



Christian  
Reformed  
Church

# Approved Candidates 2022





*Name:* Sheri L. Admiraal

*Place of Birth:* Clinton, IA

*Education:*

Calvin University  
Grand Rapids, MI  
B.A., Secondary Education,  
1998

CSU Fullerton  
Fullerton, CA  
M.A., American Studies, 2005

Calvin Theological Seminary  
Grand Rapids, MI  
M.Div., 2022

*Internships:*

Fuller Avenue CRC  
Grand Rapids, MI  
2020-2022

Hospice of North Ottawa  
Community  
Grand Haven, MI  
June - August 2021

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*Faith Journey*

I was born and raised in a Christian home. My dad, a CRC pastor, was a devoted husband and father. And my mother was a devoted partner in ministry with my dad and committed to raising my siblings and me. With ministry always being a central focus in our home, I had a firsthand look at what it meant to serve Christ and his church. My parents laid a firm foundation that provided a strong starting point for my own personal relationship with Jesus Christ. That relationship was further nurtured within my church community, through Christian education, and through relationships with Christian friends and mentors.

The church felt like my second home and that fostered in me a deep love for Christ's church. From quite a young age, I was curious about the Bible and enjoyed any class, ministry, or conversation that dealt with the Bible. I asked a lot of questions and was thankful to have direct access to my pastor, my dad. My undergraduate studies in secondary education resulted in a 22-year career as a Bible teacher at a Christian school. Entering into a vocation where questions about the Bible, Christianity, faith, etc. were an everyday occurrence, I was challenged daily in my own faith. This led to intentional conversations with students, colleagues, friends, and acquaintances who were exploring, questioning, and/or pursuing their own faith journeys. Such opportunities pushed me to remain committed to a persistent journey of exploring and delving deeply into my own faith.

This personal, persistent journey stirred within me, through the Spirit's working, a desire to further my own education. After completing an Evangelist Training Program certificate (offered by my local classis), which simply whet my appetite for more learning, I applied and was accepted as a student to Calvin Theological Seminary. Over the last three years, I have discovered a new avenue for ministry. As the Spirit has moved me from educational ministry into a passion for pastoral ministry, I'm curious to see how God is going to use the church moving forward. Fully recognizing the brokenness in our own lives, in the world in which we live, and within the context of the church, I believe that reality has created an environment that is ripe for God's kingdom to enter, for God's light to shine forth, and for God's love to be all-encompassing. I'm excited to see how Christ will continue to grow and use me in this new venture the Spirit has called me to, and eager to see how God will continue to work in and through the body of believers as faithful witnesses to Christ in God's kingdom.

Sheri L. Admiraal

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*Statement of Reason*

I'm seeking ordination in the Christian Reformed Church to respond, in gratitude, to the calling the Holy Spirit has placed upon my life. Raised in the CRC, I've been shaped by the Reformed "accent", the creeds and confessions, the centrality of Scripture, and the core elements of faith. I desire to be used by God as a humble, servant leader, exemplifying what it means to live as a disciple of Christ. I'm committed to faithfully preaching the truth of God's Word, compassionately sharing the love of Christ with all people, and equipping and encouraging the body of believers to live their lives daily as an act of worship to God.

Sheri L. Admiraal



*Name:* Brad. D. B. Bootsma

*Place of Birth:* Scugog, Ontario,  
Canada

*Education:*

Mohawk College  
Carpentry Apprenticeship  
Diploma, 2004

Calvin Theological Seminary  
Grand Rapids, MI  
M.Div., 2022

*Internships:*

Prison Fellowship  
The Dorms in Bellamy Creek  
2018-2019

West End CR Church  
Grand Rapids, MI  
2019-2020

Building Bridges, GRCCT  
Construction Consultant  
2019

Charlottetown CR Church  
Youth Leader  
2021 - Present

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*Faith Journey*

When I was five years old, my dad died in a car accident. I can tell you facts that make it sound more traumatic. For example, it was six days before Christmas, and I was the oldest of four children; my youngest sister being only six months old... But really, those things don't make it worse. He was gone, and that is as bad as it gets.

So as a five-year-old little boy, I was struggling with deep faith questions. As I sat in CRC Sunday School the other children sang *Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me*. I was quite sceptical. These children knew because the bible told them so? What about my lived experience? What about a God who rips my father away from me? Is that what love looks like? I have been wrestling with these questions ever since – with my mind and my heart.

I have always had some form of relationship with God, but it wasn't until I was at a youth convention in my early twenties where I had a personal encounter with the Holy Spirit. After that, my arguments were able to take a back seat to reliance and trust for God because I *knew* He loved me.

Through other ups and downs in my life, I have strived to balance a trust in Jesus while getting to know myself and God and who He is calling me to be. After high school I became a carpenter and was very excited to be finished with school. I loved building things, and by the time I was 21 years old, I had opened my own business. Through this, I became aware of my love for leadership. At 28, my mind was becoming restless with building and my body was getting tired. I took a position managing a renovation company and worked alongside the owner, growing that business from three employees to 22 of the next six years. It was at this time that God started to lead me towards a call to vocational ministry in the church. At 36, I quit my job and moved to Grand Rapids with my wife and four children to undertake an education that would prepare me for a career in furthering God's kingdom here in the world.

Midway through my in-residence journey at CTS, my family and I moved to my wife Rebecca's childhood home; Prince Edward Island. We became involved in the local CRC church where I am currently serving as a youth leader as I complete my studies. I am looking forward to finding out where God will lead my family in this next season.

Brad. D. B. Bootsma

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*Statement of Reason*

I am seeking candidacy as an ordained pastor in the Christian Reformed Church. I am passionate about pastoral care. I am passionate about relational discipleship. I am deeply interested in the intersection between faith and life as we find it inside *and* outside the walls of the church. I believe that God created us in community and for community. I am passionate about seeing people thrive individually *so that* they can serve God and serve others. I am open to the many vocations that this can manifest including chaplaincy, church planting, and traditional parish ministry.

Brad. D. B. Bootsma



*Name:* Kristy L. Bootsma

*Place of birth:* Edmonton, Alberta,  
Canada

*Education:*

The King's University  
Edmonton, AB  
BA, Psychology, 2018

Calvin Theological Seminary  
Grand Rapids, MI  
M.Div., 2022

*Internships:*

The Community  
Ada, MI  
September 2018 - May 2020

CRCNA Office of Leadership  
Development: Women's  
And Ethnic Ministry,  
Grand Rapids, MI  
June 2019 - July 2019

Eastern Avenue CRC  
Grand Rapids, MI  
Youth Spiritual Formation  
Director  
August 2021 - current

*Contact:*

616-617-1936  
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*Faith Journey*

There was never a point in my childhood where I wondered if God was real or if God loved me; I think back at what an ease and confidence I had in my faith as a child. What a gift that was. I had few questions and took in information as it came. I grew up in a Christian home, attending church and Christian school. In my early teenage years my faith was most impacted by two spaces - the Sunday school classroom where I taught three year olds, and the basketball court. Since I was 12 years old, I was helping to show my church's littlest members what a loving God we have. A small seed was planted over those years of passion to teach and share the Gospel. At the same time my concept of Christian relationship was formed most significantly in my friendships with teammates and my basketball coach. As a team, we were mentored and taught how to care for and encourage one another, to represent Christ on and off the court, and how using our gifts brought glory to God.

As I grew into early adulthood, my questions came. The mental models of faith I had grown up with as a child were no longer big enough to fit my questions of the world. I was terrified to start asking questions of my faith, because my faith was not strong enough for those wonderings. It took time to find the people and places where I could ask and wrestle with my honest questions. I entered university with these questions right at the surface and an unknown future. I realize now how fragile my identity was at that time; I had little sense of direction, but underneath all that unknowing was a little bit of trust, and that trust led me into a calling I had never expected.

That summer after my first year of undergrad, I was called by God to pastor in a moment. In a time of worship I physically felt my body filled with the Spirit, and experienced something close to hearing the words "You will do *this*". The closest thing I had to "this" in my experience, was the word "pastor" (and I have gone on quite the journey in my understanding of that term since). In that moment I raised my arms and said to the Lord, "here I am, I am yours." It was an unresistant call at that moment, but my resistance came in the many steps afterwards.

In university, as I leaned into my calling, I found myself in circles surrounded with opportunities to practice a contemplative spirituality. What felt so foreign to me began to feel like home. There was something in my faith that was missing up until this point, a real depth of silence, when before all I knew was how to be quiet. I learned and led in areas of worship, liturgy, and contemplative listening. I grew to love psychology and studying the amazing ways God has created humans to function. And in my growing knowledge, in the big picture, I was able to understand myself better. This was the time in life when I began to see my emotional self as a gift, realizing my emotional self was not something that was a hindrance to God, but that it was the primary way the Holy Spirit invites me to listen for what God has for me. Over the four years of university, I was able to begin to weave all of these pieces of my life together.

Seminary is where I have truly received from the Divine the impact of these passions that God had revealed to me. The mentors and spaces God had for me in seminary is a gift I cannot express. I have been able



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*Faith Journey (continued)*

to lean into my contemplative side, as well as reach back into history to grow in contemplative practices and postures. That isn't to say my spiritual growth has been easy throughout seminary; being an emotive person in a very intellectual tradition and institution is not always a comfortable space to be. But I know God honors both, and I know both extremes and everything in between exists in the church.

In my spiritual formation I have come to recognize I grew up with a single story of the CRC, and as I continue to grow into the person God has called me to be, I strive to surround myself with diverse voices and a breadth of perspectives.

Kristy L. Bootsma

*Statement of Reason*

I seek candidacy in the CRCNA as the next step of my calling. I wholeheartedly believe God has called me to minister in the CRCNA, not because I think the denomination is perfect, but because God upholds us all, and upholds me in this denomination that I continue to call home. In confidence and reverence I pursue this calling; I do so with appreciation and value of the reformed tradition, our rootedness in our ecumenical and reformed creeds and confessions, and faith in God's work in the reformed community.

