



CALVIN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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2021  
approved candidates



*Name:* Ram S. Aryal

*Place of birth:* Kathmandu, Nepal

*Colleges & Seminaries Attended:*

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

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

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

Calvin Th. Seminary  
M. Div., 2017

*Internships:*

Redeemer PCA, Florence, AL  
Aug 2011 - Oct 2012

Thornapple Covenant Church  
Sept 2013 - Sept 2015

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

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

*Languages spoken:*

English, Hindi (Indian),  
and Nepali

*Contact:*

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### *Faith Journey*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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*Faith Journey (continued)*

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

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

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

Ram S. Aryal

*Statement of Reason*

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

Ram S. Aryal



*Name:* Maria Beversluis

*Place of birth:* Grand Rapids, MI

*Education:*

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

Regent College  
Vancouver, BC  
M.Div., 2011

Calvin Theological Seminary  
Grand Rapids, MI  
EPMC, 2012

*Internships:*

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

*Contact:*

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*Faith Journey*

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

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

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

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

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

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

Maria Beversluis



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*Statement of Reason*

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

Maria Beversluis



*Name:* David Bouma

*Place of birth:* Agana, Guam

*Education:*

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

*Internships:*

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

Hanford CRC  
Hanford, CA  
June 2018 - August 2018

*Contact:*

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### *Faith Journey*

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

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

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

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

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

David Bouma

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*Statement of Reason*

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

David Bouma



*Name:* 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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mark\_broadus@fellowship  
churchto.org

*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



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*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:* Yoon Chul Choi (Daniel)

*Spouse:* Ji Yon Hong

*Age:* 46

*Place of Birth:* Seoul,  
Republic of Korea  
Canadian Citizen

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

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

*Internships:*  
Health Intervention Service,  
Grand Rapids, MI  
Summer 2011  
  
Hahn-In CRC,  
Grand Rapids, MI  
September 2011 — January  
2012

*Languages:* Korean, Spanish,  
and English

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### *Faith Journey*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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*Faith Journey (continued)*

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

Yoon Chul Choi (Daniel)

*Statement of Reason*

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

Yoon Chul Choi (Daniel)



*Name:* 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

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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:* Brad Diekema

*Place of Birth:* Grand Rapids, MI

*Colleges & Seminaries Attended:*

Kuyper College  
B.S.

Calvin Theological Seminary  
M.Div., 2017

*Internships:*

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

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

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### *Faith Journey*

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

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

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

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

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

Brad Diekema



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*Statement of Reason*

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

Brad Diekema



*Name:* 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

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### *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

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*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:* Steven Dykstra

*Place of Birth:* Ottawa, Ontario

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

McMaster Divinity College  
M. Div., 2014

Calvin Theological Seminary  
EPMC, 2018

*Internships:*

Inner-City Outreach  
Hamilton, Ontario  
2010 - 2011

Servant Partners  
Bgy. Botocan, Manila,  
Philippines  
2011

Meeting Place Church  
Hamilton, Ontario  
2013 - 2014

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

*Contact:*

905-515-3850  
stevedyks@gmail.com

*Faith Journey*

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

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

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

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

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

Steven Dykstra

*Statement of Reason*

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

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*Statement of Reason (continued)*

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

Steven Dykstra



*Name:* 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:*

519-955-4211  
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.



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*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:*

616-644-6310  
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.

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*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:*

616-644-8896  
jlg055@calvinseminary.edu

*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

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*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:* Robert Gruessing

*Spouse:* Sue

*Age:* 39

*Place of Birth:* Zeeland, MI

*Number of Children:* Four

*College Attended:*

Cornerstone University  
B.S., 2010

*Seminary Attended:*

Calvin Theological Seminary  
M.Div., 2014

*Internships:*

70 X 7, Holland MI  
Summer 2012

CPE, Pine Rest,  
Grand Rapids, MI  
Summer 2013

*Contact:*

616-748-0493  
rjg66@calvinseminary.edu

### *Faith Journey*

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

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

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

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

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

Robert Gruessing

### *Statement of Reason*

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

In Christ, Robert J. Gruessing







*Name:* 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:*

515-518-6072  
director@isu-areopagus.org

*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.

