



Christian
Reformed
Church

Prospective Candidates 2026





June 3, 2026

Dear Delegates of Synod 2026,

Enclosed in this booklet are descriptions of the candidates being recommended to Synod 2026. 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 this booklet will help the delegates of Synod 2026 become a bit more familiar with the 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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan LaClear".

Rev. Susan LaClear, Director of Candidacy

300 East Beltline Ave NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49506-1208
616-241-1691
616-224-05895 fax

3475 Mainway
PO Box 5070 STN LCD I
Burlington, Ontario L7R 3Y8
905-336-2920
905-336-8344 fax



Name: Laurel Ackerman-Lindholm

Current Place of Residence

Grand Rapids, Michigan

Education

Calvin College
Grand Rapids, MI
B.A. in Business and Spanish,
May 2015

Regent College
Vancouver, BC
M.A. in Christian Studies,
April 2024

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
M.Div. December 2025

Experience

Resonate Global Mission
Costa Rica
Cohort of Missioners

Bronson Methodist Hospital
Kalamazoo, MI
CPE & PRN Chaplain

Monroe Community Church
Grand Rapids, MI

Contact

lackerman01@gmail.com

Faith Journey

“We will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, his power, and the wonders he has done” (Psalm 78:4b). Praise be to God that I have never known a day apart from the Lord. As both a granddaughter and daughter of CRC pastors, I grew up in the church (and I do mean that literally! Ask me about kindergarten!). My father, mother, and maternal grandmother nurtured my faith alongside countless Christian teachers, mentors, and leaders. Making my public Profession of Faith in middle school was a natural step in my faith journey. By the time I finished high school, I was fully involved in my local church by playing on our worship team, teaching Sunday School, and engaging in evangelistic, cross-cultural ministries. I graduated from high school, studied in Israel for two weeks, and then spent three weeks under the care of Calvin Seminary students through Facing Your Future. By the time I began undergrad and living independently, my faith in Jesus was fully my own.

Like every Christ follower, my walk with God has not always been easy. I experienced the death of someone I loved early in my life, and death has continued to be a repeated reality. Unsurprising to those of us committed to the church, 100% of faithful church members are also sinful human beings. There have been times when I have wanted to walk away from God, and there have been times when I have doubted. Yet, as I look back on my faith journey, I can spot the many praiseworthy deeds of the Lord. As I look forward, I trust that God will do wonders again.

Statement of Reason

After almost a decade of working in the business world, God called me to seminary. I staunchly refused to go until God closed all the other doors. God guided me with a vision: Get more tools in your toolbelt. I already had the honed tools of human resources, operations, and manufacturing. Yet, God wanted a few more tools in my toolbelt. I needed the tools of Hebrew, Greek, theology, and preaching. While I remain unsure how God will use my toolbelt and me, I know candidacy in the CRCNA is the next obedient step. Throughout seminary, I have thought back on a distinct memory from middle school. I learned to play “Here I Am, Lord” out of my mom’s purple songbook on the piano. Long after learning the song for my lessons, I would sit on my piano bench, play the ivory keys, and sing the chorus: “Here I am, Lord. Is it I Lord? I have heard you calling in the night. I will go Lord, if you lead me. I will hold your people in my heart.” That simple refrain still rings true for me today. Here I am, Lord. If you lead me, I will go. Whether in business, at church, or through some combination of both, I will hold your people in my heart.





Name: Arthur N. Agu

Current Place of Residence
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Education
Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
M.Div., 2026

Experience
Christ Church PCA,
Shawnee Park CRC
Ministry Intern
September 2023 - May 2025

Contact
nwabufu12@gmail.com
(616) 724-5895

Faith Journey

My name is Arthur Agu Nwabufo, and my heart beats for Jesus, sharing the Gospel, and nurturing young lives for Christ. I was ten years old when I lost my father, my mother faced the daily struggle of providing for ten children alone. Those years, marked by hardship, hawking, and child labor, planted in me a longing for a personal God and Savior.

God's grace found me in the midst of these trials. My journey toward Christ began in 1992, sparked by religious journals and the writings of C.S. Lewis that landed in my elder brother's shop, often dropped by a neighbor. After years of searching and stumbling, I surrendered my life to Jesus in 1996. My first convert was my mother, whose resilience in the face of adversity inspired me immensely. Though nine of us survived to adulthood without formal education, yet I am grateful for life and salvation. With God's help, I pursued adult education, determined to rise above my circumstances.

The Lord's call to ministry grew stronger in 1997, as spiritual gifts and vivid dreams revealed God's desire for me to serve his church. One dream, on January 1, 2000, after a night of prayer, showed me being entrusted with a Bible and Christian materials, and I was led into a school hall with about 20 people and an instruction from a noble man saying, "these are my sheep, teach them my word." I answered the call, starting a youth fellowship that blossomed into a small congregation. When I left for ministerial training, I handed it over to a nearby church, trusting God for his timing.

My theological journey continued from MITRE (Ministerial Improvement and Training Institution) in Kaduna, where mentors shaped my understanding of ministry. Since then, I have pursued further theological development through various institutions, seminars, and leadership programs. I completed my bachelor degree in Divinity at Christian Leaders Institute in May 2021, and a Masters of Divinity at Calvin Theological Seminary by May 2026. As a traveling evangelist, I have witnessed transformation in countless lives through preaching and teaching God's word.

In 2006, I married Blessing Okeke, and together we embraced the mission field in Kaduna, Northwest Nigeria, a region often hostile to the Christian faith. We are blessed with five children: Chosen, Peculiar, Treasure, Virtue, and Gospel. Our family motto has been the gospel: "If it's not something to live for, at least let it be something to die for."

Statement of Reason

In recent years, my discernment has led me to the CRC, and specifically to Shawnee Park CRC, my home church. My journey has been marked by moments of uncertainty and clarity but always guided by the conviction that God's hand is at work.

I am pursuing ordained ministry in the CRC because I want to be part of a denomination where strangers at the gate and people of all ethnicities are generously welcomed and embraced. This spirit of hospitality and inclusion is not just an ideal, it is something I have experienced firsthand at my home church, Shawnee Park CRC. The welcome I received there affirmed my sense of belonging and deepened my desire to serve within the CRC community.

Now, as I round up my master's at Calvin Seminary, I see God's hand guiding every step. My heart's desire is to proclaim Christ, whether through ministry,

Statement of Reason (continued)

education, or daily life. The Lord has equipped me through trials, education, and calling. I long to be obedient, sharing the Gospel with those He places in my path. It's all for Him. Christ is all!



Name: Jason C. Blunt

Current Place of Residence
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Education

Cedarville University
Cedarville, OH
Bachelor of Arts in History, 2022

Cornerstone Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
M.Div

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
EPMC, 2026

Experience

Sunshine Community Church
Grand Rapids, MI
Student Intern
May 2021 - August 2021

Sunshine Community Church
Grand Rapids, MI
Youth Intern
May 2024 - August 2024

Trinity Christian Reformed
Church
Sparta, MI
Pastoral Intern
June 2025 - May 2026

Contact

(616) 970-0500
jasoncrusoebblunt@gmail.com

Faith Journey

I had the blessing of growing up in a Christian household, with parents who faithfully shared the Word of God regularly. I was baptized as an infant, and had the promises of God's covenant signed and sealed to me as an infant through the sacrament of Baptism. Being raised in Christian discipleship and the reading God's Word, I was led by the Holy Spirit to understand that I am a sinner who is in need of mercy and grace. I was saved by God according to His rich mercy and grace when I was a young child. Since then, God has been growing me in sanctification according to His purposes and His will. I was raised in a Reformed home and according to God's sovereign providential will, I have grown to be a Reformed Christian. I grew up in Alto/Caledonia, Michigan, just south of Grand Rapids. My father was a pastor in the RCA growing up, and then in 2013 he became a pastor at a CRC church. God has directed my life, in such a way I can see His hand at work in all that I have done.

