



CALVIN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

2021

prospective candidates



June 1, 2021

Dear Delegates of Synod 2021,

Enclosed in this booklet are descriptions of the candidates being recommended to Synod 2021. For each person there is a photo, a brief biographical sketch, a statement of their faith journey, and the stated reason for pursuing candidacy. Each of the candidates has their own unique story and their own unique gifts. They are united in a desire to serve the Lord Jesus Christ through ordained ministry in the Christian Reformed Church. We trust that these pages (presented via an electronic format) will help the delegates of Synod 2021 become a bit more familiar with the 31 candidates.

The Candidacy Committee expresses its gratitude to the faculty and administration of Calvin Seminary for their role in preparing the candidates for this significant event in their respective ministry journeys. Many of the candidates have spent several years in study at Calvin Seminary through either the residential or distance programs. Those who have graduated from other seminaries have participated in the EPMC (Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidacy), a program approved by synod, overseen by the Candidacy Committee, and carried out in partnership with Calvin Seminary.

As a Candidacy Committee we are pleased to present these individuals to the church. We rejoice in what God has done and will do through each of them. We invite each delegate of synod to use this electronic booklet as a prompter to pray for the church and for the candidates as they wait for and respond to calls from the church in the coming months.

The Candidacy Committee
Rev. David Koll, Director of Candidacy

The Candidacy Committee
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Name: Mark D. Broadus

Place of birth: Duluth, Minnesota

Education:

Tyndale Seminary
Toronto, Ontario
M.Div., 2017

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
EPMC, 2021

Internships:

Chartwell Baptist Church
Mississauga, Ontario
Sept. 2016 - May 2017

Contact:

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Faith Journey

I have come to full-time Christian ministry later in life, and I have always tried to serve Jesus wholeheartedly in whatever job or career he has placed me. I was born in northern Minnesota to church planting parents in the churches of Christ; their example of dedicated service taught me volumes. Growing up in that environment built in me a deep love of Scripture and for the local church. I raised my own children in a Baptist tradition; there I gained experience in church leadership, worship and loving Jesus.

One of the great joys of my Christian walk has been to serve alongside my wife. First this was in shared leadership in a church which expectantly encouraged the Spirit's gifting of the women in our midst. Sandy preceded me in earning her MDiv, then went on to obtain her DMin and start her own para-church ministry. Even while pursuing her own call, Sandy continues to confirm, encourage and challenge my own gifts and call.

I came to Fellowship Christian Reformed Church of Toronto as a recent seminary grad in 2018 to help them refocus their ministries toward their neighbourhood. I was thrilled to see the congregation's own confirmation that God had placed us together in ministry, and was thrilled to see how God used much of my experience from previous careers. I was ordained as a commissioned pastor in 2019 and immediately started on the road to become a Minister of the Word. I have thoroughly enjoyed learning about the Christian Reformed Church and value the faith journeys of the many people I have met while on this journey.

I am a passionate believer that the local church is the way Jesus has ordained that his name be made known to the world. The Christian Reformed Church is a wonderful combination of local churches serving where they are planted, and a group of churches banding together to pursue the gospel mandate. I am excited to be a part of this in whatever way brings glory to our great God.

Mark Broadus

Statement of Reason

I am seeking candidacy because I believe God is calling me to this as the best way for me to serve Jesus and the local church. I have attempted to do this to the best of my ability my entire life in lay ministry, and now, to my own surprise, God has led me to the Christian Reformed Church. The three years I have worked here have confirmed God's leading by his generous hand. I value the Christian Reformed Church's desire to shape culture and participate in God's redemptive process, utilizing the Spirit-gifts of all of its members.

Mark Broadus



Name: Kelly J. Buist

Place of birth: Grand Rapids,
Michigan

Education:

Calvin College
Grand Rapids, MI
B.S.R., 2005

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
M.Div., 2021

Internships:

Plymouth Heights CRC
Grand Rapids, MI
January 2018 - March 2019

Calvary CRC
Wyoming, MI
March 2019 - June 2019

Contact:

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Faith Journey

As I look back over my faith journey, one thing is clear above all else – God has been present, guiding my path every step of the way.

I was born and raised in Grand Rapids, MI and grew up in the CRC. My childhood unfolded in the halls of my home, my church, and the Christian school, and running the sidewalks of my neighborhood with friends from all walks of life. I am grateful for the solid Biblical foundations on which my parents and grandparents raised me to know and love God. Some of my earliest memories center around the spiritual practices of prayer, worship, hospitality, and service. From a very young age, I knew I was loved by God and called to love the people whom God has placed in my life.

In middle school and high school, the knowledge I had gained about God began to develop into my own personal faith, leading to my public profession of faith as a freshman in high school. Soon after, I began participating in, and eventually leading Bible studies, which continued through my time at Calvin College, and remains a favorite discipline of mine.

After graduating from Calvin College with a Recreation degree, I married Don and began to work in the corporate world. It was here that God really began to stir my heart toward ministry. I continued to feel like something was missing and that I was not where God wanted me to be. I became pregnant with our first child and decided to take time off of work to raise her. Eventually we welcomed home another daughter and a son.

For 10 years we were happy and content. I was a stay-at-home mom who did not like to stay home much and found various ways to volunteer at our church, the kids' school and throughout the community. Somewhere along the way, I had begun praying that God would break my heart for the things that break God's heart, and everything about the way I saw life around me began to change. Wanting to seek change, I dove further into lay leadership at our church and in our community. God used this time to significantly grow me into who I am today, and to open my eyes to the ways in which God has gifted me and called me into ministry.

Through a number of gentle and then not so gentle nudges from the Holy Spirit, friends, and family, I eventually walked through the doors of CTS, but not without huge hesitations. I felt God's call on my life and I was open to wherever God might lead, but it took some time before I could fully accept that and step into it. At the beginning of this part of my journey I simply felt God telling me to go and I wanted to lean in as far as I could. I had learned by then that God was inviting me into that sweet spot where God does so much work in us – that space where we step out in all our fears and unknowns, and trust that God will guide us through. That holy space is where I continue to meet God regularly.

The spiritual journey which God has brought me on while at CTS has been one that I could never have imagined. Through numerous painful experiences, God has stretched me and broken me down. In my own grief and loss, God has invited me to lean heavily on God and has deepened my love for God's people. Amidst the brokenness, God has

Faith Journey (continued)

revealed rich and true qualities about Godself to me and drawn me into God's embrace more fully. I know without a doubt that God is with me, every step of the way and it is my deepest desire that God's people know this for themselves as well.

Kelly Buist

Statement of Reason

I am joyfully seeking candidacy in the Christian Reformed Church. Having felt and heard God's call on my life, and in leaning into the unique gifts which God has given me, I humbly step forward, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to love and serve God's people. I want nothing more for those whom I will serve than for them to know the gentle, generous, and grace-filled discipleship of Jesus Christ. And I consider it a joy and honor to enter into God's presence with God's people. Knowing all of this, and trusting that God goes before me every step of the way, I offer myself as God's servant in and for God's Church.

Kelly Buist



Name: David M. Dick

Place of birth: Cadillac, Michigan

Education:

Dordt College
Sioux Center, IA
B.A. in Animal Science, B.A. in
Ag-Business, 2010

Mid-America Reformed
Seminary, Dyer, IN
M.Div., 2021

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
EPMC, 2021

Internships:

Borculo CRC, Zeeland, MI
June 2019 - Aug 2019

Christ Reformed Church (URC)
Sioux Falls, SD
June 2020 - Aug 2020

Contact:

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Faith Journey

By God's providence, I was born into a Christian home, and had many significant Christian influences in my life, including my family, my teachers at the Christian school, and my pastors and teachers at our church. The Lord used all of these people to help me to grow in my faith and in my knowledge of God and his Word.

Having moved back to my hometown several years after graduating from college, God gave me a desire to be a similar influence in the lives of others. To that end, I began teaching middle school catechism, which really encouraged me to dig more deeply into the Bible and the Reformed confessions, particularly the Belgic Confession. It proved to be a formative experience not only for my class, but also for me. Additionally, very soon after I began teaching, the Lord called me to serve our church as an elder. Although I felt very inadequate at the prospect of this new calling, God's grace was sufficient for me. It was such a blessing to be able to minister to the people God had called me to serve. It was during this time that I really felt the call to full-time ministry and was encouraged to pursue it by those around me.

With that calling in my heart and mind, I began attending Mid-America Reformed Seminary, and my time studying has really served to deepen my faith and encourage me for what lies ahead. The Lord has also provided me with many different opportunities to serve him and his people and has used this work to shape me in a number of ways.

I have also been blessed to have a wonderful wife and two children accompany me on this journey. As my wife and I seek to raise our children in the fear and knowledge of the Lord, it reinforces the importance of instruction in the gospel, and also highlights the immense joy of watching others come to know and experience Christ. What we've seen on an individual level with our own children, I look forward to witnessing in an even greater way in my future ministry.

David Dick

Statement of Reason

I am seeking candidacy in the Christian Reformed Church because of the call to ministry that God has made evident for my life. I have felt this call internally, and it has been confirmed by those around me, as I have completed my seminary education. I look forward to serving the Lord and his people wherever he might place me.

David Dick



Name: Charles J. Dillender

Place of birth: Bellflower, California

Education:

Calvin University
Grand Rapids, MI
BA. Biology

Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, MI
M. Medicine, 1991

Fuller Theological Seminary
Pasadena, CA
M. Theology, 2007

Fuller Theological Seminary
Pasadena, CA
D.Min., 2017

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
EPMC, 2021

Contact:

916-812-4091
cdill195@calvinseminary.edu

Faith Journey

I was fortunate to have grown up in a stable, loving Christian home where both parents were actively engaged with my formation as a covenant member of our local church and as a disciple of Jesus of Nazareth. My parents were active members within our church, as a council member, in small groups and outreach ministries so I was modeled what active participation within and through the local church body looked like. Furthermore, as a child I was blessed to experience the birth of a new church and participate in its early growth my teenage years. This planted the seed for my future involvement with church planting. While I was born in Bellflower, CA I grew up in Ripon, CA and attended Ripon Christian school all twelve years of my primary education. As such, I was blessed to have a family, a church and a school all invested in my development as a beloved child of God by grace through faith. For this, I am eternally grateful. My faith accent is decidedly Reformed as expressed through our three confessions, yet I appreciate the breadth of our ecumenical faith as expressed by our three creeds. I am deeply appreciative for this upbringing as it laid a strong scriptural and theological and experiential foundation for my developing identity in Christ.

After High School, I attended Calvin University where my faith continued to be nurtured within the Reformed tradition to see all of life, including vocation through the lens of God's sovereign grace. I then attended Western Michigan University and became a Physician Assistant in Cardiology. That same year of graduating, I married my High School sweetheart and we move to Hemet, CA where I practiced medicine and she taught first grade. During this time, we attended a small CRC church plant in Temecula, CA. We loved it! It was here where my faith grew and deepened quite significantly as I had the opportunity to teach and lead and come alongside others in their faith journeys, from long time believers to skeptics to new converts to Christ. I began to sense a call into ministry but wanted to make sure it was of God. So, I prayed and began to take seminary classes at Fuller Theological Seminary at night and on the weekends. After three years of discerning and waiting for a clear call, God did. In a convincing manner, He used 2 Timothy 4 to direct me to "preach the word, in season and out." I have never questioned that call in over 23 years of ministry since.

Providentially, the little church plant my wife and I attended in southern California closed and we ended up at another church plant in Moreno Valley where we met a couple that we eventually would plant River Rock Church in Folsom, CA with in 1998. At that time, I left medicine for good, pursued a masters in theology at Fuller Seminary, became ordained as a Commissioned Pastor and moved to Folsom. My responsibilities with this church plant were centered around faith formation and practice. This included developing, implementing, leading and nurturing systems and structures that facilitated the creation of a discipleship culture within the church. Ten years into this plant, my colleague accepted a call elsewhere. I was asked by council to lead River Rock Church. After discerning both an inward and outward call I accepted and became the lead pastor for the next 12 years. During this time, we moved River Rock Church from new church status to

Faith Journey (continued)

established. Between 2015-2017, I completed a Doctorate of Ministry degree in discipleship from Fuller Theological Seminary. This time was a deeply formative period of leading and learning in which a primary focus was on being credible and coherent witnesses of Jesus of Nazareth through active participation as his disciples within God's unfolding narrative and divine drama.

This year will mark 30 years of marriage! Char and I have two wonderful children, a daughter who is 21 and graduating from Calvin University this year and a son who is 18 and graduating from Ripon Christian. In my free time I enjoy being outdoors, photography, softball and reading.

Charles Dillender

Statement of Reason

In 2018, I was approached by Community CRC in Oakdale, CA to consider being their lead pastor. I accepted per article 24b of the Church Order and with approval from Classis and Synodical Deputies. This article speaks to a bridge ordination in which a Commissioned Pastor can take a term call to an established church upon the condition of successfully becoming a candidate for Minister of the Word. This is why I am seeking candidacy as a Minister of the Word in the CRC.