Kristy L. Bootsma



*Name:* Tricia L. Bosma

*Place of Birth:* Holland, MI

*Education:*

Calvin University  
Grand Rapids, MI  
BA (Education), 1992

Calvin Theological Seminary  
Grand Rapids, MI  
M.Div., 2022

*Internships & Experience:*

Hillcrest CRC  
Hudsonville, MI  
Director of Discipleship  
2015-2019

Sacred Sector Fellowship  
(Center for Public Justice)  
Plainsong Farm  
Rockford, MI  
Summer 2019

Pine Rest Christian Mental  
Health Services  
Grand Rapids, MI  
Clinical Pastoral Education,  
Unit 1  
Summer 2020

Pine Rest Christian Mental  
Health Services  
Grand Rapids, MI  
Chaplain Residency,  
CPE Units 2,3,4  
Fall 2020 - Summer 2021

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*Faith Journey*

I was born into a loving Christian home and raised in the Christian Reformed Church in Lafayette, Indiana. Consequently, my faith became an important part of my identity from early in my childhood. I accepted Jesus as my Lord and Savior in the third grade when an astute Sunday School teacher recognized the Holy Spirit working in my life. As I grew, I found Jesus was my faithful and ever-present friend and guide. I made profession of faith my junior year in high school after attending a Young Calvinist convention in Rhode Island. I began to discover that my faith appeared to play a more significant role in my life than it did in the lives of my peers around me. I understand this now to be the beginning of God calling me into ministry. Regrettably, this calling was not nurtured since I was female, and I struggled to understand the role of the calling that I sensed. I pursued a typically feminine profession and taught elementary and middle school for nearly 20 years. Additionally, I was blessed by becoming a wife and mother. Although professionally I do believe that I missed the mark of my call, undeniably God used these years of my life powerfully. However, my teaching career abruptly came to an end in 2014. During the summer of 2015 God reinstalled an unmistakable call to ministry. Thankfully, at this age I possessed the spiritual maturity to see the call clearly and was able to respond to it with the support of my spouse and children.

Being raised in the Christian Reformed Church my faith was based on the sturdy tenets of Reformed doctrine and theology. However, reflection on my life's history reveals that I always longed for a more organic and living faith. God has created in me a deeply compassionate heart, and I longed for a faith that possessed a greater relational aspect. I recall lamenting with a kindred spirited friend, "There must be more to this Christian faith than I am experiencing." This longing marks the beginning of an exploration that I embarked upon in my early adult years. That exploration resulted in my growing love for Jesus Christ. As a young woman I knew what it meant to love my husband and to love my children. That love was palpable; what I lacked was a robust love for my God. In this portion of my faith journey God nurtured my love for him so that it took its rightful place of priority in my life.

A significant portion of my faith development has also occurred during my seminary journey. When I embarked on this journey, God fostered in me a spirit of spiritual adventure; I endeavored to take advantage of all opportunities with which I was presented. I was able to travel to Mexico City for a J-term class. This experience powerfully contributed to my seeing the gospel message as reinstatement of universal Shalom through the work of Jesus Christ. I also was afforded the opportunity to be a Sacred Sector fellow through the Center for Public Justice. This opportunity gave me lenses to see how the church and other faith-based nonprofit organizations can and should be a reconciling force and blessing in today's societies. Through this spiritual adventure, God engaged me in a process of deconstructing inflexible constructs of my faith. The Holy Spirit has helped me to envision Jesus' redemptive work more broadly. His redemptive work is being done in me, and also in the church, in communities, and in the cosmos. There were times when I was fearful of what was occurring in me spiritually. However, the



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*Faith Journey (continued)*

Holy Spirit was faithful in my formation and helped me to maintain the orthodoxy of my Reformed faith while incorporating a grander narrative of redemption toward Shalom-filled new Creation.

The telling of my faith journey would not be complete if I did not comment on my experience in clinical pastoral education (CPE) at Pine Rest. It was here that I was forced to wrestle with God most fiercely. The experience of spiritually caring for patients brought the stark realities of sin into painful clarity. The compassionate heart that I possess was broken for those whom I cared for. While clinging to God's promises to heal my own brokenness of heart, through the process of CPE, I also mined my Reformed theology to inform what I believed about spiritual concepts such as mercy, hope, faith, purpose, and love. While I am certain that I still don't have all the answers, the experience of CPE informs my preaching of the Word of God and has prepared me to help others who also wrestle with disorienting faith questions. This pastoral work seems to have risen in prevalence and now characterizes the calling God has placed upon me.

Tricia L. Bosma

*Statement of Reason*

I seek ordination in the Christian Reformed Church of North American so that I may further discern the next leg of my journey. I was once advised to find joy in the journey of seminary. I have at times clung to that advice throughout the seven years of that journey. However, I have discovered that joy and sorrow are two sides of the same coin. Joy is not something that you choose. Joy is discovered when sorrow is traversed. It is time for my journey to proceed to ordination and service in my calling. I humbly seek ordination as minister of the Word to the CRCNA, and with humility I accept its sorrows and expect to discover further joy in fellowship with Christ and His Church.

Tricia L. Bosma



*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:* Stewart J. deJong

*Place of Birth:* Hanford, CA

*Education:*

California Polytechnic  
State University  
San Luis Obispo, CA  
B.S. in Wine and Viticulture,  
2016

Calvin Theological Seminary  
Grand Rapids, MI  
M.Div., 2022

*Internships:*

Christ Church PCA  
Grand Rapids, MI  
Fall and Spring semesters,  
2019-2021

Coopersville CRC  
Coopersville, MI  
Summer 2021

North Blendon CRC  
Hudsonville, MI  
Fall 2021 - Present

*Languages:* English - fluent  
Spanish - moderate

*Contact:*

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*Faith Journey*

I have been blessed by God to have been raised in a family that loves and follows God. Throughout my life I have sat under biblical preaching at church. At home the lives of my parents and their style of parenting was guided by scripture. Every time we sat down together as a family for a meal we joined in prayer and we had devotions or Bible reading afterward. My parents were able to send me to Christian schools where I was taught by godly teachers who cared for us students and bore their responsibility well for our education and formation as children of the covenant community. In college, I found a few godly friends through Campus Crusade and a good church to go to so that I was nourished in scripture even as I was away from home. After college, I found work for a year and a half at Crop Production Services and then worked for my uncle on a dairy.

Growing up, my plan was to live and work in agriculture as did the rest of my family. Had I been more discerning from an early stage I likely would have recognized my gifts and calling earlier in life. Apparently many in my community marked me for a pastor from early in my life but few people said anything about it and only in casual ways. There were occasions growing up in which I was in front of church leading a responsive reading or reading scripture for the congregation. This helped me early on to grow comfortable with being a small part of leading worship.

My pastor made mention of my possibility to become a pastor when I made public profession of faith, but I never really took it seriously as a youth. While he apparently saw some measure of gifting in me I had never before considered or discerned these in myself. There were a few moments in high school when I took a brief look into ministry because of my pastor's comment but never with any serious consideration. Early on in our dating, my wife and I went to my cousin's wedding for which I read the sermon text. After reading the text the officiating pastor questioned me about pursuing ministry; I more or less shrugged it off out of surprise. After all, what did a pastor see in me after having only heard me read scripture?

Finally, during our wedding reception a year and a half later, our pastor told Christine that he still held the opinion that I should go to seminary. Because of this, I finally began to listen to the call of God. Christine helped me to ask some of the good questions I needed to ask of myself. It was at this time that I finally began to value my speaking skills, an appreciation for scripture, my tendency to have thoughtful conversations with people, and a heart for others. A few doors were closing with my work at my uncle's dairy and the ministry door opened as I grew to hear that God was indeed preparing me for ministry in my character and gifts. The people to whom I turned for counsel supported the call.

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*Faith Journey (continued)*

While in seminary, our family has grown by two and Christine and I are learning every day what teamwork and growing in God as a family looks like. There have been many in seminary and in my internships from whom I have learned and with whom I have grown as a disciple of Christ. I have enjoyed my time learning more in depth from scripture about what we believe and why. While I have learned much about God and the church in this time of study, it is certainly only a beginning of the learning to be had in years of ministry ahead.

Stewart J. deJong

*Statement of Reason*

I seek to become a minister of God's word because of God's calling to shepherd his flock. God has called me to fill the need for discipleship and teaching from scripture. I seek to submit my life and ministry under God and his word. I pray that in everything I do, I serve God first and foremost in seeking the health and growth of the church of Christ. I desire to minister in the Christian Reformed Church because our historic creeds and confessions faithfully define and teach the content of scripture which is our guide for life and faith.

Stewart J. deJong



*Name:* Brad Diekema

*Place of Birth:* Grand Rapids, MI

*Colleges & Seminaries Attended:*

Kuyper College  
B.S.

Calvin Theological Seminary  
M.Div., 2017

*Internships:*

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

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

*Contact:*

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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:* Mark D. Elffers

*Birthplace:* Pasadena, CA

*Education:*

Seattle Pacific University  
Seattle, WA  
BA in Business Administration,  
2013

University of Oxford  
Oxford, England  
Certificate in Theological &  
Pastoral Studies, 2014

Talbot School of Theology  
La Mirada, CA  
MA in Christian Apologetics,  
2018

Westminster Seminary  
California  
Escondido, CA  
M.Div., 2022

Calvin Theological Seminary  
Grand Rapids, MI  
EPMC, 2022

*Internships:*

Visalia CRC  
Visalia, CA  
Summer 2020

Borculo CRC  
Zeeland, MI  
Summer 2021

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### *Faith Journey*

The Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor is right when he says that we now live in a secular age. Belief in God has been disregarded by huge swaths of people in modern western societies. Love of self has replaced love of the LORD. Love of human words has replaced love for God's Word. An insurrection against the Almighty has taken place, and humans are now trying to occupy a throne of authority that belongs to the Triune God alone.

It is within this context of civilizational revolt that my own faith has developed. During my college years I felt the challenge which came from the new atheists. After reading books written by Christopher Hitchens and Richard Dawkins, I realized that a robust Christian faith was vital to buttress myself as their polemics came rolling in. Without a robust faith – one which is Biblically, historically, and confessionally rooted, the spirits of this age – materialism, hedonism, agnosticism, and nihilism, will sing their seductive songs into our ears and entice us to abandon our proper course toward the Gates of Glory.

Thankfully, I entered my college years with a good foundation. I was a covenant child, a true son of the Reformation, born to Christian Reformed parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, and great-great-grandparents. My parents embraced the long-standing CRC model of seeing that their children would undergo Christian formation in the church, home, and Christian school. My parents presented me to be marked with the covenant sign of baptism as an infant. They took my siblings and I to church every Sunday to hear God's Word preached. They led our family in prayer and Bible reading at the meal table. They put me in Christian schools where teachers had my classmates and I memorize Bible verses, so that God's Word might dwell in us richly.

But just because a child is raised well does not mean that all will be well. Our Ancient Foe is crafty, and he knows how to use the music, movies, and media of the world to present an alternative vision of the good life to young and impressionable minds. In hindsight I now see how I was often caught in a cross-pressured firestorm, with the voice of the LORD and the voice of the Serpent both calling out and bidding me to come.

Thankfully, God in His mercy sent me a preacher. During my college years I was blessed with outstanding Christ-centered preaching at my local church. And the Holy Spirit worked through the preached Word to convict me of sin and drive me to Jesus Christ. The more I heard about the glory of the LORD on Sundays, the more I wanted to examine the Scriptures for myself to increase in understanding. After business school at Seattle Pacific University, I studied Scripture, theology, and apologetics for a year at the University of Oxford, for two years at Talbot School of Theology, and then for three years at Westminster Seminary California.