When I was deciding what college to go to, God led me to Cedarville University in Ohio. Cedarville is an unofficial Southern Baptist school, and attending there challenged my personal theological convictions. In discussions with professors, fellow students, and friends I felt that my Reformed theology did not weaken or develop doubt, rather I grew in confidence and conviction in my Reformed theology roots. My college experience not only strengthened my theology, but it also strengthened my faith and trust in God's divine sovereignty. While I attended college God directed my major to be History. Seeing God's sovereign providence to direct the courses of history made me see the beauty of the story that God has been writing for all of time. God's plan for His great story, created in me a deep love to tell others of this story. God's working through scripture, creation, and history is one of the major foundations of my passion for ministry. God has drawn me in to help others see this beauty, that we might give Him praise and honor.

My love for history, God's Word, and Reformed theology have all led me to have a passion for our Three Forms of Unity and the pastoral and loving care that these confessions were written with. Lord's Day One of the Heidelberg Catechism is one of the most beautiful articulations of the gospel. It reminds me of the two passages of God's word that I remind myself of every day, Isaiah 59 and Ephesians 2:1-10. The message of both being, that I was an enemy of God, dead in my sin, but God being rich in His mercy, looked upon my helpless state, and He sent Christ, His only begotten Son, to live a perfect sinless life, and to die on a cross in my place, so that I may be given life everlasting, saved not for who I am or what I have done, but out of the pure grace of God. I am His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that I should walk in them. I am not my own but belong to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ. Of all that could be said of my life, that is the most important. God has led me to Himself, He saved me, my life now is to be a slave to the Lord, full of gratitude and joy, living in service for all that He has done.

Statement of Reason

I am seeking ordination as a Minister of the Word in the CRCNA. I believe I am a Reformed Christian who is being led by God to serve His people in a Reformed church. I affirm and love The Three Forms of Unity, believe that they are in full agreement with the Scriptures, and seek to faithfully use them to teach, preach, and serve God's people. Leading all of the covenant community to love God and find their comfort and rest in Him. My desire is that people

Statement of Reason (continued)

would come to faith in Jesus Christ, and come to have confidence in the Reformed articulation of the faith, seeing the beauty and majesty of our great and holy God.



Name: Bryan J. Branderhorst

Current Place of Residence
Bellflower, California

Education

Northwestern College
Orange City, IA
B.A. in Education and
Religion, 2002

Concordia University
Irvine, CA
M.A. in Coaching and Athletic
Administration, 2009

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
M.Div., 2026

Experience

Long Beach CRC
Long Beach, CA
Commissioned Solo/Lead Pastor
June 2020-Present

Contact

(562)505-6344
bbranderhorst@lbcrc.org

Faith Journey

Thanks be to God for his grace to me even before I was born. I was raised in a Christian family and church community. I was baptized as an infant at Pella II Christian Reformed Church, now named Cornerstone.

Within this covenant community, I was blessed to be discipled by my parents, many at church, and by the Pella Christian School system. I am thankful that not a day has gone by that I haven't experienced the love of God through his covenant community.

God's gift of faith to me was more fully realized at the age of 17. It was then, through the challenge of a cancer diagnosis (Hodgkin's Lymphoma) that my intellectual faith had now invaded my heart. This season of life opened my eyes to the intimacy and goodness of God. I made a public profession of faith at Pella II CRC.

After high school, I began my undergraduate degree at Northwestern College. After initially pursuing a degree in kinesiology, I was overwhelmed with a call from the Spirit towards education. Specifically, I felt God's call to be a Bible teacher and basketball coach. I was quite pleased to turn my focus fully to education and theology.

In 2003 I married Tracey Halma, moved to California and began working as a teacher and coach at Valley Christian Schools. This proved to be a wonderful ministry, one I assumed I would continue for the rest of my life. But a series of events would open my eyes to a new call.

A new and sudden restlessness, the departure of our pastor, and serious health challenges to my son all led me to congregational ministry. For a time, I was thankful to serve as pulpit supply at Long Beach Christian Reformed Church, but God called me deeper. By 2020 I was ordained as a commissioned pastor at LBCRC.

I have served as a solo lead pastor since. It has been my pleasure to serve the local church and the kingdom through the preaching of the word and the administration of the sacraments. It has also been a gift to walk with the people of LBCRC in their celebrations and sorrows. These moments include the joys of weddings, baptisms and new members and the hardships of death, disease, and grief. I take joy in leading the congregation in discipleship and mission opportunities. In all of it, God continues to press me into a deeper reliance on Him.

Statement of Reason

I am thankful to be completing the Master's of Divinity degree at Calvin Seminary (Spring 2026) that I have been working towards over the past six years. I intend to continue in pastoral ministry and be ordained as a Minister of the Word so that I may continue to serve the King and Kingdom. I am thankful to be aligned with the rich tradition, creeds, and confessions of the Christian Reformed Church.





Name: Daniel Jihoon Choi

Current Place of Residence
Edmonton, Alberta

Education

The King's University
Edmonton, AB
Bachelor of Arts in Theology,
2021

Regent College
Vancouver, BC
M.Div., 2025

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
EPMC, 2026

Experience

New Westminster Christian
Reformed Church
Burnaby, BC
Ministry Intern
September 2023 - April 2025

Inglewood Christian Reformed
Church
Edmonton, AB
Pastoral Intern
July 2025 - June 2026

Contact

778-890-1385
danielchoipg@hotmail.com

Faith Journey

I was born in Edmonton on September 2nd, 2000 and moved to Prince George in 2004. After moving to Prince George, our family moved to the Christian Reformed Church of Prince George, where I would call home for the next several years of my life. While I grew up in Church my whole life, I truly took my faith seriously in 2016. During high school, I had a friend who was very adamant about bringing me to his Church for Youth Group. After countless attempts, I finally caved in and decided to join. As soon as I realized Youth Group was inside a Church, my immediate impulse was to make excuses. I did not even know Youth Group was inside a Church. I wanted nothing to do with Youth Group! When I walked inside, I was greeted by my Youth Pastor, Shawn and other members of the Youth. On the first night of Youth Group, Shawn shared his testimony. That was the first real glimpse I had of God. I realized that Jesus is not for those who are perfect, but for those who are incapable of helping themselves. Every presumption I had towards God was challenged. I realized Church is a community filled with broken people who actively work alongside one another to grow in their faith and relationship with Christ. After I got home from Youth Group, I opened the Bible on my shelf and began reading the four gospels for the first time in my life. I began to experience God's real comforting, redemptive grace. For the first time in my life, I truly believed in God. As I reflect on my conversion experience, I was enamoured with God's word. I refused to sleep and spent all night reading the four Gospels. As I reflect on my conversion experience, I am reminded that I found comfort in the word of God. My love for Scripture immediately captivated me. Towards the end of my final year in Youth Group, Shawn challenged his oldest Youth to help out with ministry, hoping to train them to be leaders afterwards. While most of them helped with leading games, Shawn asked me to preach. I always wanted to share a message with the Youth, and I was delighted that he asked me to lead a sermon next week. I look back on my first sermon, and I viscerally cringe. I spoke way too fast, quietly, and overly formal, and barely made eye contact with the rest of the Youth, which is a sentiment shared by most pastors. While I look back at my first message and see how far I have improved, I have seen it as a defining point where God planted seeds that he will continue to grow. Studying Scripture in depth and reading the text theologically helped me grow in my love for God. While prepping for the message, I paused several times while studying, filled with awe, which led to worship. Even though I am not proud of my first message, I was joyful to bring God's news to others. While I wanted to study theology after high school, the moments leading up to preaching confirmed my calling: my passion was to preach God's word. While many pastors I have met did not want to work in a Church until much later in life, my story is quite different. From the moment of my conversion, Scripture held the highest importance. I want to be a pastor, not because it is the only vocational route I can see myself pursuing. My enduring passion for God's Word leads me to joyfully proclaim it to others. I want to see the Church as a community that lives and breathes Scripture.