Charles Dillender



Name: Bart B. Eisen

Place of birth: London, Ontario

Education:

Emmanuel Bible College
Kitchener, Ontario
Bachelor of Theology, 2013

McMaster Divinity College
Hamilton, Ontario
M.Div., 2021

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
EPMC, 2021

Internships:

Paid, full time, Interim Youth
Center Director at Youth
For Christ
Wingham, ON
April - August 2011

Youth Ministry Associate
Waterloo Pentecostal Assembly
Waterloo, ON
September 2012 - April 2013

Youth Pastor at Bethel CRC
Listowel, ON
April 2013 - Present
(Commissioned: February
2018 - Present)

Contact:

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barteisen45@gmail.com

Faith Journey

I had the privilege of growing up in a Christian home. I have loving parents who taught me from a young age what it means to follow Jesus. I was baptized as an infant and I remember embracing God's election at around the age of 5 in the front pew of a small CRC church. Since then, God grew my faith through a variety of means and I became more serious about my faith.

In high school I continued to grow in my passion for Jesus. I pursued holiness and abstained from the party scene. I was naively bold about my faith with my teachers and fellow students even though it was public high school. Despite being a youth myself, I helped to lead the youth ministry in my church. Up until the age of 16, it was easy for me to be serious about faith because I had experienced very little adversity. However, just after professing my faith, my home church began experiencing division and it separated with its pastor. I remember attending my first membership meeting after this event and being disgusted by the conversations that were occurring during that meeting. When the church was closing, I left disgruntled and began attending the Pentecostal church down the street. Here I grew in my appreciation for the charismatic gifts and my faith gained a spiritual element that had been foreign to me in the past. In this church I was mentored by a Youth Pastor who saw ministry potential in me. He pushed me to explore the possibility that I was called to ministry.

Because of the affirmation I experienced from my community, I began attending Emmanuel Bible College. Here I had the freedom to wrestle with my own beliefs regarding doctrine and praxis. After serious study, I concluded that though I am a continuationist and I admire Pentecostal praxis, I could not embrace some Pentecostal distinctives like second spirit baptism and tongues as the only initial evidence of that baptism. I also recognized that I have strong reformed leanings. However, I still had some resentment towards the CRCNA in my heart, so at the end of my Bible College journey, I still applied to Pentecostal churches. It was not until I met with a CRCNA pastor during this season that it became clear that the CRCNA had become more open to charismatic expression and that not all churches in the denomination were like my home church. For this reason, I began applying at Christian Reformed Churches.

In the spring of 2013, I accepted a call to become the full-time Youth Pastor at Bethel Christian Reformed Church in Listowel Ontario. Unfortunately, this call coincided with a serious battle with burnout fuelled depression that was the result of my previous ministry experiences. Throughout this battle I embraced spiritual disciplines and found great comfort in them. I also experienced the encouragement and support of a congregation who had only known me for a very short period. Eventually, I healed and grew into my calling at this church. I became commissioned in 2018 and I started seminary in the spring of 2014.

Faith Journey (continued)

Though I only began seminary at McMaster Divinity College out of a growing academic curiosity, it became clear, as time passed, that I was being prepared for ministry as a minister of the Word. Throughout my 7-year journey God sharpened my understanding of theology and Biblical languages and grew in me a passion for the whole church.

Bart B. Eisen

Statement of Reason

I am seeking ordination as a Minister of the Word in the Christians Reformed Church because I see it as the next step of my pastoral journey. I am passionate about seeing people encounter the presence of God in such a way that they are on mission for the glory of God. I believe that Jesus is leading me to pursue this office so that I can express this passion and live out the calling he has placed on my life. I have experienced the power of Christian community and I am excited about the challenge and responsibility of being a part of seeing people being transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Bart B. Eisen



Name: Josiah J. Gorter

Place of birth: Grand Rapids,
Michigan

Education:

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

Western Theological Seminary
Holland, MI
M.Div., 2021

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
EPMC, 2021

Internships:

City Life Church
Sacramento, CA
2019-2021

Contact:

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josiah.gorter@gmail.com

Faith Journey

For as long as I can remember, I've loved hearing stories and imagining what it would be like to be a character in them. I was raised in the CRC hearing stories about Jesus and his disciples, Moses and the Israelites, David and Goliath, and these stories fascinated me. From a young age, I was beginning to see these patterns of danger and brokenness entering into a good world, and that God was at work through different characters to heal that brokenness and make things right. My family was tremendously influential in teaching me how these lessons could be acted out in everyday life. I learned that small sins can grow out of control, life is better in community, it can be hard to say 'no' to what we want, and that God loves me even when I don't deserve it. They were teaching me the story of the Bible.

When I was sixteen, God woke me up and showed me that I was part of this story, *his* story that he had planned. Suddenly, all the tales I learned in childhood became more real than ever. I began seeking opportunities every day to make the story of my life look as much like the stories I had read about Jesus. I began spending more time with the disability programs at our school, volunteering as a tutor with kids at a low-income after school program, and leading a weekly Bible study with my friends. I was finally living out something I had always imagined as a kid, I was part of something bigger than myself and it was just getting started.

I went on to study philosophy and psychology at Calvin College where I learned how to think critically and compassionately. I was taught to see the depth and complexity of the world, that it's better to humbly admit "I don't know" than to pretend I have everything figured out, and that I can learn more about God and his character if I have a broader perspective. During my four years at Calvin I was able to take internship positions in Detroit and Sacramento. I witnessed a level of poverty and societal brokenness I had never seen before, but I also witnessed how God's love shines brightest in the dark places of our world.

After graduation I moved from West Michigan to Northern California where some friends and I started a ministry called "The Grace House" in partnership with local CRC's in the Sacramento area. We lived in community with our neighbors, practiced spiritual disciplines together, and served at the local church and community center. We were stretched beyond what we had anticipated and learned exactly how challenging Christian community life can be. We faced a number of setbacks and finished the year a little battered, but wiser and more mature than when we had started. It was over the course of this year that I met my wife, Genevieve, and we were married in August 2016.

I enrolled at Western Theological Seminary shortly after as part of their Newbigin program. This track had a special focus on church planting and doing ministry in urban areas. I was tentative at first about learning the biblical languages and taking the preaching courses, but these quickly became my favorite classes. It was in seminary that I discovered a shift taking place in my approach to learning. I was no longer seeking to understand the Christian faith for my sake alone, I was hungry to learn how best to teach and share this faith with others.

Faith Journey (continued)

As a distance learning student, I was able to apply the things I was learning in class directly to the ministry I was doing with teens and families at the local community center. The families I worked with in my neighborhood come from diverse backgrounds and it has been a blessing to share life with people from all over the world. I was also licensed to exhort by Classis Central California during this time and have preached at nearly a dozen churches in the area since then. Spending time in scripture and finding ways to communicate the gospel in relevant and engaging ways has become a passion of mine.

In the end, my faith journey always comes back to the stories which enthralled my imagination as a child. The world is not the way it should be, but God has called his church to be part of his amazing redemption story with Christ at the center. I look forward with hope and excitement at how my small role will play out in the grand story of God's love and grace.

Josiah Gorter

Statement of Reason

I believe the basic tenets of Reformed theology have something unique to offer our culture during these socially charged times. I want to be a pastor in the CRC because I believe our approach to the gospel can give a vision of hope that is emotionally comforting, intellectually sound, and spiritually fulfilling. I was baptized, raised, and shaped by the CRC; it has always been my spiritual home and I want to invite others to find their spiritual home here as well.

Josiah Gorter



Name: Joshua L. Grimes

Place of birth: Grand Rapids,
Michigan

Education:

Azusa Pacific University
Azusa, CA
Bachelor's in Biblical
Studies, 2017

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
M.Div., 2021

Internships:

Blythefield CRC
Rockford, MI
September 2019 - May 2021

Exodus Place Men's
Transitional Facility
Grand Rapids, MI
June - August 2020

Contact:

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Faith Journey

I was born March 5, 1992 in Grand Rapids to Skip and Debra Grimes. Throughout my journey God has blessed me with surrounding communities of faith that have molded and shaped me into who I am and who I continue to grow into today as I seek day after day to reflect the image of the one who created me. Not only was I blessed to be born into a Christian home but was raised in the church and in Christian education institutions my entire life.

I grew up in a small town outside of Grand Rapids, MI. I attended Caledonia CRC from a very young age, having abnormally high interest in the catechism teachings and even the sermons for my age. I attended Dutton Christian Elementary and Middle School, which is where I first felt the call towards ministry after my second grade teacher told me, after I gave the morning devotions, that I should be a pastor. My running joke has been, since I did not develop a mid-90's fastball and couldn't play major league baseball, this is a great alternative. The truth is, this is the calling that God gave me very early on and has continued to reaffirm both inwardly and outwardly over the last 20 years.

I went to South Christian High School, played football and baseball, attended as many young life and church events as possible, helped plan and even speak at chapels whenever I could, and continued to take interest in any faith-based activities. In Spring of 2008, my father, who was my best friend, died unexpectedly, and I have commented countless times since then, that that is when my faith, and my belief in the one true hope and comfort we have in life and in death was truly that I am not my own, that we are not our own, but belong body and soul to Christ Jesus, our Savior. While this event and some fallout from it has been incredibly challenging, it has also helped shape me into the person I am.

Much of my high school experience, the faith-based activities participation, continued on into my undergraduate days at Azusa Pacific University in California. I immediately found myself on chapel planning teams and eventually leading the team, and being honored to give the Senior Speaks chapel message. My time in college also challenged me in personal ways, and challenged me in how my faith interacts with my lived experience. It not only made my faith, but my reformed viewpoints stronger. College and Southern California is also where I met my wonderful wife, Marissa, and was able to work my first "real" church job as a Junior High Director at a Presbyterian church, which was a great joy, but again continued to shape my faith and now more specifically my calling. While I thoroughly enjoy youth work, I also know I am called to do work that includes it, rather than it being my sole focus. I have what I believe are God-given gifts in the areas of preaching and leadership that I look forward to growing, stretching, and learning in.

I started Calvin Theological Seminary in Fall of 2018, in the distance program, before somehow convincing my Southern California born and raised wife to move to the "arctic wasteland" of Michigan to continue my education, not full time and in person. Over the last couple years I have been blessed to engage both new and old friends and mentors, in and outside the seminary. My internships have been formational

Faith Journey (continued)

and challenging, especially as we currently continue to ride out the COVID-19 Pandemic. As I continue this journey in and towards further ministry, my hope and faith is in the one who called me into it.

Joshua Grimes

Statement of Reason

I am seeking ordination because I feel it is faithful to the call given to me by our Lord and Savior. That he, since an early age and through a variety of ways has called me into vocational pastoral ministry, complementing the inner calling on my mind and heart with outer affirmations of the calling through teachers, coaches, pastors, and mentors. I am seeking this ordination in the Christian Reformed Church because I feel that the Reformed lens in which we view the Gospel through is the most faithful to the Word of God as presented in his Holy Scripture, affirming and emphasizing his sovereignty and action in our lives as individuals and in the community of the church, both locally and globally, and in the already but not yet Kingdom of God, ordained by the Father, ruled over by Christ Jesus, and through the power of the Holy Spirit we have been given a wonderful blessings in participating the work already being done to bring it to full restoration. I am blessed to have been called in this way to participate in that and look forward to how he continues to use and call me.

Joshua Grimes



Name: Tyler R Helfers

Place of birth: Pekin, Illinois

Education:

St. Cloud State University
St. Cloud, MN
Bachelor of Arts
in Criminology, 2010

Birmingham Theological
Seminary
Birmingham, AL
Master of Arts in Theological
Studies, 2015

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
M.Div, 2021

Internships:

New Life Prison Community
Newton, IA
April 2019 - Aug 2019

Stellenbosch International
Fellowship
Stellenbosch, Western Cape
South Africa
Jan 2021 - April 2021

Contact:

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Faith Journey

The fingerprints of God's work in my life stretch back to junior high and confirmation at a rural Lutheran church. Though our family was unchurched, my parents thought it valuable for me to participate in this program, and through the study of Scripture and catechism—unbeknownst to me—God began to ingrain His truth and the message of the gospel in my heart and on my mind. Over the course of the next three years, and providential friendships with Christian coworkers at my summer job as a park district camp counselor, God opened my eyes to my sin, as well as to the beauty, truth, and goodness of the gospel of Christ and the Kingdom of God. And while I cannot identify a specific moment, it was during the summer of 2005, that I placed my trust in Christ.

I attended St. Cloud State University in Minnesota, quickly getting connected with the church and a ministry on campus. This was a season of tremendous growth through Bible study on campus and service in the church. I was challenged to love God and love my neighbor through worship and evangelism, tutoring and volunteering at a homeless shelter. God placed mentors in my life—from the church, campus ministry staff, and in the criminology department in which I was pursuing a degree—to help foster spiritual maturity and development as a leader. It was during this time I also discovered Reformed theology through the writings of Calvin, Kuyper, and the Three Forms of Unity.