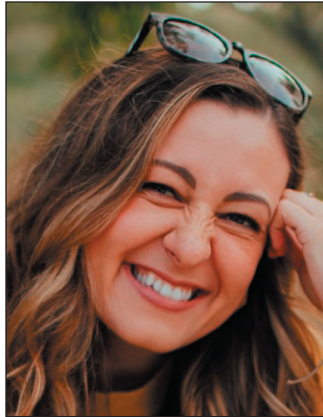
Tyler R Helfers

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*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:* Noelle Meggie Jacobs

*Place of birth:* Dearborn, MI

*Languages spoken:* English,  
Romanian

*Education:*

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

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

Calvin Theological Seminary  
Grand Rapids, MI  
EPMC, 2020

*Internships:*

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

Mescalero Reformed Church  
Mescalero, NM  
May 2018 - July 2018

*Contact:*

734-260-1440  
noellemjacobs@gmail.com

*Faith Journey*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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*Faith Journey (continued)*

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

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

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

Noelle Jacobs

*Statement of Reason*

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

Noelle Jacobs



*Name:* 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:* Travis Jamieson

*Place of birth:* Sarnia, Ontario

*Education:*

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

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

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

*Internships:*

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

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

*Contact:*

312-428-0579  
Tmj093@calvinseminary.edu

*Faith Journey*

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

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

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

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*Faith Journey (continued)*

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

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

Travis Jamieson

*Statement of Reason*

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

Travis Jamieson



*Name:* 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 eve-ryone was very driven to be the best so that they could find bet-ter jobs, make good money and become successful. But I just could not see that that was a fulfilling or meaningful life. I be-lieved 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 automati-cally 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 fulfilment . It always amaz-es 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 outthrough 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 serv-ant so I can be faithful to Him in all circumstances.

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*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 7<sup>th</sup> 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

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*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:* Kennedy Muli Kailiti

*Place of birth:* Makueni, Kenya

*Languages spoken:* English,  
Kiswahili

*Education:*

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

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

*Internships:*

Hope Network  
Pastoral Department,  
July 2017 - July 2018

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

*Contact:*

616-466-6773  
kmk030@calvinseminary.edu

*Faith Journey*

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



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*Faith Journey (continued)*

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

Kennedy Muli Kailiti

*Statement of Reason*

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

Kennedy Muli Kailiti



*Name:* 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:*

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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:* Jiyong Kim

*Place of birth:* Seoul, South Korea

*Languages spoken:* English, Korean

*Education:*

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

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

*Internships:*

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

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

*Contact:*

734-355-1410  
jk044@calvinseminary.edu

*Faith Journey*

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

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

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

I thank you God, so very much.

Jonathan Kim

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*Statement of Reason*

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

Jonathan Kim



*Name:* Jooheyng (David) 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:*

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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 (David) Kim

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*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 (David) 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:*

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*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:*

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*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)!

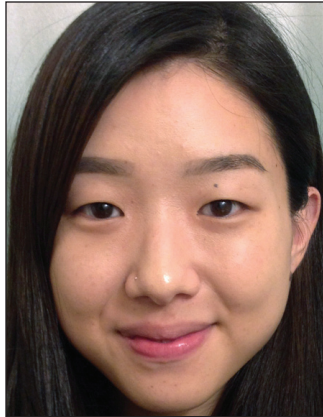
Tim Kimbel

*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:* Hannah Ryou Lee

*Place of Birth:* Grand Rapids, MI

*Colleges & Seminaries Attended:*

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

Calvin Theological Seminary  
M.Div., 2017

*Internships:*

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

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

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

*Languages spoken:*

Korean

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### *Faith Journey*

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

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

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

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

Hannah Lee

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*Statement of Reason*

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

Hannah Lee



*Name:* Hoon Jae 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

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*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.

Hoon Jae Lee



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*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.