Statement of Reason

While I have been raised in the CRC my whole life, it felt natural to seek ordination in the Reformed tradition. I have grown to love the CRC because of its love of Scripture. When I reflect on my experience in catechism, I believe the ultimate question that the reformed denomination seeks to answer is, "How do we glorify God?" This stems from our workplaces, to the missional work of the

Statement of Reason (continued)

Church, to shepherding and edifying believers to deepen their love and knowledge of God. I feel called to ordination in the CRC because this denomination values the proclamation of God's Word and seeks to invite all of creation into God's overarching narrative. I believe that the Church is the prophetic voice that preaches the Gospel and also equips Christians to learn how to appreciate and deepen their adoration for God's Word. I seek to work in a CRC to learn how to preach and bring God's word to others, and to equip the Church to read God's word together as a community.



Name: Kwangjun Choi

Current Place of Residence:
Oceanside, California

Education

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
EPMC, 2026

Azusa Pacific University
Azusa, CA
M.Div., 2023

Azusa Pacific University
Azusa, CA
M.A. in Teaching English to
Speakers of Other Languages,
2020

Busan Presbyterian University
Gimhae-si, Gyeongsangnam-do,
Republic of Korea
B.A. in Social Welfare, 2014

Experience

California Prestige University
Santa Fe Springs, CA
Grant and Development
Administrator & F-1 International
Student Advisor
January 2024 – Present

The Bridge Church
Covina, CA
Ministry Staff (Administration &
Interpretation)
August 2020 – Present

Azusa Pacific University –
International Center

Faith Journey

I was born into a Christian family in South Korea and grew up deeply rooted in the Korean church. Throughout middle school, high school, and college, I consistently served in leadership roles at church, particularly through worship dance and drums. The church was not just a place I attended – it was where I found my identity and passion.

The pivotal moment in my faith came during my senior year of high school. I had always been an obedient, rule-following student, but when my homeroom teacher – a Buddhist – refused to let me attend a church retreat, something stirred in me. For the first time, I skipped class, climbed over the school wall, and ran to the retreat. As I climbed that wall, I felt an overwhelming sense of freedom and joy – the thrill of running toward Jesus. At the retreat, God broke through the fears that had quietly governed my life: the fear of failure, the anxiety over college entrance exams, and the pressure to measure up. I learned that my future was not determined by which university I could get into right now, but by the God who promised to walk with me and lead my life.

When I entered the Korean military, I fully expected to serve as a drill instructor for new recruits – a tough, physical role I had been selected for. But unbeknownst to me, my father had been fervently praying that God would redirect my path. His prayers were answered in an unexpected way: a colonel noticed on my records that I had studied at a theological school and immediately assigned me as a chaplain’s assistant – a position that had been vacant for six months. Through that role, I stepped outside the Christian bubble for the first time and encountered many young men who had never heard the Gospel. Despite facing harassment and jealousy from senior soldiers who resented the relatively lighter physical demands of my position, I pressed on. By God’s grace, I served the soldiers with the love of Christ – cooking ramen for a hundred men at the chapel, preparing snacks, and inviting them to gather, eat, and hear the Good News. It was during this season that a deep passion for sharing the Gospel with young people was ignited in my heart.

After completing my military service, the Lord led me to the United States for further studies. I found a home at The Bridge Church (CRC) in Covina, California, where I was entrusted with leading the young adult ministry. Many of the members were MKs (missionary kids) – young people who had grown up on the mission field surrounded by Christianity, yet often lacked a personal, intimate encounter with Jesus. When I asked them questions about their faith, their answers came out as if rehearsed from a script – theologically correct but experientially hollow. So we decided to reset together. Through one-on-one Bible studies and deep conversations, I listened to their stories – the unique struggles, wounds, and blessings of growing up on the mission field – and together we pursued an authentic, firsthand faith.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, many international students returned to their home countries, and the landscape of my ministry shifted dramatically. But rather than shrinking my calling, God expanded it. He opened my eyes to American college students beyond the Korean community. Together with my father-in-law, I began going out to college campuses – starting at Citrus College in California – to share the Gospel. What began with Korean international students has now grown into a ministry that includes American students and young professionals who have come to faith through campus outreach. To this

Faith Journey (continued)

day, I continue to serve the young adult and young professional community at our church, and my heart burns for the next generation.

Through this journey, I have come to see my linguistic limitations not as a barrier but as a blessing. Because English is not my native language, I cannot always say everything I want to say. But this has taught me to listen more carefully, to choose my words with greater intention, and to speak with deeper sincerity. Where a native speaker might fill silence with words, I have learned to sit in that silence and truly hear the person in front of me. What the world might call a weakness, God has turned into one of my greatest tools for ministry.

Looking back, I can see God's hand weaving every chapter of my life together – from the Korean church, over that high school wall, through the military barracks, across the Pacific Ocean, and onto American college campuses. He has continually expanded the boundaries of my calling, and I am eager to follow wherever He leads next.

Statement of Reason

I am seeking ordination in the Christian Reformed Church because I believe this is where God has called me to serve. Throughout my journey – from the Korean church, through military chaplaincy, and into campus ministry in the United States – God has consistently placed me among young people who are searching for an authentic faith. I believe He is now calling me to continue that work within the CRC.

What draws me to the CRC is its commitment to a healthy, rooted theological tradition. In an age of increasing individualism and personalization – where even faith can become tailored to personal preference – I believe the church's Christ-centered, covenantal, and communal identity matters more than ever. The CRC has faithfully upheld these convictions, and I am grateful for that foundation.

At the same time, I believe God has uniquely equipped me – through my cross-cultural experience, my passion for worship and the arts, and my heart for the next generation – to serve within this tradition with both reverence and fresh energy. My desire is to proclaim the Gospel, disciple young people, and build bridges across cultures and generations, all for the glory of Christ and the building up of His church.

Azusa, CA
Student Worker
(F-1 Student Services)
May 2018 – July 2022

Republic of Korea Army
Republic of Korea
Chaplain Assistant
December 2009 – October 2011

Languages

Korean (Native)
English (Proficient)

Contact

(626) 650-1447
kwangjunchoi9178@gmail.com



Name: Victor Chua

Current Place of Residence

Richmond, British Columbia

Education

National University of
Singapore
Singapore
Bachelor of Engineering, 2002

Regent College
Vancouver, BC
Graduate Diploma in Christian
Studies, 2018

Regent College
Vancouver, BC
M.Div., 2021

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
EPMC 2026

Experience

Tenth Church
Vancouver, BC
Intern
October 2018 – June 2020

Immanuel Christian Reformed
Church
Richmond, BC
English Ministry Pastor
March 2022 – present

Languages

English (Native speaker)
Mandarin (Moderate)

Contact

(778) 883-6035
vic@icrc.ca

Faith Journey

I was born to a Christian family in Singapore. My parents were first-generation Christians in a pentecostal church. They had received Jesus as their Lord and Savior in their teenage years, despite religious opposition from their family. Growing up in this family, it took me a while before I would acknowledge Jesus in the same way.

As a kid, I remember being rather sceptical of Christianity. My peers at school were quite intellectually curious, and their scepticism of the truth claims of Christianity affected my own disposition. This scepticism was present until I was 13 years of age. That year, I found an abnormal growth in my chest, and my parents brought me to church for prayer that Sunday. Nothing happened, and I went to bed that night angry at a God that I had decided was either not there or did not care. However, the next morning, I discovered that the lump in my chest had disappeared.

For me, this marked a turning point in my journey of faith. Scepticism engendered by years of secular education, gave way to a burgeoning hunger for God. Faith began to seek understanding. Within 2 years, I would read the Bible cover-to-cover multiple times, and engage with God in worship and prayer daily. I began to serve the church as a transparency operator and bass guitarist. Later on, I led small groups for youths and young adults.

Drawn by Kay Arthur's approach to Inductive Bible Study, a group of us started a decade-long bible study that was focused on deep engagement with Scripture. I found this period of time to be the most spiritually fruitful and rewarding, as my church community began to seriously read God's Word together, and to seek ways in which this faith could be lived out.

Over time, my circle of friends began to encourage me to consider becoming a pastor. This began a process of discernment, which finally resulted in the pursuit of the Master of Divinity program at Regent College. In 2017, my wife Isabel and I relocated to Vancouver so that I could receive theological education. Although we initially only had enough funds for me to pursue the MDiv, we saw God's bountiful provision, which allowed my wife Isabel to complete the Master of Arts in Christian Studies.