While at university, I led a Bible study on campus and, during the summer, started a rural youth ministry at the church in my hometown. Slowly, rather than a career in federal law enforcement, I began to sense God calling me to vocational ministry. This internal sense was externally confirmed through my pastor, an elder, and our campus ministry staff calling me to leadership roles and asking me to consider entering into missions or attending seminary. Seeking to be faithful to how I felt God was leading, my wife and I joined staff with a parachurch ministry aimed at ministering to, and raising up leaders in, the Latino student populations on our university campuses. After a little over two years, we left and I began taking seminary courses, first at Birmingham Theological Seminary, and more recently, Calvin Theological Seminary.

For the past seven years, I have had the privilege of serving as a campus ministry director for the CRC at Iowa State University. Through my work with students from across the country and around the world, as well as with faculty, staff, and researchers, God has expanded my vision of His mission in the world, and instilled in me a love for the church and for serving her as a herald of good news, a shepherd to His sheep, and equipper of the saints for the work of ministry. These years have been crucial in my spiritual formation and sharpening my sense of call as a witness to Christ in the world; learning to appreciate global perspectives, ecumenism, and what it looks like to contextualize and renew the use of the creeds and confessions—and the rich resources of our tradition—in our present age. With all that said, I praise our Triune God for his patience and grace, and look forward to where He leads in the years to come.

Tyler R Helfers

Statement of Reason

I am seeking ordination in the Christian Reformed Church because of God's strong call on me to serve in His Kingdom through the proclamation of the Gospel and the building up the church for the work of ministry. At each twist and turn of my life and story, and the numerous formative ministry experiences along the way, God has been equipping me for this calling while also revealing to me my own ongoing need for the Gospel of Jesus Christ and reminding me of how much I have yet to learn. I am pursuing ordination in the CRC because of the way God has used the rich resources of the Reformed tradition and this denomination—from its confessional heritage and covenantal focus, to the writings of theologians like Calvin, Vos, Kuyper, and Bavinck—to kindle my awe, wonder, and love for God, His world, and all people. Through my work in campus ministry, God has kindled a passion within me for the global church, and, by pursuing ordination, I am further prepared to serve that church, whether in campus ministry, a church context in the United States or Canada, or an international church context somewhere abroad. Wherever it is that God may lead, I desire to see the church further live into and reflect the calling to “make disciples of all nations” who will go into all the earth and all spheres of life as witnesses to the good news of Jesus Christ.

Tyler R Helfers



Name: Mackenzie M. Jager

Place of birth: Holland, Michigan

Education:

Taylor University
Upland, IN
BS in 2016

Western Theological Seminary
Holland, MI
M.Div., 2021

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
EPMC, 2021

Internships:

Ridge Point Community
Church
Holland, MI
September 2018 - May 2019

Zeeland Christian
Middle School
Zeeland, MI
August 2019 - March 2020

Contact:

616-990-6498
mackej32@gmail.com

Statement of Faith

Thanks to my family, friends, and the teachers at my Christian school growing up, I have never known myself apart from God or faith. I've experienced seasons of doubt and questioning, but I could never turn away from the beauty and hope of the Christian story: that God created the world, loves the world, and will redeem all things.

I attended Taylor University and studied writing and Christian education. So much of my undergrad experience was formative, but I think the most important season was my semester abroad in England. During those six months, I was acutely aware of God's presence. For the first time in my life I was outside the Christian bubble, and God gave me opportunity after opportunity to talk about faith with nonbelievers. When my peers and professors learned that I was a Christian, many of them were eager to ask me questions and hear my story. In many ways, those conversations were humbling experiences, but they also gave me confidence and passion. I became more confident in my ability to talk about Christianity in accessible ways, and as heartfelt and sometimes heartbreaking chats unfolded over cups of tea, I became passionate about making room for faith conversations at a personal level.

As my travels took me between the mountains and oceans and moors of the UK, I marveled at how God's power and imagination combined to create such a world. And standing in glittering cathedrals and the ruins of abbeys, I felt connected to a God and a faith tradition that stretched back thousands of years. I began to grasp a bit more of God's timelessness and enduring faithfulness, and I gained a new appreciation for what it means to worship in the global community and the communion of saints.

After graduating from Taylor, I moved to Maryland and began working for a publishing company and volunteering at a local youth group. I felt myself come alive in the youth group setting. It was a space where I could use all my passions—writing, teaching, and mentoring—and I started to wonder if ministry might be a better fit for me than a desk job. Around that same time, a few trusted friends and mentors asked me if I'd ever considered seminary, or, even more bluntly, why I wasn't doing full-time ministry. After a season of discernment, I packed up my life on the East Coast and returned home to Holland, Michigan, to attend Western Theological Seminary.

Mackenzie M. Jager

Statement of Reason

I am seeking ordination in the CRC because I am grateful for the ways the CRC has loved, challenged, and equipped me. As an ordained pastor, I hope to do the same for our denomination and those under my direct care. After spending time in a non-denominational church on the East Coast, I realized how dear the liturgy, creeds, and confessions of the Reformed church are to me. Additionally, many of my values are shared by the CRC, and I'm eager to serve in a denomination that is passionate about scripture, education, and justice.

Mackenzie M. Jager



Name: Hang (Joshua) Jiang

Place of birth: Shanghai, China

Education:

Shanghai JiaoTong University
B.S., 2013

Calvin Theological Seminary
M.Div., 2021

Internships:

Good Shepherd Presbyterian
Grand Rapids, MI
September 2017 - June 2018

Calvary Baptist Church
Grand Rapids, MI
September 2018 - June 2020

Contact:

616-617-7047
hj028@calvinseminary.edu

Faith Journey

I grew up in an underground church in China, and both of my parents are ministers in the underground churches. Initially, I was drawn to Christianity simply because I was introduced to a story Bible given to me by my grandma. It was through this children's Bible that I got to know a lot of biblical stories. For some reason, I was convinced that there is an almighty God and He loves me, so, I made my commitment to God and gave my life to Him even though nobody told me anything about Jesus and His redemption story.

Throughout my life, God constantly met me in seasons of dis-tress, and providentially He has always been protecting me and guiding me to truth and wholeness. It was in my college that I truly developed a deeper relationship with Christ. I was initially recruited by the Chinese Communist Party to be trained as an engineer, but I never liked my major or anything I was doing within the program. Life in college was very depressing as everyone was very driven to be the best so that they could find better jobs, make good money and become successful. But I just could not see that that was a fulfilling or meaningful life. I believed that there has to be more than that. Again, God met me in a season of loneliness and doubt, and through the fellowship with other Christians and churches, I was convinced that only eternity is more meaningful and that service for Christ will last.

During my last year in college, the government found out I was a Christian and they absolutely did not like it. So, I was automatically released from my obligation to the governmental project and I was free to dive into the ministry. God puts mission work on my heart, and I love doing mission work so much that even at the seminary I was always trying to take every single mission class I could possibly find.

Each year I went on mission work in different countries, through which I found great joy and fulfillment. It always amazes me how much people are willing to accept Christ and yet there definitely needs more Christians to stand up and fill in the gap. To me, there is no better investment than investing in people's lives and becoming an engineer that edifies people's souls. Through this ministry, I found confirmation of my call, so I am very committed to serving Christ and His kingdom.

Hang Joshua Jiang

Statement of Reason

I am seeking ordination in the Christian Reformed Church, so I can become a minister witnessed by the denomination and sent out through Resonate or the Christian Reformed Church into missions field, particularly in Asia so I can continually work for the Lord and the service of His people. As a minister, I feel the necessity to be tied to, supported by and grounded in a denomination that I can call home. The church and denomination can hold me accountable as God's servant so I can be faithful to Him in all circumstances.

Statement of Reason (continued)

In the meanwhile, I want to have a church based in the Christian Reformed Church that can become my home church which supports me and prays for me and my family so that I can have more strength to serve Him in the front line.

Hang Joshua Jiang



Name: Timothy K. Joo

Place of birth: Wayne, NJ

Education:

Rutgers University
Piscataway, NJ:
BS in Electrical Engineering,
2014

Westminster Theological
Seminary
Glenside, PA
M.Div., 2018

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
EPMC, 2021

Internships:

Grace Community Chapel
of NJ CRCNA
Teaneck, NJ
October 2014 - present

Contact:

201-456-7955
tkj039@calvinseminary.edu

Faith Journey

As I grew up in a Christian home, I took it for granted and did not take the Christian faith seriously. I went to church just to play with friends, and I never really cared to understand what it was all about. I attended Sunday schools, Bible studies, retreats, small groups, and Vacation Bible Schools. My mom was the secretary to the head pastor, and so I spent a lot of time in and around the church. However, it was not until I was in the 7th grade that I started to really begin understanding all of the different truths that I had been learning.

Growing up, my parents were not too involved in my life. They would never ask about my grades or give me much guidance in life decisions, but this was something I was used to. My dad would spend time with me and my brother from time to time, but this became less frequent as we got older. Eventually, my brother and I received the news from my dad that he and my mom were getting a divorce.

A few months later at a youth retreat, I remember feeling so broken and lost at the state of my family. It was then that I realized I needed the unconditional love of God. I was crushed and I was hopeless, but the Word of God gave me hope. All of the truths that I had learned growing up came flooding into my heart, and I became desperate for Jesus. From that point on, I struggled everyday with my sins, and I have been learning what it means to walk in obedience by grace through faith in Jesus Christ as my personal Lord and Savior.

My sophomore year in high school is when I first felt called toward local church pastoral ministry. The youth teachers and pastors I had played a pivotal role during some of the most important times of my life, and they really influenced me and showed me God's compassion and love. Almost instinctively, I wanted to have the same positive influence on the lives of others. I wanted to be able to share about this same God who had changed my life. Although I did not completely grasp what it meant to be called into ministry at that age, I stayed committed and passionate about the church and this conviction ever since.

When I entered college, I joined a Christian Reformed Church called Grace Community Chapel, where my theology began to be formed more deeply. I began to learn about Reformed orthodoxy and important doctrines like salvation, law and grace, Scripture, and Church, amongst others. Through this church, I learned more about my totally depraved nature and why Christ had come to atone for my sins. I learned more about the power of the resurrection in our lives, and what it means to be disciples of Christ in this present age. I have also learned the power of the Holy Spirit, who dwells in us and testifies of God's mercies every day. I can humbly profess the truth that Christ was crucified and raised as the Scriptures testify, and that I believe in a Triune God who is worthy of all honor and glory.

As I grew older and matured in my understanding of God's vision over my life, I began to further realize how much God's sovereignty and providence had been leading me. Internally speaking, God has given me a strong desire and motivation to serve people diligently. I love being involved in the life of the church, and I also enjoy serving people outside of the church. Whether it is setting up, cleaning up, meeting

Faith Journey (continued)

with people, making people feel at home, teaching the Bible, praying with people, serving people food, or leading worship, it is a tremendous privilege and joy to serve others.

I have been humbled and thankful to receive affirmations and encouragements of God's calling upon my life through people in the church and outside of the church. They have affirmed my gifts in shepherding, leadership and teaching, and I would not be where I am today without the impact of my mentors.

Timothy Joo

Statement of Reason

I am seeking candidacy in the Christian Reformed Church because I want to serve the Kingdom of God by advancing the Gospel of Jesus Christ in a dying world. My desire is to proclaim the Lordship of Jesus Christ over all creation, and to make disciples of all nations, who will bring glory to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. I am seeking candidacy in the Christian Reformed Church to build up the church of Jesus Christ who is the Lord of lords and the King of kings. I believe the Lord is working powerfully through the unity and diversity of the Christian Reformed Church, and I want to be a part of the way that God is expanding his Kingdom through this denomination.

Timothy Joo



Name: Eunice Kim

Place of birth: South Korea

Languages spoken: English, Korean

Education:

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
M.Div., 2021

Internships:

Faith Christian Fellowship
Walnut Creek, CA
January 2021 - Mid May 2021

St. Mary Magdalen Church
Berkeley, CA
June 2021 - August 2021

Contact:

510-965-3371
5eunicekim@gmail.com

Faith Journey

My journey begins in a small town in South Korea where I was born into a Buddhist family. My idyllic childhood started to change as I faced the reality of immigrant life when my family and I moved to the Northern Mariana Islands when I was in elementary school. Through a series of life changing events, God shone His light onto my parents and they came to know Him, beginning to model a faithful life as Christians to me. I remember coming home to Scripture readings playing through my mom's beloved cassette player everyday. And to this day, I still remember bits of Scripture verses playing from the cassette player: "Psalm 1, Blessed is the man..." Daily family devotions became a big part of my life early on, as my dad would lead worship from the worship book. My parents lived a life of humility, generosity, and honesty before others.