Mark D. Elffers

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*Statement of Reason*

Now as one who has been trained to proclaim God's Word, it is my desire to preach the gospel from all the pages of Scripture, so that many people may come to faith in Jesus Christ, grow in Christian maturity, and find comfort in knowing that our Triune God will keep us in His care now and forevermore. The Christian church can be certain that no secular age and no wile from the Devil will ever separate us from our Savior – Romans 8:38-39.

Mark D. Elffers



*Name:* Ryan L. Farrell

*Place of Birth:* Halifax, Nova Scotia

*Education:*

New Brunswick Bible  
Institute/Covington  
Theological Seminary  
Victoria Corner, NB  
Advanced Diploma in Biblical  
and Theological Ministries,  
2013

Bachelor of Theology in  
Pastoral Ministry, 2014

Tyndale Seminary  
Toronto, ON  
M.Div., 2020

Calvin Theological Seminary  
Grand Rapids, MI  
EPMC, 2022

*Internships:*

Momentum/Geneva Campus  
Ministries (CRC)  
Queen's University  
Kingston, ON  
September 2020 - June 2022

Bay Park Baptist Church  
Kingston, ON  
July 2014 - May 2015

Grace Community Church  
Pharr, TX  
September 2013 - May 2014

*Contact:*

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ryfarre@gmail.com

*Faith Journey*

I grew up in an Irish-lineage committed Catholic family in the country. I went through the usual stages of faith formations/sacraments: baptized as an infant, received first communion, altar service, confirmation, and so forth. I have always been drawn to the interior life—introspection, contemplation, philosophy—but this led to many questions and doubts regarding my faith. At fifteen I stopped believing in God and kept this secret from my parents. I was overwhelmed with my sin. I believed that *if* God existed, then he must hate me. Around the same time I began attending a non-denomination (Protestant) Christian camp and experienced a reconversion back to faith and my salvation through Christ. I understood the Gospel of Jesus for the first time and was drawn to the oceanic deep love of God.

The fifteen years since my reconversion has been an incredible pilgrimage. I underwent much of my initial discipleship through the ministry of the camp where I was reconverted. In my teen and young adult years, I worked the entirety of my summers there, eventually becoming the director in charge of programming and staff. I began attending youth ministry at a Baptist church and, when I was 18, decided to leave the Catholic Church. In Bible college my love for studying the scriptures was ignited. After completing a three year diploma, God brought me to Pharr, Texas (on the Mexico border) to do a pastoral internship (which would eventually lead to my Bachelor of Theology). Working there I ministered to 100+ teenagers under the umbrella of their Spring camps, Christian school, and youth drop-in ministry.

After my internship ended in 2014, I was exhausted. It was a positive experience but it was too much responsibility too fast. I decided to give ministry another try, but at a slower pace, as a marathon and not a sprint. This brought me to Bay Park Baptist in Kingston, Ontario in 2014. Initially, I began as another pastoral intern but transitioned into Pastor of Student Ministries (2015) and then again as an Associate Pastor (2020). While pastoring, I completed my Master of Divinity at Tyndale Seminary. The past two years I have worked part-time in campus ministry, partnering with the Spirit to care for students at their lives' crossroads. Over the years of ministry, I have garnered insights into my personality and unique leadership DNA. I have a passion for preaching and teaching. Joy fills my soul as I study the scriptures, theology and traditions of the church, and help people understand the richness of our Christian faith. I love one-on-one pastoral care, discipling and mentoring. Some say I have a gift for wisdom. I'm quite introverted and not outspoken, but when I speak I choose my words carefully. Being used by the Spirit to speak encouragement in the midst of complex scenarios is a deep privilege.

Ryan L. Farrell

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*Statement of Reason*

These last few years God has been calling me into the Reformed “accent” of the Christian church. I consider myself a creedal, confessional, sacramental, and liturgical disciple of Christ. Through my exposure to the CRCNA working in campus ministry, and the past two years of EPMC, the candidacy journey and pulpit supply with the CRCNA, God has solidified my decision to step out of the Baptist tradition and into the Reformed one. I have done this with fulsome Kingdom support from my Baptist church, with nothing but good memories, yet excited for the pilgrimage that is ahead. My intention to be ordained as a Minister of the Word and Sacrament is to be an ever-humbled, shapeable leader in the Potter’s Hands. I am called to be a Shepherd *and* Teacher (and apprentice) under the Headship of the Great Shepherd-Rabbi, Jesus Christ. In ministry I desire to “work the angles” which Eugene Peterson identifies as prayer, Scripture, and spiritual direction.

Ryan L. Farrell



*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:* Matthew D. Guichelaar

*Place of Birth:* Brantford, Ontario

*Education:*

Redeemer University  
Ancaster, ON  
Bachelor of Arts, 2019

Calvin Theological Seminary  
Grand Rapids, MI  
M.Div., 2022

*Internships:*

Creston CRC  
Grand Rapids, MI  
Sept 2019 - May 2020  
Sept 2020 - May 2021

Pine Rest Christian Mental  
Health Services  
Grand Rapids, MI  
Clinical Pastoral Education  
June 2021 - August 2021

*Contact:*

905-518-4526  
mdguichelaar@gmail.com

*Faith Journey*

I was raised in a Christian family and have been part of the Christian Reformed Church my whole life. Over time, I came to grow more and more into faith, and able to claim it as my own. This growth and exploration came to a head when I was introduced to the Ecumenical Creeds and Reformed Confessions in my church's catechism class, where I was introduced to some of the finer points of Reformed theology and came to a new understanding of grace. I developed a more personal relationship with God as my Father, Jesus as my Lord and Savior, and the Holy Spirit as the inspiration of my faith and my Advocate. Catechism ignited a new understanding of what it means to be Christian and to serve God with my whole life. This theology stimulated my mind and shaped my heart in the formative years of high school.

At the same time, the Holy Spirit began his work of calling me to ministry. Through the promptings and encouragement of my catechism teachers, my youth pastor, and a friend, I became aware of some of the gifts God had given me for pastoral ministry. I was faithfully encouraged by my youth pastor who encouraged me, mentored me, and gently guided me into increased participation in church life. Throughout the latter half of high school and university, I was given the opportunity to read Scripture and pray in church, be involved in a visioning process, and serve on a search committee. I was also able to do a reading sermon. In all these explorations, I was affirmed and encouraged to use the gifts God has given me in ministry. However, it took some time for my internal call to catch up with the external call I was receiving from others. I participated in the Facing Your Future program at Calvin Seminary in 2014, which really solidified my sense of calling and set me on the path toward seminary.

I continued to grow in my faith in university through solid Reformed teaching across a variety of subjects which inspired me to pursue God's glory in all areas of life and study as I prepared for seminary and the pastoral vocation I am pursuing. My time at Calvin Seminary has taught me just how much we need to rely on God and how faithful he has been to us in the midst of a tumultuous world. I look forward to serving Christ's Church through pastoral ministry.

Matthew D. Guichelaar

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*Statement of Reason*

Throughout all these experiences in my life I have been affirmed in the direction of pastoral ministry in the Christian Reformed Church. I want to use the gifts God has given me to shepherd his people to find their place in the story of God's redemption of the world through the work of Jesus Christ. I am humbled by the huge responsibility of bringing God's Word to his church, building up disciples of Christ, and spreading the Gospel. I know that none of this is possible by my own strength, but only by the work of the Holy Spirit in my life. I have a deep love for the church and a desire to see it flourish. I hope that by the grace of God, and equipped with the skills, knowledge, and character I have gained at seminary and the rest of my life, to be able to lead one small part of God's Church toward that vision.

Matthew D. Guichelaar



*Name:* Rebecca G. Hall

*Place of Birth:* Redwood City, CA

*Education:*

Biola University  
La Mirada, CA  
BA Social Sciences, 2002  
MA Education, 2003

Benedictine Spiritual  
Formation Program  
Benet Hill Monastery, CO  
Spiritual Direction Certificate,  
2012

Calvin Theological Seminary  
Grand Rapids MI  
M.Div., 2022

*Internships:*

Brookside CRC  
Grand Rapids MI  
2019-2021

Pine Rest Mental Health  
Services  
Grand Rapids, MI  
CPE, Summer, 2020

*Contact:*

434-390-3335  
rgh014@calvinseminary.edu

*Faith Journey*

From an early age I identified myself as a teacher and have come to understand God's call to pastoral ministry as a combination of teaching and spiritual care. I grew up in a Christian home in San Jose, California and attested to loving God as a young child. When I was twelve, I went forward at an altar call to be a "bond servant to Christ." It is a life's journey to discover what that entails.

I was a shy child and a people watcher, but God has used these qualities to strengthen me and draw me out of myself. As a teenager, God gave me the awareness that others were as lonely and in need of support as I was. I am a learner and found great satisfaction in sharing this gift, when, in high school, I taught Sunday school. It was at that time that I was first introduced to Reformed theology and my family joined the Reformed Church. I received a Bachelors and then a Master's of Education at Biola University, expecting that teaching was my calling.

Yet upon meeting my husband, John, and having three children, I shifted gears as a homemaker and found myself most engaged by volunteering in church ministries varying from "lifestyle" and street evangelism to short term missions and refugee resettlement. I felt that God was using me within his Church to draw others into a deeper walk with God by sharing and learning together—through leading an evangelism course, conducting a beginner's Bible study and leading the congregational outreach team. Still there was a feeling of unfulfilled yearning to help others grow.

When our family moved to Colorado, I was attracted to a Benedictine Spiritual Formation program through Benet Hill Monastery which equipped me as a Spiritual Director. It was through this program that I began to discern a call to pastoral ministry, bringing together my gifts of teaching and spiritual care. The training under this program showed me a different aspect of Christian discipleship which has given me a deeper appreciation for the spiritual disciplines.

When my children were getting older, and I considered re-entering the workforce, I realized that what I loved to teach was not so much the academic studies, but God's Word. It took me a time of prayer and discernment to rectify my own understanding of being a woman called to pastoral ministry, but I came to the clarity that God calls "shepherdesses" as well as "shepherds" for his flock.

Rebecca G. Hall

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*Statement of Reason*

Following God's call to the building up of the Body of Christ, I am seeking ordination in the Christian Reformed Church for parish pastoral ministry in order to effectively use the gifts which the Holy Spirit has given me. My desire is to use the gifts of administration, teaching and pastoral care in service of God's kingdom. I am passionate about revitalization of the Church's central call to mission and community. I believe that making disciples requires honest and compassionate communication of the gospel to those within the church and those without, building trusting relationships and the exercise of practices which mark us as God's people.