Hoon Jae 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:*

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### *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:* Jeff M. Liou

*Place of birth:* Tulsa, OK

*Education:*

TEDS, M.Div., 2009

Fuller, Ph.D., 2017

Calvin Theological Seminary  
Grand Rapids, MI  
EPMC, 2020

*Internships:*

Elgin EFC

*Contact:*

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jeff.liou@intervarsity.org

### *Faith Journey*

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

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

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

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

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

Jeff Liou

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*Statement of Reason*

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

Jeff Liou



*Name:* 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

*Contact:*

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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

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*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:* Bryzon Wanjala Masiboh

*Place of birth:* Bungoma, Kenya

*Languages spoken:* English, Swahili,  
Kiluhya

*Education:*

St. Paul's Theological University  
Kenya

Dip. Theology

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

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

*Internships:*

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

*Contact:*

231-683-0777  
bmasiboh@yahoo.com

*Faith Journey*

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

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

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

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

Bryzon Wanjala Masiboh

*Statement of Reason*

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

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*Statement of Reason (continued)*

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

Bryzon wanjala Masiboh



*Name:* 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

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*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:* Lisa Meyer

*Place of birth:* Grand Rapids, MI

*Education:*

Calvin College  
B.S.N., 2004

Calvin Theological Seminary  
M.Div., 2012

*Internships:*

Aspirus Wausau Hospital  
Wausau, WI  
June 2009 - August 2009

Calvin CRC  
Grand Rapids, MI  
June 2010 - August 2010

*Contact:*

616-240-3861  
harperquinn@gmail.com

*Faith Journey*

I grew up in Grand Rapids and have lived in the same zip code for my entire life. I attended Christian schools for my education, and I suspect I am one of the few who walked to school from kindergarten through graduate school. My father is a church organist and also taught at colleges for many years, and through him I developed my love of sacred music and liturgy.

I loved school and church and learning, but I never considered ministry as a career. I went on mission trips with my youth group and attended Convention and made profession of faith and attended Sunday School and catechism, and I enjoyed it all, but ministry wasn't really a practical choice for my future. I saw myself becoming a medical missionary, and so I went to Calvin University and studied nursing. But I continued to volunteer with the high school youth group and participate in small groups at church, and I served the Calvin Orchestra as the Spiritual Coordinator. It was a position that hadn't existed before, a student-led leadership opportunity, and so I created it as I saw fit. Every Monday I sat for an hour and prayed for each of my fellow orchestra members by name, and they trusted me with all the worries and woes and joys of their hearts, and it was the most powerful experience of my life.

When I entered seminary in the fall of 2008, I took a huge leap of faith. I had been working as a registered nurse for four years, and many of my friends and family couldn't understand why I wanted to leave a relatively stable and well-paying career for ministry. One family member told me I was throwing away the best years of my life, when I should be at home raising a family. But I had prayed about it and sought counsel from wise folks, and I knew this was where God was leading. With the support and blessing of my husband and my church backing my strong sense of call from God, I followed the path to Calvin Theological Seminary.

Like so many paths God lays out, mine was neither straight nor direct.

During reading break of my third year, I gave birth to a son. By the time I graduated, that son was nineteen months old and I was six months pregnant with a second son. Despite these changes, I was confirmed as a candidate by Synod in 2012. My plan was to wait until early 2013 to seek a call—by then, my second child would be more than three months old and my standard "maternity leave" would be completed. But I knew that finding a job could be challenging and take time, so late in 2012 I started a different nursing job.

In April 2013 I found out I was pregnant again. This was not how I anticipated my life going. I don't remember if I renewed my candidacy or not, but I knew that with the births of three kids in just over three years, there was no way to make a ministry career viable for me at that time. So I continued working at my nursing job, occasionally leading adult education, and wondering about God's plan.

In 2016 my home church, Calvin CRC in Grand Rapids, asked if I would be interested in preaching again. I was a little hesitant, but agreed. Once I stepped back up to the pulpit, though, my fears vanished. I loved the time spent studying God's word and wondering what God wanted to say to God's people. I loved taking a jumble of notes and trying to shape

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*Faith Journey (continued)*

it into a coherent message. I loved standing in front of my friends and family and my church and feeling God speak through me.

I left my first nursing job, in the emergency department, because I had lost the ability to cry. I could no longer handle the raw humanity and the daily heartbreaking reminders that this world is not how it is supposed to be. But when I sought what I thought would be a temporary job after seminary, it was back in the emergency department. I think what drew me back was the diversity of the experience, both the people and their reasons for coming. I see ministry as an extension of that work, as a place where the broken people can come with questions and problems of all sizes and shapes. The CRC has a reputation as a church for intellectual people, but in every sermon I preach I also think about the faces of my three growing children. They don't care about the finer points of theology if they don't understand the truth that God loves them so much that he died for them. My joy in ministry is to walk alongside people in all parts of their faith journeys, and I look forward to continuing to serve God however God leads.