In all this time, God was not only ministering to me through my parents, but also through the Christian radio broadcast and a Baptist pastor on another island. Touched by His grace through all these experiences, I accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Saviour and was baptized when I was fifteen. I started teaching Sunday School in High School, interpreting sermons for English speakers, and serving in the young adult ministry to raise funds for church construction and evangelistic outreach.

While serving in Sunday School, I was encouraged to continue serving the Lord through children's ministry. I enrolled in the Calvin Theological Seminary for Masters in Christian Education. After meeting my husband at the seminary, we have since been serving in ministry for over twenty years: my husband as a pastor to the Korean speaking congregation and I as a leader to the English Speaking children and young adults. But the tugging of my heart to return to CTS for more training never ceased. I finally obeyed the call though it was a difficult decision to make both as a pastor's wife and as a woman. Nevertheless, I still followed through with my husband's full support, and here I am at the end of my journey, which wouldn't have been possible without His guidance. I am excited and looking forward to serving the Lord in yet another capacity. "Here I am, Lord!"

Eunice Kim

Statement of Reason

I want to seek candidacy in the Christian reformed Church because I consider it my adopted home. I didn't grow up in the CRC, and in fact, I didn't know about it until I was enrolled in the CTS for my Masters in Christian Education. I have grown to appreciate Reformed Theology, giving me the eyes to see what my faith and walk with Christ look like, which has been liberating! I have grown to love the freedom in Christ, but I know that there is much responsibility with this knowledge. God willing, I want to serve with my varied experiences to bring this love of Christ to others and share this gospel that has transformed me.

Eunice Kim



Name: Jooheyng Kim

Place of birth: South Korea

Languages spoken: English, Korean

Education:

Dordt College (IA)
Calvin Seminary (MI)

Internships:

Korean Bible Church
Ann Arbor, MI
April 1, 2018 - July 31, 2018

Namu Church
Flushing, NY
January 5 - February 1

Contact:

512-569-6843
jkkimdavid@gmail.com

Faith Journey

I was born into such a passionate Korean Christian culture. Ever since I was a young boy, every Sunday was filled with two services and volunteer responsibilities that forced me to spend the whole day in church. Being a pastor's son, I opted to join every meeting and as many as possible. I habitually attended the church without having a personal faith in Christ.

When I truly recognized the love and grace of God, however, God made me willingly surrender and give up my old life, which was filled with desires for worldly success. Before I went to college, I lived my life based on worldly perspectives such as money, fame, and power. To fulfill my secular pleasure and desire, I had to suffer every day. If I were not able to receive an outstanding GPA, I felt as if I were not as precious. In 2011, however, I had an opportunity to experience God's love when I read and studied Heidelberg Catechism Q&A #1. For the first time, Q&A #1 did not touch my heart. However, when time goes by and my suffering was getting severe, I realized that my only true comfort is found in God, the king of all creation, who suffered on the cross for me and still guides my life to the green pastures. His love calls me as a precious human being in the world no matter what. It provides me great comfort when I suffered from all these worldly perspectives. After I awakened to God's love through the work of the Holy Spirit in my life, God has slowly and gradually restored my broken life. And I want to know more about God and decided to study Bible at Dordt College.

While I was studying at Dordt College, I had a chance to learn and see God's broad salvific plan, not just narrow down to humans, as John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son." It made me see the world from a different perspective. The church and world were not separated. It transformed my life purpose. God called me as a precious being in the world to participate in building up God's justice and his Kingdom on the earth. Then, I continued my study at Calvin Theological Seminary because I had a strong heart to help youth and college kids who go through similar suffering like me. God continually molded and shaped me in the Seminary. Finally, God sent me to New York City and allowed me to serve youth group students going through the academic struggles I had. I am looking forward to experiencing how God will transform these kids' lives.

Jooheyng Kim

Statement of Reason

Though I did not grow up in the Christian Reformed Church, I have been trained and grown from educational institutions based on CRC's teachings. I truly love and believe the creed and confessions. I am seeking candidacy in CRC because 1) God calls me to serve His church with my whole life. 2) God wants me to share the love of God and His mission with people through His word and practicing the sacraments. Even though I know that I am still weak and sinful, I seek the guidance of the Spirit. 3) God wants to build up the kingdom of God on the earth. He calls me(us) to practice God's justice in our society and the church.

This is what CRC stands for. I believe that the Lord, our God, called me to serve the body of Christ and His creation.

Jooheyng Kim



Name: Young-Kwang Kim

Place of birth: Jerusalem, Israel

Languages spoken: English, Korean

Education:

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
M.Div. & Th.M., 2020

Internships:

Hahn-In CRC
Wyoming, MI
Sept 2016 - July 2020

Contact:

253-304-5686
imalilkkm@gmail.com

Faith Journey

When I was 16, as an Asian-American teenager, I was struggling with my identity and at the same time was looking for a sense of belonging. God and church, which had always been huge parts of my life no longer seemed important. So, even on this particular Sunday, I was sitting in the back of the youth group room giving my undivided attention to the snake game on my Nokia phone—that was my norm back then. But on that day, the words of Isaiah 43:1 penetrated my ears. I was suddenly drawn to what God was speaking through the pastor.

My observant youth pastor noticed that I was actually listening and sensed an opportunity. After the service, he asked if I had any questions. God had already melted my heart, so I shared with him my identity struggle and search for a sense of belongingness. God used my youth pastor who brilliantly contextualized Isaiah 43 to address my spiritual needs and explained that my identity, first and foremost, is that no matter what, I am a child of God and I belong to Jesus Christ, for He chose me even before the foundation of the world.

That day, I realized my Christian identity and salvation which had already been signed, sealed, and delivered through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It was the beginning of my discipleship. Even today, whenever I struggle, I still look back on that Sunday, and God reminds me that I am His child because I belong to Jesus Christ. Those simple truths have continued to play huge roles in my formation. For instance, later in my life, those simple truths that highlight would play crucial factors in my decision to pursue theological training. It is never easy for anyone to switch careers. When I needed to quit my job so that I could move to Grand Rapids to attend Calvin Theological Seminary, it was once again my identity in Christ and the sense of belonging to the Heavenly Father who graciously provides for those who first seek his kingdom and his righteousness that gave me the confidence to follow God's call.

Young-Kwang Kim

Statement of Reason

I am seeking candidacy in the Christian Reformed Church because of my deep conviction that I am called by God to serve his church and his creation through his church. In our society where everyone is taught to create his or her own brand, I want to tell people why dying to oneself and rising with the new identity in Christ is the only comfort in life and in death. And by the grace of God and the power of the Spirit, I want to help people walk their journeys with Christ so that their new identity in Christ can do what it does best, transforming lives.

Young-Kwang Kim



Name: Timothy J. Kimbel

Place of birth: Cadillac, Michigan

Education:

Central Michigan University
Mount Pleasant, MI
B.S. in History, 2012

United States Army Chaplain
Center and School
Ft. Jackson, SC
Chaplain Basic Officer Leader
Course, 2017

R. C. Freedom Ministries, Inc.
San Antonio, TX
Unit 1 CPE - 2020

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
M.Div., 2021

Internships:

Lake City CRC
Lake City, MI
May 2018 - December 2018

Camp Grayling Joint Maneuver
Training Center
Grayling, MI
February 2020 - May 2020

Contact:

231-388-5226
ttkimbel01@hotmail.com

Faith Journey

When I was a boy I looked up to my grandfather. Educated only through seventh grade, he overcame poverty through hard work and ingenuity. Grandpa joined the Army Air Corp during WWII and qualified as a pilot. His example of patriotism and determination have impressed me deeply. Following the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, I felt the Holy Spirit leading me toward military involvement. I joined the Michigan Army National Guard in February 2002 and immediately began training. The next January my unit was deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. During that 15-month deployment, I learn a lot about who I am, and who God was calling me to be.

In 2008 I deployed a second time. During this second deployment I sensed that I needed to make a change. While remaining dedicated to the brothers and sisters in the military, I realized that God was calling me into a new mission—one requiring a change in identity. When I returned home, I took three years off work and completed my undergrad. During this time, I was still trying to discern my new direction. I completed Offices Candidate School in the summer of 2012, just prior to graduation. The next year I became an ordinance officer.

While my new identity was being shaped, I could tell that I was not on the right track. After denying the possibility that God would want me to serve as a chaplain, I finally submitted to this call in 2016, beginning seminary that year. I am confident this is the path marked out for me. Serving as a chaplain candidate for the past five years has given me ample ministry opportunity to discern God's calling in this role. I have now undergone a profound identity change, from a Soldier to an officer, and from an operational planner to a chaplain. My wife Jamie has been a tremendous support for me during this time, along with our eight children (Elijah, Joshua, Johanna, Isaiah, Gideon, Micaiah, Obadiah, and Benaiah). I look forward to serving the members of the Michigan Army National Guard in the role of chaplain. Pro Dñ et patria (For God and country)!

Tim Kimbel

Statement of Faith

I am seeking ordination in the Christian Reformed Church to serve the Soldiers in the Michigan Army National Guard by nurturing the living, caring for the wounded, and honoring the fallen. There is a vast range of spiritual and emotional needs present within the formation. Time away from family, the tragedy of combat, and personal spiritual discovery are some of the common needs to which a chaplain attends. Through the support of the local church, I am affirmed in my call, and supported in ministry. The chaplain has the unique role of addressing Soldier in a wholistic way, honoring all aspects of our humanity.

Tim Kimbel



Name: HoonJae Lee

Place of birth: Seoul, South Korea

Languages spoken: English, Korean

Education:

Dordt University
Sioux Center, IA
Theology: Youth Ministry, 2014

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
M.Div., 2021

Internships:

Madison Church: Ford Campus
Grand Rapids, MI
September 2017 - May 2019

Contact:

616-551-6587
hjl060@calvinseminary.edu

Faith Journey

A little boy (myself) was born in Seoul, South Korea to Christian parents. I grew up fearfully and wonderfully under the love of my parents and by the grace of the Triune God. As I grew up under God's sovereignty in my life, I felt a strong inner calling to serve God's Kingdom by serving ministries. I grew up as a missionary kid experiencing diverse cultures since the early age. My family left South Korea when I was eleven, and I lived in the Philippines for ten years (until graduating high school). After I graduated high school, I came to the U.S.A. I was accepted at Dordt University located in Sioux Center, Iowa. I graduated majoring in Theology: Youth Ministries. After finishing my undergraduate, I went to South Korea to do my duty by serving the military for two years. As I finished my duty, I came back to the U.S.A. to be enrolled at Calvin Theological Seminary in the M. Div. program. By God's grace and faithfulness and love, today, I am on my transition to the next step of my faith journey.

In my personal life experience and testimony living as a foreigner for almost twenty years, I never felt comfortable with my identity. Instead, I had difficulties finding my identity for I felt no sense of belonging as I have lived away from my family and my country most of the time. Honestly speaking, I miss my families, relatives, friends, and my community especially at this time of the pandemic. Social distancing and wearing masks somehow deconstructed relationships. I am seeking how to reconstruct my relationships again in this new generation of COVID-19.

After all these years of faith journey in fear, loneliness, and anxiety, I have found true and only comfort in my identity in Jesus Christ. My personal and true identity is based on Heidelberg Catechism Q/A 1. I believe the following confessional statement is the summary of my belief based on my true identity: *"That I am not my own, but belong body and soul, in life and in death to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ..."* As I have found my identity in Jesus Christ, I am comforted, secured, and assured. Surely and certainly, I know what I am called to live my life for God's Kingdom. First, I am called to love the Lord my God with all my heart and with all my soul and with all my mind. And I am called to love neighbors as myself (Matthew 22:36-40). Second, I am called to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything Jesus Christ has commanded me. And surely Jesus Christ is with me always to the very end of the age (Matthew 28:16-20). Through my life experience and knowledge that I have received from institutions, I am going to use my training as tools to serve in God's Kingdom. With such posture, I embrace the word "SERVANTHOOD" in my life and ministries which is Christlike humility and the ultimate character of Jesus Christ.

HoonJae Lee

Statement of Reason

I, HoonJae Lee, confidently feel the calling and humbly seek to care for and love the people of God with the love of Jesus Christ based on the Gospel. I love to spend time having fellowship with people. Whether the platform is inside the church or outside the church does not matter. I believe ministry is not limited according to place. The place where the body of Christ gathers is the church, and I believe the work of the Holy Spirit is active where they truly seek Jesus. Applying my background in ministry, I love diversity and believe in the power of multi-cultural communities. I have a vision and hope of restoring the brokenness of culture through ministries by the name of Jesus Christ. When I see myself in the mirror, I certainly see gifts for shepherding and speaking the truth (Gospel) with love for Jesus Christ. I love to serve in the area of pastoral care as someone who can listen with full presence. I believe I can do well and do my best in caring for people and this has been affirmed in ministries of my internships and by the cloud of witnesses in Jesus Christ. In this time of COVID-19, ministries are very difficult to be experienced and witnessed. But I continually pray for the church and the congregation to stay safe and healthy and be comforted in Jesus Christ who is our only Comforter. May the Triune God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) continue to pour amazing grace upon His people and the world. And may the people in the world be able to experience the amazing grace of the Triune God every day in life and even in death. Amen.