Rebecca G. Hall



*Name:* Carol E. Hulin

*Place of Birth:* Belleville, Ontario,  
Canada

*Education:*

Loyalist College of Applied Arts  
and Technology  
Belleville, ON  
Diploma Television Production,  
1985

Constellation College of  
Hospitality  
Mississauga, ON  
Diploma Hotel and Restaurant  
Operations, 1989

Emmanuel Bible College  
Kitchener, ON  
Bachelor of Theology, 2017

Tyndale Seminary  
Toronto, ON  
M.Div., 2020

Calvin Theological Seminary  
Grand Rapids, MI  
EPMC, 2022

*Internships:*

Westside Fellowship CRC  
Kingston, Ontario  
Tyndale Seminary Pastoral  
Internship  
January-August 2020

Westside Fellowship CRC  
Kingston, ON  
EPMC/Calvin Pastoral Internship  
August 2020 - July 2022

*Contact:*

613-847-7226  
chul207@calvinseminary.edu

*Faith Journey*

My faith journey has been filled with twists and turns, but God has always been faithful.

As a child of 5-6, I used to sit my grandparents down and preach a sermon to them. I have no idea what I said. I wish I did. I know I wanted others to know about Jesus. So, even from this very young age I feel it was inevitable that I would be a pastor.

I grew up attending the United Church of Canada (UCC). However, when I was a teenager, I, along with thousands of teens of that time period, stopped attending church. In my case it was because I was tired of hearing about my parents being ashamed because I wouldn't be confirmed (Profession of Faith). Most were confirmed at age 14 and I was 16 and didn't feel comfortable with doing it yet. I ended up walking away from church and from Jesus. And, although I grew and matured into adulthood, life was filled with spiritual emptiness and darkness.

In my mid 30's, a few years after a tragic event in my life, I started searching for an elusive "something". I was invited to attend a church service at Ebenezer CRC in Trenton, ON and was blown away (in a good way). They read and preached from the Bible in a way I had never heard before. The way I had dreamed it should be preached. The preaching helped people to understand the Bible better. It was during this time that I also took an Alpha Course. God used both of them to help me find that elusive something: Jesus.

About 10 years later I felt God calling me back to school, but I resisted. I didn't want to go back to school. I was well established in my career in the hotel industry, and I was now in my mid-forties. Thankfully God was persistent and patient. Eventually, I decided I had to obey God's request and at the very last minute, hoping it would all fall through, I applied to Emmanuel Bible College, Kitchener, ON. I was astonished to be accepted in June, find a place to live in July, and start classes in September. At first, I was only going to do the one-year diploma in Bible Studies. I wanted to know the Bible better so I could help other people know the Bible better. Amazingly, because I was learning so much, one year turned into three years of growing in knowledge, healing, maturing, and personal faith. I graduated with a Bachelor of Theology.

And God wasn't finished yet. I felt called to continue on with graduate studies so applied and was accepted to Tyndale Seminary, Toronto, ON. I started out in the Master of Theological Studies (MTS) program. Here too I grew in knowledge, healing, maturing, and personal faith. Throughout, God kept bringing up memories; like me preaching to my grandparents, and my dream to help people understand the Bible better. So, after a time of discernment and prayer, in the second year of my MTS, I changed degrees and graduated in 2020 with an MDiv. Now I'm just finishing up the requirements of the EPMC program at Calvin Seminary.

Through the many twists and turns of my faith journey, only briefly mentioned here, God has been persistent, consistent and faithful. Thanks be to God. I am humbled, honoured, and look forward to serving him by serving his people.

Carol E. Hulin

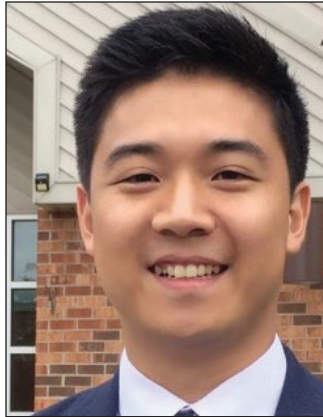


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*Statement of Reason*

This is always mysterious and hard to explain, but I know in my heart that the call to be a pastor is not a new one for me. It goes back to my childhood. It is a call to serve God's people through sharing the Good News of Jesus by helping people to understand the Bible – his Word. I have done internships within other denominations, and I grew up in another denomination. Yet, I feel called to serve within the Christian Reformed Church of North America (CRCNA). It is with obedience that I answer God's long held call for me to pastor, and therefore respectfully, request candidacy within the CRCNA.

Carol E. Hulin



*Name:* Jake (Minho) Jeong

*Place of Birth:* Incheon,  
South Korea

*Education:*

Asia United Theological  
University  
(also known as ACTS – Asian  
Center for Theological Studies  
and Missions) Yangpyeong-gun,  
Gyeonggi-do, Republic of Korea  
Bachelor of Theology, 2016  
Bachelor of Missiology, 2016

Calvin Theological Seminary  
Grand Rapids, MI  
M.Div., May 2022

*Internships:*

Creston CRC  
Grand Rapids, MI  
September 2018 - July 2019

Hanbit CRC  
Rochester Hills, MI  
August 2019 – August 2020

Pine Rest Christian Mental  
Health Services  
Grand Rapids, MI  
Clinical Pastoral Education  
June 2021 – August 2021

*Language spoken:* English, Korean

*Contact:*

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*Faith Journey*

My journey begins in South Korea where I was born into a family under various religious influences such as Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism, and other superstitions out of folk religions, and Christianity. In particular, as someone who was born into a family with a Christian mother and non-Christian father who was aggressively against Christian living for a while, especially against my calling to the pastoral ministry, I could learn through wounds about people who associate with different worldviews, but who all attempt to deal with and survive in many common brokenness and pains of life. With relational, emotional, and spiritual wounds in my family relationship, I grew up as an extremely introverted person and lost the meaning and purpose of life when I was a middle schooler at which point God encountered me radically through the youth group summer retreat.

Since I became a totally different person full of confidence in Christ, I found my calling in pastoral ministry and have been involved deeply in the church as a student leader and worship leader until I became an assistant pastor in a couple of churches in Korea. Throughout my teens, I could build myself firmly in the faith and extend my identity in Christ from Korea to the entire world through spiritual disciplines and participation in English ministry.

During my undergraduate, while I served the church as a pastor, I observed lots of ministry leadership failures that made people drift away from sound doctrine and healthy Christian living. This prompted me to actualize my dream to study abroad in the U.S. which was developed from English ministry so as to pursue teaching ministry because I believed I could be a pastor of pastors once I become a seminary professor.

However, ever since I moved into the U.S., God deconstructed me and shaped me in a totally different way, opening my eyes to see how I was entangled with fame, honor, acclamation, and accomplishment. Realizing that my identity is not rooted in Christ, but denigrated with the desire to be a Christian celebrity, I have been through a humbling and refining process throughout seminary education. Also, God revealed himself as a loving and caring shepherd which I knew only in my head and God walked together with me in difficult times closely through this new environment where I am completely lost – language, culture, friends, family, legal security, financial stability, etc. Living as a minor who lost everything, God guided me through various experiences and challenges to see and feel the pains not only of me but also of those whose backs are against the wall in every corner of society.

Currently, this journey is guiding me to pay attention to chaplaincy where I can get connected to those in emotional and spiritual pains beyond political preference, financial status, legal security, denominational background, religious affiliation, racial/ethnic identity, sexual and gender identity, etc. easier than in the traditional church ministry setting. It is not that I dismiss or remove pastoral ministry from my vocational path, but that I am deeply interested in pastoral and spiritual care for the isolated, marginalized, stigmatized, and excluded to any degree.

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*Faith Journey (continued)*

At this stage of my life, I feel called to the ministry of reconciliation in the way mentioned above and I believe God is and will be shaping me continuously to be his faithful servant wherever I go. I am grateful that God has guided me up to this far even despite and through my weaknesses and wickedness. I am very excited to see how God will use me as a whole for his name and his kingdom.

Jake (Minho) Jeong

*Statement of Reason*

I am seeking candidacy in the Christian Reformed Church because I believe God has called me and shaped me to walk along with people in pain and provide God's presence through love, service, empathy, and all other gifts God gives me. Though I grew up in the Presbyterian tradition, I have experienced many other denominations and even religions through family, society, the church, my undergraduate studies, and mission trips. Above all these, I begin to love Reformed accents where I can find comfort, peace, safety, and firm ground in God to flourish as a child of God and disciple of Christ. I believe in the guidance of God who allows me to be a part of CRC through all challenges and growths so far. And I am eager to be a witness to the work of God all around the world beyond the church building based upon the CRC community and doctrine. As well as I can, I want to serve him and his church whom I love, following my calling given, developed, and clarified by God through his provision and protection of God through the CRC community.

Jake (Minho) Jeong



*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:*

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

Kennedy Muli Kailiti



*Name:* 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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### *Faith Journey*

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

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

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

Eunice Kim

### *Statement of Reason*

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

Eunice Kim





*Name:* Jooheyng (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:* Jelle H. Koersen

*Place of Birth:* Kamperveen,  
Netherlands

*Education:*

Kuyper College  
Grand Rapids, MI  
B.S. Intercultural Studies and  
Bible & Theology, 2016

Wycliffe College  
(University of Toronto)  
Toronto, ON  
M.Div., 2021

Calvin Theological Seminary  
Grand Rapids, MI  
EPMC, 2022

*Internships:*

The Lighthouse Community  
Centre  
Toronto, ON  
January-April 2016  
Summers 2017 and 2018

Resonate Global Mission  
Egypt  
September-December 2018

Grace CRC  
Scarborough, ON  
Summer 2019

New City Church  
Toronto, ON  
September 2019 – April 2020

*Languages:* Dutch

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*Faith Journey*

A question I may get asked from time to time is whether I have always known I would be a pastor and if this has always been the vocation I wanted. This may be asked more of twenty-somethings who get into vocational ministry early rather than those who may be going into pastoral ministry as a second career – which many of my seminary classmates were. For me the answer has not been a confident “yes” – especially as incoming pastors face challenges of economic pressure and the challenge to be innovative leaders. What the identity and role of a pastor in today’s context looks like hasn’t been an easy question for me.

I grew up in a Christian family, being very young when we emigrated from a rural town in the Netherlands to rural Southern Ontario. In my contexts in those childhood and adolescent years work in agriculture or a trade always seemed more practical as a vocation, and I still see young people in locations like these being under pressure to look for work that seems primarily practical. With the seed of faith having already been planted and watered by the church, a big shift took place for this question of vocation at Facing Your Future (a summer program that was put on by Calvin Theological Seminary for grade 11 & 12 youth) where an interest in ministry as a vocation was affirmed in some deep ways. The experience also led me to consider Kuyper College where I would go on to study Intercultural Studies and Bible & Theology. I was certainly formed at Kuyper and learned that I wanted to participate in the mission of God that he calls the Church to realize. Kuyper College was also a time of rich friendships – ones that I continue to cherish even while being geographically separated.