Lisa Meyer

*Statement of Reason*

I am seeking candidacy in the Christian Reformed Church because I believe God has called me to ordained ministry. The CRC is my home denomination, and with gratitude to God for his faithfulness through my lifetime, I intend to fulfill my profession of faith vows to offer myself to God as his willing servant and do the work of the Lord wherever I am called.

Lisa Meyer





*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

*Contact:*

231-740-3051  
danielfmeyers@gmail.com

*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.



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*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:* Loice Mueni Minito

*Place of birth:* Machackos, Kenya

*Languages spoken:* English, Kamba  
and Kiswahili

*Education:*

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

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

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

*Internships:*

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

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

*Contact:*

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

*Faith Journey*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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*Faith Journey (continued)*

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

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

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

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

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

Loice M. Minito

*Statement of Reason*

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

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

Loice M. Minito



*Name:* Matthew Mulder

*Place of birth:* Zeeland, Michigan

*Colleges & Seminaries Attended:*

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

Calvin Theological Seminary  
M.Div., expected May 2019

*Internships:*

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

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

*Contact:*

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

### *Faith Journey*

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

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

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

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

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

Matthew Mulder

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*Statement of Reason*

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

Matthew Mulder



*Name:* Katrina Olson

*Age:* 32

*Place of Birth:* Listowel, Ontario

*Name of Spouse:* Jim Olson

*Colleges & Seminaries Attended:*

The University of  
Western Ontario  
B.A., 2006

Calvin Theological Seminary  
M.Div., 2016

Calvin Theological Seminary  
Th.M., 2016

*Internships:*

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

*Contact:*

269-377-5643  
katolson5318@gmail.com

### *Faith Journey*

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

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

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

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

Katrina Olson

### *Statement of Reason*

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



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*Statement of Reason (continued)*

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

Katrina Olson





*Name:* Seonmok (Paul) 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.

*Contact:*

720-300-2086  
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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.

Seonmark (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.

Seonmark (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:*

519-971-3043  
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

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*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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*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

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*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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*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:* Kyle J. Sandison

*Place of birth:* Grand Rapids,  
Michigan

*Colleges & Seminaries Attended:*

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

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

Calvin Theological Seminary  
EPMC

*Internships:*

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

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

Bellevue CRC  
Bellevue, WA  
May 2015 - Aug 2015

*Contact:*

(616)-745-4313  
kjs023@calvinseminary.edu

*Faith Journey*

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

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

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

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

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

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

Kyle Sandison

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*Statement of Reason*

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

Kyle Sandison



*Name:* Ivan K. Santoso

*Age:* 25

*Place of Birth:* Surabaya, Indonesia

*Colleges & Seminaries Attended:*

Purdue University  
B.S., 2012

Calvin Theological Seminary  
M.Div., 2016

*Internships:*

Sunrise Community Church,  
Austin, TX  
June 2014 to July 2014

Visalia CRC - Visalia, CA  
June 2015 to August 2015

*Languages spoken:*

Indonesian

*Contact:*

765-586-7896  
ivan\_k\_s@yahoo.com

### *Faith Journey*

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

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

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

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

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

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*Faith Journey (continued)*

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

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

Ivan Santoso

*Statement of Reason*

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

Ivan Santoso



Name: Hannah G Saxton

*Place of birth:* Elmhurst, Illinois

*Education:*

Grand Valley State University  
Allendale, MI

B.A. in Classics, April 2017

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

*Internship:*

Mayfair CRC  
Grand Rapids, MI  
August 2017 - May 2019

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

*Contact:*

616-820-4420  
han.vanrees@gmail.com

*Faith Journey*

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

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

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

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

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

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*Faith Journey (continued)*

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

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

Hannah Saxton

*Statement of Reason*

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

Hannah Saxton





*Name:* Nathaniel A Schmidt

*Place of birth:* Elk Grove Village, IL

*Education:*

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

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

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

*Internships:*

River Rock Church  
August 2017 - May 2019

CPE at Pine Rest  
October 2019 - March 2020

*Contact:*

616-954-5296  
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*Faith Journey*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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*Faith Journey (continued)*