HoonJae Lee



Name: Maria L. Leys-Bowater

Place of birth: Hinsdale, Illinois

Education:

Calvin College
Grand Rapids, MI
BA, May 2007

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
M.Div., 2021

Internships:

RedArrow Ministries
Paw Paw, MI
September 2018 - August 2020

Contact:

269-779-7369
bowater.maria@gmail.com

Faith Journey

My life is a picture of the faithfulness of God, and I am so very thankful for the ways he has pursued me, revealed himself to me and empowered me to live for him. From a young age I knew that I not only loved God, but I also love the church. To the best of my ability, my faith journey has been a life of loving both. Growing up in the home of a Christian Reformed pastor, I had the privilege of a family committed to worship, evangelism, discipleship, and service. My parents demonstrated that you cannot love God well if you do not love his image bearers well. What a blessing to be raised respecting all image bearers and breathing hope, dignity, respect, and life into the people around me.

Following my first year of college, I had the opportunity to go to Mexico for the summer with Idea Ministries through their Summer Training Session (STS) program. I experienced God's faithfulness to me in real and tangible ways, and by the end of the summer I stood in the assurance of my salvation. No longer was Christianity just the faith of my family; I took ownership of my belief. I discovered a passion for missions, as well as an urgency for the world around me. Therefore, after having been married just over a year, it was not a surprise that God called my husband (Ben) and me into missions. We served as partner missionaries in Guam for two years through Christian Reformed World Missions (Resonate). In Guam, we taught at a Christian school, as well as led worship and served as youth directors in our church.

Ben and I returned to the mainland, and we went back to our home church, Community Life CRC (Lockport, IL) where I served on the ministry admin council and led children and family ministries. While in our home church, God confirmed our call into ministry; therefore, Ben attended Calvin Theological Seminary. As he finished seminary, we took a call to be the church planters for Classis Kalamazoo. We planted RedArrow Ministries in Paw Paw, MI, and it was a church restart following the closing of Paw Paw CRC. At RedArrow, I have served as the worship director and executive pastor, overseeing operations. Partnering with my husband to plant a church has been one of my greatest joys. It has been such a privilege to be used by the Lord as he makes a redemptive impact in our community. Whether in Guam, Lockport, or Paw Paw, my prayer has been and continues to be, "In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:17).

Maria Bowater

Statement of Reason

I am seeking candidacy in the Christian Reformed Church of North America because I know God has called me into ministry, and he has asked me to be prepared for whatever comes next. This step of faith is my response to his invitation for me to get ready. I do not know what the Lord has in store for me, but he continues to affirm me every step of the way. It is my hope that the candidacy process will be another example of God's affirmation.

Maria Bowater



Name: Jessica E. Maddox

Place of birth: Grand Rapids,
Michigan

Education:

Kuyper College
Grand Rapids, MI
BRE, 1998

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
MTS, 2001

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
Ph.D., 2012

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
EPMC, 2021

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Faith Journey

In elementary school, I tried on my parents' practices of Christian faith like I tried on my mother's shoes - I loved wearing her glossy black heels, but they didn't quite fit and I always ended up kicking them off in preference for my comfy tennis shoes. I asked Jesus into my heart frequently, I prayed for people, did private devotions, and I participated in Sunday school. I never doubted the existence of God, but watching my parents, I knew there was an aspect of God's reality that had not made its home in my heart and mind. I could tell there was more to God than what I could learn about or assent to, I just couldn't seem to summon it through the mimicry of my parents' faith.

I ran my own way in fifth and sixth grades with modest rebellion, testing my parent's love and faithfulness as much as I was testing God's. I had the disorienting experience at 11 years old of getting exactly what I had been striving for in my young life, only to find it hollow and unsatisfying. I was in seventh grade the first time I remember turning to God as my hope and answer to the empty ache I carried around within me. I prayed Psalm 23 on my knees on my living room floor after my parents had gone to bed. This moment of prayer stands out for me because it was the time, apart from the many others, that I first sensed that the Lord was with me. I felt his presence, comfort, and assurance in a way that soothed my young heart's ache. For the first time, I experienced the joy of my salvation. This experience reoriented my striving, and I wanted most to live a life that never wandered from that sense of the Lord's nearness. I have wandered back to desolate places of empty striving in the thirty-two years since that night, but I have always known with a deep assurance that the Lord is my shepherd, with me and for me, whether in life seasons of green pastures or shadowed valleys.

During my growing up years, my faith was most significantly formed by my parents and my church, a Presbyterian (PCA) church in Grand Rapids. My home life was characterized by my parents' practice of a missional and outreaching faith. It shaped our family conversations and deeply influenced my understanding of what lived faith looks like. The way my parents did church showed me that church is the renewal center for a missional life of faith. Church is where I learned the tenets of my faith, formed Christian friendships, found Christian mentors, learned the spiritual practice and joy of service, and discerned my gifts and calling. Church was the cloud of witnesses whose faith I watched and listened to. Church was the home into which I invited my seeking friends. For the most part, these were green pasture years, for which I am grateful.

The Lord has since shepherded me through some shadowed valleys – some darker and deeper than others. God has used some of the darkest legs of the journey to most radiantly display his goodness, grace, and love. I know, with a knowing that goes beyond learning and assent, that God is my Father, that Jesus is my Savior, and that the Spirit is my Comforter.

I love Jesus and I want to follow him. This desire has led me into and out of a variety of activities over the years, but it has always been at the core of my motivation. I graduated high school with what my guidance

Faith Journey (continued)

counselor would have viewed as a disappointing sense of ambition. I had vague notions of being an English literature teacher, but with little clarity, I decided to take a year to live in the mountains of Montana and attend bible school. A year of learning and hiking at Montana Wilderness School of the Bible among a beautifully ecumenical group of Christians ignited my call to be a bible teacher. I then attended Kuyper College (then Reformed Bible College) in Grand Rapids. I fell more in love with Jesus the more bible and theology classes I took, and I hungered for more. I started at Calvin Seminary in the MTS program in 1998, the same year I was married, and then began the Ph.D. program in 2001. I cherish the learning and forming that happened at CTS and am grateful for the introduction the seminary gave to me to the Christian Reformed Church, which our family calls home. I was a theology professor at Kuyper College for a decade and loved everything about the work of teaching and training mission-minded students. With the joyful surprise of our fourth child in 2013, I decided to stay home with my kids.

In these years at home, I have volunteered countless hours with groups generally not associated with the church and the Lord has stirred a deep longing in my heart that they should know God as their shepherd, too. And as I've taught a variety of adult education classes at church or been involved in small groups, I have seen how many of us inside the church are still hungry to know God and draw near to him and sense his shepherding care. Inside and outside of the church, we all need Jesus. I have a deep longing to practice church in a way that imitates the acceptance, belonging, grace, truth, and reconciliation demonstrated in the ministry of Jesus.

Jessica Maddox

Statement of Reason

I am seeking candidacy in the Christian Reformed Church because I believe God has called and equipped me to point people to Jesus and build up his church. I desire to do this work in and through the denomination in which my family has found a home. The Lord has shared his shepherd's heart with me and I long to help gather his people, near and far, in his name and for his glory. I am eager to be a part of the church's witness in the world to God's goodness, love, and reconciliation. It's true that I could do all these things apart from ordination. And I have. When I heard God's clear call to seek candidacy in the Spring of 2019, it seemed less like an invitation I could accept or reject and more like a sign posted along the road we were already walking. I love the Lord; I want to serve him as well as I can, with all that I am, wherever he leads.

Jessica Maddox



Name: Frank A. Meneses

Place of birth: Mexico

Languages spoken: English, Spanish

Education:

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

Internships:

Life Church RCA
Yakima Washington
Oct 2019 - June 2020

Contact:

509-596-8659
fam072@calivnseminary.edu

Faith Journey

Reflecting on my faith journey, I can say that there wasn't much. My family were unchurched, we would go to church once or twice a year. At my early age God, or church were not part for my life. God existed somewhere in the universe, I had a sense of who was God, but it seemed that God was only for certain people, for the religious, and because I was not a perfect young man, therefore God was not reachable. Or at least that was what I thought about God. At the age of 19, I was a messed, life was a little too crazy.

One day I was invited to church, of course I denied the invitation. For a few months the same person kept inviting me, to a point that it got annoying. One day I accepted, I went and all of the sudden God became real, He was speaking to my life. The questions that I had was, God, is that really you? There was someone speaking to my heart. At the age of 19 I was in a church in Arizona being confronted by God, calling me to repent from my sin. It was there that my life changed, and my life was transformed and all fo the sudden a God that was unreachable became a God that was close and was present in my life.

There, my faith journey began, from one day to the next my life had changed. Then I started the process of discipleship, it was here that I understood my purpose in life, and in a way I began to see the calling of God over my life. Before I had rejected God, and honestly I did not wanted to know anything About God, but then all of the sudden He showed up and called me to served him.

Years later I got married with Judith, we met at church, and now we have a son (Josiah) and our daughter (Cesia). After being married for a few years our life began to change, especially my life, looking back I can say it was the time that God called me to ministry. I served a few years as a church planter in a different denomination. It was then when I was introduced to the Christin Reformed Church. To the Reformed tradition, it was then when I was able to understand the gospel in a clear way.

By the grace of God I helped start a church plant in Chandler Arizona, and now a third church plant in Yakima Washington. One thing I have understand when it comes to my faith journey is that I have been saved through grace and have been given a mission. Jesus told is disciples to go and make disciples of all nations.

Frank Meneses

Statement of Reason

I desire to be ordained as a minister of the word in the Christian Reformed Church to preach the good news of our Lord Jesus Christ. I truly believe and I know that God has called me to go and make disciples of all nations, to baptize them in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit and to teach them His word. My desire is for people to come and know Jesus as their Lord and Savior. For their life to be transformed by the power of the gospel. This calling has been affirmed by the local church both in Arizona and in Washington state. It has also been affirmed by ordained ministers. I know that the calling of God over my life is to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up. (Ephesians 4:12)

Frank Meneses



Name: Daniel F. Meyers

Place of birth: Muskegon, Michigan

Education:

Calvin College
Grand Rapids, MI
BA in Religion and BA in
Asian Studies, 2009

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

Internships:

Covenant CRC
Cutlerville, MI
Sept 2017 - May 2019

Ellsworth CRC
Ellsworth, MI
May 2018 - Aug 2018

Bronson Methodist
Hospital CPE
Kalamazoo, MI
Aug 2020 - Sept 2021

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Faith Journey

I grew up in a Christian family. My Dad was originally Catholic and my Mom was Christian Reformed. Together, they decided we would attend a Christian Reformed Church. I was baptized at Calvin Christian Reformed Church in Muskegon, MI. I attended Sunday School there and begrudgingly endured their long-form prayers for the people during the service. It wasn't until I was a teenager in high school that Christianity became more than just a family ritual.

When I was 14 years old, I read a book called *Jesus Freaks* by dclark. In this book, I heard stories of people accepting Christ despite overwhelming opposition and persecution. They put their lives at risk and often lost them for the sake of the gospel. As I read this, I started to realize that this is important, that my faith is something worth more than what I have given it. I wanted to be more passionate like these people. And so, I went to my youth pastor and told him, "I want to do my profession of faith. I want to claim this as my own."

I decided I was going to become a missionary like the people in the book, and when the opportunity to do a mission trip to Mexico, I signed on. I went down to Mexico, and found myself completely out of my depth. I didn't know how to present the gospel and I was too shy to try. It seemed like my dream of becoming a missionary was cut short from the very beginning. Then I read another book called *Revolution in World Missions* by K.P. Yohannan. The author described how new Christians and the emerging church around the world were best suited to serve as missionaries - they knew the culture, they were already living there, and they spoke the language. What these young churches needed, however, was seminary education. While they had the passion, they didn't have access to the education that is so readily available in the western world.

So I decided I would be the type of teacher to go there. I would go as a teacher missionary and teach people about theology. I went to Calvin College and got a degree in religion and in Asian studies. I married a young woman who also had a passion for mission work in East Asia and we went down to Asbury Theological Seminary in pursuit of this goal. That's when things took a difficult turn.

My wife became pregnant, and our daughter developed spina bifida and anencephaly and eventually she passed away from this. It created one of the darkest times of my life. We didn't know how to move forward. I took a job as a machinist in Ohio because I didn't have the heart to continue my seminary studies. After a second miscarriage, my relationship with my wife fell apart. She told me she wanted a divorce, and after six months of counselling together, she stood by those words. I realized I couldn't keep this marriage together alone. So I accepted this reality.