During the Facing Your Future program I was able to choose where to go on excursion learning for a week and a half. And although I was from Listowel, Ontario, something led me to choose Toronto – which though only two hours away was in some ways a very unfamiliar place. From the vantage point of Listowel, Toronto is a Samaria of sorts – being geographically close but culturally distant. During my last semester of Kuyper I was led to come back to Toronto for an internship at the Lighthouse Centre, and through my living arrangement with MoveIn I was led to stay in Toronto – and a relationship with my now wife later encouraged this as well.

To get back to my initial question, whether I’ve long wanted to be a pastor, at least until seminary – I would have answered “no, I’m not sure about that.” But upon graduating Kuyper I had to face the question more head-on. I was interested in seminary being down the line – I love studying the Bible, I enjoy the conversations taking place amongst theologians and I believe it must all be for the Church and the advancement of God’s kingdom. But I enrolled in seminary partly out of convenience, possibly with ambivalence and having reservations about the alternatives.

I resisted that “calling” largely because I’ve grown up in and around Christian communities all my life. The question “am I what I am (religiously or spiritually speaking) mainly because I was born into it?” Is one I’ve had to wrestle with – and I think many people my age in this pluralistic society do as well – and some are driven away from



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*Faith Journey (continued)*

the Christian faith because of it, or they are clearly driven away from Christian practice. But through finding a place in seminary, steady support from family, church and friends, and through internships where intentional discernment has taken place I feel ready to take on a position of leadership in the Church through a pastoral role. I desire to help others work out their salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12) – as matters of belief are no light matters and are deeply personal.

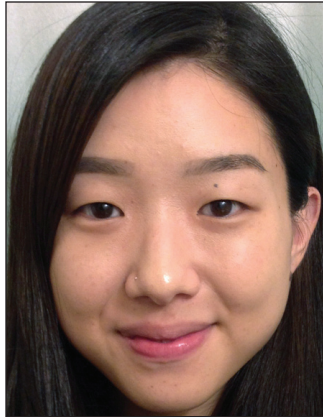
One of the hardest things about stepping into the role of a pastor is to face people's embodied doubts in God's power and the Church's witness, which has at times had a poor track record because of a collective lack of faith. The challenge to meet those doubts with confidence is certainly difficult. But to this I look to the Apostle Paul's words "*I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed – a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "the righteous will live by faith"*" (Romans 1:16-17). I am ready to proclaim this gospel so that in pursuing righteousness by faith God's holy church may indeed witness to the world.

Jelle H. Koersen

*Statement of Reason*

The Reformed tradition has been a deep well to draw from for the understanding of pastoral ministry. Since the Reformed tradition is part of the holy catholic and apostolic church that we can invite people into, it does not close itself off from other perspectives but rather seeks to learn from them knowing that all wisdom is from God, and it is within God's perfect will that he shall grant wisdom to those not like me. For this reason I seek to be a candidate for pastorally ministry in the Christian Reformed Church and am excited to pastorally journey with others, learn from them, and be of service within whatever capacity God has given. I hope candidacy and later ordination will help by putting me in conversations with people who may otherwise be inaccessible. I hope to present the Christian faith in its best light, and show that it can change us in profound ways and that reconciliation between opposing sides is God's doing.

Jelle H. Koersen



*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:* Aleah M. Marsden

*Place of Birth:* Concord, California

*Education:*

Calvin Theological Seminary  
Grand Rapids, MI  
M.Div., 2022

*Internships:*

Fairfield CRC  
Fairfield, CA  
Church Administrator  
2017-2021

Christ Church of Davis  
Davis, CA  
2020-2021

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### *Faith Journey*

I did not grow up regularly attending church. My family was nominal at best, and would attend different local Christian churches in spurts and stops throughout my childhood. Even with the lack of access, I have always felt drawn to church. I was baptized when I was ten in an Evangelical Free Church. A friend had invited me to her AWANA group and I read about upcoming baptisms on a bulletin that was taped on the wall in the women's restroom. Something inside me knew that it was for me. I signed up, received no instruction as to what baptism is other than "an outward sign of an inward faith" and showed up for my baptism at a Saturday evening service with my family in tow. Before baptism we were supposed to give a short testimony. Of my own volition, I had written my speech on 3x5 notecards. The pastor offered me the microphone and I gave an impassioned confession of my faith. Family lore has it that after I finished the pastor took the microphone from my dramatic little ten-year-old self and quipped, "And I think she means it, folks!" I look back on this fondly. Before I knew anything of it, God called me to himself, into his family, and had gifted me to serve him.

By junior high I'd mostly lost interest in church, and weathered some family trauma in the meantime. In high school the spark would be rekindled into a flame that has burned ever since. A friend invited me to a Bible study at her youth leader's home, and something fell into place in my heart and life that I've not shaken. Studying the Word made me feel alive and more myself in ways that at that point I couldn't articulate. Women were not ordained at that church, but there was one woman whose husband was the pastor of youth ministry, and as such, she was able to lead the junior high ministry. She had invited me to be a small group leader, so weekly I sat under her teaching. I recognized something in her that I desperately wanted. To my limited imagination, I interpreted this as a call to marry a youth pastor, so that I could teach the Bible.

I'll fast-forward through the intervening years of leaving that church for my soon-to-be fiancé's CRC, getting talked out of going to college by a fundamentalist-leaning mentor, getting married at nineteen and having four kids by my mid-twenties, and struggling through a faith crisis of realizing that if a woman's highest calling was to only the domestic sphere that God had gifted me wrong. But through that struggle I leaned into my study of the Bible, determined to find contentment where God had placed me, and discovered a God who was more personal and gracious than I had dreamed. A God who would not give me gifts that I could not use. A God who makes ways where there are no ways.

As I committed to making small, faithful choices, God began to bring opportunities into my life beyond any I had imagined. I began writing, publishing, speaking at women's events, leading retreats, and eventually being seated next to Jul Medenblik at a leadership event he was teaching for our classis (Central California) that led to an invitation to pursue seminary at Calvin.

It has been through the formative experience of my studies that I've been moved into this most recent season of pursuing candidacy. Here I have been given language that has increased the scope of my

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*Faith Journey (continued)*

imagination for how God can use my gifts. I have been able to identify how many relationships I've had trouble defining in my past make perfect sense when placed within a pastoral care framework. Preaching has been a sacred culmination of my creative and communication gifts. I have also had to reckon with the heartbreaking cost associated with being a woman pursuing ordination. Already this calling has led our family away from a church we love and served for over two decades that has chosen to continue to bar women from the consistory and pulpit. The road of calling narrows, but I have found God to be utterly faithful and trustworthy. It may be hard, but it will be worth it. He is worthy.

Aleah M. Marsden

*Statement of Reason*

I am pursuing ordination as a Minister of the Word in the CRCNA because I have come to the conviction that this is the next small, faithful choice to which I'm called. As I've found with most things related to ministry, Eugene Peterson puts it best: "God and passion. This is why I was a pastor, that is why I have come to this place: to live in the presence of God, to live with passion—and to gather others in the presence of God, introducing them into the possibilities of a passionate life." Being a pastor makes more sense of my life, my story, myself than anything else I've encountered. I'm hopeful to have the opportunity to serve God's people through the faithful administration of the sacraments and preaching of the Word, as well as attentive and compassionate care for the community to which I'm called.

Aleah M. Marsden



*Name:* Daniel F. Meyers

*Place of birth:* Muskegon, Michigan

*Education:*

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

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

*Internships:*

Covenant CRC  
Cutlerville, MI  
Sept 2017 - May 2019

Ellsworth CRC  
Ellsworth, MI  
May 2018 - Aug 2018

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

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*Faith Journey*

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

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

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

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

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

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



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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:* Machakos, 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:* 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:*

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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:* Jacob A. Patton

*Place of Birth:* Munster, IN

*Education:*

Kuyper College  
Grand Rapids, MI  
B.S. (dual major) Pre-Seminary  
Studies and Bible and Theology,  
2019

Calvin Theological Seminary  
Grand Rapids, MI  
M.Div., 2022

*Internships:*

Second Byron CRC  
Byron Center, MI  
2019-2021

Mel Trotter Ministries  
Grand Rapids, MI  
Summer 2021

*Contact:*

616-648-0150  
jacobanthonypatton@gmail.com

*Faith Journey*

My faith journey began in a loving home surrounded by parents who loved the Lord and who were dedicated to giving myself and my three siblings a christian education and continual involvement in church. Throughout my childhood we were members of Christian Reformed Churches. I grew up constantly learning about God and His great love for me, and how He called me to live. Out of gratitude for God's love and with a fervor to tell the world of a Creator who loves everyone, I began preparing and considering a life in ministry in high school. I had people like my youth pastor, family, and teachers help support me as I discerned this calling. My grandfather also helped a lot in this area, walking through the reformed confessions (especially the Heidelberg Catechism) with me, explaining them to me and their importance. He even took me to the local seminary (Mid-America Reformed Seminary) to visit a class there.

While I was in high school, I felt confirmed in my calling during an evening of worship with a powerful experience. During a night of worship as part of a SERVE program, myself and many others considering ministry were prayed over. I felt overwhelmed by the Holy Spirit, and knew in my heart that God was calling me to a life of ministry.

Through my study at Kuyper and Calvin Theological Seminary, I connected deeper with the faith and theology of my Christian heritage. This helped affirm my beliefs, strengthen my knowledge and helped my faith grow deeper.

I believe that the Bible is God's Holy and Inspired Word and is unfailing in its purpose to proclaim the Gospel of salvation through Christ alone. I believe that the entirety of this Holy Scripture is useful and instructive for Christian living and obedience to the Will of God. I believe God created the world as perfect and Holy, with humankind as His own image-reflectors. It is through the free will of humankind that sin enters the world and corrupts creation and erodes the connection between perfect Creator and (as a result of the Fall) imperfect creation.

I believe that God is one Being existing in three Persons who are all equally divine and of the same essence. God reveals Himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, which is revealed throughout scripture. The Son became willingly submissive to the Father, taking upon Himself the punishment due to fallen humankind. Through His death and resurrection, believers are imputed with the righteousness of Christ. These believers are thus called to participate with God in His mission to bless all Creation, both individually and corporately as the church. And as the church enacts this mission, we are called to eagerly wait for Christ to usher in this new Kingdom.

