show himself approved, a man who rightly divides the Word of God. During this time of searching the scriptures for greater convictions of truth, we welcomed our daughter, Amarese into the world in March 2015.

Through continued study of the Word, my convictions began to change and eventually led me to the historic Reformed tradition of Christianity. I started to see the sovereignty of God all over the pages of scripture and the Holy Spirit began to confirm the truth of God's Word in my heart. I immediately had a desire to return to seminary and plant my feet more firmly in these deep truths and this Christian tradition. I remember sitting in my office at the church I was pastoring and really struggling to figure out how I could go back to school. As a long shot I googled "reformed seminaries in Indiana" thinking nothing would pop-up. To discover that there was a well respected seminary only an hour from where I was pastoring was a shock. At that moment I had a deep sense of God's blessed providence in my life.

Unfortunately following my acceptance into Mid-America Reformed Seminary I was dismissed as the pastor due to my changed convictions thus affirming my desire to return to seminary and seek a pastoral call in the Reformed faith. By God's providence and through God's grace my family and I were offered a position at Cottage Grove Christian Reformed Church which we gladly accepted. I often say that I am Christian Reformed because Cottage Grove is Christian Reformed. The people here have embraced us, brought us in, nurtured us in our faith, and took us in as their very own. My wife and I made profession of faith at Cottage Grove, all our children have been baptized at Cottage Grove (including our youngest daughter Eleanor Mazzie Gephart born April 18th, 2018), and we have come to embrace the beauty of Reformed worship and the creeds and confessions of the CRCNA. Lord willing, my family and I look forward to serving and glorifying God alongside Cottage Grove Christian Reformed Church for many years to come.

Faith Journey (continued)

As I have planted my feet more firmly in the Reformed tradition, and in the CRCNA more particularly, my prayer is that my love for the deep theology of the 3 Forms of Unity would cause me to love the Christ of scriptures all the more. My prayer is that the great doctrine this tradition has would not be dead, but come alive in my love of God and love of neighbor. My prayer is that the unity of the Creeds and the particulars of the Confession would be drawn together in my desire to bring the Church together in our pursuit of the great commission. May the authority of the Scriptures be held high, the pure gospel be preached, the sacraments bring grace in their administration, the glory go to none but Christ, and may the Church be faithful and true till he comes again to judge the living and the dead. Amen.

Cary Gephart

Statement of Reason

I am seeking candidacy in the Christian Reformed Church because as a follower of Jesus Christ I must be obedient to his calling. I have sensed this call into ministry since my youth and God has affirmed it in many ways along the way. Most recently it has been affirmed when God opened up the opportunity to serve a church belonging to the CRCNA. The council and congregation of this church has over and over again confirmed my inward call by their support and encouragement of the ministry I do among them. My prayer is that I would be able to serve Christ's Church by faithful preaching of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments, as well as pastoral care and counseling, active discipleship, and evangelism to the lost. I wholeheartedly believe in the CRCNA's creeds and confessions and it is my desire in future ministry to communicate the value of these beautiful truths to those who may have taken them for granted. My prayer is that God would use my humble efforts in ministry to bring the grace of Christ to his people until the Lord comes again to judge the living and the dead, and brings us his chosen ones to be with him forever.

Cary Gephart



Name: Benjamin Gresik

Place of Birth: Kingston, Ontario

Colleges & Seminaries Attended:

Queen's University - Bachelors
of Science (GEN in Biology)
B.S., GEN in Biology, 2011

Tyndale Seminary
M.Div., 2016

Calvin Theological Seminary
EPMC, 2018

Internships:

Westport Free Methodist Church
Westport, Ontario
June 2014 - May 2015

Willowdale CRC
North York, Ontario
September 2016 - June 2018

Contact:

613-483-6235
ben.gresik@gmail.com

Faith Journey

I was born to Christian parents in a small independent church. As a child, my parents instructed me in what it meant to believe in Jesus and give our lives to him. I experienced love, affection and an understanding of what it meant to live out life with Christ in all areas of life. At about the age of six I decided I wanted to take on the things they were teaching me and began to make my faith my own. We moved to a local CRCNA congregation a few years after that.

I attended Christian School through elementary and high school age. As I moved through high school, I began to have questions about my faith as I started to understand it more fully. Broadly speaking, these were questions about how I could trust what God was telling me, and how could I respond to what he asked of me. I received answers to many of these questions but was often unsatisfied with what I had received. I continued to search further throughout high school.

As I studied and read my Bible, I began to think about serving in ministry because some adults in my church who I trusted mentioned that I might consider serving in ministry. I entered undergraduate studies in Biology with the idea that I may pursue ordained ministry after school. I thought that if I could encounter these challenging questions and any more I might encounter during my studies, I would be better equipped to help others with those same questions.

It turned out that this was much more challenging than I had anticipated. I struggled in university both with my studies and with my faith. However it came to a point near the end of my undergraduate work where I had a moment of clarity with God. I recognized that if I did not have God then nothing else mattered in my life. God was the one who had conquered death through his son Jesus. God was leading me through those challenging years of my undergrad. God was the only certain thing for me in a very confusing time. So in that time, I decided to commit my life to pursuing ordained ministry in the hopes that I might serve God in that capacity.

As I have completed theological training, I have come to appreciate the fullness of what Jesus does for us. He comes down among us. He lives like us and shares our experiences. He understands what we go through. After all of that he sacrifices himself so that we might not have to fear a life without God anymore and instead are invited with open arms into God's kingdom where we can experience the fullness of what God has created us for.

At the end of this journey, I feel well equipped to serve in ordained ministry and look forward to seeing how God might continue to lead me in the future.

Benjamin Gresik

Statement of Reason

I am seeking candidacy because I have experienced God's call in my life both internally and through others. I feel that my skills in communication and in interpersonal relationships are well suited to ordained ministry. I am seeking candidacy in the CRCNA because it has a rich theological tradition which speaks to the challenges and questions that people have and responds thoughtfully to those challenges without being dismissive.

Benjamin Gresik



Name: Robert Gruessing

Spouse: Sue

Age: 39

Place of Birth: Zeeland, MI

Number of Children: Four

College Attended:

Cornerstone University
B.S., 2010

Seminary Attended:

Calvin Theological Seminary
M.Div., 2014

Internships:

70 X 7, Holland MI
Summer 2012

CPE, Pine Rest,
Grand Rapids, MI
Summer 2013

Contact:

616-748-0493
rjg66@calvinseminary.edu

Faith Journey

My belief in God and experience of Him are all about relationships. I have seen how God has loved and walked with me throughout the struggles of my life in a variety of ways. I was born and raised in a good Christian family, and would consider my faith journey as an ongoing process of enlightenment. My beliefs can be summed up in the 'reformed' Christian creeds and confessions that I hold dear.

The high point of my faith came after I got married. First we had a daughter and two years later a second daughter was born. Three years after that we found we were pregnant with a son. I was excited to have a boy! But, that elation soon turned to grief as we learned halfway through the pregnancy that he had thanatophoric skeletal dysplasia, which caused his demise shortly after birth. This was very hard on me. I cried out to God...how could He do this to me?

My Grandfather reminded me that God knew what I was feeling. He, too, foreknew that His son was going to die. In fact, He put it into motion for us. That got me thinking.

Because of that 'discussion' with God over all that pain and misery I have grown stronger in my faith. It was at times a difficult and long journey of faith, however I found peace letting God have control over all things, and I have come closer to Him than I have ever been.

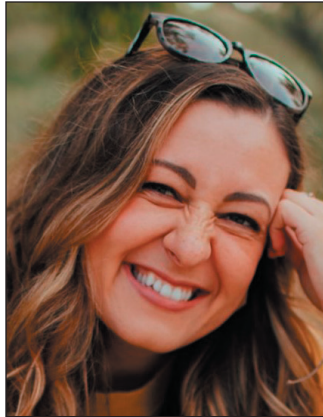
Since then we have had a second son and a third daughter! This call to the ministry has been a long and sometimes painful process. I have always felt the call, yet I was hesitant to accept it. But every roadblock and hurdle I put up was either answered or removed. God has truly provided for me in ways I will never understand, and He will use the education at Calvin to help me come to grips with and answer those hard questions I faced over my lifetime.

Robert Gruessing

Statement of Reason

I feel called by God to serve Him in active ministry in the Christian Reformed Church to further His kingdom. I am excited as well as humbled to answer this call and to continue a life of service to Him. I stand in awe of the awesome responsibilities active ministry entails, but with God's help I will strive to faithfully serve Him.

In Christ, Robert J. Gruessing



Name: Noelle Meggie Jacobs

Place of birth: Dearborn, MI

Languages spoken: English,
Romanian

Education:

Grand Valley State University
Allendale, MI
B.A., April 2015

Western Theological Seminary
Holland, MI
M.Div., May 2019

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
EPMC, 2020

Internships:

Campus Ministry @ GVSU
Allendale, MI
August 2016 - April 2019

Mescalero Reformed Church
Mescalero, NM
May 2018 - July 2018

Contact:

734-260-1440
noellemjacobs@gmail.com

Faith Journey

I grew up in a supportive yet chaotic home with two Romanian-immigrant parents—each with their own miraculous story of how they came to the United States. It was through the lens of their difficult and broken stories that they taught me about the Lord’s faithfulness, love, and grace. “It’s only by his sovereign and gracious character that we are here, alive, and provided for each day, Noelle.” This is the narrative I grew up with. This is the God I grew up knowing.

My parents, our pets, and I lived in a townhome in a low-income neighborhood with people of all social, faith, and ethnic backgrounds for the first thirteen years of my life. It is a richly diverse community just east of Ann Arbor, MI. A community in which I learned the true meaning of family. Our biological family relationships were—and still are—severely broken. My father worked as an auto mechanic and my mother stayed home to homeschool me. Our front door was always open to the neighborhood. To the kids to come in and play. To the college students in our building who sought relational advice and a home-cooked meal from my mom. To the young men who looked to my dad for an oil change. To the widow, elderly, and marginalized. They were all welcome and celebrated in our home, especially at the table during the holidays when some of them also had no one else to turn to. “This is the family of God,” my dad would say.

We did not consistently attend a church, but my parents believed that we had community and could hear the Word of God through televised sermons from pastors like Dr. Charles F. Stanley, Dr. David Jeremiah, and others. I loved watching “Stanley” because he had a soft, gentle voice. I remember praying his saving prayer while watching *In Touch* when I was six years old. I remember being anxious at times, and feeling peace after watching his sermons. I knew we would be cared for, because “Stanley” said God watches over us and is always with us.

I played tennis and swam competitively at the country club across the street. For most of my childhood and teen years, we allowed athletics to make our life full. We moved to a local small town and I joined Saline High School my sophomore year for the sole purpose of swimming on the D1 varsity team. I had good friends and a busy life between school and swimming, but God became an afterthought and someone I’d only turn to if things went wrong.

I became heavily involved with our high school news program, as I had an interest in TV news reporting after seeing news crews cover stories in our old neighborhood. When the college search began, Grand Valley State University seemed like the obvious choice—a great broadcast journalism program, and a good swim team—if I made the cut. I had not the slightest clue of what the Holy Spirit was doing in leading me to GVSU. Looking back, his navigating work throughout my life to get me to where I am now is abundantly clear.

I made wonderful friends in my dorm, many who were seeking Christian community. I desired to spend time with them rather than try out for the swim team. On Monday, January 9, 2012, we went to a Campus Praise Rally hosted by Campus Ministry @ GVSU. That night changed everything for me. I didn’t know people my age wanted to worship Jesus.

Faith Journey (continued)

I didn't know hundreds of students could be so unashamed to proclaim his good news. I only knew that I wanted to be like them, really, to be like him. I joined student leadership for CM@GVSU, got baptized there, and became an student intern at "CM." I traveled to the Passion conference in Atlanta, and an Apache Reservation in Mescalero, New Mexico for spring break mission trips, a couple of which I led. In May of 2015, I graduated with my degree in broadcast journalism and got on a plane five days later for a two-week study trip to Israel/Palestine with CM@GVSU. Upon my return, I could not imagine doing anything else with my life but wholeheartedly dedicating it to Christ and his Church, specifically, those searching for truth, purpose, and community in college.

After a year and a half of working simultaneously with WOOD TV8 in Grand Rapids, MI and CM@GVSU's downtown team, I began the M. Div. program at Western Theological Seminary in Holland, MI. I was not giving up my dream to be a story-teller. I simply realized I was made to tell a different kind of story. In fact, many stories of God's faithfulness.

I stayed heavily involved with my CRC, Alive Ministries in Jenison, MI. Upon graduation in May 2019, I accepted a job with another local CRC, Evergreen Ministries in Hudsonville, MI as their communications coordinator (and occasional preacher), while also serving as a church partner for CM@GVSU where I am an associate director of new student engagement and lead a 22-member student-run hospitality team. I preach there as well. My passion is to help others understand the eternal hope we have in Christ, grow in an eternal perspective of what it means to be a family of God with intent of living it here and now, connect college students to community, and help them understand the Spirit's navigating work in their own lives as part of God's grand, on-going story.

Noelle Jacobs

Statement of Reason

I am seeking ordination in the Christian Reformed Church of North America with God's help and the help of my faith communities as a response to his clear call to love his people and point them to Christ in every area of their lives. The CRCNA has been so caring, gracious, and supportive of me in my journey. I am grateful for the patience and support I have received while learning Reformed doctrine and polity. I want to associate myself with a denomination that so deeply cares about the authority of Scripture, what it teaches about God's character, how sacraments aid our sanctification, what it means to have a personal relationship with Christ, and how his gospel transforms our world. I am particularly joyed about CRC campus ministries through Resonate Global Mission. It is my hope to make a long-term commitment to serve in this specific mission field.

Noelle Jacobs



Name: Travis Jamieson

Place of birth: Sarnia, Ontario

Education:

Moody Bible Institute
Chicago, IL
B.A., December 2014

Trinity Evangelical Divinity
School
Deerfield, IL
M.A., May 2017

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
M.Div., May 2020

Internships:

Beacon Hill at Eastgate
Senior Care Facility
Grand Rapids, MI
Intern in Chaplaincy
September 2017 - May 2019

Pine Rest Mental Health Services
Grand Rapids, MI
Clinical Pastoral Education
Intern
October 2018 - March 2019

Contact:

312-428-0579
Tmj093@calvinseminary.edu

Faith Journey

As a child, I grew up hearing about the stories of the Bible in church and knowing that I should believe in Jesus for the forgiveness of my sins, but I never experienced much life change until my first year of college. During that year, God gave me examples of what it means to walk with Jesus and be led by the Spirit through a number of different friends. I was also connected with a mentor who began to ask me questions about my faith and my walk. These questions and examples caused me to study the Scriptures more intently and begin to wrestle with what my faith in Jesus Christ meant for my daily life. Within about a month of this time, my friend from back home suddenly died. I was shocked by the news and began to wonder why I never made it a priority to share the good news of the gospel with her. God used this moment to open my eyes to the fragility of life and the need for the gospel to be proclaimed to all people. A couple of months later, I was attending a missions conference and felt called by God to dedicate my life to full-time ministry. The Spirit used my first year of college to feel my need for Christ and to motivate me to pursue ministry. So as result, I began to get involved in whatever ministry I could. I served in a camping ministry, a college ministry, and youth ministries. All of which were adding fuel to my desire to pursue a call to full-time ministry.

After my first year of college, I decided to transfer to Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, IL to complete a degree in theology. God used my time at Moody to grow in my knowledge of and love for Him, to experience ministry in a church context, and to meet and marry my wife, Annie. As I studied the Bible and theology, I learned that the end goal of all knowledge is the glory of God. God is on a mission to bring us deeper into union with his Son by His Spirit. He desires intimacy with his people because we are his beloved children. As I ministered in the youth ministry at church, I learned about and experienced cross-cultural ministry in urban Chicago. I grew up in a majority white culture in Canada, but in Chicago, God led me to be part of a ministry that serve a majority black group of students. God used this time to teach me humility and address my own savior complex. He helped me see that it is ultimately he who does the work because I am not adept enough on my own accord. He also taught me that ministry is never a one way street, but it is a mutual exchange. Finally, my marriage to Annie has been the best decision of my life. Annie has a vibrant faith and is never afraid to ask tough questions and seek justice for those around her. She is someone I look up to in my own faith.

Following college, I completed another degree in systematic theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and I worked as a youth pastor at the same church I attended through college. I did this for three years and God used it to lead me in a different direction theologically. I grew up in a Baptist like church in Canada and the non-denominational church I was working for was Baptist in many ways, but as I continued to study, read lots of Herman Bavinck, and have conversations with pastors, theologians, and friends, I came to a Reformed understanding of the Scriptures and theology. My wife and I journeyed together in this theological shift and after the birth of our daughter, Cecilia, we realized the Lord was leading us to join a Reformed denomination. After much

Faith Journey (continued)

contemplation and discernment, we felt led to attend Seminary at Calvin. So, we packed our things, and moved to Grand Rapids, MI.

Our time at Calvin has been life changing in many ways. The month after we moved from Chicago, my mother-in-law died after a long fight with cancer, so we started Seminary in grief. It was a difficult season. During this same time, I began serving at Beacon Hill at Eastgate, a Senior Living community in Grand Rapids, as a chaplain. I never knew how much I'd enjoy working with the elderly population. I continued there throughout my time at Calvin and in my second year was hired on full-time to replace the retiring chaplain. The Lord has used my work as a chaplain and my studies at Calvin to show me that I do not need to try to do ministry like someone else (Enter famous preacher here), but he has wired me in a particular way to impact the community he has called me to. I believe that God is on the move in my life and he is revealing himself more to me each and every day. As I conclude my time at Calvin Seminary, I am more excited about Jesus Christ and my faith in Him than I've ever felt before. I feel equipped and ready to continue ministry at Beacon Hill and be Christ's ambassador. Thanks be to God!