During my divorce, the church community that I attended gathered around me. They did not judge me for my separation but they heard my pain and honored my tears. They loved me well. As my divorce was finalized, a friend of mine gave me a call and said, "I'm attending seminary this fall. Maybe you should attend seminary, too, and return to your first love." After much soul-searching I agreed to try.

Faith Journey (continued)

Seminary was not easy, but it was very healing. It was a place where I felt safe exploring these more mature, difficult themes in my life. I heard professors discuss the ache of Job's heart and the emotional pleas from Psalms. I grew in my own maturity. Before, I was afraid to speak even a word on that mission trip. By God's grace, I was able to serve a vacant church during the summer after my first year at seminary, as their primary pastor and pastoral care provider.

While I was in my internship church, a number of people suggested to me that I had giftings in the area of chaplaincy. I decided to take their advice and look into what chaplaincy really looks like. I served in a summer intensive Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) unit at Bronson Methodist Hospital. I found the ministry fulfilling, that God worked through me in the lives of those I visited. I could hear their pain and honor it as my pain was heard and honored.

Right now I'm completing a year-long CPE residency at Bronson Methodist Hospital and seeking to candidate in the Christian Reformed Church. As I continue to serve people in the hospital, I see the Holy Spirit at work, not loud and brash, but slow and subtle. Oftentimes I see that the Spirit has already begun his work in them before I meet them. I see fellow Christians and even non-Christians bringing care and presence in the times of deepest need, and I know God is among us. I have found the Christian walk to be hard and mysterious, but not lonely. God is in us and among us. Amen.

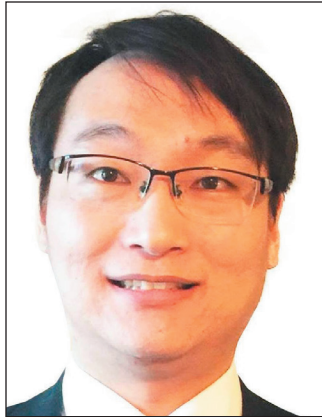
Daniel Meyers

Statement of Reason

My choice to seek ministry in the Christian Reformed Church is twofold. First, it is a practical choice: the Christian Reformed Church is my home. I feel comfortable with its forms, creeds and confessions. I have a personal connection to this community. Secondly, I also believe thoroughly in its doctrines; its Reformed accents make sense to me. I respect our exegetical methods. I love seeing the continuous thread of God's salvation thread throughout Scripture. I am awed by God's sovereignty and I am quieted by his mystery. The Reformed tradition and the Christian Reformed Church allow me to hold this tension.

Right now my heart is led to the ministry of chaplaincy. I look forward to providing spiritual care in whatever location God may choose for me. Wherever I may serve, I think it would be most proper to serve as a Christian Reformed Minister of the Word, God helping me.

Daniel Meyers



Name: Seonmok P. Park

Place of birth: Centennial

Languages spoken: English, Korean

Education:

Asia-Pacific Nazarene
Theological Seminary, Taytay
The Philippines
M.Div., 2014

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
EPMC, 2021

Denver Seminary
Littleton, CO
Korean D.Min.,
currently student, 2024

Internships:

Manila New Life
Church(Korean)
Makati City
The Philippines
Sept. 2013 - Dec. 2013.

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Faith Journey

I was born in Christian family. My father is a pastor in Korea. I am grown as a PK. I have two younger sister and brother. They are pastors in Korea. I was more engage God when I was high school student. I was a youth leader of my church and a leader of 4 city based. My faith with Jesus something inner to outward. I and church youth members went out to near Buddhist temple for evangelization. I went a secular school. One day, a teacher asked me my faith in the class time. I shared my faith with Jesus is the class.

My father wanted me to go to seminary. But I refused that. Instead, I went to social science in the university. I met and experienced my whole university era with Inter-Varsity Christion Fellowship. I learned discipleship, mission, worship, evangelization, etc. Above all, I learned my obedience to God. In the middle of university, I went to the military service for 2 years. I was a Chaplin Staff. At that time, I organize Saturday Christian fellowship. Returned to the university, I rejoined IVF.

I went to the Philippines to join a Korean missionary who serves Leprosy in the Philippines. I served about for 6 months. Then I moved another organization in the Philippines. After one year, I decided to enter the seminary the Korean missionary recommended. Entering the seminary, I and 3 others started to outreach at a poor location near the seminary. It is a moment my life is something to change.

I got a very severe Dengue fever. I was in hospitalized for 10 days. God was telling me stay calm. "I will be with you, don't worry yourself. I will go you just follow. I will make a way." I was extremely sick, but I was in peace. At that time, I am love by God and God's people. I served a lot of mission field and Korean-Philippines churches.

Wow. I got married with Ahnna in the US in 2014. It is another dramatically change in my life. I served three churches and am serving one church. I have two kids four-year-old girl and one-year-old son. I open now to serve any Korean American CRC churches. Two year ago, I got a severe stroke. I had no pain. I was in hospitalize for 6 weeks. I am still recovering. But I am ready to serve God and His people more than any time.

Paul Park

Statement of Reason

I am seeking and enjoying ordination in the Christian Reformed Church. As God is willing and calling in my life, I commit myself His own. I listen and meditate on the Word of Jesus include His life. I conflict His Word sometime, not because His Word is wrong but because of my willing for my life. I finally obey His Word. I am led the Holy Spirit to open my mind in any situations, myself, and my family. I am specially calling in preaching the Word of God to all nations especially Korean.

Paul Park



Name: Ryan M. Phan

Place of birth: Toronto, Ontario

Education:

Redeemer University College
Ancaster, ON
Youth Ministry Major
Business Minor, 2018

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
M.Div., 2021

Internships:

inSpirit Church
Byron Center, MI
September 2018 - May 2020

Bridge Street Ministries
Grand Rapids, MI
July 2019 - March 2020

Contact:

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ryanphan1993@gmail.com

Faith Journey

I did not grow up in a Christian home. I grew up in a home that was loving and supportive but I went most of my life not knowing who Jesus was. My only focus in my younger years was playing baseball and making it to the big leagues (playing professionally). It wasn't until my final year of high school where through a relationship, I began going to church. Even then though, I wasn't really serious about my faith but rather was going to suck-up to her and her father. However, the more I found myself going to church and surrounding myself with the church community, the more I was intrigued and I made the decision to make an effort to grow in my own personal relationship with God. It wasn't long after I made that decision that my life started to flip upside down. I sustained an injury which would prevent me from playing baseball to the level that I was used too. Then shortly after that, the relationship I had been in for 3 years, ended. Nothing made sense anymore. The future I had planned for myself both career and relationship wise was done and I blamed God for it. I thought, the more I gave myself to God, the more my life didn't make any sense. So, at that point, I decided I actually wanted nothing to do with God and quickly found myself replacing Him with the wrong crowd and the wrong things. It took a series of many unfortunate events that led me to realize that I actually need God because no matter how hard I tried, I was just making everything worse. Luckily, we serve a God who is faithful, loving and of many chances because I remember that feeling once I again gave myself to God, feeling so at peace and so loved. And for me, a God who would love me and extend to me so much grace is a God truly worth serving. I wouldn't say that after I once again made the decision to follow God that life has been easy because it hasn't been. I do though find myself having identity and purpose and direction all while being unconditionally loved. I switched schools from the University of Windsor to Redeemer University to obtain an education in youth ministry. From my time at Redeemer, I had to do at least two youth ministry internships which led me to a small church in Thunder Bay where I found a friend and mentor as well as a church family that took me in with open arms. It was also the community that pushed me to go to seminary. So, here I am currently finishing up my Master of Divinity still in awe that God would ever decide to call me to seminary and be someone seeking ordination, but I have come to know that God works through people and in ways that seem unimaginable at times. I am just very humbled and thankful to be where I am today by the grace and love of God.

Ryan Phan

Statement of Reason

I am seeking ordination in the Christian Reformed Church that I may humbly submit and follow God's call on my life. I hope to serve in a church and share the good news of Jesus Christ that I have encountered and received. I wish to do this not only within the walls of the church building but serve alongside of a church community as we bring the gospel message to all people. I hope to lead not only myself but others into a deeper understanding of who God is, what He has called us to, and grow in our own personal relationships with Him.

Ryan Phan



Name: William S. Roelofs

Place of birth: Downers Grove,
Illinois

Education:

Vanderbilt Divinity School
M.Div., 2020

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
EPMC, 2021

Internships:

Alive Hospice Chaplain
Nashville TN
August 2018 - May 2019

St Thomas Midtown
Hospital CPE
Nashville TN
June 2019 - August 2019

Rush University Medical Center
Resident Chaplain
Chicago IL
September 2020 - Current

Contact:

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roelofs.will@gmail.com

Faith Journey

Throughout my youth, I was always pretty quiet in large groups of people. I gravitated toward one-on-one conversations. These relationships would grow deep quickly, and I often found myself in talks about emotionally challenging topics. Topics that were difficult for myself and for others.

When I entered college, I wanted to use these gifts to become a psychologist. I was excited for this plan until I took my first Biblical Studies general education course. I was hooked. I grew up in the Christian Reformed Church. I always took pride in the fact that we had weekly catechism throughout high-school, and that our church community taught us difficult theological concepts from an early age. This training well prepared me for my Biblical Studies courses. After only one week of class, I marched into the registrar and changed my major. I had been reading the Bible my whole life, but getting to study with great professors and fellow students unlocked a new passion of mine. When I graduated college, I was a bit lost. What does one do with a BA in Biblical Studies?

I got jobs working for various non-profits working in interfaith, with at-risk-youth, and with an organization dedicated to ending world hunger. In my free time I would often go to coffee shops and bars with my brother to talk about faith, life, God, and to throw darts. While operating in these spaces, I became acquaintances with many people. Due to my affinity for deep conversation from my youth, our talks often became about the loss of a loved one, or struggles with addiction, or with hopelessness. It was about this time I learned about chaplaincy. I discovered a way to combine my passion for the Bible with my penchant for talking with those who were struggling.

I wound up Vanderbilt Divinity School, due to their reputation for training chaplains. There, God affirmed both my reformed identity and my call toward chaplaincy. In classrooms where I was often the only reformed student, I found a deeper appreciation and understanding of my denomination. I had the honor and privilege of serving as a hospice chaplain and then a hospital chaplain. I am currently working as a resident chaplain at a large hospital in Chicago, amidst a pandemic. All of these spaces affirmed the gifts that God has given me. I am continually amazed at the ways in which the Holy Spirit works through me to speak to people at the most difficult points of their life. As a chaplain I have the privilege of witnessing the ways God brings comfort to those facing their own death or the deaths of their loved ones. Through my studies, the support of my church community, and daily scripture meditations, God is continually preparing me to enter the hospital each day to provide spiritual care.

William Roelofs

Statement of Reason

I am seeking ordination in the Christian Reformed Church in order to continue to use the gifts God has given me to serve those in emotional and spiritual pain. As a Reformed Chaplain I recognize that I cannot do this work alone, but need the support of God and a church community for both encouragement and accountability. While my own theological beliefs often cannot be expressly named in chaplaincy settings, my reformed identity greatly influences the type of care that I give and my own sustainability in ministry. I hope to serve as an ordained Christian Reformed Chaplain that I may continue these relationships of encouragement and accountability, and that I may serve the denomination as well.

William Roelofs



Name: Kent A. Sanders

Place of birth: Pamona, California

Education:

Calvin University
Grand Rapids, MI
BA Psychology, 2017

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
M.Div., 2021

Internships:

Fuller Ave CRC
Grand Rapids, MI
September 2017 - May 2019

Contact:

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kas083@calvinseminary.edu

Faith Journey

My journey in the Christian faith has been an interesting one and continues still to be full of surprises. I wasn't raised in a church background and so my first exposure to the gospel was in middle school when a Christian family up the street invited me to a church camp. As I grew older and transitioned into high school I began working on a sailboat and after many long and in depth conversations of spiritual matters with my boss, I came to find out that he was a CRC Chaplain. Primarily through this relationship and the many other families in my neighborhood who continued to invite me to church, I became a disciple of Jesus Christ.

One of the touchstones of my faith has been never wanting to accept easy answers and so I really identify with people in scripture who have wrestled with God. I have sought to experience God in depth and in tangible ways and so I am often frustrated when my sin and limitedness get in the way. I continue to seek Christ in any way he will have me and pray that the future will consist of more of him and less of me.

Kent Sanders

Statement of Reason

The Christian Reformed Church is a community that has adopted me, disciplined me, walked with me, supported me, loved me, and wrestled with me as I walk with Christ. Due to their hard work and the work of the Holy Spirit the gospel has born great fruit in me. I know the CRC bears many gifts and so I would like to continue in this mission of going and making disciples.