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

Nathaniel Schmidt

*Statement of Reason*

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

Nathaniel Schmidt



*Name:* Dawei (David) 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:*

323-561-0502  
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 (David) 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 (David) Shao





*Name:* Sharon Smith

*Age:* 48

*Place of Birth:* Grand Rapids

*Name of Spouse:* Rev. Reggie Smith

*Number of Children:* 3

*Colleges & Seminaries Attended:*

Calvin College  
B.A., 1990

Western Theological Seminary  
M.Div., 2016

Calvin Theological Seminary  
EPMC, 2016

*Internships:*

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

Warm Friends, Holland, MI  
May to Aug 2010

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

Freedom Christian Schools,  
Hudsonville, MI  
Jan to May 2012

*Contact:*

616-452-9052  
smithsharon.67@gmail.com

### *Faith Journey*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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*Faith Journey (continued)*

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

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

Sharon Smith

*Statement of Reason*

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

Sharon Smith





*Name:* Lynn Song

*Place of birth:* Seoul, South Korea

*Languages spoken:* English, Korean

*Education:*

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

Calvin Theological Seminary  
Grand Rapids, MI  
M.Div.

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

*Internships:*

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

*Contact:*

202-390-9732  
ls021@calvinseminary.edu

*Faith Journey*

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

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

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

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

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

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

Lynn Song



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*Statement of Reason*

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

Lynn Song



*Name:* Joshua Stammers

*Place of birth:* Greenville, North Carolina

*Education:*

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

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

*Internships:*

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

*Contact:*

219-776-1883  
jps037@calvinseminary.edu

*Faith Journey*

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

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

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

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

Joshua Stammers

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*Statement of Reason*

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

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

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

Joshua Stammers



*Name:* 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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etin201@calvinseminary.edu

### *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

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*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



*Name:* Rebecca Tjapkes

*Place of Birth:* Antigo, Wisconsin

*Colleges & Seminaries Attended:*

Calvin College

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

Calvin Theological Seminary  
M.Div., 2018

*Internships:*

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

Calvin CRC  
Grand Rapids, Michigan  
June 2017 – August 2017

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

*Contact:*

616-843-1313  
becky@zmagnet.com

### *Faith Journey*

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

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

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

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

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

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*Faith Journey (continued)*

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

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

Rebecca Tjapkes

*Statement of Reason*

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

Rebecca Tjapkes





*Name:* Lynette A. van de Hoef  
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,  
AB, Canada  
May 2019 - Aug. 2019

*Contact:*

616-990-3742  
lynette.vandehoef@gmail.com

### *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

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*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

*Contact:*

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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

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*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:* Thomas J. Van Wyk

*Age:* 63

*Place of Birth:* Chicago, IL

*Name of Spouse:* Edna

*Number of Children:* 2

*Colleges & Seminaries Attended:*

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

Governors State University  
1993-1996

Calvin Theological Seminary  
M.Div., 2016

*Internships:*

Kelloggsville CRC,  
Kentwood, MI  
May 2015 to Jan 2016

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### *Faith Journey*

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

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

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

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

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

Thomas Van Wyk

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*Statement of Reason*

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

Thomas Van Wyk





*Name:* Femke Visser-Elenbaas

*Place of Birth:* Groningen,  
The Netherlands (NL)

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

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

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

Calvin Theological Seminary  
J-Term, 2013  
EPMC, 2017

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

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

*Languages spoken:*  
Dutch, German

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### *Faith Journey*

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

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

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

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



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*Faith Journey (continued)*

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

Femke Visser-Elenbaas

*Statement of Reason*

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

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

Femke Visser-Elenbaas



*Name:* 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

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*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:*

Hagersville Community  
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.

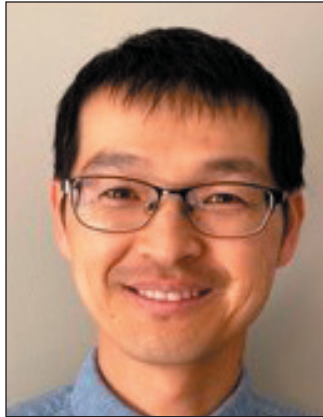
Lea Wilkening

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*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 (Paul) 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 patience. 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



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*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