Travis Jamieson

Statement of Reason

I am seeking ordination in the Christian Reformed Church because I believe God has led me by his Spirit to this denomination in order to follow the call he has placed on my life to be a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The creeds, catechism, and confessions of the Christian Reformed Church represent the doctrines I hold to and I believe the polity of the CRC provides the accountability and support needed for a lifetime in ministry. I also believe ordination will further enable me to share the love of Christ in my setting as a chaplain. I do this with the full support of my church community as well as my wife.

Travis Jamieson



Name: Kelsi Jones

Place of birth: Grand Rapids, MI

Education:

Grand Valley State University
Allendale, MI
B.S.W., April 2014

Calvin Theological Seminary,
Grand Rapids, MI
M.Div., May 2020

Internships:

LaGrave CRC
Grand Rapids, MI
August 2017 - May 2018

Madison: North
Grand Rapids, MI
August 2018 - May 2019

David's House Ministries
Wyoming, MI
May 2019 - August 2019

Contact:

616-206-2033
kj082@calvinseminary.edu

Faith Journey

I was raised in a household where we went to church at least twice a week and I loved it. I remember when I was young, sitting on the stairs with my mom while I prayed to Jesus, inviting Him to be the Lord of my life. At the time I didn't fully know where that would lead me, but I knew it was what I wanted more than anything. Sadly, there were times in my life where I felt I didn't need God as deeply as I did in that moment and thought I could do it on my own. I am grateful beyond reason to God for reminding me of who He is and the abounding grace that God has bestowed upon my life. I believe in God the father, his son who died and was raised for my sins, and the Spirit who is active in my life, the church, and this world. It has that belief that has shaped my life.

In my early childhood church was a place that felt like home and I knew without a doubt that I loved God. However, my faith, like many at this age, was not strongly built. I wanted to know more about God and loved Sunday school and church. When I was in 6th grade I began Catechism with a mentor. We would spend Saturday mornings talking about what the Catechism said, who our God is, and what it means for our lives. God was abundantly present to me in this time.

However, when I entered high school I began to drift away. I still loved God but was worn-out with the church. I didn't want to go and thought I could be a Christian on my own, without any community. God brought people into my life to help show me the beauty and community that is found in the church. The Spirit renewed by love, not only for God, but the church too and once again I got involved in the community. Throughout the rest of high school, college, and post-graduation I was committed to serving Christ and the church in whatever way I was able. From Bible Studies at my university, volunteering in church, and engaging in book studies in my neighborhood, I was committed to allowing God to lead me to where I was needed in the Kingdom.

It was then that God called me into formal ministry and to Calvin Seminary. God has used the theological education I have received to form and shape me more into who he has created me to be. The opportunities I have had to enter into cultures that differ than mine and learn more about how the Kingdom. I have felt called, as I enter into ordained ministry, to work within the church to reach out to the communities we are in. Sharing and spreading God's message of love and shalom for the world.

Kelsi Jones

Statement of Reason

I am applying for candidacy in the Christian Reformed Church because I have experienced God's call to serve the church through preaching of the word and administering the sacraments. God has given me a love for the Christian Reformed Church, and a passion to work to help the church be a strong biblical representation of Christ. I long to see the church grow and for people to experience the Grace of God, the love of the Father, and to know the power of Christ's sacrifice on the cross.

Kelsi Jones



Name: Kennedy Muli Kailiti

Place of birth: Makueni, Kenya

Languages spoken: English,
Kiswahili

Education:

Egerton University
Njoro, Kenya
B.Sc., Agriculture and
Human Ecology
Graduation 1996

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
M.Div., May 2020

Internships:

Hope Network
Pastoral Department,
July 2017 - July 2018

Millbrook CRC
Grand Rapids, MI
Feb. 2018 - Sept 2018

Contact:

616-466-6773
kmk030@calvinseminary.edu

Faith Journey

In the beginning of the 19th century Reverend Peter Cameron Scott and other missionaries walked for two weeks from the port of Mombasa and settled at our village Kalamba. Here they established the first church Kalamba African Inland Church which has played a central role in Christian mission in Kenya and the East Africa. My parents told us stories of how our clan donated land for the church and that our grandparents were pioneer Christian. I was born in a time that Kalamba was a thriving church and Christian was the culture and way of life in the community. My parents, Pastor and church leaders taught me the word of God, prayer, worship and fellowship and the Christian ethics. In our Church were missionaries from the United and as a young boy my dream was to serve God as a missionary. I attended catechism, was baptized and my faith in the Lord and passion for ministry was growing. When I joined my primary school I was active in youth programs and also singing in the youth choir. I was convinced that God's grace and mercy through family church and school. I continued to live my Spiritual life and disciplines and community was everything in my life. I joined high school and left the village and the community and I was part of the Christian Union group. I met students from different religious and faith backgrounds and I had questions about the bible and Christianity. I was exposed to new interpretation of the bible, living the way of Christ and the whole different ways of worship. This started my journey of reading, learning, engaging and discovering faith in a diverse way. I spend time reading the bible, prayer and fellowship and when I went home over the holidays talking to my pastor and family. I had to take a walk of faith to rediscover Spirituality, baptism, miracles and others as practiced in other denominations. My faith and church was challenged and it took time to understand that the same God reveals Himself to us differently and to fulfil His purpose to us. When I joined the university my Spiritual journey was more challenged as I encountered student who were atheists, Muslims, Buddhists and those with cultural believes. I had to engage them to learned how the view of God and faith and I learned that faith in God is dynamic, diverse and different in different groups. In the university I joined a Baptist group that was doing missions to high schools. When I graduated from the university I travelled to the coastal town of Mombasa which is mainly dominated by Muslims. I joined Ushindi Baptist Church and started my teaching career at their church high school. I went through their discipleship class and became a youth leader. In the high school I was working with students in faith formation and also guidance and counselling. In a few years I was not only a youth leader, a secretary to the church council but also one of the mission team reaching out to Muslims. I got married to my dear wife Eunice Ngina and in the years we were blessed with two girls. I realized how my love for family and family relationships were helping me in ministry and service to others. I left Ushindi Baptism after about seven years to plant a church and school with some German missionaries in another part of the province. I was always felt that Gods mission was among the poor of the poorest and so I left Mombasa with my family and relocated to Nairobi. I started working with a Muslim community school in Kibera slums and in three years I served in the slums. In the school I was working with students who had lost hope, in drugs, rebelling and living in the

Faith Journey (continued)

shanties reaching them with the gospel message. My dream of mission was never lost so when I got a green card with my family to relocate to here I knew my faith journey had started. I joined Calvin Theological Seminary in obedience to this word and Gods call in 2 Timothy 2:15 to be a missionary as Reverend Peter Cameron. I have studied and loved the reformed theology and fellowship and serving as an intern-pastor in Millbrook CRC, intern with Hope-Network Pastoral services and now in Brookside CRC. God has given me grace with mentors, teachers and a community that has taught and shaped my theology and life. Last year I organized a Pastors conference in Kenya and my Pastor prayed and send me on my first missionary journey. This July I travel back to Kenya with my Pastor Paul DeVries to a bigger Pastors leadership conference and I thank God for His faithfulness and Grace.

Kennedy Muli Kailiti

Statement of Reason

In the four years of study in Calvin Theological Seminary I have been mentored by professors and minsters, CLASSIS, Church and the community. I have become part of the Christian Reformed Church participating in activities as the social justice, black and reformed and this is my now my faith and church as it was in the beginning of my faith Journey. I am assured by the Holy Spirit that a solid foundation for Word and mission has been gracious laid in me and it's time to serve. The CRC church and community has been used by God to shape and train me for ministry and service and so I gracious seek their ordination to be a minister of the Word. I am committed to Gods Kingdom that is diverse and united and His Church the CRC its values and policy which is my new identity in Christ.

Kennedy Muli Kailiti



Name: Hyung Jun Kim

Place of birth: Seoul, South Korea

Languages spoken: English, Korean

Education:

University of Toronto
Toronto, ON
B.A., 2003

Regent College
Vancouver, BC
M.Div, 2009

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
EPMC, 2020

Internships:

Korean Campus Mission at the
University of British Columbia
Vancouver, BC
2003 - 2009

St. Andrew's Hall at the
University of British Columbia
Vancouver, BC
2006 - 2009

Galilee Korean Presbyterian
Church
Vancouver, BC
2009 - 2015

New Westminster Christian
Reformed Church
Burnaby, BC
2015 - current

Contact:

604-521-0111
hkim@nwcrcc.ca

Faith Journey

I was born and raised in a Christian (Presbyterian) family in Seoul, South Korea. My mother had been Christian her whole life and my father, coming from a Buddhist family, had just become one so he can marry her! Both my parents were great teachers of my faith. My mother taught me what it means to be a Christian in her ordinary, everyday life. Through my father, I learned the power of God that completely change one's life when it is surrendered into God's hands.

My family immigrated to Vancouver, BC, Canada when I was a teenager and it was a time of both great blessing and an enormous challenge. During this time, my faith in God was deepened and my life was centred around the church. I began to realize how much I love to be part of various ministries of the church and also others have encouraged me to think about becoming a pastor.

I subsequently went to the University of Toronto and chose to major in Ancient Near Eastern studies, learning the Hebrew language and culture with a desire to be well-equipped to study God's word. My sense of calling remained strong and it was affirmed by the congregation that I was part of in Toronto (Knox Presbyterian Church).

I came back to Vancouver to study theology at Regent College, during which time I worked as a campus minister and resident chaplain at St. Andrew's Hall (Presbyterian College at the University of BC). Toward the end of my studies at Regent, I also had an opportunity to serve as a short-term missionary in Mongolia for a year and then to study at Leiden University in the Netherlands for another year. I have served as a volunteer pastor at the Korean Reformed Church of Rotterdam where I met my wife Lin who was doing her master's degree in music in organ performance. All these experiences helped me to develop an understanding that our missional God has created us to be missional, to be sent into the world where diversity in ethnicity and culture exist.

After graduating, I began serving as a pastor at Galilee Korean Presbyterian Church in Vancouver. For about 7 years, I served as Children's Ministry Pastor, Youth Pastor, and then Pastor of Young Adults Ministry. During this time, I also worked as a freelance bookkeeper and part-time Payroll Administrator at Regent College. These 7 years of bivocational life was a blessing, an opportunity to understand the world I otherwise wouldn't have experienced.

I currently serve at New Westminster CRC in Burnaby, BC, with a particular focus on multicultural ministry and ministry to international students. During my time here the Lord has been opening up new opportunities for our congregation to minister to our ethnically diverse neighbourhood and my work here focuses on discipleship and on supporting the needs of a growing multicultural identity.

I'm very grateful to be part of the CRCNA and look forward to continuing to serve God and his people within our denomination.

Hyung-Jun Kim

Statement of Reason

I have a strong sense that God had led me to the Christian Reformed Church, that the choice wasn't mine but his. I am deeply grateful for the rich history and tradition of the CRC and also rejoice in all that God is doing in and through our denomination in our time. I commit myself to the work of the church that gathers to worship, to be nourished by God's Word, and to commune with God and with each other in fellowship. I also commit myself to the work of the church that spreads, carrying out the mission of God, and be the light and salt in the world that needs him more than ever. I consider it a privilege and an honour, to be called for a Christian ministry and to serve his church as Minister of the Word.

Hyung-Jun Kim



Name: Jinsol Kim

Place of birth: Hapcheon,
South Korea

Languages spoken: English, Korean

Education:

De La Salle University
of Manila
Manila, Philippines
B.S., Business Management

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
M.Div, May 2019

Internships:

Korean Grace CRC
Grand Rapids, MI
October 2016 - Present

Disciples Making Church
Fresh Meadows, NY
May 2018 - August 2018

Contact:

312-536-2747
peter13kim@gmail.com

Faith Journey

I grew up as a pastor's kid. And as a pastor's kid, church and Christianity was always part of my identity. I was never doubtful about God or about the things that I learned from the church. As a good Christian kid, I memorized Bible verses, obeyed my parents, cleaned churches, volunteered for church activities. I thought I was a good Christian and my faith was so strong that no one could make me wonder about God.

When I finished my 6th grade, my parents decided to move to the Philippines as missionaries to the Philippines. Growing up as a missionary's kid, I was heavily involved in my parents' ministry as a coordinator and an interpreter. Thinking back, I think my life as a pastor's kid and a missionary's kid was God's way of training me. And throughout my life, God planted a passion in me, a passion to serve his church and his kingdom.

I tell people God works in weird ways because that's how he worked through my life. Throughout my experience in the Philippines, God made me to be disappointed at many Christians and churches that I looked up. And he made me to realize that nothing and no one is perfect. That's how I began to seriously think and doubt about my faith. Through endless doubts and questions about God and Christianity, God gave me a clear and strong calling for me to go to the seminary and learn about him. And by the grace of God, I started my seminary education in Calvin Theological Seminary in 2015 and again by grace of God, have completed M.Div in May of 2019.

God works in miraculous ways. God gave me an opportunity to serve his church in Grand Rapids and softened my disobeying heart and made me to enjoy serving his church and his people. While I was in the seminary, God provided me everything I needed in miraculous ways and confirmed my calling to serve him and his church.

As a pastor's kid, there were moments when I never wanted to walk the same path of struggle that my father walked. But it is God who softened my heart and it is God who strengthens his calling in me every day. I believe this process of being sanctified and being comforted by God will continue throughout my life. And I pray that God will continue to guide my path so that I will be faithful to him and his church as his beloved child.

Galatians 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

Jinsol Kim

Statement of Reason

I am seeking candidacy in the Christian Reformed Church because I believe God is calling me to serve his church and his family as a minister of the Word. I know that I am not worthy to be used by God, but I believe it is God who uses unworthy vessels for his glory. As I have received the amazing love from God, God is urging me to pass down this love to his people and to my neighbors. I am grateful and hopeful to obey God's calling humbly and obediently by the grace of God.

Jinsol Kim



Name: Jiyong Kim

Place of birth: Seoul, South Korea

Languages spoken: English, Korean

Education:

University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, MI
B.A., 2012

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
M.Div, 2019

Internships:

Pine Rest Christian Mental
Health Services
Grand Rapids, MI
June 2014 - Aug 2014

Korean Presbyterian Church
of Metro-Detroit
Detroit, MI
Aug 2014 - Aug 2018

Contact:

734-355-1410
jk044@calvinseminary.edu

Faith Journey

As someone who was not born into a Christian family, I thank God for the journey that I have been on and how far He has carried me. Due to my father's work, my family and I have lived in various parts of the globe. During my formative years I lived in Poland, Korea, Ivory Coast, Kenya, and Uganda. Ever since I came to the States for my undergraduate studies in 2008, I have lived in the US. By God's grace and amazing love wherever my family and I went, God and His loving church were always there for us. Through the amazing family-like churches that I have had the blessing of growing up in and being a part of, my faith in God was planted and nurtured. It is also important to state that due to the unique upbringing that I had, my worldview and faith were also opened, challenged and tested in different ways. Through it all I give God all the glory and praise for giving me this faith and revealing Himself to me as the unchanging Father that is ever-present in my life.

I would say that I was a nominal Christian up until college: I had obligingly gone to church, served and stayed active but in my heart, I was lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, as the Bible describes in Revelations 3. I had gotten comfortable with where I was, neither wanting more nor willing to drop it all and explore things outside of church. When I became independent, and the responsibility and consequences of all my actions were solely mine, that is when I had to face and make conscious decisions about my faith. My brothers and sisters lovingly cared for me while I was going through the valleys of doubts, questions and growth; my mentors pushed me and pulled me through with their wisdom, supervision, and accountability. My time in church fellowship and communal worship, and at Calvin Theological Seminary surrounded me and grounded me in trust and faithfulness to His Word and the unchanging truth of the Gospel.

At this point in my life, I am simply astounded by the steadfast love that God has unceasingly proven to me over the years and I am fully aware of my status as a debtor to that incredible grace. I know that I am still an imperfect person with numerous shortcomings. But I pray that, the Lord willing, I would be of any use to God for His Kingdom work on this earth. The reason why God would call a person like me to serve Him as a worshipper and more specifically as a minister to His people is beyond my comprehension. I pray and hope for the Spirit's continual indwelling in my life so that I may continue in this journey of denying myself and becoming more like Christ each day. As it has been the one unchanging constant in my life thus far, I place my trust and confidence in the faithfulness of God, who, I know, will continue to mold me, teach me, guide me, protect me, and challenge me to greater humility and faith in Him through the people and circumstances of my life.

I thank you God, so very much.

Jonathan Kim

Statement of Reason

I entered seminary with the sole desire of wanting to grow deeper in understanding and practice in the Christian faith that I had become so accustomed to. Never did I really think that I was worthy of the call to serve God as His minister. And perhaps, in some sense, I still consider myself unworthy of this calling. However, I am now seeking candidacy and ordination in the Christian Reformed Church because of the undeniable debt that I owe Christ and from a heart that desires to serve Him with everything that He has shown me and equipped me with. I love God, I love His Church and hope to serve His people with the Spirit's help. I know I have a long way to go but I am going with God, wherever and however He leads me.

Jonathan Kim



Name: Seongjun Kim

Place of birth: Gyeongsan-si,
Gyeongsangbuk-do,
South Korea

Languages spoken: English, Korean

Education:

Seoul National University
Seoul, S. Korea
BA of Mechanical Engineering,
1985

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
M.Div, May 2020

Internships:

Cross Cultural Internship
CRC HeadQuarter
Grand Rapids,
Jul 3 – Aug 4, 2017

CPE Internship
Pine Rest C. Mental Health
Grand Rapids, MI
May 29 - Aug 10, 2018

SIS II
Coopersville CRC
May 28 - Aug 18, 2019

Contact:

616-570-9689
sjk005@calvinseminary.edu

Faith Journey

I was born at a suburban of Daegu in South Korea, as the first son of non-Christian family among one daughter and three sons and accepted Jesus as my Savior and Lord at a Presbyterian Church in my hometown, but had gone through lots of persecution, since I was the first son who had to take care of all the ancestral rites of my family. After losing my father through lung cancer, I started my spiritual life again at a church at Seoul, with my mother, my wife and children, by proselyting them with His grace, when we moved to Seoul.