Kent Sanders



Name: Dawei Shao

Place of birth: Linyi, Shandong,
China

Languages spoken: English, Chinese

Education:

“Shandong University
Jinan, Shandong, China
Bachelor of science, 2009

Mount Olive Bible College
Qingdao, Shandong, China
MA in Theology, 2016

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
M.Div., 2021

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
Th.M., 2021

Internships:

Hillcrest CRC
Denver, CO
June 2019 - Aug 2019

Mayfair Church
Grand Rapids, MI
Sept. 2018 - May 2019

Contact:

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ds000@calvinseminary.edu

Faith Journey

The merciful God showed his love and led me to know Him. In a middle school summer vacation, I was reborn from the Holy Spirit. Since then, I am sure that I am a Christian, knowing God from the Spirit and my heart, not from second-hand knowledge or experience of being born in a Christian family.

My father used to take me with him in my childhood when he traveled to preach in other towns. I admired him as he was preaching on the podium. But as I was growing, it seemed that the memory started to blur, so I thought it's just a temporary common admiration of a small boy to his father.

In 2009 after I graduated from university, God led me to Qingdao, a Shandong province. I joined a church where I met a beautiful girl who became my wife the next year.

In 2012, I worked in an advertisement company in a high building near the coastline of Qingdao. One day at noon, there was a slight sway of the building because of the strong wind from the sea, and even the swivel chairs of the office were rolling on the floor. Everyone thought it was an earthquake. A sudden thought ran into my mind that I felt great regret because I was dying, but I had not served God full time though it was my desire and longing for a long time. The event turned out to be more frightening than hurtful as it was no earthquake at all, but I confirmed that I would be a full-time pastor to follow His call sooner or later.

After a few years' voluntary work in the church, I applied for a local seminary and started my theological study in 2012. The next year, our church needed another full-time preacher, and thankfully the chance was offered to me, so I began to work in the church.

In the last four years of seminary training in Calvin Seminary and different intern times in different churches, I sense that the call to serve in ministry is more transparent and certain. I believe this is the way God is leading me to go.

Dawei Shao

Statement of Reason

I was raised in a Christian family, but we did not belong to any denomination. Later, many things led me to recognize the role of regional church communities. When I first came to Calvin Seminary, I did not know it is part of the CRC. After my first year, I changed to the Mdiv program and hoped to be ordained in the CRC. The first reason is my recognition of the importance of a denomination in local churches' faith journey. The second reason is I hope I can be in a network of pastors and churches to be mentored and helped. The third reason is that I consider it fit to be ordained based on my understanding of my calling. The last reason is that I admire the rich tradition and profound Reformed theology and worldview taught here.

Dawei Shao



Name: Evan J. Tinklenberg

Place of birth: Munster, Indiana

Education:

Covenant Theological Seminary
St. Louis, MO
M.Div., 2020

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
EPMC, 2021

Internships:

Orland Park CRC
Orland Park, IL
May 2019 - July 2019

Contact:

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Faith Journey

I was baptized into Christ at Bethel CRC in Lansing, Illinois, and I have no memory of it. Such an asymmetrical act displays the marvelous grace of the triune Lord in calling me to himself before I even could perceive the world around me. “In love he predestined” me (Eph 1.5), and called me with a purpose: that with my whole life I might proclaim the wonderful works of him who transferred me from the kingdom of darkness into the realm of his beloved Son (Col 1.13).

I spent the early years of my life in the care of the ordinary community of the church — my dad was a deacon, my mom served in the nursery and at women’s Bible studies, and the church loved our family dearly. Throughout this time I was not awake to the grace that so overflowed in that community, and as I approached double-digits my faith was stale at best. Then, in the fall of 2003, I got news that my dad was diagnosed with cancer. Through several ups and downs, a brief period of remission, and the cancer’s sudden and dramatic return, on July 16th, 2004, my dad went to be with his Lord.

The constellation of ways in which his death affected me would exceed this short statement, but in the midst of painful grief and confusion and doubt, I saw ordinary Christians in action: a group of church members gathered at our house, praying for us. The image is engraved in my mind: the humble response of faithful believers to the death of someone they loved. That is why, as I grew older, I did not consider faith to be ill-equipped for suffering in the real world. This faith was feisty in the face of suffering, because it proclaimed Christ crucified and risen. I’ve since deepened in my conviction that there is no more important truth in the universe than this: Christ died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.

Through work as a student ministry leader in college, increasing discipleship opportunities with pastors and professors, and robust engagement with Christian theology past and present, my sense of who God has called me to be was clarified. I discerned a call to seminary, and found myself surrounded again by the faithful love of the saints in Christ: pastors and professors who not only knew the Scriptures and the doctrines of the church, but knew what it was to suffer, and what it meant to be a minister of the gospel in the midst of it. I gained knowledge from them, but more than that I was apprenticed in a way of being Christian in the world, and I learned more clearly who God made me to be. God in his grace made me a theology nerd with a heart for the church and a passion to proclaim the good news. In other words, my call to ministry echoes Paul’s words: “This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God” (1 Cor 4.1). The baptism I underwent as an infant means more to me now than it ever has: it reminds me that “I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me” (Gal 2.20). My prayer is this: wherever the Lord leads me and my family, may our life be lived to God in the service of his saints.

Evan Tinklenberg

Statement of Reason

I am seeking ordination in the Christian Reformed Church because this church has been constitutive of my identity from the very beginning. I have been adopted by the Father, Son, and Spirit, and the CRC has been the Lord's means of raising me in that family. By God's grace, I have been surrounded by faithful sisters and brothers committed to the Reformed expression of Christian faith, and they have been excellent stewards of God's grace on my behalf. I seek only to offer my life in return for God's inestimable gift, trusting that he will, by his Spirit, multiply that gift.

Evan Tinklenberg



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Meyers

Place of birth: Picture Butte, Alberta

Languages spoken: English, French

Education:

Redeemer University
Ancaster, ON
B.Ed, B.A, 2012

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
M.Div., 2021

Internships:

Calvin CRC
Grand Rapids, MI
September 2018 - August 2020

A Christian Ministry in the
National Parks
Waterton Lakes National Park,
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May 2019 - Aug. 2019

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Faith Journey

I grew up with a solid knowledge of and love for Jesus. I am thankful to God for parents and grandparents who are testaments of His love and faithfulness. I publicly professed my faith when I was thirteen years old. That girl had no real idea what was ahead of her and probably could not have imagined trusting and loving God more than she did then. However, I'm beginning to understand that my love for God will continue to grow and deepen throughout my entire life.

In 2017, I began studying *You Are What You Love* by James K.A. Smith with Pastor Nate Van Denend. The book, our conversations, and my reflections kept bringing me to the question of "what do I really love"? By God's grace, my answer increasingly became: God. I love God. I am certainly not perfect at living out the reality that this answer necessitates, but He continues to work in me, so there is hope!

I dove into the depths of God's love that year by reading through the Prophets for the first time. I was intimidated and worried that they were going to be full of confusing and depressing situations (and they are). However, as I began reading, what I saw repeatedly was a God who deeply loved His people Israel and desperately wanted them to love Him back. I saw a God whose heart was broken over their betrayal, yet who would not leave them alone in their brokenness. He is a just God, therefore they found themselves in exile. He is also forgiving, gracious, and merciful and so after a time, He brought them home. All the while, God loved them. This is an overwhelming and incomprehensible kind of love. God is love. It's so simple, yet so profound.

Within the year after beginning that book study with Pastor Nate, I decided to leave my teaching career behind. I wasn't sure what was ahead, but I had experienced a deep sense of peace about that decision. Seminary became my next step in life, which was surprising to me. I grew up as a PK and had not anticipated that pastor's life as an adult, especially not *as* the pastor. But seminary has proven to be such a gift for me. As I stepped away from my career into an unknown future, my trust in God grew immensely. That has continued to be the case throughout seminary. My relationship with God has deepened, and while I still experience a wide variety of emotions regularly (fear, worry, joy, anticipation, etc.), underneath it all is an ever-flowing river of peace. The peace that passes understanding, the Living Water, flowing in and through and around me, each and every day.

I love Jesus and have committed my life to Him. Psalm 146 has become an important passage for me over this past year, and I proclaim with the Psalmist: "I will praise the Lord all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live!" Jesus summarized the law and the prophets into two basic commands: love God, and love people. If God loves us the way that I've been learning He does, then my response to Him could be nothing else than to love Him back, and to love His people.

Lynette van de Hoef Meyers

Statement of Reason

When I am asked what I am passionate about, my answer is often: "People"! I love seeing others get to know themselves, grow in who they are, develop in their spiritual lives, and begin sharing themselves with others. It's incredibly rewarding and special when people share their journey with me. I love people, and the church is one giant group of God's people, so I love them and I'm committed to living, leading, and growing with them! I desire to be ordained in the CRC because I have a deep appreciation for the Reformed variety of faith. I also grew up in the CRC - it's home. I think God is doing good and beautiful (and sometimes challenging) work in His church, and I want to be a part of that. God has called me to this place (the CRC) at this time, and until that changes, this is where I want to be.

Lynette van de Hoef Meyers



Name: Ryan A. K. VanderWees

Place of birth: Thunder Bay,
Ontario

Education:

Redeemer University College
Ancaster, ON
Bachelor of Arts, 2017

Loyalist College
Belleville, ON
Graduate Certificate, 2018

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
M.Div., 2021

Internships:

Westview CRC
Grand Rapids, MI
Sept 2018 - May 2019;
Sept 2019 - May 2020

Summer Language Institute -
LCC University
Klaipeda, Lithuania
July 2019

Aylmer CRC
Alymer, ON
May 2020 - August 2020

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Faith Journey

My faith journey is one of the faithfulness of God. I was born in Thunder Bay, Ontario and Baptised into the CRC. I grew up in the CRC community attending both a local Church and the Christian School. All throughout, God's steady hand was at work leading and guiding me. Though uneventful, God's faithful and steadfast love kept me in His care. There is a certain beauty to the uneventful yet faithfull work of God in those of us who have been a part of the Church from a young age.

However, it was when I started studying the Heidelberg Catechism at Church in my adolescence that I really began to understand just what God has done, is doing, and will do. The Pastor who taught me the Catechism at Church helped open my eyes to the realities of God and His work in my life and in the world. It was the Catechism that introduced me to Theology and the wonders of God. It did not take long after starting Catechism classes that I began finding and reading as much about Theology, the Church, and the Bible as I could. Perhaps it was a little strange, but even as a youth I found great enjoyment in reading about God and learning as much as I could. God's faithfulness in my life had brought me to an even greater appreciation of His works.

Spurred on by a desire to know God more I ended up taking an undergraduate degree in Religion and Theology. Both before starting my undergrad and while completing it I felt an inward and outward call to the Ministry. I brushed it off because I did not want to be a Pastor. After completing my degree in Religion and Theology I started studies in a different field looking to set myself on the path to a good career. However, God gets what God wants, and while trying to do what I wanted it was made clear by God that He wanted me in the Ministry. As a result, I started Seminary and resumed learning as much as I could about Him and His Word. The faithfulness of God was, once again, evident in my life as He brought me where He wanted me. It has been clear that God has been sustaining and leading me in His faithfulness all my life; even when I ignored Him.

Ryan VanderWees

Statement of Reason

I am now nearing the very end of my Seminary studies, and am approaching the next step. In God's faithfulness He has brought me this far, and in His faithfulness He will continue to lead me. As such, I seek ordination in the CRC. It is both the inward and the external call that has brought me this far. As a result of God's calling I seek ordination in submission to His faithful leading. The CRC is the Church which raised me, taught me, and formed me in doctrine, life, piety, and reverence. The CRC is the Church which God has both placed me in and sustained me in. In Ordination to the CRC it is my hope that I will be best able to serve the Church that God used to form me. By being ordained in the CRC I trust that God will use me to serve the Church just as I have been served by the Church. My reason for seeking ordination is summed

Statement of Reason (continued)

up well by the end of Answer 1 in the Catechism, “Because I belong to him, Christ, by his Holy Spirit, assures me of eternal life and makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready from now on to live for him.” For me, this willingness and readiness to live for Him involves seeking Ordination in order to proclaim the wonders of His works, Grace, and redeeming of sinners.

Ryan VanderWees



Name: Benjamin E Wiersma

Place of birth: Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Education:

Northwestern College
Orange City, IA
BA, 2009

Sioux Falls Seminary
Sioux Falls, SD
M.Div., 2021

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
EPMC, 2021

Internships:

Living Water
Community Church
Sheldon IA
2017-2020

Sibley CRC
Sibley IA
Summers 2015-2020

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Faith Journey

As one of my seminary professors phrased, I was a “pre-natal” Christian. I have been attending church since before I was born. During my childhood and teenage years, I was part of the Protestant Reformed Church. The Christian faith was a large part of my upbringing. My parents modeled commitment to the church, bible study attendance, and daily devotions. I went to Christian grade school and high school, catechism classes through that entire time, and youth group. I learned a lot about the Christian faith as well as the Reformed faith during those years.