Jacob A. Patton

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*Statement of Reason*

As I finish my last semester at CTS, I seek candidacy in the Christian Reformed Church. I have been a member of CRC churches throughout my life and have appreciated their expression of the Christian faith. I have been the benefactor of the different ministries and the preaching of CRC churches and wish to use the gifts and talents God has given me to provide this to others. I wish to be ordained so that I can serve God and neighbor through this office. I want to effectively preach, disciple, teach, and care for lifetime believers and first-comers. I do not know all of what God has in store for me and my family, but I hope to be well-prepared for whatever He may call us to.

Jacob A. Patton



*Name:* Mario R. Perez

*Birthplace:* Chino, California

*Education:*

California Baptist University  
B.A. Sociology, 2015

Calvin Theological Seminary  
Grand Rapids, MI  
M.Div., 2022

*Internships:*

The River CRC  
Redlands, CA  
Youth Director  
Intern - Young Life

*Contact:*

909-938-8193  
mariorodolfo.perez@gmail.com

*Faith Journey*

Being raised in a Christ serving home, my parents were the first examples in my life who showed my younger brother and I what it means to serve the Lord with all of our heart, soul, and strength. Though their walk was not perfect, they strived to show us what it meant to be real with God and real with those around us.

I grew up serving in the Church, starting at a young age. My parents were active in various ministries such as the homeless ministry, grounds ministry, and Sunday school. Due to their activeness in serving, that meant my brother and I tagged along. This was the beginning of the formation of my faith. It was through serving alongside my parents where I was able to learn about having my own relationship with Christ and to put it into action. Growing up, I was always told that I was going to be a pastor, and I fought that calling. I did not want to be a pastor, but instead I wanted to be in law enforcement.

When I was 12, we left that church and began attending a local Christian Reformed Church. This is where I would say my faith really grew. As I grew older and my faith matured, the constant reminder from people telling me that I was going to be a pastor did not stop, even at a new church. I wrestled with it until finally my senior year of high school, I knelt down on the side of my bed and surrendered my future to Christ. I asked him where he was leading me to and at that moment, youth ministry was placed on my heart. I fought it and remembered praying that if he wants me in ministry that he was going to have to open up the doors and push me through them because I was not going to look for them myself.

This was the beginning of my ministry journey because soon after this I was asked to serve in my youth group as a student leader. After high school, I attended a local university where I got plugged in serving in Young Life. After a year with Young Life, I began interning at the church where I am now the youth director at. After graduating college, I still fought where God was leading me and after two years of serving as the youth director, I began my seminary journey. I remember having three desires if I was to go through seminary. The first was being able to continue to serve my church as the full-time youth director alongside my studies. The second was to study alongside people I knew, who were going to be on the same path as me. Finally, I was hoping to not come out of school with overwhelming debt. God showed up and each desire was fulfilled!

As I look back at my life, God showed up in mighty ways. He continued to reveal his plan for my life through various people and events. He was and is faithful in my life and each life changing event, I can full heartedly say that God was in the midst of it, preparing me for the ministry. Over the last five years, I have seen God show up in ways that I didn't think were possible. He used people who I least expected to speak truth and affirm His calling in my life.

Mario R. Perez

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*Statement of Reason*

I seek to be ordained in the CRCNA as a response to be obedient to the journey God has called me to walk. I have seen his hands orchestrating my life in a way that is undeniable and it was through the reformed teachings that I was able to see the love Christ has for me. It is my hope to serve through the Christian Reformed Church and to receive accountability, prayer, and support from those who are also a part of this beautiful community. I have a passion to share the beautiful covenant that God made with us and how we can live out the covenant with those in our community.

Mario R. Perez



*Name:* Micah P. Ringelberg

*Place of birth:* Clare, Michigan

*Education:*

Ferris State University  
Big Rapids, MI  
B.A.

Calvin Theological Seminary  
Grand Rapids, MI  
M.Div., 2022

*Internships:*

Ada CRC  
Grand Rapids, MI  
2019-2022

*Contact:*

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### *Faith Journey*

Though I was infant baptized and raised in the church, I grew most significantly in my faith after college. It was after college that I understood sonship and adoption as a child of God and the salvation which Jesus gives as a free gift. During college and my first career, I lived for the approval of achievement and accomplishments and this can be seen by my ability to graduate in three years with two bachelor's degrees. I took course loads which were above the maximum full time of 18 credits and worked extensively. Eventually the Holy Spirit convicted me of the idolatrous lifestyle and the insincerity in which I pursued faith. I eventually left the first company I worked at being convinced that the culture and community I was surrounded with was influencing me in a way not aligned with my Christian faith.

After a short season of reflection and spiritual growth I moved to Richmond, Virginia and began a new job working for Schneider Electric. While working for Schneider Electric, I became involved in a PCA church and began meeting bi-weekly with the head pastor to discuss the book, **Concise Theology** by J.I. Packer. After a year, I was nominated to become a deacon and received training for the office. It was at the end of my diaconal training that I began to consider a call to pastoral ministry. After discussing it with my head pastor, I spent three years discerning a call and practicing gifts for ministry before leaving for seminary at the end of 2019.

I have now preached nearly 50 sermons. I have led worship services, taught Sunday school ranging from middle school to adult classes, led council and consistory meetings, and served in many other areas of ministry. From this, I have a strong passion to build up the church and disciple believers to have a holistic faith, identity, and hope grounded in Jesus Christ and God's redemption through Christ's work and victory on the cross and in the resurrection!

1 Corinthians 15:10 - But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.

Micah P. Ringelberg

### *Statement of Reason*

I wish to serve God promptly and sincerely with all my heart, mind, strength, and soul. I believe he is calling me to serve pastorally in the CRC and to humbly, through His help, build up and strengthen the church.

Ephesians 2:8-10 - For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Micah P. Ringelberg







*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:*

630-605-8406  
roelofs.will@gmail.com

*Faith Journey*

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

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

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

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

William Roelofs

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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:* Nicole M. Romero

*Place of Birth:* Grand Rapids,  
Michigan

*Education:*

Kuyper College  
Grand Rapids, MI  
B.A., Science: Intercultural  
Studies, 2018

Calvin Theological Seminary  
Grand Rapids, MI  
M.Div., 2022

*Internships:*

Church of the Servant, CRC  
Grand Rapids, MI  
ESL Teaching Intern  
September 2017 - April 2018

Church of the Servant, CRC  
Grand Rapids, MI  
Vocation Formation  
Seminary Intern  
September 2018 - May 2020

Pine Rest  
Grand Rapids, MI  
CPE Intern  
May 2022 - August 2022  
(Expected Completion)

*Contact:*

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*Faith Journey*

Warm greetings! My name is Nicole Romero, and I am currently applying to become a candidate seeking ordination in the CRC! This journey has been one with many twists and turns. To sum up my time in seminary, I would say that it has been an absolute whirlwind. If you had asked me five years ago, what I would be doing, I never would have thought this is the direction God had for me. I had no idea that I would be pursuing the path to ordination and receiving a call for a career in chaplaincy.

I spent most of my upbringing in the small town of Zeeland, MI. I grew up in a biracial household and this is the lens in which I have come to view the world through, which I am thankful for. My dad is from Honduras and my mom is from Jenison, MI, but was a missionary in several Spanish speaking countries. While both my parents speak Spanish, I, alas, was unable to become fluent. This is absolutely a learning goal for the future. I grew up attending church, was baptized in a CRC church in Jenison in which my grandparents were founding members and attended Sunday school. When I was twelve, my family changed churches to First Reformed Church of Zeeland. This church was my home church until I attended college.

During my high school years, I found myself in a difficult season both in life, but also within my faith. There were many life events taking place that left me feeling confused, angry, and unsure of what I believed. There were moments when I could not understand why God allowed certain events to take place and seriously questioned my involvement within the church. Thankfully, the Lord knew what I needed and provided many wonderful mentors into my life and opportunities for reflection and processing. Even though my faith did not stop hard things from happening, it helped me wrestle in ways where hope was found. My experience in high school and looking back on God's presence and guidance in my life, has truly shaped me into who I am, thus far.

When it came time to apply for colleges, I decided to attend Kuyper College. During my first semester, I found the Intercultural Studies (ICS) department and found my place in that program. During my time majoring in ICS, I explored and saw the world in new ways. I was able to learn more about others from a multitude of contexts as well as put together some unsolved puzzle pieces of my own life specifically within my parent's relationship and my biracial identity. Also during this time, I grew in my competency in cross-cultural ministry and the beauty and grandness that is the kingdom. During this time, I also received a Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) certificate. This went well with my ICS degree in that I was able to work with non-English speakers and be present in new ways and learn different ways of how to show Christ through my actions.

In my final semester of my undergraduate degree, there were a series of closed doors, which led me to discern my next steps. Through wise counsel from a couple professors and mentors, the idea of seminary came into discussion. Coupled with this possibility of seminary, the vocation of chaplaincy began to come into conversation. After taking time to prayerfully discern, I decided to continue my education and

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*Faith Journey (continued)*

attend Calvin Theological Seminary in the Masters of Divinity program with the hopes of becoming both an ordained Minister of the Word as well as a future Hospice Chaplain. My faith during my time in seminary has been challenged and has grown in ways that I had not ever anticipated. I have learned more in depth the challenges of ministry and the hard conversations taking place. I also have met and learned from some simply amazing humans and have gained fresh perspectives for interacting with others and how to care for both myself and others.

Overall, the Lord has moved me in directions I never would have imagined and placed specific calls and passions into my person. My future career as a hospice chaplain is a call that is truly God ordained and while I will be entering into a deep and difficult space, it is truly a sacred one where God is present. It will be messy and there will be many unknowns. I do not pretend to have all the answers and will continually be growing, but I hold so much gratitude for where I have been placed and for the whirlwind that is seminary and the whirlwind that is ministry!

Nicole M. Romero

*Statement of Reason*

I, Nicole Romero, wholeheartedly, feel called to be an ordained Minister of the Word within the CRCNA. I believe that God has called me to serve and care for creation and humanity in a wide variety of ways. I believe that I have gifts in pastoral care and empathy that will help aid me in my work as a chaplain. I also believe that God has called me to be a lifelong learner to receive gifts from further education and others. As a Minister of the Word, I will do my absolute best to be my authentic self in the spaces that I am a part of and walk alongside the dying, the vulnerable, the broken, the marginalized, and all those in between.