While serving as a youth director there for over two hundred students, by preaching and teaching, I had been struggling with the guilt feeling, since even though I realized the limit of the theology of the four-fold gospel, which I was taught at that church, but I had to teach the students with that theology that we could receive the second grace of holiness through hard work and fervent praying. Finally, one day at 2003, I crossed over the Pacific ocean in order to cure my daughter who had been suffering with congenital muscle disease which was an incurable disease, as a resident engineer of my company at Ann Arbor, Michigan, running away from my burden.

While preparing return to Korea after five years, our family became to stay at the States unexpectedly and had to go through the wilderness of immigrant life. Finally after losing my daughter at 2013, we moved to Grand Rapids at 2016, to study the Reformed theology at Calvin Theological Seminary, since I realized that I am a mere human being who is totally depraved and so have to rely totally on His grace, after seeing clearly my sinfulness and inability during the wilderness. It was painful, but also thankful to meet Great God.

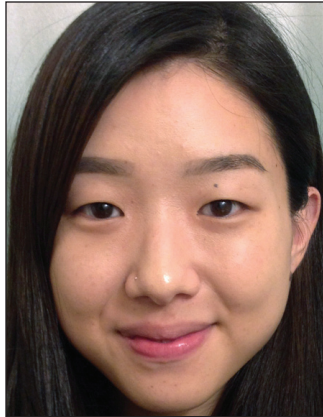
While I have been studying the Reformed theology, I learned and experienced by myself that the sound Reformed theology could liberate me from legalism or moralism and felt deep desire and even responsibility to teach this firm and sound theology to the next generation. After short ministering experience at a Korean church at Lansing and summer internship at Coopersville CRC church, I had a vision toward the next-generation, especially Korean-American next-generation, to teach the Heidelberg catechism and discipleship training, cultivating their spiritual rhythm of life based on the Reformed theology so that I may grow together with them in the knowledge, love, and communion with Jesus my Lord.

Seongjun Kim

Statement of Reason

I am strongly seeking ordination in the Christian Reformed Church that I may continue to grow in Him firmly and healthily, as I already experienced and tasted the Reformed theology which made me free from legalistic burden. I strongly want to preach and share the Gospel based on this firm theology, while growing together with healthy community into my Lord, Jesus.

Seongjun Kim



Name: Hannah Ryou Lee

Place of Birth: Grand Rapids, MI

Colleges & Seminaries Attended:

University of Michigan,
Ann Arbor
B.A., 2013

Calvin Theological Seminary
M.Div., 2017

Internships:

Pine Rest Christian Mental
Health Services,
Grand Rapids, MI
Clinical Pastoral
Education (CPE)
May 2015 - August 2015

Hope Community CRC,
Indianapolis, IN
Pastoral Ministry Internship
June 2016 - August 2016

Calvin College,
Grand Rapids, MI
Campus Ministry Intern
September 2016 - May 2017

Languages spoken:

Korean

Contact:

616-304-9575

hjr071@calvinseminary.edu

Faith Journey

What do I believe and how did I get here? Like a majority of Christians, I grew up in the church being taught to pray to “Our Father, who art in heaven” and to sing ‘I love you, Jesus’. I was taught that Jesus is my Savior, the one who died and rose again for me. I learned that God loves us so much that He sacrificed His only son. Through him, we get to go to heaven. For much of my life I took in what I was taught without much thought. I thought I knew what it meant to follow Jesus. I truly believed that I had faith.

And though I don’t think I can dismiss it point-blank, when put to the test my faith crumbled pathetically and with little hesitation. It seems my faith was nothing more than a seed that fell on the “rocky ground” or a seed choked by thorns. When my mother unexpectedly passed away, the loss proved too much for me to bear, and I descended down a long and winded path away from God. I was angry at God and doubted all that I had known of him, especially his goodness, in light of my sufferings. Like Peter denied Christ under scrutiny, I did the same and estranged myself from him.

But as God ordained it to be, in His good and perfect timing, I encountered His grace so abundant and merciful. Through small moments and few faithful people, God beckoned me once again into His presence. He granted me the understanding of things I had not fully understood before. I began to grasp within the depths of my soul the vastness of God’s love, His beautiful and wholesome will, and His perfect sacrifice through Christ, His son. I began to see wrongs of my past and the foolishness of my desire to know the world and not He who fulfills and satisfies my soul. I began to understand the broken state that all people share; separated from God by sin and shame, all of humanity hungers for restoration, healing, for Christ. But most importantly, I understood for the first time that God did not delight in my sufferings, but mourned with me and was present with me.

Through God’s grace, today I am able to know Him more intimately and confess that He is God, that His son Jesus Christ is my Savior and the Lord over my life. I continue to learn what it means to submit my life to him, to be united to Christ, and to be led by the Spirit. As I continue to learn the enormity of his grace, the confession of Peter echoes in my heart often, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life”. But I also increasingly see that it’s beyond just me; Jesus Christ also died for the church and for the world. Jesus loves me and desires restoration for me, yes, but he also loves his people and that all of history has been God acting on a mission of grace, to reconcile all things to him. With Christ’s death and resurrection as our foundation, I believe the church is called to faithfully dance between the ‘already’ and ‘not yet’ of the age to come, as “new creation [is] in collision with the present age.” I believe that as we submit to this calling, we continue to be formed and fed by God’s Word where his will is revealed wholly and perfectly, and empowered by the Holy Spirit for everyday living.

Hannah Lee

Statement of Reason

Richard Mouw, in the beginning pages of his book *Calvinism in the Las Vegas Airport*, introduces the analogy of a theological shelf. He uses it to explain his attitude toward the particularly hairy doctrines that divide denominations; the “shelf-doctrines”. But I think the analogy is a helpful image in general. What are the doctrines that sit on my theological shelf, regardless of where the proverbial books may sit (shelves closest to the ceiling where they are hardly touched or at eye-level for regular access)? The reason I seek candidacy in the Christian Reformed Church is because my theological shelf is filled with Reformed doctrines. That sounds rather dry, and here I suppose the analogy starts to fail, because my theological shelf is not only a piece of intellectual furniture, but where my worldview, and thus my very heart, sits. When I chose Calvin Theological Seminary four years ago, it was a careless choice of practicality. But now at the end of my time at Seminary, I am so grateful that I was careless and yet God was not. Reformed theology, and the CRC’s expression of it, has given me a firm foundation by which I understand my faith and build my pastoral identity. This is my reason for seeking candidacy in the CRCNA.

Hannah Lee



Name: Jeff M. Liou

Place of birth: Tulsa, OK

Education:

TEDS, M.Div., 2009

Fuller, Ph.D., 2017

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
EPMC, 2020

Internships:

Elgin EFC

Contact:

734-657-0207

jeff.liou@intervarsity.org

Faith Journey

In a rural town in Oklahoma, my barber, karate instructor, substitute first grade teacher, next-door neighbor, and many others took turns bringing us to the handful of churches that served our small town of 2,000 residents. I remember the yellow, corrugated, aluminum panels of the Assemblies of God church down the street where I gave my young life to Christ during a passion play depicting the release of Barabbas to make room in prison for Jesus. Cut to the heart, strangely warmed, and with tears streaming down my face, I went forward to the altar to pray a prayer of repentance and faith. From that day to this one, I have walked with Jesus.

My family was not a religious family. So, the few Bible verses that I learned in occasional Sunday school and vacation Bible school sustained me. I read them now and then, not knowing what they meant. Still, I knew God's presence in answered prayer, in my dreams, and in my times of quiet. When we moved to Tulsa, I joined a Chinese American church and I was so eager for instruction in the faith and for Christian community. However, my parents forbade me to be baptized. This, they explained, was for very serious people who get "too deep" into religion.

In college, away from their supervision, I was baptized without their knowledge. My disobedience is not something I'm proud of, even though my obedience to the ordinances of Christ were filled with joy. As a first-year student, I was blessed to have the most caring and skilled InterVarsity Bible study leaders who instructed me in the faith. The next year, it was my turn to lead the study. In obedience to Christ, I also began to look for effective ways to share the gospel with the campus. I tried evangelistic preaching for the first time. I approached countless strangers on the "diag" at the University of Michigan. I began to lead my peers in this kind of street evangelism. Our small fellowship began to see people come to Christ week after week! I could never deny the faithfulness and goodness of God to seek and save the lost.

My mentors took notice and began to groom me for InterVarsity staff, and I would answer God's clarion call to minister in the university world. This quickly led to challenges in my family. However, the body of Christ surrounded me, supported me, and I heard in those days a call to serve the church. All this has led me through theological education, pastoring in another denomination, university chaplaincy, and now directing the theological formation of campus ministers in InterVarsity.

My faith journey has included surprises at every turn. God has shown me on enough occasions that my own plans must give way to the tasks that God has prepared for me in advance. Each time I have responded in obedience, God has supplied great joy as well as all that is needed to accomplish the work.

Jeff Liou

Statement of Reason

I am seeking ordination to Minister of the Word so I may “proclaim, explain, and apply Holy Scripture in order to gather in and equip” members of the church, seminary students, and fellow ministers, “so that the church of Jesus Christ may be built up.” While ordination is not required by my mission organization, I am persuaded that long-term, faithful, and vital ministry is enabled by submission to a community of peers likewise taken captive for service to the church in the world. Should God lead me to serve as pastor of a congregation again, I desire to have been meaningfully examined and approved for such a call.

Jeff Liou



Name: Bryzon Wanjala Masiboh

Place of birth: Bungoma, Kenya

Languages spoken: English, Swahili,
Kiluhya

Education:

St. Paul's Theological University
Kenya

Dip. Theology

Kuyper College
Grand Rapids, Michigan
B. S in Youth, Bible, and
Theology

Calvin Theologica Seminary
Grand Rapids, Michigan
M.Div., 2019
Th.M., 2019-2021

Internships:

Clinical Pastoral Education
African Community Fellowship
Grand Rapids, Michigan
Oct. 2016 - Mar. 2017

Contact:

231-683-0777
bmasiboh@yahoo.com

Faith Journey

I was born and raised in a Christian family. My father was a pastor, now deceased. Despite being born from a Christian family, I did not heed the word of God. I lived a sinful life and attended Church service solely intending to please my parents. My Friends provided a negative influence on my spiritual growth.

One day after my high school, I attended an open-air prayer gathering at my hometown. That day, the preacher's message challenged my sinful life. I heard internally God calling me. I went back to my room, knelt, and cried to God to save me. Through the Grace of God, I received salvation. My life was transformed by the blood of Jesus. I was no longer myself, but Christ living in me. That was the best decision I made in my life.

Currently, I am a student at Calvin Theological Seminary. Now, I pursue a master's in theological studies (Th.M.) concentration in pastoral care and counseling. I also did master's in divinity 2015-2018 at Calvin seminary. Similarly, Pastoral care and counseling motivated me to learn more about Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE). I have done two units of clinical pastoral Education (C.P.E). At Pine Rest, I have had several conversations with patients who were addicted to drugs and substance abuse. I can understand addiction as a disease through embracing genuine listening skills and relate it to human understanding of suffering. Also, in the adolescent and young adult's wing of Pine Rest, I have been able to listen to patients' stories, engage their spirituality, and empathize with them.

I am also an alumnus of Kuyper College with majors in Youth Ministry and Bible and Theology. Besides, I am engaged in God's calling on my life through continued volunteer work leading youth ministry at African Community Fellowship C.R.C. in Grand Rapids.

Bryzon Wanjala Masiboh

Statement of Reason

I desire to be a minister of the word and sacrament in Christian Reformed Church because I believe that God has called me both inwardly and outwardly. God spoke to me about serving Him through many people who expressed their wishes and saw the God's call in me. Also, elders in my Church added a voice to my calling. They encouraged and approved me to join the seminary. Similarly, I have found a lot of encouragement from my family. My family has been a great support system for my life especially, my wife. She has been influential in my spiritual formation. She is a prayerful woman. We pray together and grow together.

Statement of Reason (continued)

However, at the seminary and Kuyper college, God confirmed his calling through my friends, professors, and the community. They saw God using me as his instrument for his work. While as a student at Calvin Seminary, I developed a deep interest and appreciation for the Christian Reformed tradition. A sense of God's calling solidified during my time at the seminary and I said, "Here, I am. Send me." Therefore, I am obedient to God and submit my name for candidacy.

Bryzon wanjala Masiboh



Name: Loice Mueni Minito

Place of birth: Machackos, Kenya

Languages spoken: English, Kamba
and Kiswahili

Education:

Ukamba Bible College
Machakos, Kenya
Diploma in Bible and Theology,
March 2002

Kuyper College
Grand Rapids, MI
B.S.W., April 2014

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
M.Div., May 2019

Internships:

Pastoral Ministry at African
Community Fellowship CRC
Grand Rapids, MI
October 2017 - October 2018

CPE at Pine Rest Mental
Hospital
Grand Rapids, MI
May - August 2019

Contact:

616-337-3931
loice.minito@gmail.com

Faith Journey

I was born into a Christian family. Our family was immense; we were six girls and two boys. My parents' Christian environment and going to church and participating in its programs shaped my life and my world view. My baptism was done when I was eight years old. My mother was also my spiritual mentor. She explained clearly to me what Christian faith entailed when I was fifteen years old. She reiterated that faith in Christ is only possible by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

In 1991, I made a profession of faith. I have continued to grow in the Lord since I was a young girl to date. However, this does not mean that my life has been without the inevitable challenges of life. I have lamented God, I have felt overwhelmed at some points in my life as a Christian, but amidst all the problems, I rely on God's word, personal quiet times (praying and meditating upon God's promises) and other Christians' prayers to strengthen me during those moments of adversity and trials.

I sensed my call to Christian Ministry while I was in High School serving as one of the Christian Union leaders and later confirmed after I graduated from High School in 1996. My call to serve God was affirmed by my enthusiasm and conviction, fulfillment doing church work, and encouragement from fellow believers.

I am married to John Mondri. We are blessed with three children: Samuel (thirteen), Josiah (eleven), and Joyce (nine).

The Lord has been faithful in keeping my faith and providing opportunities that have shaped my life. After high school, in following response to my call, I joined Ukamba Bible College (1998-2002) in Machakos Kenya, where I trained and graduated with a diploma in Bible and Theology. In 2011, the Lord opened another opportunity at Kuyper College, where I majored in Social Work (BSW) and graduated in 2014.

In Kenya, after my Bible education studies, I was employed by African Inland Church Churo (non-denominational), Kenya. My job title was a Christian Education Coordinator (CED). I was responsible for coordinating youth, children, women, and other related Christian education programs. I served in this capacity from September 1st, 2002, until August 31st, 2004.

I did my pastoral internships at African Community fellowship CRC October 2017- October 2018. For my cross-cultural ministry at Pine rest mental hospital from May 2019- August 2019

Also, since 2009 when my husband began serving as a pastor at African Community Fellowship Church (in Grand Rapids, MI), I work and still do (as a volunteer) with children and women ministries. I also did my social work internship with Bethany Christian Services and even Adult Foster Care with MOKA Cooperation in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

As I continue with my faith, I notice that Christian life entails nurture (ministered by the church and personal devotion) and proclamation of the good news (witnessing to the world). In other words, we receive grace and blessings from God through His Word, and we channel it out to the

Faith Journey (continued)

world around us (local and international). I have several reasons why I am committed to my Christian life, but I will briefly share two of them.

First is salvation by grace through faith alone in Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:8, 9). It is comforting to know that God, in His divine wisdom, chose to accept me a sinner without any conditions! More importantly, this salvation that I have received freely from God has shaped my moral foundation.

Second is living out my faith. It means I not only commit to living by Christian Biblical standards every day, but also it means I have to proclaim this great story of God's redemption to others (Matthew 28:18-20).

I am grateful for all my previous experiences in Christian ministry because through the years; I have known my gifts. I delight, for example, in doing evangelism, preaching, pastoral care, and teaching. My degree in Social Work has also helped me to see Christian ministry from a different perspective (for example, I am qualified to deal with human social issues concerning Church ministry).

However, with the competing voices in our world today, I strongly feel that to build my ministry skills and more in-depth theological knowledge in order to contend for my faith (Christian faith) and serve the Church of Christ boldly in a world where Christianity is fought from all directions, I needed further theological training and God granted me the opportunity and resources to study at Calvin Theological Seminary. I am ready to follow His leading through the next step in the process to become a pastor-teacher/Chaplain to empower the body of Christ.

Loice M. Minito

Statement of Reason

I aspire to be a Minister of the Word and Sacrament in the Christian Reformed Church in North America because I believe that God has called me both inwardly and outwardly to ministry. In the years leading up to seminary and during seminary, God had affirmed this calling through fellow believers who saw my potential as a minister of the Gospel. God's people have been a blessing to me, while a student at a High School, Ukamba Bible College, Kuyper College and later as a member of African Community Fellowship CRC.

During my time at Calvin Seminary, I have developed an appreciation for the Christian Reformed tradition. It is my prayer that by the power of the Spirit's work, I may continue serving the Lord as a pastor to his people in CRC denomination, a church I have come to cherish and love.