After graduating in 2021, I was led to consider serving as a pastor at Immanuel CRC. After a period of mutual discernment, Immanuel called me to be the pastor of the English congregation. Although I did not grow up Reformed, I found myself drawn to the Reformed faith. At Immanuel, there was a high regard for the Word of God, and sermons were exegetical, going through books of the Bible chapter by chapter. Having studied Reformed theology through the EPMC, I have been blessed by its distinct accent on covenant, kingdom and sovereignty, and we have embarked on a renewed engagement with the creeds and confessions of the CRCNA in the various ministries of the church. I was also very impressed by the Reformed approach to church governance. My previous experiences of pastor-led polities left much to be desired, and I appreciated the lengths to which the CRC went to put in place a biblical framework for the governance of the church. Last but not least, I was drawn to the CRCNA for its biblical perspective on gender and sexuality.

Immanuel CRC has been my spiritual home and community for the last four years, and it is my joy and privilege to be able to continue serving here.

Statement of Reason

Looking back, I have been sensing a calling to ministry for perhaps 30 years. During that time, I had a fulfilling career in defence technology, public policy and project management. And I led small groups at church, and later a young adults ministry as a layperson. But I always felt like something was missing. And although I felt engaged and energized in the course of my previous vocational life, I have never been quite as engaged and energized as I have been over the last four years as a pastor. I remember my first pastoral visit, to check on a congregant who had been involved in a minor traffic incident, to read the bible, to pray, and to worship God. I remember coming out of the hospital, and feeling a deep sense of fulfillment. Like a key had opened a long-locked door. Like a kid discovering ice-cream for the first time. Like this was what I was meant to do. And although I am by nature an introvert, pastoral visits have been a place of flourishing for me, and it has greatly shaped my Sunday preaching.

I am seeking ordination in the CRCNA because I believe that God has sovereignly called me to be here. I ascribe to the theology, polity and anthropology of the CRCNA. For me, this is a safe space where I can follow Christ as a disciple, and lead others to follow Christ as a disciple-maker.



Name: Jonathan P. Coupal

Current Place of Residence

Walnut Creek, California

Education:

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
EPMC, 2026

Chaplains International
Middletown, PA
Chaplaincy Credentialing and
Certification, 2023

Western Seminary
Portland, OR
M.Div., 2023

New Hope Uganda Institute of
Childcare and Family
Kassana, Uganda, East Africa
Certificate in Cross Cultural
Ministry, 2016

Perspectives USA
Aurora, CO
Certificate in Perspectives on the
World Christian Movement, 2015

Metropolitan State University
of Denver
Denver, CO
B.S. Aerospace Technology, 2013

Commercial Pilot License
w/ Inst. Rating, 2013

Emily Griffith Technical College,
Denver, CO

Airframe and Powerplant
Mechanic Licensure, 2012

Faith Journey

I did my undergrad degree in aerospace technology. From 2012 to 2015 I was working as an aircraft mechanic for a flight school and had logged more than 450 hours of flight time as I achieved my private pilot license, instrument rating, and commercial license. I was well into training to become a certified flight instructor and inspection authorization. Yet, my chosen career path felt empty as God was calling me to walk more closely with Him and help others do the same.

In January 2016, my wife and I prayerfully made the shift into full time ministry as we sold our house and moved to Uganda with the goal helping get a new ministry, Terebinth Ministries, off the ground. Under the guidance of the director of Terebinth, my wife and I attended Perspectives on the World Christian Movement and New Hope Uganda to prepare us for cross-cultural ministry. By the summer of 2016, we were living in Gulu, Uganda, working to start up the Terebinth Ministries School of Discipleship. This was a program to equip and train Ugandan pastors. As the ministry grew and we developed the farm, clinic, and widows' program, we had to delegate more positions to run the whole ministry effectively and I became the director of the school of discipleship. I worked in this role from 2017 until 2022. In this role, I was responsible for training the other teachers in the school, foreign and Ugandan, I operated as the head teacher for the students, and I spearheaded all the curriculum development. As a result of this work, I had the ability to teach through the Bible six times from beginning to end, developing a culturally-tailored curriculum along the way. The ministry has continued to build on this work since I repatriated and is now accredited with the Ugandan government operating as the only seminary in Uganda north of the Nile.

While living in Gulu, Uganda, and working for Terebinth Ministries, my family remained involved in and supported local churches. From 2016 to 2019, I was one of the pastors on teaching rotation at Calvary Chapel Gulu, was one of the pastoral counselors for the church, assisted in updating the worship ministry equipment and training musicians, and was a general advisory pastor during a church move and time of transition. In 2019, my family transitioned from Calvary Chapel Gulu to Twelve Springs Church in Laliya, mostly as the result of an abundance of Western support at Calvary Chapel Gulu and a lack in Laliya. There I assisted the pastor with teaching duties and helped disciple men and women in the church to become deacons and elders. From 2020 to 2022, especially when the COVID-19 restrictions in Uganda were tight, I provided recorded audio teachings through the book of Daniel. The pastor distributed these teachings throughout the cell groups of 10 people or less so that the church, although they could not meet together, were still able to study as one and be unified in their teaching. This model caused massive church growth during COVID lockdowns, and when the church was able to meet once again it had gone from 90 consistent members to over 200.

My M.Div. training was transformational for me. I studied from August 2018 to August 2022. I electively emphasized Biblical Hebrew, church and organizational leadership, and pastoral counseling. As a credentialed chaplain, I am a professional counselor.

After repatriating to the U.S. in April 2022, I served as a pastor at Calvary Chapel Cherry Creek. In the church, I volunteered as a teaching pastor to fill in the pulpit as needed. I also ran discipleship classes including an 8-month

Faith Journey (continued)

course through the Torah and the first three modules of the Practicing The Way curriculum. My wife and I oversaw the counseling ministry for the church and grew in our experience of both individual and marriage counselling.

In June 2024, I accepted the call to become Senior Pastor of Faith Christian Fellowship, a Christian Reformed Church in Walnut Creek, California, which also involved returning to studies to complete the EPMC requirements, and have been serving in this capacity since.

Statement of Reason

I am seeking ordination as a Minister of the Word in the CRC because God has led me on a lifelong journey of servant leadership that is culminating now in the ministry of the local church manifesting God's kingdom in community. Having come from a denomination that values the efficiency of solo pastor leadership and props up charisma over character, I have witnessed increasing reports of church-based abuse. God has deeply instilled within me a heart of justice for the hurting and outcast, and I therefore find a great need for a church that protects pastors from congregations and congregations from pastors. In the CRC, I find that need met in the form of a polity that is historically grounded, robust, and God-honoring. In service to the church, God has equipped me to express my deep passions of justice and biblical-literacy for everyone. I see the beauty of the Church as God's sovereign rule, over God's covenant people, living in God's kingdom. I prayerfully and humbly affirm my calling to shepherd in God's Church.

Experience

Faith Christian Fellowship
Walnut Creek, CA
Senior Pastor
June 2024 - Present

Calvary Chapel Cherry Creek
Centennial, CO
Assistant Pastor
April 2022 - June 2024

Twelve Springs Church in Laliya
Gulu, Uganda, East Africa
Assistant Pastor/Teaching Pastor
February 2020 - April 2022

Calvary Chapel Gulu
Gulu, Uganda, East Africa
Advisory Pastor/Teaching Pastor
July 2016 - February 2020

Terebinth Ministries
Gulu, Uganda, East Africa
School of Discipleship Director
January 2016 - April 2022

Contact

(720) 215-7022
jon@faithfellowship.com



Name: Brady J. De Boer

Current Place of Residence
Grimsby, Ontario

Education

Redeemer University
Ancaster, ON
B.A. in Youth Ministry, 2019

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
M.Div., 2026 (D.V.)

Experience

Huron Feathers
Sauble Beach, ON
Camp Counsellor
June 2016 - August 2016

Meadowlands CRC
Ancaster, ON
Youth Ministry Intern
September 2018 - April 2019

Athletes in Action -
Power to Change Ministries
Langely, BC
Volleyball Ministry Intern
May 2018 - August 2018, May
2019 - August 2020

Ebenezer CRC
Jarvis, ON
Director of Youth and Young
Adult Ministries
November 2020 - August 2022

Mountainview CRC
Grimsby, ON
Pastoral Intern
September 2022 -
August 2026 (D.V.)