*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

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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:* Ivan K. Santoso

*Age:* 25

*Place of Birth:* Surabaya, Indonesia

*Colleges & Seminaries Attended:*

Purdue University  
B.S., 2012

Calvin Theological Seminary  
M.Div., 2016

*Internships:*

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

Visalia CRC - Visalia, CA  
June 2015 to August 2015

*Languages spoken:*

Indonesian

*Contact:*

765-586-7896  
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### *Faith Journey*

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

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

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

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

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

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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:* 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:*

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*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:* Joseph J. Steenholdt

*Place of Birth:* Kalamazoo, MI

*Education:*

Kendall College of Art &  
Design  
Grand Rapids, MI  
BFA, 2006

Westminster Seminary  
Escondido, CA  
M.Div., 2022

Calvin Theological Seminary  
Grand Rapids, MI  
EPMC, 2022

*Internships:*

North Street CRC  
Zeeland, MI  
Summers, 2020 and 2021

Arise Presbyterian Church  
(PCA)  
Vista, CA  
2019-2022

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*Faith Journey*

“What is your only comfort in life and death?” By God’s grace, I cannot remember a time when I would answer this question with anything other than belonging to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ in body and soul. Although, by the Holy Spirit, God has mercifully drawn me closer to him throughout my life so far. He continually calls me away from my sin and self-dependence to new life through Jesus Christ and humble dependence on Him. Slowly but surely, God drew me by surrounding me with his gifts of grace to form me more and more into the likeness of His Son.

The first gift God nurtured my faith with was Christian parents. I see the fruit now from the nightly Bible stories my mom would read to me, the regular mealtime prayer and devotions, their willing service to our local church, and how the Christian faith permeated into living with integrity in all of life.

The second gift God nourished my faith with has been the weekly means of grace in a local church. I was more concerned with drawing pictures and trying not to be bored sitting over an hour in the pew in my younger years. Yet the regular habits of hearing from the Bible, singing the doxology, reciting the Apostles’ Creed, and memorizing for Sunday School were laying down the foundation even when I did not realize it.

The third primary gift God grew my faith with was through my Christian teachers at the Kalamazoo Christian Schools. I learned how God speaks through His Word and in His world. Worship was not something regulated only to Sunday but throughout the week and for all of life.

Given the context of these graces, it still has taken many years to mature in my faith. As a young child, I wrestled with some Bible stories, wondering why God would ask Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, why Jacob would receive a blessing after being deceptive, or confused that Uzzah was struck down dead for trying to catch the ark of the covenant. The whole ceremonial rituals also seemed strange. The stories of Jesus and the New Testament letters were a bit easier to digest, but the Old Testament certainly left a lot of questions in my mind.

My pastor in high school started to give me the bigger picture though. After teaching the Heidelberg Catechism, he led us through an introductory theology course. I began to see how Reformed theology made all of these connections and the unfolding story of redemptive history. I soaked it up like a sponge. I wanted to know what I believed and why I believed it.

When I moved away from home to go to college, the Lord continued working on my heart and making my faith my own. Theology stimulated my intellect, but the gospel was transforming me. The gospel of Jesus Christ was no longer just Christian jargon I took for granted but was beautiful and rich to me personally. The life, death, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ makes all the difference in the world. The problematic Old Testament passages came to life when I saw Jesus in them. The Creator of heaven and earth is not only an Almighty God but my loving Heavenly Father. The Holy Triune God has condescended by



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*Faith Journey (continued)*

communicating through His Word, His people, and in these times and places in my life.

My faith journey continues, and I am grateful for the continued mercy God has shown me in my life. It has been a true privilege to study the riches of Scripture at seminary, continual nourishment by the ordinary means of grace in Word and Sacrament, blessed with faithful pastors over the years, a godly wife encouraging me in this journey, and my own children to teach the goodness of belonging to Jesus. As an elder at our church in California regularly reminds us, someday looking back, we'll all say, "how wonderful it is to be called a Christian."

Joseph J. Steenholdt

*Statement of Reason*

I desire to be ordained in the Christian Reformed Church to answer God's calling on my heart internally and confirmed by others externally, to serve His church as an undershepherd to the Great Shepherd. He has worked this in my life over time by affirming the truths of Scripture and professing the historical, catholic, and global Christian faith summarized in the ecumenical creeds. I also believe that the Reformed confessions faithfully depict the Bible's teaching. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes" (Rom. 1:16) and humbly aspire to proclaim this good news that is only found in Jesus Christ. By the grace of God, may I fulfill the daily calling to love God, love His people, and "preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction" (2 Tim. 4:2) for the building up and edification of Christ's body (Eph. 4:12–13).

Joseph J. Steenholdt



*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:*

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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:* Zachary Toth

*Place of Birth:* San Antonio, Texas

*Colleges and Seminaries Attended:*

Ferris State University  
Big Rapids, MI  
2012-2014

Grand Valley State University  
Grand Rapids, MI  
B.S. Statistics, 2014-2018

Calvin Theological Seminary  
Grand Rapids, MI  
M.Div., 2022

*Internships:*

The Caledonia Gathering  
Caledonia, MI  
2018-2022

Mel Trotter  
Grand Rapids, MI  
Summer 2020

*Contact:*

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*Faith Journey*

One thing I have noticed in my Christian journey is that people really seem to value Paul-like stories. Where Paul was heading down the wrong path and then one day he met Jesus and his whole life was turned upside down. We seem to put less value on the Timothy stories, who grew up in the faith and never really wavered too far. I have a Timothy story. I grew up in the faith and pretty much followed the path my whole life, straying every now and then but completely abandoning the path.

I have been involved with playing on the worship team at whatever church I was at since I was 14 and was first learning how to play the bass. When I was twenty, I was asked to join in my first leadership role when the youth director asked me to help lead the youth group. From there, I led multiple mission trips, started a youth praise team, and started substituting as a worship leader when our typical leader had to take a Sunday off.

Almost five years ago, I felt the call to work in ministry full time. I started looking for job opportunities in the two fields that I was most comfortable with: worship ministry and youth ministry. This led me to consider the CRC for the first time. I applied for a position at Caledonia CRC and they offered me the worship position at their church plant, The Caledonia Gathering. The only issue with this is that it was a part time job, but I saw it as a necessary stepping stone to full time ministry.

About a year in, and after falling in love with The Caledonia Gathering, I was asked to apply for a full time youth ministry position. During the process I was asked the question, "where do you see yourself in 10 years?" That is when I realized that I didn't see myself doing youth ministry nor worship ministry in the way that I was currently doing it, and I felt the calling to full time pastoral ministry. So I signed up for seminary a few days later and here I am about to graduate!

Since taking the position at The Caledonia Gathering, I have been able to see myself in so many roles (as is typical for church plant employees). Our pastor left in July of 2021 which has led to most of his responsibilities falling on myself and our Children's Director which has been stressful but so good in my growth as a church leader. I'm so excited with what the rest of my faith journey has in store.

Zachary Toth

*Statement of Reason*

One consistent thing in my life and in my ministry is the fact that I have always been drawn to the unchurched. I have been so blessed by my experiences in the church but I know so many people that have not been, often having been scared by the church. I know the goodness that the church and a relationship with Christ can bring to people. It is my greatest desire for people to experience this goodness. The reason I want to be ordained is to be able to lead a church in sharing the love of Christ with others that may not have experienced it before.

Zachary Toth







*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  
Aylmer, ON  
May 2020 - August 2020

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*Faith Journey*

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

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

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

Ryan VanderWees

*Statement of Reason*

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

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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:* Anthony D. Vander Schaaf

*Place of birth:* Worcester, MA

*Education:*

CSU Long Beach  
Long Beach, CA  
BA, Human Development &  
Psychology, 2013

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

*Internships:*

Kelloggsville Church  
Kentwood, MI  
Youth Director

Calvin University Campus  
Ministries  
Grand Rapids, MI  
2019-2020

Branches Church  
Huntington Beach, CA  
2014-2015

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*Faith Journey*

My faith and life with Jesus have continually developed and been shaped by the Holy Spirit, working through the relationships I have made over my lifetime. Through the stages of life and the relationships that accompany them, I can trace back countless pivotal moments of growth and maturity that have built up my faith and taught me more about Christ.

One of the pivotal elements of my story is being raised in a multicultural and multilingual church. It was in this setting that I experienced worship, relationship, and faith expressions of many backgrounds. The diversity of worship and community made it evident to me at a young age that there is no sacrosanct culture in which the Gospel is confined to. As children of God and siblings in Christ, we are unified in our faith, but the expression of that faith takes on different sounds, locations, and cultures. This has shaped in me a desire for the unity that Jesus calls us into as the body of Christ, through the power of his Spirit.

This setting taught me that every human interaction is an opportunity for us to learn about the other, and through the other, more about our God. Far from simply coexisting with Christians from other traditions, our diversity in faith and work is something that helps us thrive and grow in the Kingdom of Heaven. When we learn, and appreciate the diversity of cultures, people, and backgrounds, we are only made more aware of the creativity and brilliance of our creative God. In my understanding, we grow closer to who we were created to be when we live in a rich community with each other.

As Romans 12 encourages us to be continually transformed through the renewing of our minds, and offering our bodies as living sacrifices, I have learned that this participation in God's work and community goes hand-in hand with our development as gritty, spiritual, human beings.

In my previous career working in behavioral health, I learned the impact that our small decisions have on us each day. We are continually being shaped and transformed through our lives, choices, and relationships. And as a follower of Jesus, I really hope to look more like Jesus with each passing day. I believe that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ not only saved us from our brokenness in sin, but that Jesus also taught and modeled to us how to live well with ourselves and with others. This is something I long to chase after every day, and I have found it my joy to help others discover this life and growth as well.

Anthony D. Vander Schaaf

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*Statement of Reason*

*“How do we grow and change?”* is the question that gets me out of bed in the morning. I am seeking ordination in the Christian Reformed Church that I may continue to help others grow in Christ, and to grow alongside them. I take this step with a community who has supported this calling in my life and has helped me grow as well. It is my hope to serve in the Christian Reformed Church to work alongside other churches and believers to bring good news that is life-changing to the lives of those lost and searching for hope.

Anthony D. Vander Schaaf



*Name:* Jodi F. VanWingerden

*Place of birth:* Sheboygan, WI

*Education:*

Calvin University  
Grand Rapids, MI  
Bachelor's of Social Work, 1997

Calvin Theological Seminary,  
Grand Rapids, MI  
M.Div., 2022

*Internships:*

Campus Ministry at GVSU  
Grand Rapids, MI  
2018-2020

Grand Rapids Center for  
Community Transformation  
Grand Rapids, MI  
2021-2022

*Contact:*

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### *Faith Journey*

I was born into the CRC. Raised by parents whose unpretentious faith in action still provides a foundation for Christian living. Grew up in a Wisconsin congregation who populate the stories of my childhood, where Christmas programs and Sunday school classes and church picnics are the settings. Attended Christian schools that offered more of the same, including teachers who lived into the call of their vocation. Played and worked at Camp Calvin and Camp Tall Turf and Camp Roger, where the forests of the Midwest were my sanctuary. Participated in SERVE projects that shaped the way I saw my faith intersect with a bigger world. Went to Calvin College, graduated with a social work degree. Stayed in Grand Rapids, where my husband, Dave, and I settled into a CRC congregation in the city—our faith family now for almost 25 years—where faith and service and calling have converged for me. Worked at a Christian counseling center, then moved into editing for Zondervan and CRC Publications. Had three delightful children who had grown up in the CRC and attended Christian schools.