Loice M. Minito



Name: Matthew Mulder

Place of birth: Zeeland, Michigan

Colleges & Seminaries Attended:

Trinity Christian College
Palos Heights IL
B.A. in Music and Theology,
2015

Calvin Theological Seminary
M.Div., expected May 2019

Internships:

Fuller Avenue CRC
Grand Rapids, MI
Oct 2016 - May 2018

Fuller Avenue CRC
Grand Rapids, MI
May 2018 - Aug 2018

Contact:

(616)-886-3934
mpm003@calvinseminary.edu

Faith Journey

I believe in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit: Three persons in one Trinity. I believe that God created everything and made humans in His image. I believe that humans have fallen from God's perfection and, because of this, each and every person is born depraved and sinful, both because of an inherent original sin, and because of the sins we commit every day. I believe that, in spite of this, God, in His everlasting love, sent His only Son to stoop down to our level and become incarnate so as to redeem us from our sins. I believe that Jesus died on the cross to save me and the rest of God's elect from our sins. I believe that God sent the Holy Spirit to live within Christians so that they might be a light for God in this dark and sinful world as a part of the Body of Christ, the church. I believe that Jesus is currently in Heaven at God's right hand, interceding on our behalf. I believe that one day, Jesus will come again to earth and bring us to be with Him eternally in the everlasting Shalom that is the New Creation.

I was born and raised in the CRC in West Michigan to parents who faithfully exemplify what it means to be a follower of Christ. I grew up being taught a very strong conviction to the Christian faith and to the church. For our family, this meant never missing the evening service on Sundays, being involved in Cadets and Youth Group, and going to Christian schools. This also meant having a robust study and understanding of Scripture and the Creeds and Confessions from an early age. I made Profession of Faith at age 10 and in preparation for that my father and I went through the Confessions. We also had weekly Bible Study time on Sunday evenings for a few years, and as I grew up more in a CRC church, I enjoyed learning more about God, the Bible, and the Heidelberg Catechism.

In college, I set off to get a minor in Theology and enjoyed my classes as I learned more about what a Reformed Worldview and Theology looks like. Through some providential circumstances, I ended up changing that Theology minor to a double major along with Music and I was able to further delve into my theological studies, learning more about church history, Calvinist studies and more modern Reformed thought. Through all this I was further confirmed in my faith and fulfilled in my desire to learn more about how God reveals Himself to us.

It was during this time that I was also convicted by God that a large part of Christian life is the church. I had stopped going to church for a couple years during college out of laziness, but, providentially, I was given an opportunity to play bass at a local PCA church plant. Through my attendance at this church I was reminded how lifegiving and integral it is to have a community of believers in one's life. It was also at this church plant where I began to articulate my call to ministry as they opened their arms to me not only as an attender of worship but also as an intern.

In my time at Calvin Seminary, I have been further affirmed by my friends, family, mentors, church, classis, colleagues, and professors in my call to ministry in Christ's body and bride, the church. I can see the ways in which God has been faithful to me thus far in my life and how God has continually been transforming and sanctifying me. I look forward to what God has in store for me as I strive to follow God's call to ministry.

Matthew Mulder

Statement of Reason

I am seeking ordination in the Christian Reformed Church of North America because I firmly and truly believe that God has called me by the Holy Spirit into service in ministry to God's people in a church setting. This call has been confirmed by the church communities that I have been blessed to be a part of as congregant or intern as well as through my experiences over the past three years at Calvin Theological Seminary. As Christians, we are all on a journey of transformation and renewal as we seek to follow God's will for our lives. I believe that in following His will, God has led me to this point in my journey of education and ministry. I seek to continue to follow God's will so that I may equip and serve the members of the body of Christ as we all seek to proclaim God's love and mercy to this fallen Creation.

Matthew Mulder



Name: Katrina Olson

Age: 32

Place of Birth: Listowel, Ontario

Name of Spouse: Jim Olson

Colleges & Seminaries Attended:

The University of
Western Ontario
B.A., 2006

Calvin Theological Seminary
M.Div., 2016

Calvin Theological Seminary
Th.M., 2016

Internships:

Westwood CRC, Kalamazoo, MI
September 2006 to May 2015
January 2013 to April 2013
(cross cultural)
September 2013 to
August 2014 (PMI)

Contact:

269-377-5643
katolson5318@gmail.com

Faith Journey

My understanding of God is ever changing and yet solidly rooted. God is beyond what I comprehend and still He considers me, satisfies my personal needs even as they change. God loves. God saves. God redeems. God is patient when I am frustrated...or more importantly—frustrating! God is Truth with a capitol “T”. God gives. God expects me to live in grateful obedience.

I am thankful for the gift of grace He freely gives. I have to trust in God’s justice, even when I see inexplicable evil. There are traits within myself that help me understand God because He’s given them to me, like love, laughter, peace, kindness. Yet God is bigger than my understanding, with gifts beyond what I can experience in others or myself. God is omniscient, omnipresent. Trying to understand God is like scooping up the ocean with a soup spoon, but I am convinced He delights in my curiosity, in my desire to know Him more and more.

How could I not be absolutely committed to a God like this? How could I not be absolutely committed after feeling the power of the Holy Spirit within me? I pray that it radiates out from my very pores. I feel His call in my life. He challenges me to always be living in a right path with Him. When I stumble and sin, He challenges me. When I celebrate Him, it reverberates within me. Even in times of deep sadness I have joy. The joy God gives me is not a happy-feeling that most have come to associate with joy, but a deep-seated comfort and bliss in knowing that I belong to Him, body and soul.

This is the God that I’ve come to know. I was raised in a Christian home but faith was never easy. There was immense pain growing up that caused me to grapple with faith: bullies in school and at church, abusive boyfriends, secular schools, and death before death was expected. The glittering vices of the world lured me in and I stumbled down a road I don’t wish anyone else to experience, but God was ever faithful in my life. He used friends, mentors, and church families to bring me back into a faithful walk and when I look back over my life I can see the promise of baptism traced throughout. God has seen me through some intense pains of life, when evil seemed to press in, and on this side, I see how He redeemed them into a deeper relationship with Him.

Katrina Olson

Statement of Reason

If you ask my Oma (my grandmother) when I first felt God’s call, she would tell you it began when I was about five years old. She fondly reminds me of my answer whenever asked what I wanted to be when I grew up: a minister. It seems surreal to be applying for candidacy in this moment, reflecting on the events of life that led me from that point to this. Why did that little girl want to be a pastor—why do I want to become one now? I suppose I don’t have a concrete reason and would rather sit in the mystery of the call. I can cite my longing to serve to the church, a love of teaching God’s word, and a desire to spread the gospel...but shouldn’t all Christians feel the same way? I am seeking candidacy because I have felt God’s nudges—and frankly, some hard pushes—into ordained ministry and when I follow the path He has laid

Statement of Reason (continued)

before me, I feel affirmed and excited by the Holy Spirit. I am seeking candidacy in the Christian Reformed Church because God has called me and led me to this point in both life and in faith and I am eager to take this next step despite the path being shrouded in mystery.

Katrina Olson



Name: Jeremy Oosterhouse

Place of birth: Holland, MI

Education:

Trinity Christian College
Palos Heights, IL
B.A., Psychology, Dec. 2005

Chicago State University
Chicago, IL
M.S.W., May 2009

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
M.Div., May 2020

Internships:

Palos Heights CRC
Palos Heights, IL
Jan. - May 2020

Contact:

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Faith Journey

The central work of God in humanity is to call a people to be his own and to promise to their God. This promise – “I will be your God and you shall be my people” – has been present in my life from the moment I was born. From my earliest memories I have known God as my Father in heaven and Jesus as my Lord and Savior. Growing up in the CRC and taught in my faith by my parents, I praise God that out of the depths of his love he has chosen me in Christ to belong to him.

“I will be your God and you shall be my son”. And yet: life is not without its ups and downs, is it? As I look back over my youth and young adult years, over and over again I see how God has been actively present in my life calling me back to him, redirecting me, and forming me to belong to him. I see how God has worked in the heart of a young man that did not always appreciate the gift of life in Christ, who took for granted the promise of salvation. I see now all the ways that God has been present reminding me that he still is my God and I still am his son. The love of the Father is real, and I have experienced his grace and mercy and forgiveness too many times and in too many ways to recount here. But I am thankful for his steadfast love, his enduring faithfulness for me and the truth that nothing can separate me from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

“I will be your God and you shall be my servant”. In truth, I never planned on serving in ministry. Growing up, I always had other dreams, other plans. Even in college and after, my heart was first for social work, for the practical outworking of kingdom-building in the world. But through a series of opportunities and doors that were opened and closed that can only be attributable to the providence of God I found myself first in a lay ministry setting in the church, working with youth, and later in seminary. And over the last ten years as I have wrestled with what God is doing in my life and how he has called me, I have heard him remind me over and over again, “I am your God and you are my servant”. Even in those times when I have questioned him or doubted him or when I grew weary during the journey through seminary, he has remained faithful, his promise has not changed, and his answer to me has continued to be “I will be your God and you shall be my servant”. What am I to do but say, “Yes, Lord!”

“I will be your God and you shall be my people”. My faith journey is not over. God is still working in my life to remind me and encourage me of his promise of redemption and restoration for me. But now I have the opportunity to share this journey with others. God has called me to belong to him, to be his son, and to be his servant. Now, I have the privilege to share with others that God has also called them to belong him and to be his sons and daughters. In the spirit of the Gerasene man in Mark 5:19, I pray for the opportunity to go and tell how much the Lord has done for me.

Jeremy Oosterhouse

Statement of Reason

I am seeking candidacy in the Christian Reformed Church because I believe God has called me and gifted me for the ministry of gospel proclamation and for teaching and encouraging his body, which is the church. “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few”; and I believe the Lord of the harvest is sending me into his harvest field. So I want to continue serving my Father in heaven and give myself to Christ and his church so that in all things God may be glorified.

Jeremy Oosterhouse



Name: Jennifer Palkowski

Age: 27

Place of Birth: Toledo, OH

Colleges & Seminaries Attended:

Hope College

B.A., 2012

Calvin Theological Seminary

M.Div., 2016

Internships:

Ada Bible Church,

Ada, Michigan

September 2015 to present

Harderwyk Ministries,

Holland, MI

June 2015 to August 2015

Calvin Theological Seminary,

Facing Your Future,

Grand Rapids, MI

July 2014

Languages spoken:

Spanish

Contact:

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Faith Journey

I grew up in a Christian home. Through the age of eleven, my family and I attended Community Christian Reformed Church in Lambertville, Michigan. It was a small church and my family was highly involved in its programming; my parents, for instance, were the leaders for both GEMS and Cadets and they organized and facilitated community events such as Parents Night Out, Family Fun Night and Wednesday Night Soup. The youngest of three children, I attended all of these events with my parents and simply loved them. Needless to say, because of my parents' intentional participation in the outreach of our church, I learned the basics of the Christian faith at a young age and quickly internalized the importance of ministry. While my parents were crucial to my formation, it was during an elementary school chapel service that I accepted Christ as my Savior; I was in kindergarten.

In sixth grade, my family moved to Portage, Michigan, where we attended Westwood Christian Reformed Church; my brothers and I attended Kalamazoo Christian School. For the first time, I had the opportunity to experience church and school on a larger scale. Once again I became involved in GEMS at Westwood. I was blessed with an exceptional GEMS leader and it was through her mentorship that I grew abundantly in my faith. Because of GEMS and a summer camp experience in sixth grade, I chose to fully commit my life to God. I began to actively live out my faith, organizing Bible studies with my friends and dreaming of ways to bless the less fortunate. Later, when I was about fourteen years old, I was sitting in church when our pastor said, "Now if any of you young people feel called to missions, don't close your heart to God." Somehow, I felt certain that God was speaking directly to me. I grabbed hold of these words and began the process of discerning where God was leading me.

I entered college and pursued a degree in English (Creative Writing) and Spanish so that I could communicate the Gospel in two languages; my plan was to make money while doing missions by being a journalist. During college, I lived abroad in Buenos Aires, Argentina, for about a year, completing courses at the universities there in order to enhance my Spanish degree. I viewed my time abroad as an opportunity to share the Gospel. When I came home to Michigan, I quickly left to work as a Site Director on a mission field in Arecibo, Puerto Rico. It was not until I returned home to Michigan this second time that I realized I was not equipped to do missions long-term. I knew I needed training. I wanted to be able to better understand why I believed what I believed; I also wanted to be able to articulate my beliefs with others, especially with those who believed mine were wrong. Thus began the process of my applying for Calvin Seminary.

Seminary has pushed and challenged me. It has led me to a greater appreciation for the Christian Reformed tradition, a deeper understanding of and commitment to Reformed teaching, and a passion for the unity and collaboration of the ecumenical Church. Put simply, I believe in the Bible, the true Word of God, and in that which is taught in the official creeds and confessions of the Reformed faith.

Jennifer Palkowski

Statement of Reason

I am seeking candidacy in the Christian Reformed Church because I believe God has called me into ministry. Additionally, I believe in the teaching of the Reformed faith and the potential of the Christian Reformed denomination. As such, I am applying for candidacy, remaining obedient to the call of God and following wherever He leads me.

Jennifer Palkowski



Name: Ahnna Ellie Cho Park

Place of birth: Seoul, South Korea

Languages spoken: English, Korean

Education:

Colorado College
Colorado Springs, CO
B.A., English Literature and
Philosophy, May 2006

University of Colorado
in Boulder
Boulder, CO
M.A., English Literature,
May 2009

Denver Seminary
Denver, CO
M.Div, May 2015

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
EPMC, 2020

Internships:

Korean Christian Church
Denver, CO
May 2016 - present

Contact:

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Faith Journey

My life is characterized by dynamic changes and God's enduring faithfulness. I was born in South Korea and when I was 2 years old, my father went to Saudi Arabia as a missionary and a pastor. When I turned 4 years old, he invited the whole family to move to Riyadh. From ages 4 to 12, I enjoyed amazing childhood years of playing in the sand dunes, enjoying the luxuries of Riyadh, the capitol city, and being very proud of my identity as a pastor's kid. But these years were enjoyed with the backdrop of constant religious persecution, struggles of an underground church, and the Gulf War. In 1990, my father was given a sabbatical and he took the whole family on an adventurous, 43-day road trip throughout the middle east, Africa, and Europe, our farthest destination being Switzerland. Upon returning from the trip, we heard many sounds of war and sure enough, the Gulf War had broken out.

My childhood years ended abruptly when a few years after the war, my parents decided Saudi had become too dangerous of a place for foreigners like us. One day, my parents said "Dad is staying in Saudi but you are all moving to America with Mom." So just like that, in 1994, my family (minus dad) relocated to Morrilton, Arkansas. None of us spoke English then and many Morrilton residents had yet to meet the first Asians they've ever seen. The first two years in America were extremely painful—in spite of the wonderful friends who surrounded us—because there was zero continuity of lifestyle and culture that translated from our old life to the new.

In 1996, my father decided to join us in the States and we moved to Colorado together. I've been a Colorado resident since. Still, turmoil and changes abounded. In my teenage years, I struggled with my Korean, American, and third culture identity. I didn't know where I belonged. In Saudi I faced religious persecution in the hands of Muslims, and in America I faced religious persecution from atheist professors and post-Christian philosophies. In college, I fully embraced my American identity. I was so committed to this new self that as a young adult, I cut all possible ties to the Korean people. But in 2014, God led me to marry a perfectly Korean man who had never lived in the States before. Now I realize that God has called me uniquely to be a Korean-American woman, wife, and a mom, who also has a calling to pastor His people.

My life is marked by countless changes, hurts, and bruises. But it is also marked by countless revivals, healings, and redemptions. God draws me closer to Him with each and every hardship and no matter what I'm going through—a drastic relocation, identity crisis, or my husband's recent stroke—He proves that He is faithful. With every change, challenge, and hardship, God strengthens my faith in Him and deepens my call as a pastor. One thing that remains a constant in my life is God's palpable faithfulness towards me. He has also given me a lifelong passion for His churches. Now my one wish is this: "that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple" (Psalm 27:4).

Ahnna Cho Park

Statement of Reason

I, together with my husband, seek ordination in the CRCNA to best serve Him and His people to the fullness of who He made us to be. I regard it a privilege to minister with the CRC community, which holds the Bible in the highest esteem, understands church order, commits to diversity in everyday decisions, and endeavors to be missional in today's world. I commit to love God and His people, and especially love and serve my fellow believers in the CRCNA.

Ahnna Cho Park



Name: Jennifer Rozema

Place of birth: Grand Rapids, MI

Education:

Calvin College
Grand Rapids, MI
B.A., Religion & Theology, 2005

Western Theological Seminary
Holland, MI
M.Div., 2020

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
EPMC, 2020

Internships:

Faith CRC
Holland, MI

Contact:

616-394-1329
jenr@faithcrc.org

Faith Journey

There was a time when I would have felt like there is not much to say about my faith journey, for it can be summed up in a couple of pretty simple sentences: I was baptized into the Christian Reformed Church, I grew up in a Christ-centered home, and my parents were deeply involved in the life and ministries of the church. I grew to love Jesus as a child, publicly professed my faith as a sixth grader, sensed God's call to ministry in middle school, and can point to the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit in my life the whole way through. It has never felt like much of a testimony until sometime in my late twenties when I realized how beautiful this statement is and just how grateful I am to be able to speak it wholeheartedly: the covenant of God reached for me before I even knew my need, I've known and loved Jesus for as long as I can remember, and by grace I've lived my life in step with him.

I grew up in Grand Rapids, MI the oldest of three children. My parents both grew up across the state and their families are still there, so living without extended family around they had a deep desire to create a strong sense of family for us in West Michigan. So we camped, we went on family excursions, we sat around the table sharing meals and playing games, and we grew up being not only parents and siblings but also good friends. My mom grew up in a family of strong faith, and my dad grew up in a nominally Catholic family that did not prioritize faith or church ... or even really know Jesus for who he is. Having become a "born-again believer" later in life, he was on fire for Jesus in a refreshing, contagious way. Because of this, and because our church was our local-extended-family, being at church several times a week for corporate worship and different ministry opportunities became part of our family DNA. My parents love for the Lord and heart for ministry truly shaped who I am today. I saw a love for Jesus lived out through joy-filled service and Christian fellowship. My parents' closest friends were part of our church family, and therefore my close friendships were with peers from church as well.