Faith Journey

The earliest years of my life were spent in Eastmanville, Michigan where my dad was the pastor of the local URC. We lived there until I was 9 years old at which point we moved back to Wyoming, Ontario Canada where much of my extended family is from. My family attended Covenant URC in Wyoming, Ontario where I did profession of faith when I was 18 years old. For my schooling I attended Lamont Christian School in Lamont, Michigan until Grade 3, John Knox Christian School in Wyoming, Ontario until I graduated Grade 8, and Providence Reformed Collegiate in Komoka, Ontario until I graduated Grade 12. Being raised by such a faithful family that was consistently surrounded by a faithful community in the church and the schools I attended, Christianity was in the very air I breathed throughout my childhood.

Growing up, we always read The Children’s Story Bible by Catharine F. Vos after family dinner which I believe was a major influence on my knowledge and understanding of the stories in the Bible. Even as a child, I always took my faith seriously and was grateful to God for saving me from my sins. As I grew older I understood more and more the true weight of my sin and my gratitude to God also grew over time. Every Tuesday night, Covenant URC held “Family Night” which included faith instruction for all ages from children right up to the men’s Bible study which was led by my father (though he was no longer a pastor). Over the years at Family Night I studied the Bible, the Heidelberg Catechism, the five points of Calvinism, and the Belgic Confession. In my youth I often found these studies to be intense and difficult, but I am grateful today as I look back on them.

When I was in my senior year of high school I was recruited to play varsity volleyball at Redeemer University in Ancaster, Ontario. I didn’t have a lot of career vision at the time, but I jumped at the opportunity to make new Christian friends and play sports at the next level. I was originally enrolled in the Bachelor of Science program for Kinesiology, but struggled at times to keep up with the Biology minor that the program required. The summer after my first year I applied for a job as a Camp Counsellor at a small Presbyterian camp in Sauble Beach. I loved the prospect of spending the summer in a beach town teaching kids about Jesus. My knowledge of God and the Bible were immediately recognized and I wrote most of the spiritual curriculum that we would use that summer. I immediately loved getting to teach others about Jesus and this was really my first experience doing ministry outside of the faith community I grew up in.

As my time at Redeemer went on, I heard about other students getting involved with Athletes in Action (AIA) which seemed like it was right up my alley. In the spring of 2017 I went on a short term missions trip to Paraguay with AIA Volleyball and it was through this experience that I really felt called by God to give up my life in complete service to him. At the start of my third year, I changed to a double major Bachelor of Arts in Kinesiology and Theology before eventually making the complete change to a Bachelor of Arts in Youth Ministry and a Minor in Coaching. I graduated from Redeemer in 2019 and immediately started an internship with Athletes in Action Volleyball.

It wasn’t long into my internship that I started to feel the call to pastoral ministry. I have no other way to explain it than by simply saying I felt prompted by the Holy Spirit to consider a different route. I finished my eight month internship with Athletes in Action and started looking for jobs

Faith Journey (continued)

as a youth pastor. After a few months I landed a position as the Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries at Ebenezer CRC in Jarvis, Ontario. I also got married around this time to my wife, Shannon. After about a year or so working in Jarvis I felt the Holy Spirit prompting me again to go to seminary. The next year I received an internship offer at Mountainview CRC in Grimsby, Ontario which was set up to work extremely well in conjunction with studying for my M.Div. So we followed God's prompting to make another switch. Since then, our family has grown to include our two daughters, Esther (3) and Aleida (1), and another baby girl due March 2026. I've been at Mountainview CRC for the last 3 years now and feel as though God has curated these experiences especially for me preparing me for the calling he has placed on my life.

Statement of Reason

For most of my life I was unsure what kind of work I wanted to get involved in. God's call on my life to full time pastoral ministry has been a subtle but undeniable one. There was a time I thought I would pursue a career in the sports world. From there, God led me to sports ministry which soon transitioned to a clear inward and outward call to seek candidacy in the CRCNA and pursue pastoral ministry.

I am passionate for this denomination and the people within it. Over the last few years I have seen our denomination fight for truth and justice, I have seen us fail and succeed, and I am grateful for the opportunity to pursue candidacy in the CRCNA and join in this work. I feel called by God to use the gifts and the passions he has given me to serve, teach, lead, and love his people. I am incredibly blessed to get to play a small role in the mission that God has for his people within this denomination and across the globe.

Contact

(289) 455-7513

brady.deboer.4@gmail.com



Name: Travis J. Deur

Current Place of Residence

Maple Grove, Minnesota

Education

Iowa State University
Ames, IA

B.A. in Journalism and Mass
Communication, 2000

Keller Graduate School of
Management
Lisle, IL

Master of Business Administration,
2007

Keller Graduate School
of Management
Lisle, IL

Master of Human Resource
Management, 2011

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
M.Div., 2026

Experience

Faith CRC

New Brighton, MN

Director of Faith Formation
September 2016 - October 2020

Classis Lake Superior

Youth Ministry Champion
September 2018 - Present

Faith CRC

New Brighton, MN

Pastor of Faith Formation
November 2020 - Present

Faith Journey

I was blessed to grow up surrounded by the love of God as demonstrated by my family and the community where I spent my early years. At home, church, and through Christian schooling in my hometown of Pella, Iowa faith was central and formative through the guidance and spiritual encouragement of many.

Upon graduation from high school, I moved physically from these communities of support but in every other way took them with me. Studying at a large public university I was no longer surrounded by the familiar but was given the opportunity to make my faith my own. Following my first year away at Iowa State University I returned to my home church and made profession of faith surrounded by those who had helped to shape me with great gratitude for the strong roots of home.

During each step in my subsequent journey my world got bigger and my desire to engage in the life of the church and service to God's kingdom increased. While living and working in Chicago I was able to serve as a deacon for the first time. I was given the same opportunity upon moving to Minneapolis. There I engaged in a variety of roles including the church's visioning team and developing community partnerships. After years of teaching Sunday School and volunteering in the Cadet program I was asked to begin leading the middle and high school youth programs. There I found joy in continuing to engage the next generation while seeking to connect them to the life of the wider church. It was during this time I was asked about pursuing ordination and recognized God's calling on my life to devote my vocational energies to ministry.

With the encouragement of the church and our classis (where I was also serving in a youth ministry role) I completed the commissioned pastor track. Engagement in our classis provided opportunities to preach in a number of local churches and increasing responsibilities in my home church opened the door to providing pastoral care and participation in the administrative aspects of the church. Active engagement in the life of the church continues to shape my faith.

So too have relationships with many peers, mentors, and members of various congregations. During these years I have been consistently meeting with a group of active and retired pastors who have provided guidance and encouragement during my service as a commissioned pastor and my more recent pursuit of a seminary degree.

I have found great joy in building relationships with fellow seminarians and networking with pastors and various ministry leaders as I continue to grow in my knowledge and love for serving the church. Seminary internships have pushed me out of the familiar and into new environments where those from different cultures have become friends and partners in building the kingdom. I have sought to gather as many experiences as I can as God strengthens my faith and shapes me for whatever he will call me to next.

Statement of Reason

God's call on my life to serve him and his church has been clear throughout the many experiences he has blessed me with. I have been encouraged by the affirmation of others and am confident that he is shaping me for continued service in his kingdom.

Statement of Reason (continued)

I have felt him preparing my heart and mind, asking me to work diligently and remain open and ready for whatever he calls me to next. This includes verses speaking to preparation which continue to speak into my life. The charge in I Peter 3:15 to “always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have” has long been a guiding word on my life along with Ephesians 2:10 and its declaration that God has prepared us and works for us to. I humbly await his guidance toward that which I know he has been preparing for his glory.