I would never say that I had a conversion moment because belief and faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior have been a part of my life for as long as I can remember. However, there was a time in my life when I began to become a lot more serious about my faith. In high school church was boring and I had little time to care about the faith I had been given. I spent more time worrying about whether I was good enough to be chosen by God than to develop a relationship with God. I did not really understand the grace and sovereignty of God in salvation during those years.

After high school there were circumstances in my life that led me to leave my parents’ church. I began attending a Christian Reformed Church in Sioux Center, IA. It was a new experience and I felt God was putting me there for a reason. I was never really involved in the church, but attended regularly. It was after a few years of working full-time in a grocery store that I met my wife and started to attend Northwestern College in Orange City, IA. She was a student there and I wanted to spend more time with her, so why not go to college? It was at Northwestern that I developed a passion for psychology and the desire to know people more and help people began to develop.

My faith also began to grow during those college years, due in large part to the prayers of my wife and the work of the Holy Spirit within me. My faith began to grow and my desire to serve God and the church began to be a big part of my life. Before getting married, my wife and I began attending a Christian Reformed Church in Hull, IA. Through our years there we were involved in bible studies, outreach projects, and other various activities.

In February 2010, right after my wife and I finished our undergraduate degrees at Northwestern, my dad passed away from cancer at the age of 59. My dad and I were close, so this was a difficult time. God also used this time in my life to deepen my faith in a tremendous way. My dad modeled a strong faith in God as he went through the treatment process. After finding out the treatments were not as effective as they would have liked, my dad was given three weeks to six months to live. This was about a month before his death. I do not know what it was like for my dad on the inside, but outwardly he was at peace with his impending death. My dad was even excited because he was going to see Jesus. It was this experience in my life that made me realize the love of God in an amazing way. This is when it clicked for me that God’s love was the important factor in our salvation and not our worthiness. Because of

Statement of Reason (continued)

God's grace through the sacrifice of his Son on the cross our sins are fully paid for. We can do nothing to earn God's love for us.

It was after this encounter with God's amazing love that I really felt called to serve him out of deep gratitude for his grace upon me. This is when the call to become a minister of the word really began. As I listened to the sermons on Sundays and saw the passion the minister had for the Lord in those sermons, I felt a pull to be a part of that. As I was working full-time at this time, I told my boss that I was starting to feel called to be a pastor. He told me that he did not really see me as a pastor, and I agreed with him. I did not have the skills and personality to be a pastor. Not long after that, I became a stay-at-home dad when our first daughter was born, a dream that I had for many years.

During that time as a stay-at-home dad, I spent a lot of time in the scriptures and reading a variety of books. One of those books was *The Purpose Driven Life* by Rick Warren. After reading one of the chapters, I felt pulled to surrender my life to God for service. God spoke to me that day and told me to become a pastor. After struggling with that call for a year and a half, I finally accepted that call while at a weekend spiritual retreat. I discussed my sense of calling with a pastor who was a spiritual director that weekend. He affirmed that calling, freeing me up to begin pursuing the road to pastoral ministry. After six and a half years in seminary and part-time ministry, I have finally come to the final steps of the candidacy journey. God has developed the skills and traits in me during that time that I will need to serve him as a minister of the Word. I look forward to seeing how God will continue my faith journey as I continue to serve him.

Ben Wiersma

Statement of Reason

I am seeking candidacy in the Christian Reformed Church because this is where I feel called both internally and externally to serve the Lord as a minister of the Word. I have always had a passion for the Reformed faith and the Christian Reformed faith tradition is where most of my spiritual growth has occurred. This denomination has a firm biblical foundation, while also maintaining unity with people from a diversity of backgrounds, whether it is social, economic, or ethnic. The Christian Reformed denomination comes together as a family ready and willing to serve the Lord in any setting the Lord calls us into. I look forward to being a part of God's ministry in our denomination.

Ben Wiersma



Name: Lea A. Wilkening

Place of birth: Elmhurst, Illinois

Education:

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
M.Div., May 2021

Internships:

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Christian Reformed Church
Hagersville, ON
June 2019 - December 2019

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Faith Journey

One of my earliest memories is of God's grace. As a young child, there were many foods I couldn't eat because of pervasive food allergies. My mother, searching for answers but not without hope, brought me to Lighthouse Assembly, an African American church near Chicago with a prayer ministry. The energy, music, and bright colors of the services were enchanting to my 3-year-old eyes. Women who didn't know me, but called me their own anyway, gently placed their hands on my head. Their prayers were answered, and I lived without a single food allergy well into adulthood.

Soon after moving from the area, I came to know Christ more deeply at Oak Park Avenue Baptist Church in Berwyn, IL. The church allowed me to attend their children's programs without my parents. When my family learned I wasn't just playing outside, they joined too. We were blessed by this church committed to being the hands and feet of Jesus to its community. Its focus on God's law reassured me that the brokenness of my family and neighborhood was not God's plan, but the goodness there was. As a teen, I grew burdened by the weight of moral expectations and disillusioned by moral failings in church leadership. I went away to university thinking I needed to avoid church to maintain my faith.

After university, I began to ask honest questions about God's purpose for his relationship with his church. I realized it was too hard trying to do life on my own and cautiously joined Riverside Presbyterian Church. My husband, John, and I were married there and served in their middle school ministries where we grew alongside the youth. We moved to my husband's hometown of Lansing, IL and attended Bethel CRC. There I learned God's law as grace to help his people flourish and found comfort in the daily rhythms of living and worshipping in community. We continued to grow in faith alongside those we served but continued to struggle under the weight of my distorted images of "doing church."

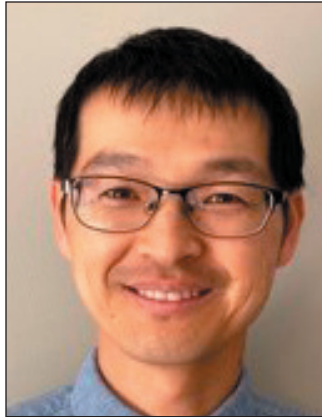
We felt called to move to Canada for what was supposed to be a one-year adventure that is now going on nearly ten years. I began working for ClearView CRC as a Community Engagement Specialist and had the incredible blessing of being discipled alongside mentors and friends who were a safe space to ask honest questions of Jesus and made following him a joyful adventure in our communities. While at ClearView, my understanding of the goodness of God and his call on my life was expanded. Throughout seminary, I've reflected on the ordinary and extraordinary ways the Spirit uses God's people to lead people to himself and, while living in community is not always easy, I am grateful for the church, which led me to our Creator.

Lea Wilkening

Statement of Reason

I am seeking ordination in the Christian Reformed Church because I am not my own but belong, body and soul, to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I cannot take credit for my faith. The Lord has sought me out in his graciousness, plucked me out of the depths, and held me in his mercy. The artful strokes of his creation are all the proof I need of his existence. I know God as Creator, Provider, Counselor, Challenger, Corrector, Good Doctor, Host of Hosts, beginning and the end. The One who blows storms across the sky whispers to me gently and deals with me compassionately through his Spirit. He knows my innermost thoughts and lives in me through his Son. His goodness breathes all around me: in my neighbors, in my friends and family, through the smiles of strangers on the street, and through his Church. My whole purpose in life is to be where he wants me to be, loving everyone, and giving anyone who asks, the reason for my hope.

Lea Wilkening



Name: Sunghak Yang

Place of birth: An sung, Kyung-ki-do,
South Korea

Languages spoken: English, Korean,
Chinese

Education:

Baekseok University
in South Korea
Bachelor degree for theology,
2007

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
M.Div., 2021

Internships:

Ann Arbor Bible Church
Ann Arbor, MI
August 2018 - June 2020

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Faith Journey

My first experience of attending church was when I was in grade 5. I started to attend the new Presbyterian Church in South Korea, and I had discipleship under the passionate pastor. During this time, I encountered many amazing spiritual experiences. I was also loved by the church, which naturally made me dream to be a pastor one day. But my father passed away in an unexpected accident. I grieved for a long time after his death. This began to affect my faith – sinking into a pit of despair and unbelief. I walked through this darkness and sadness during my first year of high school. Thankfully, with my family and friends' love and prayer, I went back to church to my family and friends. Still, there were unanswered questions such as evil and pain along with sin. Then I had the opportunity to join a Bible study of Romans in the Pierson Theological College. There I found joy like no other. I understood the meaning of the cross, forgiveness, and the true love which comes from God. Because of this incredible joy, I forced myself to memorize the book of Romans. I memorized the book to chapter 8 perfectly. For some reasons, such as the complex structure from chapter 9, I stopped memorizing it. However, I read the New Testament over and over again in addition to Job. I memorized up to the Bible I had was an old one. It only had the New Testament and the book of Job.

It is impossible to eliminate the story of my father in my faith journey. My father was such a skillful mason. Whatever shaped stones he grabbed, he would have transformed them into all different kinds of art craft. Even though my house was not rich enough to provide me some of the fancy toys that my friends played with, my father often made me all different types of hand-made wood toys or stone toys. I loved them so much. It's already been 25 years since my father had to go back to father Abraham's bosom, but whenever I see a stone while walking on the street, I miss him without fail. But I remember what my father told me about masonry work. He said that masonry work is a dirty job, and not just my clothes will get filthy. I saw many scars from his head to his toe, and many of them looked painful. The memory of my father helped me to imagine the builder Jesus. I felt overwhelming sympathy toward "stoneworker" Jesus. It must have been hard to find masonry work in the little rural town of Nazareth so he must have left his home very early in the morning to find extra work in bigger towns. Maybe sometimes he would not find any work and returned to his home in Nazareth empty-handed. Sometimes he would have been hired late, and he probably got only half wage for his work. He is a divine God, but also he lived as an ordinary human being. Whenever I remember my masonry worker father, I come up with Jesus, who shows more mercy to the weak and needy.

I was so proud of my father, who sacrificed for my family and me with his hard work. He often enjoys singing hymns while working. Even though my father was not a pastor, my father is my pastoral model regarding his humility and impatience. But he passed away suddenly. During my father's sudden absence, I spent almost everyday exercising boxing to fight against the sadness and depression. I was immersed in the exercise of boxing that abused a bit of my body. One day I found myself becoming a professional boxer. I didn't know what I was holding for and what I was wrestling with. After entering the professional boxing world, I realized that I didn't even

Faith Journey (continued)

know what I was doing it for. When becoming a pro-boxer, I sensed that my life was in danger. One day, I received a proposal of fighting money to have a match with a Japanese boxer. I concluded that this was not what I wanted to wrestle with. So I quit boxing immediately.

The depression and disappointment of missing my father pushed me to travel to China. China was like a sea of people, and there were numerous non-Christians in China. Then one day, I felt that I was like a drop of water in the open ocean, questioning, "Do they all go to hell if they don't receive the gospel?" Later I realized that it was a huge theological question. I returned home from China. I started working at a trading company, recognized for my Chinese language ability as a native Korean speaker. I loved this job. I got to travel abroad at least twice a month for only easy translating work and was paid well. One day when I was writing an e-mail to my Taiwanese customer, I heard an inner voice say to me, "What are you wrestling with now?" (I believed it was from God!) In church, I sincerely prayed about the voice I heard, and just as clearly, the same voice came to me again in my prayer. "Empty your stomach, and I'll let you know something." He wanted me to go to seminary. Despite my long fierce opposition, I finally had to surrender to God because He gave me faith that He will fulfill me with my desiring and unknown wrestling. God wanted me to go to seminary. Filled with the Holy Spirit, I finished my seminary bachelor course wonderfully.

Through the journey in Calvin Theological Seminary, I experienced God's fulfillment with my desire and unknown wrestling. Jesus was subjected to a crucial misinterpretation of the world. The light shone into darkness, but the darkness could not acknowledge the light and it swallowed the light by mistake. But this was God's unknown plan beyond the first creation. God wanted to transform the darkness, which lost its color by the sin, to restore its originally painted color by the Creator. God has begun this work by raising Jesus from death to life. And by the resurrection, the light of Jesus has been swallowing the darkness. He calls me his little light, and for this mission he has trained me so far. God has blessed me with the Holy Spirit to serve his church, and his kingdom. I love God's church, and I look forward to serving through ordained ministry.

Sunghak (Paul) Yang

Statement of Reason

My family and I are members of Neland Avenue CRC since February 2018, which is the second month after arriving at Grand Rapids from South Korea. We have experienced the CRC liturgy and a reconciled community of faith through the Neland. And I was assigned to do my internship in The Korean Bible Church Ann-Arbor. KBC is a small, rural church that was begun as Christian Reformed Church in Ann Arbor with 66 members. KBC is an immigrant family community of God in which all people from Sunday kids to elderly brothers and sisters are valued, accepted, and welcomed with God's love. I want to be a pastor in the CRC because I experienced many values and good traditions in the CRC. I love this theology, and I want to know more about the meaning of the covenant and the kingdom of God as a CRC ordained pastor.

Sunghak (Paul) Yang