In middle school I began to lead worship, teach children's worship, and serve the church in other various ways. It was during these years that I began to sense a call to ministry, and my youth leaders, teachers, and coaches began to affirm it. I went into high school hoping to spend my extra-curricular time playing and coaching sports, but before I graduated the dual occurrence of blowing out my knee and ministry opportunities being presented to me meant that I left the basketball court and softball diamond, began leading worship near and far, and joined the student ministries staff at a large CRC church where I continued to serve through college.

This isn't to say that there haven't been times I've struggled to believe, or that I haven't wrestled with doubt, for I certainly have. Honestly, it was during my years studying Religion and Theology at Calvin College when my faith was first disassembled, speculated over, and then reoriented. I've learned that it's good to wrestle with the hard questions, it's meaningful to challenge things I've always "just believed" and to grow through the hard work of grappling with things no human mind can fully comprehend, and it's more than OK to say "I don't know" or to pray "Lord, I believe, help my unbelief (Mark 9.24)."

Faith Journey (continued)

Since graduating from Calvin, I've served in three Christian Reformed Churches and one para-church ministry with CRC affiliations. Sometimes I've followed God's call with reckless abandon and sometimes with caution, hesitancy, and reluctance. Along the way, an amazing man asked me to marry him; being loved by him has been God's greatest earthly grace in my life. Together we've invested in ministry and community, spent time learning and experiencing other cultures, celebrated the healthy births of four children and grieved the still birth of one, begun to experience the joys and heartaches of international adoption, and more. We remain grateful for the Holy Spirit's ongoing work in our lives through all of these things as well as the mundane, ordinary day to day rhythms.

Even having known and loved the Lord as long as I can remember, my relationship with him is still growing and vibrant — I learn new things all the time, I'm stretched in new ways constantly, and he's continually working sanctification and transformation in my life. My daily quiet times fuel my life, and through Scripture and prayer I walk more closely with him every day. Now, as I anticipate ordination, in some ways it feels like I'm embracing something very new: the call to steward and shepherd the church as a minister, and to preach the Word and administer the sacraments, is a weighty and holy office, a mantle I don't take on lightly. And yet, in some ways it feels like the most natural next step in the journey the Spirit has been gently leading me on from childhood, in a denomination that has always been my home, as I continue to love and walk with Jesus through the grace of God.

Jennifer Rozema

Statement of Reason

I love the Church. I've loved the Church since I was a little girl, and that love has only grown over time, even through hard seasons of leading and loving the church. Having served the church in various staff capacities for the past twenty years, God continued to form a pastoral heart within me, a heart that beats faster and becomes animated by the calling to serve Christ and the church as a shepherd, teacher, and steward of the flock and as an ambassador of the Holy Spirit's work of justice, reconciliation, and peace (as described in the form for ordination). I believe God has called me forward in obedience as a candidate for ordination as Minister of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church, and will continue to equip me to live into that calling for the good of his world and the glory of his name. In humility and joy, I wholeheartedly embrace this call to "proclaim, explain, and apply Holy Scripture in order to gather in and equip the members so that the church of Jesus Christ may be built up (CRC Church Order, article 11)" and carry God's hope to the world.

Jennifer Rozema



Name: Courtney Saldivar

Place of Birth: Brampton, Ontario

Colleges & Seminaries Attended:

McMaster University
B.A. Communication
Studies, 2008

Sheridan College
Post Graduate Certificate in
Public Relations, 2009
McMaster Divinity College
M. Div., 2014

Calvin Theological Seminary
EPMC, 2018

Internships:

McMaster Christian Reformed
Campus Ministry
Hamilton, Ontario
September 2011 - April 2013

Chartwell Baptist Church
Oakville, Ontario
June 2013 - August 2013

Mission Services of Hamilton
Hamilton, Ontario
September 2013 - April 2014

Contact:

905-818-8158
courtney.norah@gmail.com

Faith Journey

God has always been so good to me, but I simply never knew it. Although I spent some time in a church as young girl I didn't know much about Jesus until my early twenties, nor did I know what to do with the rediscovery of this person that the people around me were calling their God and Saviour.

Is this for me? Can I start to believe in God at 20? What about all the bad stuff I've done? How do I choose Jesus?

I met a chaplain who was gracious and patient with my endless questions about Christianity and he invited me to be part of the local CR-campus ministry. I began to learn about (what to some might seem like the basics) but were actually life changing truths- things like worldview, covenant, and the kingdom of God.

I remember walking home one night after our regular dinner and fellowship bewildered by the fact that God not only cares about me but also cares about the way I recycle. I think I sorted through my blue box when I got home just in case it was true.

I continued on this faith journey for a number of years asking questions, speaking with many people and many pastors about how they have faith, and asking God to continue to reveal Himself to me.

Somewhere on the long journey towards finding faith I had an unforgettable experience with the Holy Spirit in prayer and decided then that Jesus was my God and my Saviour. I was a new person.

I wanted to go to seminary because I was now a Christian, a Christian who knew nothing. I needed more knowledge, I craved a deeper sense of community that I had found in campus ministry, but more than this I felt God gently nudging me to pursue ministry in some way. I began volunteering in a variety of places where I discovered the presence and power of Jesus among the poor, disadvantaged and broken hearted. In these contexts, I came to know and experience the overwhelming love and forgiveness of God in Christ.

The lonely were comforted, the sick were healed and the terminally desolate found joy.

I saw how Jesus was changing others and I saw how he was changing me.

For a long time before this I felt like a nobody. I believed I was too far gone in my thinking and in my attitude, in my heart and in my mind, to be cared for by God and to have Jesus die for me.

It seemed too good to be true.

But as it turned out, it was true. And it was good, very good!

The best, in fact, because my whole life was now dedicated to Jesus and sharing God's limitless grace.

I don't remember when, but at some point, I also discovered the reality of my journey.

That after all the questioning, deciding and choosing of Jesus- that actually Jesus, in love, had done everything.

Faith Journey (continued)

In love, he calls us by name, invites us to draw near and pursues His people relentlessly.

I thought I had chosen Jesus, but after all that had happened, I knew the truth of Christ's words in John 15:16: "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you."

Courtney Saldivar

Statement of Reason

Pursuing candidacy within the CRC is following God's call on my life, and I want to remain faithful and obedient to this. Candidacy also affirms that I am supported by others who have guided and encouraged me thus far. Lastly, candidacy is one step closer to pursuing chaplaincy (or another direction should it open) and loving and serving others anywhere and everywhere I am lead.

Courtney Saldivar



Name: Kyle J. Sandison

Place of birth: Grand Rapids,
Michigan

Colleges & Seminaries Attended:

Calvin College
Grand Rapids, MI
B.A. English, 2008

Gordon-Conwell Theological
Seminary
South Hamilton, MA
M.Div., 2016

Calvin Theological Seminary
EPMC

Internships:

Center for the Study of
Global Christianity
South Hamilton, MA
Jan 2014 - April 2014

First Evangelical Free Church
Maplewood, MN
May 2014 - Aug 2014

Bellevue CRC
Bellevue, WA
May 2015 - Aug 2015

Contact:

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kjs023@calvinseminary.edu

Faith Journey

Less than a month after I was born, I was baptized in a Lutheran church in Grand Rapids, MI. Though I obviously have no memory of that day, I know that God was present with me in that moment. In the waters of baptism, God welcomed me into his covenant community and promised that I would belong to him. God has been faithful to his promise.

Growing up in a Christian home, we attended church regularly, and I went to a Christian school. My story growing up does not include a dramatic conversion experience. It was more of a slow and steady process of faith forming practices: hearing stories in children's worship, learning what seemed like countless Bible memory verses, attending youth group retreats, praying before Cross-Country races, and many other moments like that. I am thankful to my parents, teachers, mentors, and pastors for the ways they invested in me, shaping me and encouraging me to grow in faith.

I did not know it at the time, but a significant aspect of my faith formation was learning to play the guitar. I mostly wanted to learn Dave Matthews songs and impress girls (my Cross-Country physique wasn't exactly doing it for me). But God redeemed even those rather ignoble desires, using my love for music to keep me involved in the church. I joined the church's worship team in high school, led worship on campus when I was a student at Calvin College, and music has remained an important part of the ministries God has called me to since then.

For several years after college I wondered if God might be calling me into ministry. I worked at a Christian after school center in Jersey City, New Jersey, then as the director of worship for a church plant in New York. Through these experiences God nurtured my faith and developed within me a deep love for his Church. I believe the Church is God's covenant community, made up of the people he has called and gathered together. I believe he has called his Church to carry on Christ's work of redemption and reconciliation, through the power of the Holy Spirit, in proclaiming the gospel to the world and caring for those who are last and least among us.

My love for the Church, passion for its mission, and, ultimately, God's gentle directing led to me to enroll in seminary in order to pursue ordained ministry. In seminary, I developed a deeper love for God's Word, pouring over the grammar of the original languages and learning the cultural and historical backgrounds of the books of the Bible. I believe God speaks to us in his Word, revealing his plan to redeem all things in Christ. Since graduating from seminary, I've had the joy and privilege of preaching and teaching God's Word, seeing how it shapes our lives as God's people, and how it guides the Church in carrying out God's work of redemption and reconciliation on earth.

God has faithfully directed my life, from before my baptism, through seminary, and now in the candidacy process. I look forward to seeing where God's Spirit leads as I continue this process toward ordination. To God be the glory.

Kyle Sandison

Statement of Reason

I am seeking candidacy because I sense God's call to serve him as a Minister of the Word. More specifically, I sense God's call to serve him as a pastor of a congregation, preaching the Word of the gospel, and also serving the members of the church and the community through pastoral counseling, discipleship, and community engagement. I am seeking candidacy in the CRC because of my faith's "Reformed accent." I deeply appreciate the Reformed emphasis on God's Word, God's sovereignty and grace, the church as God's covenant community, and the Lordship of Christ over all creation.

Kyle Sandison



Name: Ivan K. Santoso

Age: 25

Place of Birth: Surabaya, Indonesia

Colleges & Seminaries Attended:

Purdue University

B.S., 2012

Calvin Theological Seminary

M.Div., 2016

Internships:

Sunrise Community Church,

Austin, TX

June 2014 to July 2014

Visalia CRC - Visalia, CA

June 2015 to August 2015

Languages spoken:

Indonesian

Contact:

765-586-7896

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Faith Journey

My faith journey didn't start when I was born into this world, it had started even earlier. My faith journey had started in eternity past. Before God created anything, he had mysteriously chosen me to be one of his children. God chose me to be one of his children not because of any good that was in me, and for that reason, I absolutely can't boast the fact that I'm one of God's children. God, in his wisdom, mysteriously made me one of his children, I don't know the reason why, and I don't think I will ever know the reason why. One thing I know though, I know that now, as a child of God, it is my privilege and honor to share the Good News from my heavenly Father to the world in need of that Good News.

As regards my faith journey after I was born into this world, I was, one more time, privileged—not because work of my own—to be born into a Christian family, and I'm grateful for that. My parents brought me for baptism when I was still a child, and I am, yet again, grateful for their decision. At my baptism, my parents made a promise before all of God's people to raise me in the Christian faith; but, not just that, at my baptism, God made a promise, when I still couldn't make a promise myself, before his people to adopt me as one of his children and to love me forever from then on. My earthly parents and heavenly Parent—God—both made a promise to raise me in the faith at my baptism, and, indeed, they—God and my parents—have thus far been keeping their promise. By God's grace and by my parents' dedication, I can't remember a time when I didn't believe in God. As a child, I might not yet be able to articulate my love for God as I can do right now, but I always knew that I loved my heavenly Father; and this also was the work of my heavenly Father by his grace, and not my own work.

During my high school years, my love for my heavenly Father grew in one direction. During that time, my faith in God grew intellectually. My appreciation of my heavenly Father grew in terms of my wanting to get to know about him better. During that period, I loved studying and talking about the Bible and theology, and debating about them also sometimes, with my friends. In that season in my life, I grew in my knowledge of who my heavenly Father is.

This exploration in getting to know about God continued for the next several years during my undergraduate studies. At the same time, I started to appreciate more getting to know my heavenly Father, not just with my head, but also with my heart. By God's grace and through the guidance of different mentors, whom God had put in my life, I grew in my intellectual knowledge of God and in my personal relationship with him. I still loved studying the Bible and theology, but I also wanted to get to know God better personally through my study. My intellectual knowledge and personal knowledge of God became more synchronized. It was also during this season of my life that I felt called to ministry. God used both his Spirit within me and people around me to lead me to that conclusion. I accepted God's call for me to go to seminary.

At seminary, my faith journey has been continuing. My call to ministry has been re-affirmed and re-shaped. For the first time, while at the seminary, I sensed a call to parish ministry. I had loved God and his Church, and had felt called to serve and labor in his Church; but I'd

Faith Journey (continued)

felt called to a teaching ministry at a seminary. For the first time at the seminary, I felt called to serve, not only in the Church, but also in a local church. I haven't completely forsaken my call to teach at a seminary, but for the next couple of years after seminary, I'm quite certain that God's now calling me to a parish ministry. In addition, it was also at seminary that I completely realized that nothing, literally nothing, I could do to make God love me less or love me more. God's love for me has been secured, not by what I do, but by what's been done by Christ for me. What God had planned in eternity past was actualized by Christ's work of redemption.

My faith journey hasn't ended yet, and still continues. I don't know what the future holds for me. I know though that he who began a good work in me will carry it on to completion (Phil. 1:6). Wherever I will end up or whatever ministry I will end up in, I'm sure that by myself I will be defeated, but with God, I can walk confidently. Thanks be to God!

Ivan Santoso

Statement of Reason

Even when I still felt called to teach at a seminary (see my Statement of Faith), I felt called to ordination. I believe that being ordained as a minister in Christ's Church will always remind me that my duty is first and foremost to love and serve the Church. I feel called to candidacy and ordination in the Christian Reformed Church very strongly. I've been a part of different denominations in the past; some denominations focus too much on preaching the Gospel through words, while others focus too much on preaching through the Gospel through deeds. The Christian Reformed Church, I believe, offers me a happy medium, emphasizing the importance of both proclaiming and living out the Gospel. For that reason, I've especially felt called to get ordained in the Christian Reformed Church.

Ivan Santoso



Name: Hannah G Saxton

Place of birth: Elmhurst, Illinois

Education:

Grand Valley State University
Allendale, MI

B.A. in Classics, April 2017

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
M.Div., May 2020

Internship:

Mayfair CRC
Grand Rapids, MI
August 2017 - May 2019

Clinical Pastoral Education
at Pine Rest Christian Mental
Health Services
Grand Rapids, MI
May 2018 - August 2018

Contact:

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Faith Journey

I was raised in Holland, Michigan, going to church twice every Sunday. My parents always emphasized the importance of setting aside Sunday for God and spending time in Sabbath rest. Sabbath rest has become something so important and key to my faith life and while I did not always understand what my parents were doing, I am so grateful now for the gift they gave me showing me the importance of Sabbath rest.

My parents were also always actively involved in church and their involvement and love for the church has impacted my love and involvement in church. I grew up in an amazing church community and had so many amazing role models, besides my parents, who showed me what a life of faith looked like. My call to ministry was nurtured and encouraged at church and my love for the Christian Reformed Church was also nurtured at church. Without my church family and without witnessing people love the church, I probably would not have the same love for church and would not be following this call God placed on my life.

God placed this call on my life at a young age. In Elementary school I wanted to be two things when I grew up, a teacher and a pastor. I would alternate what I pretended to be. Some weeks I would teach my stuffed animals or my younger brother and sister the things I had learned in school that day. Other weeks, I would create my own sermons, writing them out and then sharing them with my brother and sister, even making them dress up for my mini church services. I just loved sharing what I had learned and teaching. I loved pretending to teach both in a school and in a church. As I finish this last semester of seminary, I see that God instilled this passion for teaching at such a young age as part of my call. I see God calling me both to serve a church and to a ministry of teaching.

Jesus was so present in my life throughout the ups and downs of middle school and high school. He was there with me when my grandmother died in seventh grade. He helped me through the anxiety and pressure I put on myself all through high school and college. I thank Jesus every day for the love he showed me, for the signs he gave me when I was at my weakest and for the people he placed in my life right when I needed them.

I received my undergraduate degree from Grand Valley State University and my time there was incredibly important for my faith journey and my call into ministry. I was actively involved in Campus Ministry at Grand Valley all throughout college. I was a small group leader from my first semester, and it was a life changing experience. I loved working with College students and diving into scripture with them weekly. I loved being support for them and I loved growing in my faith with other people. It was also a joy to study God's Word so intensely. The only reason I stopped being a leader was because God called me to become a Resident Assistant and I needed to focus on that. Being a Resident Assistant at Grand Valley changed my life. I grew so much through the job and I love being a resource for new students as they take this big, life changing first step in their growth. It solidified in me a desire to work with people and guide them through their life transitions. Being a

Faith Journey (continued)

Resident Assistant aided in my spiritual growth and my call to ministry. It was the last experience I had that led to applying to seminary.

My time at Calvin Theological Seminary has not always been easy but has greatly impacted my spiritual life, and I am so grateful for the last three years there. I began my Master of Divinity degree a week after getting married and the beginning of seminary was a difficult transition. Yet, through it all I sat in God's presence and listened to Him tell me that He loved me, He called me, and He had plans for me. I have not always been certain why God called me to seminary or where He was sending me, but I sat in His presence and listened to Him speak into my life during these last three years. God showed me through my studies at Calvin Theological Seminary that I need to trust and rely more fully on Him. God showed me that I have to let go of the control I think I have on my life and walk out onto the waters when He calls me there.