Contact

(612)-381-7705
tdeur7@gmail.com



Name: Joshua D. Dykstra

Current Place of Residence
Munster, Indiana

Education

Providence Christian College
Pasadena, CA
B.A. in Theology, 2012

Mid America Reformed Seminary
Dyer, IN
M.Div., 2024

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
EPMC, 2026

Experience

Hudson Valley
United Reformed Church
Middletown, NY
Ministry Intern
May 2013-August 2013

Oak Glen
United Reformed Church
Lansing, IL
Ministry Intern
May 2014 - August 2014

Rest Haven/Celebrate/Elevate
Care Nursing Home
South Holland, IL
Exhorting/Counselling Volunteer
September 2014-January 2021

Cottage Grove CRC
South Holland, IL
Exhorter of the
Word/Elder/Ministerial Intern
September 2022- Current

Faith Journey

I grew up in the south suburbs of Chicago in a rough neighborhood. My parents were committed Christians who made it a priority that I would have a Christian education. I've been a member of the Christian Reformed Church for my entire life. Throughout most education up to high school, my life was consumed with academics, reading, and various hobbies.

However, when I went to college for the first time I started investigating what it meant to be a Christian. To me, Christianity could no longer be the culture I lived in, but something more meaningful. I fell in with a crowd where Christianity was something you did on Sundays and it was a nice thing to interact with, but it never really made a major impact in my life. After experiencing major financial, ecclesiastical, and familial difficulties within a period of 18 months, I moved back home without finishing my degree. This upheaval made me begin to question what I truly had as a foundation in my life. Why was I here? What purpose was I supposed to serve? After some contemplation, I attempted to find a foundation. I found that foundation in the Christ who had never left me in the midst of challenge and trial. Some gentlemen that I knew from my church became loving mentors who guided and directed me in the Scriptures and Reformed confessions. They encouraged me to experience religious education and determine my calling by auditing classes at the local seminary. These gentlemen demonstrated their faithfulness to Christ and allowed me to experience the depth and riches of Christ that we experience in the church and in the confessions. They gave me opportunities to see God's grace even in the midst of suffering. By God's grace they helped me to connect to faithful Christian teachers who encouraged me to go back to the Reformed heritage and learn at the feet of the pioneers and forefathers of the Reformation and the Reformed Church. Through those gentlemen and those classes, God gave me a thirst for knowledge and a passion for theology.

These same men encouraged me to reenter school and finish my degree.

Taking the advice of my mentors, I went back to school and finished my degree at a small institution, Providence Christian College, that encouraged me to root myself in the Reformed confessions and in Scripture. The professors there stretched us to critically think about God's power in the world, human interactions with God's grace, and how we as His people are His instruments affecting His change. My professors molded and shaped the students in such a way as to demonstrate their care not only for our physical selves, but for our spiritual selves. They challenged us to think about the transformational power of God's grace in the world, how He makes all things new, and how we are the instruments of God in the world as His church.

Upon graduation, I followed what I believed was God's call in my life and returned to the seminary I had audited classes from. When I returned, I encountered many of the same challenges. Financial, familial, and ecclesiastical friction came again. Through those challenges and difficulties, the Lord pushed me to seek grounding again in him and learn more about his people.

Upon going into the workforce, the Lord used those around me to stretch me in ways I hadn't been before. He instilled in me the importance of a biblical foundation that can be expressed in clear language. He, through interactions with bosses and co-workers, customers and clients, gave me the courage to speak and answer when challenges to the gospel arose. He, through the encounters he gave me, instilled I should be able to have a defense of the hope

Faith Journey (continued)

that resides within me and not be timid or discouraged, but instead to be bold in that proclamation. Through those in my church and through volunteer work that I had been doing at a local nursing home, the Lord encouraged me to go back to seminary and seek the calling of a minister. Through the education of the schools and the streets, God has instilled in me the passion for learning, teaching, and preaching the Gospel, and to bring that Gospel to encourage and equip his people in the world.

Statement of Reason

I am seeking candidacy in the Christian Reformed Church because I believe that God has called me to preach the Word, shepherd his flock, and follow Christ in the calling he has equipped me for. I desire to bring the passion I have for God's Word to His people to be an instrument God will use to encourage and equip His people for their callings in the world. I seek to be a useful instrument in the hands of the divine creator as he makes all things new in Christ Jesus our Lord. I am committed to the Reformed confessions, the Belgic Confession, Heidelberg Catechism, and Canons of Dort, as faithful, accurate, and clear summaries and testimonies of God's Word. I desire to use the talents that God has given me in preaching and teaching to build up the church of God and to encourage the next generation for faithful service to Him. I desire to seek first the kingdom of God, preach boldly the Word, and bring Christ to the brokenhearted in the church that I have been a part of my entire life.

Contact

(708) 280-7963

ybicred@sbcglobal.net



Name: John A. Hall

Current Place of Residence
Lacombe, Alberta

Education

Kenyon College
Gambier, OH
Artium baccalaureus, 2002

University of Notre Dame
Notre Dame, IN
Master of Medieval Studies, 2005
and Ph.D., 2010

Calvin Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
M.Div., 2026

Experience

New Life Fellowship CRC
Red Deer, AB
Ministry Intern
March 2025-March 2026

Ongata Rongai AIC
Ongata Rongai, Kajiado County,
Kenya
Ministry Intern
July-August 2025

Contact

(587) 774-1390 (Canada)
(434) 390-3335 (USA)
john.hall.ahenobarbus@gmail.com

Faith Journey

When I was 17 years old, I mercilessly soaked a bee with a water gun. I got her in the fork of the branches of a rose bush, and I squirted her with savage relish as her sodden wings drooped and her hairs matted with water. I had just found out that someone I cared about had been hurt badly, and I took out my anger and pain on that bee. The pitiable state of the bee at length led me to remorse. I was perpetuating a cycle of hurt, paying forward the pain on vulnerable things within reach. The person who hurt my relative was probably also paying forward some wound of his own, and the person who injured him... I saw it all now. The world is a cycle of pain-induced brutality. For the first time, I realized my own sinfulness, and my complicity in sin's reign over this world. Both I and it clearly need a savior. I decided to take the claims of Christianity seriously.

I was raised in a Christian home. It was also an academic home. My mother is a mathematician and my father a pastor and New Testament professor. I was always encouraged to look for evidence. Until that bee, I had not seen evidence for Christianity. In fact, I thought Church looked like a club for people who like to sing and wear suits and ties. I didn't see any life-transforming faith there. All I saw was people who approved of the civil rights movement but went to a church where the only black person who ever came in the building was the janitor. If God existed, he wasn't making any difference in these people's lives. You may have heard of deconstruction. I deconstructed when I was 11. My parents enthusiastically supported me through this process. They rejoiced even more at my return to faith.

After the bee showed me my own sinfulness, my faith continued to grow. I saw that the kindness and love that flourishes (albeit under duress) in this world necessitated a savior who died to redeem sin and rose to conquer death. I gradually recognized providential rule in the world. After a few years, the work of the Spirit ceased to seem entirely preposterous. I was active in the Christian fellowship group at my secular university. I met and married an uncompromisingly Christian woman.

I began to wonder whether I would be called to ordained ministry. My father was a pastor, and my little brother had already sensed a call to the ministry. When I applied to graduate schools, I applied to seminaries as well, to keep that route open, in case that was what God had in mind, but programs in medieval studies paid better, and my wife wanted to have children, and I still didn't discern a call to the ministry, so I studied medieval Christianity instead. We joined a Christian Reformed Church, and we have been CRC almost ever since. I graduated, and taught high school Latin and coached. It was all a blessed time, but I experienced a growing feeling that this wasn't right. Whenever I was teaching, I never wanted to do anything else, but at every break, I knew that my current employment wasn't a perfect match for me. I didn't know what was missing: maybe teaching boys instead of all girls, or university level instead of high school. In the meantime, I wasn't complaining.

But things weren't right for my wife, either. She experienced what she has since termed "holy discontent", and realized that she was experiencing a call to the ministry. Then I thought I finally understood why I was not called to the ministry myself: I was called to be a pastor's spouse, not a pastor. We relocated to Grand Rapids for her to attend seminary. I taught at a state university nearby. It was a delightful time for our whole family. We relocated to Alberta

Faith Journey (continued)

for her first call. I was blessed to become a stay-at-home-dad for about two years, which gave me time to reflect on God's call for the rest of my life. I had just decided that I should get some kind of job, when I was surprised by a call to the ministry.