For much of my life, it has felt like there is nothing special about the cyclical story of my faith, particularly in the bubble I've only occasionally ventured away from. But I've come to realize that doesn't really matter. God has directed and utilized the pieces of my life to bring me to this moment, and to the moments that will follow. The years in church and school created a love for the Bible and for the communities of people who are brought together because of its story and the One who tells it. The church people and counselors and teachers—both those who suppressed my questions and those who invited them—shaped my faith to be one that lives comfortably within the “gray areas,” the tension inherent in this life of the “already but not yet.” Social work taught me that I care about people who are hurting and the reasons they are vulnerable. The editing helped me see that I am concerned about what the church is doing and saying in the world. Being a stay-at-home mom showed me the deep significance and purpose and joy in life's daily “small moments.” Our faith family in Grand Rapids has nurtured me in ways that grew all of these things—including my love for working with teenagers/young adults, my capacity for leadership, my understanding of the importance of the church to be relevant in its place, and my desire for the church to be a place of deep welcome for everyone.

God brought all these pieces together for me at Calvin Seminary, where I've spent the last four years in joyful exploration of God's Word and work in the world, surrounded by staff and faculty and students whose stories have been shaping my own. I have no idea what comes after seminary, but I'm okay with that. It is enough to know that God will continue to bring the pieces of my life together for the moments that are yet to come, moments that could lead me anywhere, because every part of this world—the urban and the rural, the black and the white, the rich and the poor, the young and the old, even (or perhaps especially) the church—is in need of Christ's light and healing and reconciliation.

Jodi F. VanWingerden



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*Statement of Reason*

I, like many, see the church's potential for being a community of unparalleled beauty, witness to the power of Christ in broken and hurting and hurtful people. I hold together this vision and the reality of the ways that the church falls short. I have felt God calling me to live in this place of tension within the church—within the unrealized vision of Jesus' prayer for us to "be brought to complete unity so that the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me" (John 17:23). I am seeking a call to ordained ministry in the CRC because it is the setting God has chosen for my story and my sense of calling.

Jodi F. VanWingerden



*Name:* Thomas J. Van Wyk

*Age:* 63

*Place of Birth:* Chicago, IL

*Name of Spouse:* Edna

*Number of Children:* 2

*Colleges & Seminaries Attended:*

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

Governors State University  
1993-1996

Calvin Theological Seminary  
M.Div., 2016

*Internships:*

Kelloggsville CRC,  
Kentwood, MI  
May 2015 to Jan 2016

*Contact:*

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tom@vanwyk.us

### *Faith Journey*

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

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

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

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

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

Thomas Van Wyk

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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:* Wendy J. Werkman

*Place of birth:* Edmonton, Alberta,  
Canada

*Education:*

Canadian Bible College  
Regina, Saskatchewan  
2005

Taylor Seminary  
Edmonton, AB  
M.Div., 2022

Calvin Theological Seminary  
Grand Rapids, MI  
EPMC 2022

*Internships:*

Bethel Community (CRC)  
Church  
Edmonton, AB  
September 2021 - current

*Contact:*

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*Faith Journey*

I was blessed to grow up in a family that loved God, and who mentored a spiritually formed life to me. I felt a calling to serve in the church at the age of 10, but wasn't sure how that would come about. My faith was challenged during my teens, but became personal in my early adulthood. I realized that I had been living a double life; one foot in the Christian world, and one foot in the worldly life. I chose to follow Jesus with both feet!

I felt a calling to serve in the church, and became part of the fabric of the church community volunteering wherever I could whether it was a serving or leading position. I met my husband Melvin at church. It was his desire to become a youth pastor. I was determined to use all the abilities I had to help him be effective and our prayer was that we would, as a team, see people come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. During our time in Grand Rapids our 10-month-old daughter sustained a major injury and we went back to Canada for her recovery.

When we returned to Canada, we realized the Christian Reformed denomination was growing at a rate of 1%, mostly due to internal growth. The missional outreach of the Christian and Missionary Alliance church was impressive, and we became part of a church plant. I became the administrator for almost seven years, and was part of the strategy to see people come into the church, be welcomed and then grow in their faith. My husband and I became involved in Marriage Encounter, and our relationship was strengthened and grew. I taught courses on Spiritual Gifting, and started a women's Bible Study program.

My job ended at the CM&A church, and we felt that we needed to return to our Christian Reformed roots. We began to attend a Christian Reformed church where our children had friends.

I volunteered and became part of the fabric at Bethel Community Church for about 8 years. I served as a Governing Elder at Bethel, and enjoyed being part of the "mission, vision, and values" part of Council. I spoke at Women's conferences outside of the CRC, and became the Chair for an organization called "Women Alive" while continuing to lead Bible Studies at Bethel. When an opportunity arose to become the church administrator, my husband and I felt God was drawing me back into ministry as a staff person at our church. I was excited to bring my understanding of "welcome" to a denomination that historically had been very good at spiritual formation, feeling that the combination of the two would be beneficial.

While being on staff, I continued to volunteer for the Worship Ministry, as a Bible Study leader, and I became a Church Renewal Labs Coach for the "Welcome and Assimilation" portfolio with Classis Alberta North. I enrolled in and completed a three year program through Dunamis Canada, and co-lead a compiled Dunamis track to Bethel youth.

During this time, I felt a call to become "more". I felt the pull to use more of my spiritual gift to call others into a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ and to experience the hope of a life with Him. All of my experiences with church and different denominations had given me an understanding of how the church works, and what it takes to run a

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*Faith Journey (continued)*

successful program. I have learned what my weaknesses are as well as my strengths, and know that the foundation of prayer is vital. I love to lead, teach, and preach. I have learned to quietly listen and ask good questions to those who are in need of a listening ear. Those experiences have led me to strengthen my gifts and discover new ones. In 2018 I enrolled in Taylor Seminary and the EPMC program from Calvin Theological Seminary so that I could live out that call.

My three adult children are married, and have blessed me with six wonderful grandchildren. I continue to serve Bethel Community Church as the administrator as well as filling in some of the pastoral duties as needed.

Wendy J. Werkman

*Statement of Reason*

I am seeking candidacy and ordination within the Christian Reformed Church because I believe I have been called to use my gifting to call others into a growing and healthy faith life that will enable them to become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ. The verse that reminds me of my calling is Isaiah 6:8 "Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"

Wendy J. Werkman



*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

*Contact:*

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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

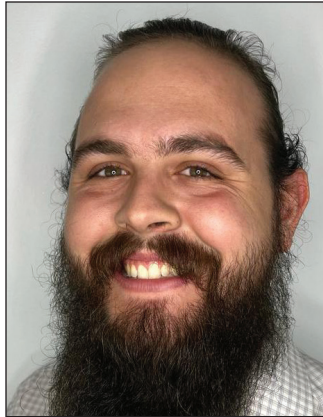
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*Statement of Reason*

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:* Benjamin H. Wimmers

*Place of birth:* St. Catharines,  
Ontario, Canada

*Education:*

McMaster University  
Hamilton, ON  
BS, 2017

McMaster University  
Hamilton, ON  
M.Div., 2022

Calvin Theological Seminary  
Grand Rapids, MI  
EPMC, 2022

*Internships:*

McMaster University  
Hamilton, ON  
CRC Chaplaincy Office  
Student Leader Intern  
2019-2020

Ancaster CRC  
Ancaster, ON  
Interim Pastor  
2020

New Street CRC  
Burlington, ON  
2020-2021

First Hamilton CRC  
Hamilton, ON  
2021-2022

*Contact:*

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*Faith Journey*

I grew up in a Christian Reformed home, went to Christian elementary and high school, and attended all the programs that my CRC had to offer as a youth. Looking back on my youth, I was almost certainly a cultural Christian, adopting the faith of my parents and community without too much thought about having a personal relationship with God, or owning my faith for myself. This would be called into question during my time at university. I believed that I had my life figured out, and part of that was the plan to become a veterinarian. I had always done well in science studies during high school, and it felt like the right thing to do, the safe option. After two years of increasingly abysmal academic performance, it was clear that I was not suited for my current area of study.

The result was a decision to run away from problems at university by joining up with Youth With a Mission (YWAM). I spent two years with YWAM in Northern Europe where I was challenged to own my faith, to develop a personal relationship with God. I thought I was running away, but actually ran into a situation where I was able to open myself up to a God who had been actively pursuing me my whole life. I was no longer a cultural Christian, but a Christian of conviction. I certainly haven't figured everything out, but I knew that God was my heavenly Father, and I was his child.

I returned home to finish the science degree I started. I still knew that medical sciences were not for me and so I began to explore ecology and environmental studies. I found my niche! Even though I enjoyed my studies, I was not certain what I was meant to do after graduation. I was deeply moved by the human-induced suffering of the earth and wrestled with what role I had to play in the restoration of our planet. That is when the Lord pointed out that if human behavior was responsible for climate change, then only a transformation of human behavior could be the solution and nothing is more transformational than the gospel of Jesus Christ! After that conversation, I knew that God was calling me to be a pastor, to preach the good news of the gospel.

My time at McMaster Divinity College has been the best educational experience I have ever had. Diving deeply into the Biblical languages, exploring the intersections of faith and culture, and wrestling with the changes to identity and function of the church in the West have been accompanied by making friends and colleges across denominational lines. I have also held onto that sense of creation care that was foundational to God shaping my call to ministry, having written my master thesis on the foundation of the Christian response to climate change, arguing that working against climate change is intrinsic to our identity and mission as followers of Christ.

I have worked with CRC's in the Hamilton area, as well as the chaplaincy ministries at McMaster University and Mohawk College. Through my work, God has continued to affirm my calling to pastoral ministry, through both successes and struggles. I am especially grateful to Dr. Michael Fallon for introducing me to the Reformed worldview and fostering a love of Reformed theology over many coffees. I am excited to be a part of a denomination that embraces a holistic view of the gospel,

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*Faith Journey (continued)*

affirming that every square-inch of creation belongs to God, and is the subject of Christ's reconciling work.

Benjamin H. Wimmers

*Statement of Reason*

I am seeking ordination in the Christian Reformed Church because I want others to come to know that transformative power of the gospel as I have. I believe that God has called me to preach his Word and be a prophetic voice against suffering and injustice in this world. He has equipped me to work within His church, through my giftings and experiences, so that He may bring about his Kingdom through my submission to Him.

Benjamin H. Wimmers