



Christian  
Reformed  
Church

# Prospective Candidates 2022





May 20, 2022

Dear Delegates of Synod 2022,

Enclosed in this booklet are descriptions of the candidates being recommended to Synod 2022. For each person there is a photo, a brief biographical sketch, a statement of their faith journey, and the stated reason for pursuing candidacy. Each of the candidates has their own unique story and their own unique gifts. They are united in a desire to serve the Lord Jesus Christ through ordained ministry in the Christian Reformed Church. We trust that these pages (presented via an electronic format) will help the delegates of Synod 2022 become a bit more familiar with the 21 candidates.

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

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

The Candidacy Committee  
Rev. Susan LaClear, Director of Candidacy

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*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

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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

*Contact:*

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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:* 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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sjdejong4@gmail.com

*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:* 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

*Contact:*

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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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*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:* 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:*

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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:*

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*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:*

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*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

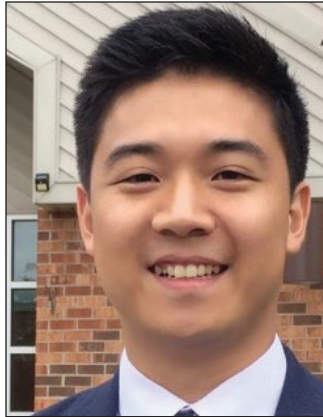


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*Statement of Reason*

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:* 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

*Contact:*

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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:* 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

*Contact:*

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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:* 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:*

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*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:*

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*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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mpr073@calvinseminary.edu

### *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:* 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:* 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:* 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

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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:* 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

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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:* 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

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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.

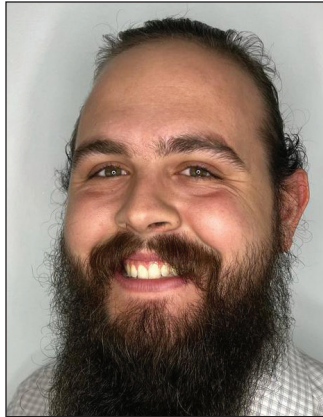
My three adult children are married, and have blessed me with six wonderful grandchildren. I continue to serve Bethel Community Church as the administrator as well as filling in some of the pastoral duties as needed.

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:* 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