Hannah Saxton

Statement of Reason

I am seeking candidacy in the Christian Reformed Church because I believe God has called me to love, disciple, and minister to God's people. Whether that is in a church or through further education and teaching, I do not know, but either way I know that God is calling me to seek candidacy and this call has been affirmed by mentors, leaders, and loved ones that God has placed in my life. I am also having my first child at the end of April and desire to be a good example for my child of trusting God and following His call in my life. I sincerely hope that in all I do I am an example of God's love and in following God's call in my life to be an ordained minister I hope to serve Him and others.

Hannah Saxton



Name: Nathaniel A Schmidt

Place of birth: Elk Grove Village, IL

Education:

Calvin College
Grand Rapids, MI
B.A. in English, May 2009

University of Illinois Springfield
Springfield, IL
M.A. of English Literature,
May 2013

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
M. Div., expected August 2020

Internships:

River Rock Church
August 2017 - May 2019

CPE at Pine Rest
October 2019 - March 2020

Contact:

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nathaniel.schmidt86@gmail.com

Faith Journey

A home-schooled only child, my parents took to heart Proverbs 22:6's indictment to "Train up a child in the way he should go." Due to medical reasons, my parents struggled to conceive for over a decade. Hence, my name: Nathaniel – "Gift of God." Grateful for their child and feeling convicted by the words of scripture, my mother, a high school teacher for over 14 years, left her career to raise and educate her son with a foundation in Reformed doctrine and the classical liberal arts. Her endeavors proved successful. To this day, I still love language, literature, and the arts. She also introduced me to faith. I recall sitting on the family room couch beside my mother at 6 years old as she told me that Jesus loved me, died for me, and asked if I would like Jesus to live within my heart. I said "yes."

From such a description, the nature of my childhood faith should be obvious: heavily intellectual and specifically Reformed, academically open-minded but culturally isolationist, and yet one influenced by puritan and evangelical thinking (I grew up 20 minutes away from Willow Creek). Although my faith proved genuine, it remained ignorant of all its cultural influences and assumptions. I also emphasized thinking "like a Christian" over following the Holy Spirit's leading or conforming to Christ's image.

Upon completing high school, I attended Calvin College, where I received my B.A. in English Literature and began writing and publishing for the first time. Immediately upon graduation, I then attended the University of Illinois Springfield where I earned a Master's in English Literature – enabling me to teach rhetoric and poetry as an English professor for the next four years. Nearing the end of my 20's, I had labored and sacrificed to pursue my dream of a life of letters as a poet and professor. I was attempting to create a life of meaning and purpose by my own hands.

God, however, had other plans. One morning, I became violently sick, running a fever and unable to keep any food down. Because of my temperature, I struggled to think coherently. Then, out of nowhere, a thought came to me: "Why do you always laugh off seminary?" I felt distressed. I couldn't answer. Occasionally, others had asked if I would consider seminary, but I never took them seriously. It made sense. Many of my friends were pastors and seminarians, and my poetry reflected a care for the faith. Still, I wanted to do life on my own terms: "Pastors tell people what God does for them; poets tell people why they need a god" I'd quip in response. However, lying by myself on the couch, a glib dismissal wouldn't suffice. I needed an answer.

Over the next several months, my fiancée (now wife) and I began the discernment process. Eventually, we put out our fleece – if God wanted me to attend seminary, he would let me be accepted and open doors for my fiancée to continue her career. Calvin Theological Seminary did accept me, provided noticeable financial support, and Hackley Public Library offered my wife not only a job, but a promotion to head of youth services. Sometimes the Lord speaks loudly.

Now I would love to tell you my time in seminary has been a season of mirth and bliss. It hasn't. Instead, it's proven incredibly painful – and

Faith Journey (continued)

yet strangely good. Like Jonah, God has brought me to contexts where I wouldn't have chosen to go. He's taught me to listen to him and others more so than myself. He's crushed many idols. He's allowed me to witness churches in grief and transition. He's wrestled with me over the pulpit, wanting to use my poetic gifts for the blessing of his people and not my own glory. I've grown in my trust and submission to his good will. While in Clinical Pastoral Education, he's let me serve as a chaplain for people struggling with substance abuse – a subset our of community that I've grown to love deeply. And he's let me witness how he weeps with, heals, and loves his creation. If Calvin is accurate that the "Knowledge of Self leads to knowledge of God," then God has used this season to strip me of my idols, reveal my true self to myself, and ask me "do you love me? – now feed my sheep."

Nathaniel Schmidt

Statement of Reason

This world often proves harsh and cruel, and yet Christ's Spirit continues to hear, weep with, and redeem God's once beautiful creation. Serving in both chaplain and parish ministry contexts, I've found myself loving the people God has made but who now suffer the brokenness of creation. Thus, I desire to care for their spiritual well-being, much like others have cared for me. Additionally, throughout my life, God has used Reformed doctrine, and particularly the Christian Reformed Church of North America, to shape the gift of faith that is his Holy Spirit within me. Thus, I desire to care for God's Word, both within language and manifested in his image bearers, by pursuing ordination within the CRCNA.

Nathaniel Schmidt



Name: Jeremy Scripps

Place of birth: Grand Rapids, MI

Education:

Covenant College
Lookout Mountain, GA
B.A. in History, 2006

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
M.Div., May 2019

Internships:

Oakland CRC
Hamilton, MI
June 2010 - August 2010

Spirit and Truth Fellowship
Philadelphia, PA
July 2011

Pine Grove Community Church
Howard City, MI
November 2018 - January 2019

Contact:

231-301-2823
jscripp6@calvinseminary.edu

Faith Journey

I grew up in the church. Some of my earliest memories were of times spent playing in the parsonage at East Palmyra, NY. I was baptized by my grandfather in that church. I remember learning how to ride a bike in the church parking lot, jumping off from the church sign with my brothers and friends, watching my mom run copies of the church bulletin in our basement, and listening to my dad preach every Sunday. And even though our family moved away from East Palmyra, still, the church was there with me. I remember playing piano for the first time publicly in the church. The church was where I made public profession of my faith in Jesus. It was where I got married and where Hannah and I renewed our vows several years later. It was where my daughter and son were baptized. And it was where I said goodbye to beloved grandparents who went to rest in Jesus.

All this to say, my faith journey has never truly been a solitary one. I've always had a family who walks this road with me. And even though the faces and places have changed, it is always the same body of Christ to which I belong. This body has identified and nourished certain gifts in me as I have grown under her wings.

In 2009, I heard God's call to use these gifts, and to step into my place in the body of Christ. So I enrolled at Calvin Seminary. The route towards ordained ministry has not been a linear pathway to say the least. In the following few years, I struggled, wondering if the call was genuine or if I had made a mistake along the way. In 2011, I broke away from my seminary studies to pursue the issues that God had laid before me. It was a difficult decision and hard times followed. Uncertainty loomed. I worked many different jobs from 2011-2017. We moved to Maryland and then to Florida. Still, the church was a continual presence of God's grace to me and my family no matter where we went. Throughout all those uncertain years, we were never alone. In 2017, God assured me that the call was indeed genuine, and that God's grace was sufficient for me in my weakness. It's difficult to describe what was felt at the time that we moved from Florida back up to Michigan, only that it felt like a homecoming. And the church was there as I graduated from Calvin Seminary in 2019.

Jeremy Scripps

Statement of Reason

I feel called to use the gifts given to me in service to the body of Christ. Through the gifts of preaching and teaching, I long to edify the Body by showing Jesus in everything that is taught. Through administering the sacraments, I long to nourish the Body by giving them Jesus in His body and blood. Through pastoral care, I long to shepherd the Body by being Jesus' presence with them, as they are with me. Through administration of the church, I long to care for her ministries so that whatever is done is for Christ's glory alone. Certainly, by God's grace alone, I long to do all this. That is why I am seeking ordination as a minister of the Word in the CRCNA.

Jeremy Scripps



Name: Mike Slofstra

Place of birth: Chatham, Ontario

Education:

Trinity Western University
Langley, British Columbia
BHKin

University of British Columbia
British Columbia
B.Ed.

Trinity Western University
Langley, British Columbia
M.L.A.

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
M.Div.

Internships:

Sonlight Community CRC
Lynden WA
June 2018 - May 2019

Contact:

360-224-9680
mslofstra@sonlightchurch.com

Faith Journey

Okay, this is gonna sound strange, but I didn't come to a personal, heart-rending and reviving, understanding of the Gospel until I was already a Youth Pastor for several years!

Don't get me wrong; I've known about Jesus all my life. Growing up, my family and church community were filled with role models of faith — I vividly remember doing my profession of faith. I've gone to numerous youth events, sports camps, and retreats where I'd feel the conviction of the Holy Spirit to rededicate my life to the Lord.

So, I'd raise my hand and try again!

But that's just it. All that time, I believed my relationship with Christ was based on who I was. I would never have said it like that, but it's how I operated. I lived as though my salvation hinged on my record. In some ways, I wanted it that way so that I could take the credit! Every time I'd come to a decision about following Christ, I'd think back on all I'd done and try to summon the strength to be a better person. My identity as a Christian and the confidence of my salvation was founded on my own self-righteousness. As much as I was surrounded by the Gospel, I never really got it.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ had not dropped into my heart, so I didn't have the rest found in His unconditional love. Instead, I sought out rest for my soul by gaining the approval of others. From sports to the arts, academics, and religion, I was always looking to earn the next words of affirmation. When I got them, I felt my worth. When I didn't get them, I felt my inadequacy. I was a slave to my idol of approval. It controlled my moods, my motives, and my loves. My eyes were so fixed on my own glory that I couldn't possibly see His. It's still striking to me what I'm willing to put myself through and what I can subject others to in order to feed my need for approval from the world.

I had taken this addiction into my role as a youth pastor — it was a great venue to attract other's words of affirmation! The problem is that their words were never enough. Even when the praise rang in my ears, I had to prove I was worthy the very next day. I didn't openly name my pursuit for their words because I learned from a young age to conceal my arrogance. In fact, I'd become so well versed in the practice I could no longer see my own tendencies. My deep-seated need for the validation of others led me to a sort of ministry crisis. ... The idol I thought I needed most was destroying me from the inside out.

It took a great deal of the Holy Spirit's heart diagnosis — a great deal of repentance — to see my own depravity with clarity. Yet, God has been gracious in rescuing me from myself. Good news can only be good when it invades the dark spaces of our lives — like a doctor bringing relief in the face of tragedy. Jesus Christ has sung over me. He has quieted my idolatrous heart with His love, dispelling my old affections with a new and glorious one. He takes great delight in me, even amid my depravity. This is the power of the Gospel — it transforms lives. The realities of His Gospel are taking up residence in every corner of my life. When He says, "come to me all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest," (Mt 11:28-30) I believe him. I've experienced it! I can testify to it.

Faith Journey (continued)

I'm still a mess! But the struggle is different. The Holy Spirit has exposed my heart, and simultaneously Christ has demonstrated His love. Because of Christ, I am no longer blindly transfixed on the approval of man. I know I have His love. No longer am I bound by the burden of self-righteousness. I know His righteousness is attributed to me. No longer am I ashamed to the point of secrecy about my failures. The Gospel of Jesus Christ reminds me daily that they are not my identity. My worth is rooted in the message of the cross. My status was secured while I was dead in my trespasses and sins. The Gospel of Jesus Christ makes the way from me, and for all, to gaze upon the cross — upon our risen savior — and see hope and rest secured.

Mike Slofstra

Statement of Reason

The Lord called me out of my first profession and into full-time ministry nearly 15 years ago. Since that time, I've been blessed with family and mentors who've affirmed that calling, challenged me, and strengthened my own convictions for ministry. These influences echo what God has impressed upon my own heart. Amid ministry, there is also a weighty joy that encourages me. I am seeking ordination that I may minister to others through the administration of the sacraments and the preaching of His word. Put plainly, I want to be a part of a community that is eager to turn toward God in repentance so that sins can be wiped out and that times of refreshing may come from the Lord (Acts 3:19).

Mike Slofstra



Name: Sharon Smith

Age: 48

Place of Birth: Grand Rapids

Name of Spouse: Rev. Reggie Smith

Number of Children: 3

Colleges & Seminaries Attended:

Calvin College
B.A., 1990

Western Theological Seminary
M.Div., 2016

Calvin Theological Seminary
EPMC, 2016

Internships:

Sustaining Pastoral Excellence,
Grand Rapids, MI
Feb to May 2008

Warm Friends, Holland, MI
May to Aug 2010

Roosevelt Park CRC,
Grand Rapids, MI
Jan to May 2010

Freedom Christian Schools,
Hudsonville, MI
Jan to May 2012

Contact:

616-452-9052
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Faith Journey

I grew up in a strong Christian family in West Michigan. We were very actively involved in our RCA church where I was taught the values of being committed to serving our church and our neighbors. There was a strong emphasis on evangelism and being a witness to unbelievers. I felt the call to ministry at a young age and took it very seriously. I made Public Profession of Faith when I was just 10 years old and began witnessing to my friends and inviting them to church.

I became a leader in my church youth group, played piano on Sundays, and sang in the choir. I volunteered to read the bible to a retired missionary who was blind. She inspired my faith as a single woman who sacrificed much to serve God. Church attendance prepared us to serve during the week. It was a way of life for our family.

My grandmother also had a strong influence on my faith and mentored me on how to read the bible and how to listen to God. She taught me to expect to be transformed every time I read the Word of God. I saw my parents participate in a bi-weekly evangelism effort that welcomed newcomers to our community and witnessed to them and invited them to our church. I began a morning bible study for Christian students in my public high school that continued for seven years.

I felt God's leading in preparing me for ministry and was motivated out of love and gratitude to serve God. Yet, I never imagined ministry beyond being a teacher, nurse, missionary, or pastor's wife. I never saw a woman preach and, although my high school gifts survey suggested I be a pastor, I was not encouraged to follow that.

I chose to attend Calvin College because I wanted to receive more biblical training and prepare for ministry. At the time I did not know the difference between a Christian College and a Bible College. When I learned in my sophomore year that there was no "missions major", I turned my attention towards sociology and social work. I was not interested in being a teacher or a nurse. Through God's leading, I was exposed to urban ministry settings in Chicago and Grand Rapids and discerned that I did not need to leave the US to be a missionary because the nations were coming to us! I felt a clear calling to urban, cross-cultural ministry and followed up with a semester-long internship in Chicago's largest housing project, Cabrini Green.

I met my husband, Rev. Reggie Smith, while he was attending CTS and came to the college to find some African American students who I had become friends with. We were married my senior year and immediately after graduating, we moved to Lawndale to serve for a year at his home church, Lawndale CRC, on Chicago's West Side.

Through the years God moved us to various ministry settings and our family grew. We spent the last 21 years serving at Roosevelt Park Community CRC in Grand Rapids until it's closing in July 2015. I was the founding director of Roosevelt Park Ministries, a Christian Community Development Organization founded out of our church and participated in multiple ministries and worked hard against community violence, drug trafficking, and improving the neighborhood where we lived and

Faith Journey (continued)

purchased our home. I loved what I was doing and felt I was living into my calling as God intended.

Yet, when our youngest two entered school full-time, I became restless. I felt God stirring me to do more. I had tried pursuing my Master's in Social Work a couple times and it was always interrupted. Someone suggested I attend seminary. It had never occurred to me! I applied and was accepted at Western Theological Seminary and chose to go there since the CRC was still undecided about women in office and I was unsure about it myself. I began as a part-time student in 2007 and have continued to grow and discern my gifting and calling to ministry. I have grown tremendously and my calling has been confirmed in multiple ways. I am so thankful for this journey that God has taken me on and look forward to what He has planned for my future!

Sharon Smith

Statement of Reason

I am seeking candidacy to become a Minister of the Word in the CRCNA. I have been a member of the CRCNA my entire adult life, beginning with my college years when I began attending Madison Square Church. I have many strong relationships within our Classis that have been nurtured through an annual Pastor and Spouse Retreat. I have many close relationships with other pastor spouses from my internship and volunteer board experience with Sustaining Pastoral Excellence in planning and attending several bi-annual Spouses Conferences and through small groups. Although I attended Western Theological Seminary, I am firmly planted in the CRC and our longevity in Grand Rapids has allowed me to develop many personal relationships that I value greatly. I am seeking candidacy in order to perform the duties that come with being a Minister of the Word and hope to use my pastoral gifts more fully in caring for others.

Sharon Smith



Name: Lynn Song

Place of birth: Seoul, South Korea

Languages spoken: English, Korean

Education:

Hankuk University of Foreign
Studies,
Seoul, South Korea
Bachelor of Laws

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
M.Div.

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
Th.M, December 2019

Internships:

Han-bit CRC
Rochester, MI
April 2016 - May 2019

Contact:

202-390-9732
ls021@calvinseminary.edu

Faith Journey

I grew up in a devout Christian family in South Korea. My parents have been in ministry since before I was born and thanks to their example I grew up loving God and his church.

One of the earliest and most significant events that influenced my faith and my calling to ministry was my experience living in South Africa for four years when our family moved there briefly as my father did his theological studies in Stellenbosch. I was young, but I learned much about the world, both its beauty, which I found in nature, and its ugliness, which I found in the remnants of Apartheid. On one hand I felt deep appreciation for God his created world, but on the other, I also felt confused about suffering that people went through in this world.

Returning to Korea as a middle school student, it was just academics until I entered college. I went to church where my parents ministered to, but didn't really have much time to ponder about the questions that I had about faith and the world. But things changed after I did my military service and met a pastor who had just come to our church to lead our young adults group. Before meeting him I guess I was a pretty naïve Christian who thought that going to church regularly, leading a good, moral life, and telling others about Jesus was all there's to Christianity.