Ever since I became part of the pastoral unit, strange things had begun to happen. First, I began to feel burdened by the scarcity of pastors in our area. Nearby churches have lingering vacancies and congregation members lament the difficulty of finding new pastors. I prayed that the Lord of the harvest would send workers. Second, one of my research projects involved the history of interpretation of several Biblical passages. The better I understood these texts, the more I delighted in how scripture is saturated with the goodness of God. I wanted to tell people about it.

These factors led me to wonder whether I might be called to pastoral ministry. I shared my doubts with my wife. She urged me to hurry up because I wasn't getting any younger, but I still wasn't convinced, but I knew there was a lot more to being a pastor than loving the Bible and preaching sermons. My pastoral call was still in the "maybe someday" phase when my wife broke her leg and couldn't drive. I became the pastor's chauffeur, in effect an involuntary ride-along intern. Sometimes I was invited into the actual visits, and some of these people really spilled their guts. Frightened, I asked myself, "Can I actually do this?" But, to my surprise, I even found these visits life-giving. I witnessed people in difficulties clinging to faith. At this point, I long urgently to study the Bible and share its goodness with people, whether in hospital rooms or from the pulpit.

Statement of Reason

I intend to serve the CRC in congregational ministry. The Bible is saturated with the goodness of God, and I want to share it with people. Why the CRC? First of all, because this is my denomination; it has been for 22 years. This is the body of Christ in which I have committed to live out my Christian calling. I'm not leaving unless it drives me out. Yet there is no strain in this choice. I have never experienced a theology or a culture so congenial. I came to this denomination as an adult, and I have a convert's zeal for the tradition, including especially the three forms of unity. I committed to this denomination initially as a layperson. I will be honored if I continue to serve it as an ordained minister.



Name: Caleb J. Horjus

Current Place of Residence
Caledonia, Michigan

Education

Cornerstone University
Grand Rapids, MI
B.S. in Biblical Studies, 2020

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
M.Div., 2026

Experience

Caledonia CRC
Caledonia, MI
Discipleship Director
July 2024 - Present

Caledonia CRC
Caledonia, MI
High School & Post-High Director
June 2020 - July 2024

Bauer CRC
Hudsonville, MI
Youth Ministry Intern
October 2018 - June 2020

Hudsonville Reformed Church
Hudsonville, MI
Youth Volunteer
September 2016 - October 2018

Contact

(616) 378-6043
cjhorjus@gmail.com

Faith Journey

My faith journey is a testimony to God's constant goodness and faithfulness to his children. There was never a time that I didn't know who Jesus was or what he's done for me. I grew up in a great Christian home where we went to church each Sunday and were involved in various things within the church. However, a marker in my spiritual journey was on a mission trip with my church to Inez, Kentucky, to serve with Appalachia Reach Out during my freshman year of high school. God used this trip to deepen my commitment to Christ and his mission for this world. Shortly after this trip, I went through our church's profession of faith process and was so richly blessed by several men who disciplined me well. Stemming from another mission trip, I became a part of a Bible Study where I was the only teenager. Each guy in the room was at least 20 years older than me. These men shaped me in my love for Scripture and living faithfully as a Christian in the world.

In addition to these men, I was blessed to have a wonderful youth pastor and leaders who further cultivated my love for God. Through their intentional relationship building and caring nature, God started to grow in my heart a call to youth ministry. I remember thinking to myself that I wanted to do whatever I could to help others have the same youth group experience that I did. So, I began to soak in all the biblical teaching and mentoring that I could. By God's grace, I saw that the gospel of Jesus Christ was worth committing my everything to. So, I began to listen to preachers like David Platt, Matt Chandler, John Piper, and Alistair Begg. At the time, I worked as a custodian at our local school, and so I listened to these preachers as I went. As I was vacuuming the halls of that school, I prayed, reflected, and was formed by the teaching of those men and the worship music I listened to.

This led me to my time at Cornerstone University. During my college years, I had two significant mentors. The first was one of my professors. Through his classes and eventual mentorship, he helped me learn how to sustain a career in ministry. He continues to mentor me to this day. He's someone who continually brings me back to the cross of Jesus. God worked through him so that my identity is rooted in looking back to the cross of Christ for forgiveness and redemption. The good news of the gospel is that, though we are deeply sinful people, the cross covers more. There's no depth of darkness or sin that the gospel cannot reach or cannot speak to. The second mentor during my college years was my supervisor during my youth ministry internship. He developed me significantly as a leader and helped me integrate all that I had learned with the nuts and bolts of ministry. He let me in on most every facet of his ministry, and so I was given opportunities to serve the body of Christ that I'm so deeply grateful for.

This led me to begin serving at Caledonia CRC. Through the mentorship of a partner in youth ministry and several other staff members, grace deeply formed me. Caledonia is a church that's committed to the gospel and applying the gospel. That forced me to take an honest look at myself and start with sin. No human is untouched by sin and the brokenness that is a result of that sin. But, as I already said, the cross reaches all of that by God's grace. And it is that grace that ultimately transforms us. It's a powerful thing when we realize how deep our sin problem is, but God's love for us remains unchanged. God used my time at Caledonia to humble me and show me his amazing grace.

Faith Journey (continued)

As I reflect on all of this, I see God's goodness and faithfulness. I see him sending people to speak into my life as those men did at Bible Study. I see him working in my heart during those seemingly ordinary days of vacuuming school classrooms that I now consider to be sacred. I see him bringing those two mentors during my undergrad years to shape me into the man I am today. I see him transforming me by his grace so that I may wholeheartedly be willing and ready to live for him. Praise God for his goodness and faithfulness to his children!

Statement of Reason

I am seeking ordination because I believe that there is nothing worth more than the gospel. It is the treasure hidden in a field that is worth giving up everything for. I am seeking ordination in the CRC because I believe that its expression of the gospel, as seen through the creeds and confessions, can uniquely meet people today. Though there is much sin and brokenness in the world, God has called me to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ and to carry out his mission as a Minister of the Word. As Romans 1:16 says, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes." In light of this, God has called me to disciple others so that they may experience the transforming power of the gospel in their lives and witness the gospel renewing the world around them.



Name: Nathan L. Jansen

Current Place of Residence
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Education
Calvin College,
Grand Rapids, MI
BA Secondary Education, BS
Integrated Sciences, 2017

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
M.Div., 2026

Experience:
Encounter CRC
Kentwood, MI
Seminary Intern,
Groups Coordinator
September 2023-January 2026

Languages
English (Native Speaker)
Spanish (Level A2)

Contact
(616) 286-2501
njan237@calvinseminary.edu

Faith Journey

My faith is a bit akin to my last name, I couldn't tell you who in my family line first claimed it as their own (with regards to our family name, I can presume at least someone's dad's name was Jan!), but I can assure you despite it being inherited, it still is extremely personal to me. Being a young child placed on your parents shoulders, both literally and spiritually, you become blessed with their shared vantage point. Given I am unsure how many generations of faith have been building up one atop of another, I am scared to find out just how blessed I have been to receive a faith built up over on the shoulders of spiritual giants. The integrity of my dad, the Holy Spirit attunement of my mom, the simple generosity of my dad's parents, the loving hospitality of my mom's parents – these are lifetimes of faith and wisdom to which I got to soak in from the front row. Before you do the math of compounding generational faith to estimate what level of sainthood I have achieved, I will save you the hard calculus and inform you no spiritual giant resides at the end of this equation; instead, you will find someone taking baby steps trying to figure out his own miraculous union with Christ. Turns out, no matter what you inherit, you still have to learn to walk for yourself and grow into what's been handed down to you – this is its own gift. Much of my childhood and early adult life was about figuring out if that inherited identity was worth keeping. The Holy Spirit worked in me slowly and methodically to reveal that it very much was worth keeping, but also, that it was worth sharing.