But as I learned about the Kingdom of God, how beautiful and magnificent it is in contrast to the worldly empires, and how as its citizens we Christians ought to live in the way of life, love, peace and justice, I could see that we really had much more to do than what I had thought and also how a lot of us were in the dark from knowing how we ought to live. So from then on, a sense of urgency of mission was engrained in me, as I felt obliged to tell others about the Kingdom of God, and to work with my brothers and sisters for the Kingdom of God.

And that has led me to want to be educated properly in theology to know more and better about God and his kingdom. I met my wife around then who was feeling the same yearning for theological education and we have been blessed to come to the United States and study theology at Calvin Theological Seminary. What I am especially grateful is that my time at CTS not only increased my knowledge about God and his kingdom, but also helped me to grow so much in character. I came to CTS as this raw person who was passionate about God but also very angry and upset about the world. But I'm thankful that through the things I learned and the experiences I had I was able to mature more and begin my path to acquiring a more Christ-like personality.

Now, God has set me on the path of parish ministry. I'm not sure how he will lead me on that path despite all the complications and difficulties that I face, but I have faith that he will use me and my family for his glory, as I seek first his kingdom and his righteousness.

Lynn Song

Statement of Reason

I am applying for candidacy because judging from how the Holy Spirit has been faithfully guiding me through my life, I believe that I've been called by him to ordained ministry as a Minister of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church. To God's faithfulness, I also want to respond faithfully, dedicating myself to edifying of the Body of Christ that is the Church, through sound preaching of the Word of God and administration of the sacraments. My wish is that through it I will be able to contribute to expanding the Kingdom of God and help people who suffer from all the tribulation and injustice of this world to find hope in Christ.

Lynn Song



Name: Joshua Stammers

Place of birth: Greenville, North Carolina

Education:

Trinity Christian College
Palos Heights, IL
Bachelors Business -
Communications,
Theology, 2017

Calvin Theological Seminary,
Grand Rapids, MI
MDiv., May 2020

Internships:

Monroe Community Church
Grand Rapids, MI
Sept. 2017 - May 2019

Contact:

219-776-1883
jps037@calvinseminary.edu

Faith Journey

I was born and raised in a Christian Reformed home, baptized as an infant, and grew up with two brothers in Northwest Indiana. For the first many years of my faith, I never really understood the importance of church. In fact, it seemed like a waste of a perfectly relaxing Sunday morning! I also didn't understand the importance of other things in Christianity—prayer, devotions, serving. It all seems like strict rules to keep me from living life how I wanted to. But all of that began to change, as I learned that Jesus isn't just a rule-maker, but our loving Savior. But at that time, I followed Jesus out of fear of what may happen if I don't. Above all, I wanted to escape God's punishment, so I felt forced into accepting Jesus.

But my faith continued to evolve in middle school. Time and again, I was challenged by the notion that "If my parents weren't Christian, I wouldn't be a Christian." I also came to realize that remarkably few people get the privilege of private, Christian education—the kind I've had. So I spent the next years finding new approaches to faith. Why am I really a Christian? I didn't want to go forward with a faith I inherited from my family or school, but I wanted to live with a faith that was my own. I continued to develop my faith throughout high school, and finally got some answers. In junior year, I went on a missions trip to Portland, OR with a program from Calvin Seminary called Facing Your Future (now called Dig). I got an opportunity to serve in homeless ministry there, and it changed my perspective on what a Christian life really looks like. We had a chance to truly serve "the least of these," and it gave me a new heart for the impoverished of our land. I had the opportunity to see God move in me, the team, and in those I served.

I came away from that missions trip with a new passion—to use my skills and talents to serve something that will last forever—the Kingdom of God. I have also been blessed with incredible pastors who have impacted my life with a godly kindness. I wanted to have that impact on people wherever I go. College helped me find those skills and develop them to prepare myself for the future. I went to Trinity Christian College wanting to be a pastor, double-majoring in business communications and theology. Pastors need to know how to communicate well and the basics of running a business. Because of this double-major, I am better equipped for ministry than I was before.

And by the grace of God, I've overcome the rigorous work of college and was accepted into Calvin Seminary. The classes were enlightening, but I was most thankful for the field work at Monroe Community Church, where I got to enact what I learned in classrooms. I also saw more and more what a pastor's life is really like day-to-day. Thanks to the support from places I've served, I feel empowered in my call as a minister. I now look forward to graduating this spring, ready and willing to serve the Kingdom of God wherever He calls me!

Joshua Stammers

Statement of Reason

God has transformed and developed me into someone confident in his faith, and ready to serve others for it. I didn't go through this transformation on my own, though; I had great mentors I could look up to throughout my journey. I want to serve as a guiding mentor for people seeking a deeper faith. The CRC is a denomination with a reputation for sound theology and wise pastors. I want to spiritually guide others with the knowledge and integrity for which the CRC is known.

I first felt the call to ministry in high school, when I went on a missions trip to Portland for homeless ministry. It was there that I found out just how important "the least of these" are to God. After sharing the gospel and hearing all different kinds of stories, I left with a passion to continue serving "the least of these" however I could. Soon after that, I learned that I had a gift for preaching, and I wanted to use that talent for God's kingdom. I devoted most of my college studies to theology in order to better understand the God I will serve. But discipleship isn't secluded in the walls of a church-building. I also used my time in college to learn business-communications. I want to make those skills and knowledge captive to the will of Christ in my life.

Throughout those years, I've witnessed a radical cultural shift in the CRC. I believe I am not the only one transforming in church life, either; it appears the CRC is transforming as a whole to adapt to our context. I want to be a pastor that brings modern-day relevance and importance to the CRC traditions.

Joshua Stammers



Name: Christopher Tibben

Place of birth: Winchester, Ontario

Education:

Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario
Bachelors of History and Law,
2016

Calvin Theological Seminary,
Grand Rapids, MI
M.Div., May 2020

Internships:

Blythefield CRC
Rockford, MI
September 2017 - May 2019

Contact:

616-406-5538
cat063@calvinseminary.edu

Faith Journey

I grew up in a very Christian environment. I came from a family that went to church every Sunday, attended Christian school from first grade to the end of high school. I went through the motions of Sunday school, Catechism classes, and my Profession of Faith. My faith was important to me, but it was never challenged. I was very safe in my community. All of that changed when I went away from home to attend university in Eastern Canada just a few hours away. It was a public, secular university and it was where I finally understood what it means to be a Christian in the world today. It was the first time I was different from everyone else. I was the oddity. I was the one who believed in things both students and professors considered ridiculous and outdated.

My faith was tested at that school, but it was also one of the things that sustained me away from home. It was where I came to see that I was going to be committed to God wherever I went. This became even clearer when I went from job to job; unsure of what exactly I wanted to do. I hopped from idea to idea: politics, psychology, law, and history. I worked in a factory in the meantime, trying to save up money for whatever I wanted to try next. I didn't have any fresh ideas until 3am during a twelve hour night shift. I was nine hours into this shift; my brain had almost shut off completely as I carried on my work. Funny enough, it was in that moment when I suddenly had the thought to consider seminary. I had never really thought about it before. My mom has always said I was a good speaker and could probably preach, but that was as far as it ever went for me.

This is where my journey into ministry unexpectedly began. I started to talk to my pastors and spiritual leaders about whether or not I should take the leap. They were very helpful in guiding me towards making the final decision that brought me here. I followed where God called and quickly signed up for attendance at Calvin seminary late in the summer. By grace I was allowed in late and began my classes within months. I was now in seminary with the intention of being a 'classic' parish minister. However, even that became clouded as I once again felt confused and lost. Even within ministry, there are countless opportunities and options. I can happily say I have reached a point where I still don't know where God will eventually lead me, but in prayerful submission I know He has called me for a reason. Of all the things I learned in seminary, trusting God and giving Him a life of service is the most important. It is the most wonderful feeling to have hope in the face of uncertainty. This was always my struggle but God has a way of shaping us over lifetimes.

Chris Tibben

Statement of Reason

I am seeking ordination into the Christian Reformed Church in order to follow God's guidance and calling in my life. I want to be able to show others the grace and hope that our God offers His people. This is especially true in the moments of despair that I have seen in my short time in ministry. When we are able to simply be present in peoples' lives, the Holy Spirit can fill us and share God's mercies. I still have much to learn about this and I am sure I will make mistakes along the way. But I know that God has brought me this far, and He will bring me further. If I can be present in the lives of those who are suffering and bring even one to Christ, then I will have considered my ministry worth it all.

Chris Tibben



Name: Rebecca Tjapkes

Place of Birth: Antigo, Wisconsin

Colleges & Seminaries Attended:

Calvin College

B.A. Psychology, B.S.W.
(Social Work), 1992

Calvin Theological Seminary
M.Div., 2018

Internships:

Pine Rest Christian Mental
Health Services
Grand Rapids, Michigan
May 2016 - August 2016

Calvin CRC
Grand Rapids, Michigan
June 2017 – August 2017

Church of the Servant
Grand Rapids, Michigan
August 2017 – April 2018

Contact:

616-843-1313
becky@zmagnet.com

Faith Journey

I am an only child of a single mother, but we made the best of it. Looking back over my life, I can see God working from the beginning. From as long as I remember, church was a big part of my life. I grew up in a different denominational background. I remember learning to love God early in life and giving my life to him at an early age. But the tradition I grew up in, had a large emphasis on guilt and condemnation. So, while I loved Jesus, there was a healthy amount of fear and wondering if I was good enough. But through all of this, my mom taught me how important prayer is. We prayed in all situations; if the car broke down, if we were sick, if we were afraid, if we were thankful, before leaving on a trip. She taught me that we could talk to God anytime and any place. But having no father figure in my life, made it difficult to relate to God as a loving Father.

As I went off to college, God led me to Calvin where I majored in psychology initially and later adding social work. It was at college that my faith really began to become my own. I began to learn about God's grace and love. I began to seek out time with God because I wanted to know him more, not because I thought I had to in order to earn his approval. But I still struggled to understand how much he really loved me.

After my husband Paul and I were married, I joined the CRC and became involved in various ministries of the church such as Stephen's Ministry, women's Bible study, various youth ministry roles and discipleship ministry. God continued to work through these years. He showed me who he was and who I was in him. But, I still had difficulty really grasping God's love for me. I still thought I had to earn it in some way by being good enough. I began to get a better sense of his love for me when I had children. As I looked down at them in the middle of the night, I was filled with love for them. And I realized that, the love I had for my children, was just a fraction of the love that God has for me.

Then about six years ago, I was studying Ephesians. For the first time, it hit me that God had chosen me before the foundation of the world. As I continued that study, I came to Ephesians 2:10 "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." As I pondered that, along with the fact that God had chosen me and had a purpose for me, I began to have a sense that he had something more for me to do than my current work as a budget counselor at a Christian non-profit agency. I didn't know what at that time.

Later that summer, my pastor asked me to help lead a discipleship ministry at our church. As I prepared for this new role, I began to learn how Jesus led his disciples and to put these principles into practice in my own life. God began to change me. I found my eyes opening to the spiritual struggles going on in the lives of the clients I was meeting on a daily basis at work. God used this and people in my life to lead me to seminary. At first, I had all sorts of reasons why this couldn't work. The timing seemed all wrong. This was such a big change for me at this point in my life. What would it mean for our family for me to change careers and become a pastor? Also, we had teenagers who would be going to college in a few years. How could we manage all of it?

Faith Journey (continued)

God has been faithful. My faith has grown through my time at seminary. With each challenge, God has met me every step of the way. I have learned more about God and the Bible. I have also learned about myself. I have learned that sometimes God calls us to difficult tasks, but he doesn't leave us alone. He gives us his strength to see them through.

The more I learn about Jesus, the more I love him. How he could have lived here on earth for 33 years, giving up the glory of heaven and taking on the pain of human existence and still remaining free from sin never ceases to amaze and awe me. Then he died so that we could live and belong to him forever. I am not my own and I am wholeheartedly willing and ready to live for him.

Rebecca Tjapkes

Statement of Reason

It is with great joy and humility that I seek candidacy in the Christian Reformed Church. I believe that God has called me and equipped me for this ministry. It is only through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit that I can answer this call. I have a passion for helping people to become whole-hearted disciples of Christ, who have a full understanding of their identity as children of God. I believe that God has given me abilities to guide people into deeper relationships with God through teaching, preaching and pastoral care. The CRC has become my spiritual home, and I am excited to see what God has in store for this denomination. I pray that he will use me in some way as we serve him together.

Rebecca Tjapkes



Name: Steven Vandyk

Place of birth: Hamilton, Ontario

Education:

NAIT

Edmonton, Alberta

Avionics Engineering

Technology, Certificate, 2008

Rocky Mountain College

Calgary, Alberta

Leadership Development

Degree, 2014

Calvin Theological Seminary

Grand Rapids, MI

May 2020

Internships:

Pastoral Internship

First CRC

Red Deer, Alberta

Summer of 2018 - 10 weeks

Cross Cultural Internship

Grand Rapids, MI

Inner City Christian Federation

Sept 2018 - May 2019

Contact:

616-426-2204

smvandyk@gmail.com

Journey of Faith

The Lord loves me, and I am his. I see him around me and working through me. Especially when I look back on my journey and see the amount of times that God was guiding me through different situations and leading me to special people. I praise God that through all of my life He has been faithful and gracious to me.

My journey begins as a child of a pastor in the CRC. I grew up in a Christian home, church on Sunday and catechism during the week. I grew to understand that Jesus loved me and I started to serve in the church; nursery, sound, VBS, and more. Growing up I was a good pastor's kid at church but during the week I drifted. I lived a two part existence for a number of years, but God kept holding on to me. He would not let me go.

For me a mission trip to Mexico was the beginning of a life transformative experience. It was in the late end of grade 11 that my church partnered with other local churches and sent 24 grade 10, 11, and 12 students to Juarez Mexico. My eyes were opened to Christians around the world. I was struck with the amount of joy that the Christians there had even with so little material wealth. It changed everything. I started to change how I was living and with that started doing a lot better in school, and taking faith seriously. Not that it was a fairytale from that point to ministry, but it was the foundation.

The long road to seminary had begun without me knowing it. After high school I worked Airplane electronics for 5 years, while leading bible studies in my Dad's church, and playing bass guitar in the praise band. But I was itching for adventure, so at 22 year old I drove across Canada. I discovered a lot about myself and God, who, after the trip brought me to a small bible school in Calgary. This is where I spent two formative years. Growing in Bible knowledge and theological training. It was there that I could hear God's whisperings, and where I told the first people that I was felt drawn to ministry. But I knew in my heart that I was not quite ready for seminary. So I looked for a nice stepping stone job into ministry and God sent me something that was right up my alley. But it wasn't in a church, it was in a Christian School. I worked maintenance at Calgary Christian School for 3 years. Fixing all manner of things and learning all kinds of skills along the way. A large chunk of my work was being in charge of 25 student workers that were employed to clean the school. I was able to share my faith with these students, and often the students would come to us with their problems and questions. It was the perfect job for me to transition to ministry. My faith grew and I was molded by the wonderful men of God that I worked beside in the maintenance division. I grew in skills and faith. Now after four years of seminary I have been able to add to my skills and my faith, a knowledge and confidence that I am truly loved by the Lord, and called to serve his people.

Steve Vandyk

Statement of Reason

My name is Steve Vandyk and I seek ordination in the Christian Reformed Church. The call on my life has been constant and affirmed by the experiences that God has put me through before and during seminary. I am convinced that God is calling me to lead in a Pastoral capacity in the Christian Reformed Church. It is where my Dad, and my Opa served, and where God is leading me to serve. God has called me to be a servant leader for His people in His church. I am grateful for the work the Christian Reformed Church continues to do in the discernment of how to live as a Christian in an ever changing world. I wish to be a part of the exciting work that God is doing with his people here in North America and around the world.

Steve Vandyk



Name: Thomas J. Van Wyk

Age: 63

Place of Birth: Chicago, IL

Name of Spouse: Edna

Number of Children: 2

Colleges & Seminaries Attended:

University of the State
of New York
B.S., 1990

Governors State University
1993-1996

Calvin Theological Seminary
M.Div., 2016

Internships:

Kelloggsville CRC,
Kentwood, MI
May 2015 to Jan 2016

Contact:

616-323-3613
tom@vanwyk.us

Faith Journey

I grew up in the CRC in Chicago, IL, went to Christian schools and attended church and Catechism classes. I came to faith during those formative years, but I struggled during and after High School. I dropped out of college before completing my first semester, worked as a carpenter, and then joined the Navy (it was the last year of the draft lottery and the U.S. was still fighting in Viet Nam). I began what I now call the Jonah phase of my life. The sheltered life of Church, Christian schools, etc. left me ill prepared to defend my faith in a secular culture. I never totally abandoned my belief in God, but wandered from active practice of my faith.

I served as a Nuclear Reactor Operator on a submarine (big mechanical fish) and got married just before completing my 6-year enlistment. (We've now been married 38 years). After my honorable discharge, I worked as a Control Systems Engineer in the Nuclear Power industry for over 35 years.

Through various problems (family and other), God regained my attention. Since I did not pay attention to the gentle nudges, He increased the intensity of the pressure, and I returned to active faith. Since then I have: served as a Deacon in the CRC, taught Catechism, studied Counseling at the graduate level, led small group Bible studies, studied Apologetics at the graduate level, served as an elder in a nondenominational church (with a CRC ordained pastor), where I was ordained into pastoral ministry via Christian Leaders Institute. I pastored a small church plant for eight months until it had to close due to zoning ordinance issues and financial struggles in the sponsoring church. The experience strengthened my awareness of my call.

My wife and I had previously helped a CRC church plant in New Lenox, IL led by a (then) new CTS M.Div. graduate named Jul Medenblik. Later, when I began to feel a call to full time ministry, I went to Pastor Jul for advice, and he provided wise advice. So when the church plant I pastored shut down, I knew I wanted to explore the paths to being ordained in a denomination (preferable CRCNA), and I contacted Jul Medenblik to see if getting into the M.Div. program at CTS was even possible. I was encouraged when he quickly got me in touch with Admissions, and I applied to the M.Div. program and was admitted. I ended my full-time employment in August 2013 to attend Calvin Theological Seminary full time beginning Fall Semester 2013. I am now nearing graduation, candidacy, and the prospect of ordination. My time at seminary has been a time of continued spiritual formation, a time of affirmation in my calling, and a time to form new relationships with my fellow students who will be the next generation of faithful CRC pastors. I have been encouraged in all of this.

God never left or forsake me. My experience confirms that you cannot run from God, and you cannot mess your life up beyond the reach of His redeeming love and grace. He is able to redeem even the dark times of our lives for His glory.

Thomas Van Wyk

Statement of Reason

I am seeking candidacy and ordination as a Minister of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in obedience to God. Having strived to imitate Jonah for a time in my younger years, He gently and firmly led me back to a life of faith – the faith I was taught growing up in the CRC. After returning to the CRC, the still small voice of His call increased in volume as my faith grew. It continued its crescendo as I pursued deeper personal intimacy with Him, and out of gratitude served in different church roles (teacher, deacon, small group leader, elder. . .). I thought the crescendo had peaked when I was ordained as a pastor (bi-vocational) in a non-CRC church. But no, His choreography of the dance of my faith journey continued. The next movement was completing the M.Div. program at CTS and seeking ordination in the CRC. As this movement closes, I know nothing of His plan for the next. Care to join the dance?

Thomas Van Wyk



Name: Femke Visser-Elenbaas

Place of Birth: Groningen,
The Netherlands (NL)

Colleges & Seminaries Attended:
Protestant Theological
University, Kampen, NL
B.A., 2007

Utrecht University, Utrecht, NL
Th.M., 2013

Protestant Theological
University, Utrecht, NL
M.Div., 2013

Calvin Theological Seminary
J-Term, 2013
EPMC, 2017

Internships:

St. Joseph's Healthcare,
Hamilton, ON
Clinical Pastoral Education
September 2014 - April 2015

St. Catharines General Hospital,
St. Catharines, ON
Clinical Pastoral Education
September 2015 - May 2016

Languages spoken:

Dutch, German

Contact:

1-289-887-2201
visser.elenbaas@gmail.com

Faith Journey

I grew up with the Christian faith in The Netherlands. I was born into a traditional Christian (Reformed) family and raised at home, school and church with biblical stories, prayers, rituals and Christian music. I enjoyed going to church. Attuned to God's presence in worship. I was an inquisitive child. My parents were and still are active members in the church and town community where I grew up. They modeled for me that faith in Christ is nourished in daily devotions and calls us to serve others. I see in my upbringing and my own Christian identity clearly two strands of the Reformed tradition: the pietist and transformationalist approaches.

As an 8-year old I felt for the first time invited by Christ to follow Him during an interdenominational Summer camp. Since then, I have experienced at a few other cross points in my life Christ's invitation to follow Him. These moments were accompanied by a great sense of freedom (grace), love (for God and people) and a longing to follow. I continue to reflect on and be nourished by these gifts of faith. Both rootedness in a local congregation and exposure to other Christian traditions (mainly Pentecostal, Baptist and evangelical branches) were part of my upbringing. The context I grew up in was a secular context, something I experienced in the school systems as well as in my church. Personal faith was not easily talked about and highly personal. As a teenager, I desired to gain a greater understanding of God and of the diversity within Christianity. Upon reflection, I think that this desire was fueled by my search for my own Christian identity and relationship with God.

This led me to study theology at the Protestant Theological University in Kampen, affiliated with the Protestant Church in The Netherlands (PCN). I felt led by the Holy Spirit in my decision making. The story of Abraham became very significant. He was called out of the place where he was rooted to the land God promised him. I also felt called 'out of something' into 'something new', and by faith I went. Becoming a pastor was not my aim. I had grown up in a church tradition that has ordained women since the 80's, but I had only been ministered to by senior male pastors, did not know personally any women in public leadership roles, and so I could not envision myself as a pastor. At that time, I certainly did not anticipate being declared a candidate for ministry in the PCN in 2014, let alone being called out of my country, to one day be a candidate in the CRC in North-America.

Between 2003 and 2013 I found myself in a rich and humbling time of academic, spiritual and personal (trans)formation and growth through studies, new friendships, living in an intentional Christian community, experiences of death and loss, involvement in church and society in The Netherlands and abroad. It was during my internship in a local congregation in Heerhugowaard in 2011, however, that I discovered a deep joy in leading in worship, preaching and providing pastoral care. I experienced God's compassion for the people I was working with, while at the same time feeling the pain of brokenness in Christian life and community. My giftedness and call to Christian ministry were affirmed by others. I had and still have great mentors on my journey, friends, professors, pastors, chaplains, who encouraged me on my vocational journey.

Faith Journey (continued)

A new chapter in my life began when I immigrated to Hamilton, Ontario, with my American husband, in response to his call from Immanuel CRC in 2014. Major life changes that were only possible by God's grace, support of loved ones and great hospitality. I continued my vocational discernment process with extensive Clinical Pastoral Education at two local hospitals. Two core ideas of the Reformed tradition are particularly significant in this part of my faith journey: that of God's faithfulness to His people—anywhere in this world—and that I ultimately belong to Christ and not to myself. This gives me a place to rest, be secure and known in this and in each new ministry context I am called to.

Femke Visser-Elenbaas

Statement of Reason

I understand my seeking candidacy in the Christian Reformed Church as a response to the Spirit's prompting in years of discernment toward ordained ministry. At this point in my life, I experience (hospital) chaplaincy as my vocational home. Serving as a hospital chaplain in the past few years, I have felt the desire for ordination strongest at the bedside of those who are nearing the end of their lives and for whom prayers and blessing were requested. I also recognize that as a chaplain, I represent for a lot of people (Christians and non-Christians), the spiritual dimension of life, the realm of faith and of meaning-making and also the community of the church. I seek to humbly journey with people through embodying, communicating and witnessing of God's care, love and grace which makes me not seldom stand 'on sacred ground' in the (hospital) community entrusted to me. I view ordination therefore as a recognition and affirmation of this priestly dimension of my work as chaplain.

My theological formation (mainly in the institutions from the Protestant Church in The Netherlands) and vocation has shaped my Christian identity profoundly and I would say that I am ecumenical at heart. I am deeply grateful for this. Since I believe that God's Spirit has prepared me through this for being able to adjust, love and serve in the new context of the CRCNA. The journey into the CRCNA is deepening my own Reformed roots and continues to reveal the theological richness of this tradition. Although I find much joy in reading up on theology, it is through the hospitality I have received and through partaking in the Christian fellowship in the CRCNA (on local, classical and denominational levels), that I have come to feel at home in this denomination. I continue to meet brothers and sisters who seek to follow Christ in their neighborly love and love for the Triune God. Therefore, I want to be held accountable to this expression of the body of Christ in my work as a chaplain through ordination into the office of Minister of the Word.

Femke Visser-Elenbaas



Name: Nathan Voss

Place of birth: Elmhurst, IL

Education:

Mid-America Reformed
Seminary
Dyer, IN
M.Div., May 2019

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
EPMC, 2020

Internships:

Borculo CRC
Zeeland, MI
June 2017 - Aug 2017

First CRC
South Holland, IL
May 2018 - June 2018

Orland Park CRC
Orland Park, IL
July 2018 - August 2018

Contact:

630-815-8546
natevoss93@gmail.com

Faith Journey

I grew up in the western suburbs of Chicago and was the youngest of five with two older brothers and two older sisters. I cannot express how influential my family was on my upbringing, and I am thankful that God blessed me with each one of them, using them all to shape my life. I have been a member of the CRC my whole life, and I have a deep appreciation for the Reformed heritage it contains.

I grew up with an interest in many things such as sports, reading, cars, etc. Along with those more typical interests, I became very interested in theology. Some of this interest came simply from my family and growing up in a Christian household. I desired to understand and seek answers to many of life's questions. This desire was greatly fed when I read the book *Chosen by God* by R. C. Sproul and saw how logical and deep God's word truly is. I also found a deep love in listening to sermons. These interests and desires, coupled with the guidance of others, caused me to consider ministry.

I completed a Bachelor of Arts in History online through Thomas Edison State University in two years so that I might attend Reformation Bible College in Sanford Florida where I earned a Bachelor of Arts in Biblical and Theological studies. Throughout this process I continued to sense God's call to ministry not only internally but also through the words of professors, friends, and family who encouraged me to continue to pursue it. I then attended Mid-America Reformed Seminary in Dyer, IN, where I received my Master of Divinity.

My faith journey is nothing more than a story of God's Covenant faithfulness to His people. As early as I can remember, I was taught to believe in God and His word, and, by His grace, I grew up knowing the Gospel, assenting to its truth, and trusting in Jesus as the only source of salvation. As I grow, I continue to see God's steadfast love. I trust in the infallible and inerrant word of God which reveals not only how sinful I am but how gracious God is. There truly is only one reason to live and that is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

Nathan Voss

Statement of Reason

I seek ordination within the Christian Reformed Church because I believe that God has called me to ministry. I have spent my whole life in the CRC, and I desire to help and serve those within it. I seek ordination in the CRC because I believe that God's word is the only source that reveals the path to salvation in Jesus Christ, and I desire to proclaim that message to all people. I also seek ordination in the CRC because I believe that its doctrine expressed in the three Ecumenical Creeds and explained in the Three Forms of Unity accurately interpret God's word. I believe the CRC, as in every church, needs to receive the message and grace of God's word. As Romans 10:14-15a says, "How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent?"

Nathan Voss



Name: Chad Werkhoven

Place of birth: Pomona, California

Colleges & Seminaries Attended:

Cal Poly State University
San Luis Obispo, CA
B.S., Agricultural Engineering
Technology, 1994

Reformed Theological Seminary
Orlando, FL
M.Div., expected June 2019
Calvin Theological Seminary
EPMC

Internships:

Sunnyside CRC
Sunnyside, WA
Nov 2017 - June 2019

Contact:

(509)-839-2423
preacher1349@gmail.com

Faith Journey

My life can be described as what some have deemed a ‘covenant conversion,’ in that throughout my life I have known Christ. This comes as a result of a solid Christian home, church upbringing, and Christian education.

In some respects my call to ministry has taken place over the last 30 years. There was always a small part of me that was interested in vocational ministry during my high school and college years, but circumstances and other opportunities kept vocational ministry out of reach. Already while I was in college, I found an outlet in which I could experience the aspect of being in ministry which I enjoy the most-teaching doctrine. I have taught classes now almost every year since to just about every age group. I also had several opportunities to serve on our church council, both as an elder and a deacon.

I had always been interested in theology, so when Reformed Theological Seminary (RTS) began their ‘virtual campus’ years ago, I began taking the classes, mostly just for my own benefit and edification. As the credits starting stacking up, it was evident that I had a knack for it.

While I certainly felt an internal call to the ministry, I was a bit frustrated that I never experienced an explicit external call. In my mind, an external call was somebody out of the blue coming up to me and saying that I needed to drop what I was doing and go into full time ministry. People would often joke that sooner or later I would be the *dominee*, but I think people just assumed I was where God was calling me since we had a successful business.

Soon just teaching catechism classes was not enough to fill my appetite. I asked our council to recommend me to our classis for a license to exhort within our classis churches, mostly for pulpit supply. I received the license, and began preaching in our own church and neighboring churches. My sermons were well received, and it was after the second or third experience that I made arrangements to begin the RTS M.Div program. Both our local church and classis have been very supportive of this, and have also helped me with funds for tuition.

It did not take long for it to become obvious that I could not run a business, fire station, raise a family, prepare sermons and catechism lessons, and keep up with RTS classes all at the same time. My dad was nearing retirement, and it was very clear to me I did not want to continue in business, so we began the process of winding the business down. My plan was to get it sold off or liquidated in some form, and then do some consulting work or other part time job while I concentrated on finishing the mDiv so I would be ready for full time ministry.

A few months ago, right as we were beginning to wrap things up in the business, God opened the next door in my ministry. A full time staff position opened up right in the church our family had been attending for decades, and I was blessed to be selected for that position, which has enabled me to experience nearly every facet of pastoral ministry. This also meant another exam from our classis, this time for the designation of Commissioned Pastor.

Faith Journey (continued)

Throughout this process I have been blessed to have the full support of my wife and four daughters, as well as my parents. We are all very much looking forward to where the Lord will call us next on this ministry journey.

Chad Werkhoven

Statement of Reason

I am seeking candidacy within the Christian Reformed Church because I recognize God's calling in my life to serve Him as a Minister of the Word. I have been privileged to enjoy a twenty five year career in business and the fire service, and I look forward to seeing how God will use me as a vocational minister. I am deeply committed to the doctrines of Reformed theology, and one of the key reasons I seek ordination in the CRC is because of its commitment to being a confessional church. The CRC has been a tremendous blessing in my life, having provided the ecclesiastical foundation for our family going back several generations. I have greatly enjoyed working as a Commissioned Pastor, and look forward in reliance on God's providence as I move forward as a Minister of the Word.

Chad Werkhoven



Name: Cory B. Willson

Place of birth: Sonora, California

Education:

Cal Poly State University
B.S. in Business, 2000

Cal Poly State University
Masters of Business
Administration, 2002

Fuller Theological Seminary
M.Div., 2009

Joint Ph.D. from Fuller
Theological Seminary & Vrije
Universiteit Amsterdam
Ph.D. Theology of Culture
(Fuller 2015) and Ph.D.
Systematic Theology
(Vrije Universiteit 2016)

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
EPMC, 2020

Internships:

Pastoral Intern
Grace Brethren Church of
Long Beach
November 2004 - July 2005

Pastoral Practicum
Grace Brethren Church of
Long Beach
August 2005 - June 2008

Contact:

805-748-2638
cbwillson@calvinseminary.edu

Faith Journey

I grew up in a non-denominational church and my “conversion” to Reformed theology came late in college while I was pastoring young adults. During this time I was in search of deeper theological roots to ground my faith and ministry in God’s sovereign grace and to provide resources for Christian discipleship in the public square. It was during this time that I came across Tim Keller’s reasoned and gracious communication of Reformed theology and I devoured everything I could find from him. It wasn’t until I encountered Richard Mouw at Fuller Seminary that I was exposed to Kuyper and Bavinck and the Dutch Reformed tradition quickly became my theological home. Other than a two-year stint with a Tim Keller-inspired church plant, I have been in non-denominational churches working more as an “ambassador” bringing Reformed theology to evangelicals in search of theology to ground their commitments to evangelism, social action, and culture-making.

In my first fifteen years in ministry I focused on college and young adults. Within this context, I found myself engaging the intellectual questions that arise as students appropriate their faith outside the bounds of their parent’s supervision. Questions related to the relationship between science and faith were prominent, but so were the existential heart issues related to desires and fears pertaining to dating and marriage, academic majors and future careers, as well as working through forgiveness and family of origin issues. Engaging these questions is the form that mission and evangelism took on in my experience ministering with students.

These experiences deeply impacted me and taught me to attend to the pragmatic and pastoral needs underlying the cognitive questions of others. It also alerted me to the reality that for many people their struggles with coming to faith and growing in Christ are often related to the tangible ways in which the Christian faith must address the lived realities of their lives. While in no way undermining the value of doctrine I came to see the value of the pastoral approach of Heidelberg 1 compared to the more theoretical starting point of the Westminster Shorter Catechism. While some people’s journey to faith may begin with the meta-questions such as “what is the chief end of man?” there are just as many people whose felt need is for comfort and hope in the face of mortality and death. The ministry of Tim Keller proved a tremendous resource for my pastoral work and evangelism as I sought to demonstrate how the gospel is central, not only in evangelism to non-Christians, but also to the spiritual growth of those within the Christian community.

The implicit theological anthropology that I learned in pastoral ministry has been more thoroughly grounded in the Reformed understanding of the centrality of desires in the human person. Early in my seminary education I began studying under Richard Mouw who introduced me to the Dutch Reformed tradition. This theology has had direct bearing on my engagement with people from Latter-day Saint, Jewish and Muslim communities.

Instead of viewing interfaith engagements simply as opportunities for truth encounters, I prayerfully seek areas where the Spirit of God might

Faith Journey (continued)

be active in the restless longings of those with whom I interact (Rom. 2:14-16; Acts 17:26-28). At times my Christian witness has taken a form of proclamation of the gospel in interfaith gatherings. At other times it has entailed me coming alongside, befriending others, and asking thoughtful questions arising from their life story. I have performed a wedding where the wife came from a mixed Jewish-Muslim family and the husband's family was Muslim. I have counseled Mormons who were on the brink of losing their faith such as a woman in the grip of suffocating solitude because her community had no room for lamenting the death of a loved one. Most often, in routine gatherings and conferences with my Muslim friends and Jewish and Latter-day Saint colleagues, witness takes the form of sharing my own brokenness, failings and longings for God's grace to work in my life. It is not an uncommon experience for my academic conversations with fellow scholars of other faiths to turn towards areas of personal pain and struggles. These solid relationships provide the opportunity for me to embody a Christian presence and witness over a long period of time.

Cory Willson

Statement of Reason

Having been called (appointed) to teach at Calvin Theological Seminary, I am happy to now seek ordination in the CRCNA. I look forward to a continuing to serve Christ in my role at the seminary and ministry within the denomination.

Cory Willson