My years as a Science teacher in both a local public school and an international Christian school cultivated how my faith went from inward to outward. In the public setting I learned to embody faith, and in the Christian setting I learned to articulate my faith. A tough skin was built up with a soft heart, as kids are the most effective critics, yet also the most malleable of minds. I had the unique opportunity to reflect God's light in how I taught and interacted, and now I am stepping into the call to equip and encourage others to reflect God's image, and just as importantly, see it in others. A long list could be made of the people that reflect Christ to us, and while that list is usually too long to list, it's evident that the light of Christ we see in these people help guide us forward hopefully in the "already" amidst what often can feel like a dark tunnel of the "not yet".

No journey is ever complete, I find myself actively in the struggle of learning every day how to embody a legacy of faith that isn't dead but very much alive. I cannot predict what growth is to come, nor where or through who it will arrive, but I can hold hope that the loving God who has held onto my family faithfully through the generations will continue to hold onto my family, both genetically and spiritually, until he returns in full glory. I hold this hope because the greatest legacy of faithfulness has shown brightly and lovingly since before Creation and has crashed into human history in the flesh at the Cross and the empty grave. That is a faith, hope, and love that is very much alive and very much worth reflecting.

Statement of Reason

I find myself being called back to the place into which I was born and raised. I see the beauty of the legacy of faith left by my family and by the tradition in which my family inherited. I also see the fractures and fissures – there are no perfect people outside of Christ – but I also see a family to love. I see the body of Christ desiring to be unified to its head in Christ. I conclude simply by pointing to Romans 11:33-36.





Name: Yexiang (Debbie) Jin

Current Place of Residence

Grand Rapids, Michigan

Education

Grace College

Winona Lake, IN

Bachelor of Arts in Exchange Program, 2021

Handong University

Pohang, Gyeongsangbuk-do, South Korea

Bachelor of Arts, 2023

Calvin Theological Seminary

Grand Rapids, MI

M.Div., 2026

Experience

Handong University

V and C Country

Short Term Missionary

January 2017 and June 2017

Elim Church

Pohang, South Korea

Children Ministry Leader

June 2019 - July 2021

Church of the Servant

Grand Rapids, MI

Student Intern

September 2021 - May 2023

CRCNA Resonate Global Mission

Muscat, Oman

Short Term Missionary,

Cross-cultural Intern

January 2023

Faith Journey

My name is Yexiang Jin, and I go by Debbie. I am a Korean diaspora in China. My parents received a calling from God and were sent as missionaries to Muslims. This background formed me to become one who can easily fit in anywhere, but doesn't feel like I fully belong. This gift of adapting and connecting different cultures comes with an expensive cost. Yes, I am a third culture kid. I struggled with who I am. Though I survived, I am still discovering who I am. Some say it is my resilience that kept me going, but I know it is God's providential care.

Due to my family background, evangelizing has been a main theme in my childhood. I loved God with a pure heart and passion. I took every opportunity to introduce my God to my friends since pre-kindergarten.

Years later, I became a high school student. One day, I was disappointed due to the accumulated rejection of the gospel. I was about to decide to never talk to my classmates and teachers, for they don't know or like my God. Yet, God said one sentence to change my mind. He said, "But I still love them." I couldn't believe what I heard from God. As a result, the next day, I interacted with them as usual. This is the first shock I had from God. The first time I understood his heart.

Later, I went to South Korea with my family. I visited many churches and attended many conferences. I started to dream about being like one of the preachers on the stage, telling people God's heart. One day, I had an opportunity to give a short message in front of hundreds of people. I still remember when I was on the pulpit speaking, I felt like my blood was boiling. It felt like I was born to be there. Since then, I have taken many opportunities to practice public speaking.

When I was in university, I read a Bible verse, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. (Hosea 4:6)." It broke my heart. Over the past decade, every time I read it, it has hit and broken my heart with the same amount of pain. This is an answer to my prayer; God has given his heart to me. It is heavy and painful, but I have not asked him to take it back. Furthermore, I am surprisingly finding myself worrying about the same issue God has helped me with before. How can I worry this much, as if God has never been gracious to me? Then, I came to a conclusion. If forgetting is human nature, I am willing to repeat the heart of God over and over again.

The same God who has given his heart to me also equipped me. After I came to Calvin Theological Seminary, I was surprised by how theological training has grounded my faith. If my knowledge about God was all over the place, now it has puzzled together in a reformed foundation.

One life-changing experience was in January 2023. I had a cross-cultural internship at Al Amana Centre in Oman. I learned to actively listen. I listen to understand why others believe what they believe. I listen to others with mutual respect. This is a gift God has given to me in such a gentle way.

After that internship, I came back to Grand Rapids. I was talking with a stranger, and I listened first. This stranger was surprised and asked me why I was just listening. I explained that I was trying to understand why what he believes is important to him. Then he literally said, "Whatever you say, I will listen." I will never forget it.

Faith Journey (continued)

Proclaiming the gospel and evangelizing are important. Yet mutual respect should be the foundation of human relationships. Before we are differentiated by religion, we have a common ground. We are human.

Lastly, I would like to briefly share my journey of ambition. When I was young and naïve, I was influenced by secular values; I wanted to be a famous preacher. I wanted to preach in front of a billion people, to all nations. I wanted to be remembered by people.

As time passed, I acknowledged that it was pride, so I decided to “circumcise” it. Now, I only want to be a faithful preacher who correctly handles the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15).

Another reason that I wanted to be remembered by people is my insecurity. So, I work hard to impress God and others. Over the past years, God confirmed to me that he loves who I am. I learned to accept and be content with my human limitations instead of pursuing perfectionism. As I found a sense of security in Christ, my soul finally rest in Christ.

As a preacher and a pastor, I don’t expect people to remember me after I die. If they remember me, I prefer them to remember that they were truly loved by me. I hope the empowerment of this love could enable them to live their lives as children of God confidently and boldly.

Statement of Reason

I am seeking ordination in the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) for two reasons. First, God has given his heart to me and given me the gift of preaching. In awe, I decide to let it shine and build up God’s church, instead of burying it. Second, serving as an ordained Minister of the Word is my way of showing gratitude to my theological cradle, Calvin Theological Seminary. In my studies, I have not found things I disagree with.

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
Chapel Planning Team
September 2024 - May 2025

Calvin Theological Seminary,
Grand Rapids, MI
Krex Theological Blog Writer
January 2023 - Present

Languages

Chinese (Native Speaker)
English (Fluent)
Korean (Fluent)

Contact

(616) 649-7536
jyx.deb@gmail.com



Name: James A. Kostelyk

Current Place of Residence
Bradenton, Florida

Education

Indiana Wesleyan University
Marion, IN
B.S. in Addictions Counseling

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
M. Div., 2026

Experience

Munster Church
Munster, IN
Ministry Intern -
Licensed Exhorter
October 2020 – March 2023

Bradenton Christian Reformed
Church
Bradenton, FL
Director of Youth Ministries
April 2023 – Present

Pine Rest Christian
Mental Health Services
Grand Rapids, MI
Clinical Pastoral Education
(Levels IA & IB)
June 2025 – May 2026

Contact

(312) 843-9623
pastor.james.kostelyk@gmail.com

Faith Journey

My faith journey began with God’s gracious and sovereign choice to adopt me as a beloved son before the foundations of the earth (Ephesians 1:5), accomplishing this by the life, death, and resurrection of his precious son. The practical outworking of this was my birth into a heritage of faith. My father, Rev. John Kostelyk is a minister in the Christian Reformed Church, and I am privileged to say that I have never known a day outside of Christ’s love for me. As a candidate for Minister of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church, I can point to my upbringing as a pastor’s kid with pride and gratitude, but that wasn’t always the case. Like many PK’s, I grew up wrestling with my identity. As a child, my parents instilled in me a love for Christ and the Reformed tradition; truly the foundations of a lifelong faith were laid. Yet, as I entered adolescence and young adulthood, there was also struggle. I questioned, was my faith my own, or just the family business? There was a transitive period in my early twenties when I attempted to leave the church and faith behind altogether, which involved running from God, towards sin. Here I encountered the irresistible grace of God. When my “grip” on him was non-existent, he still held me in the palm of his hand. Where could I go from his Spirit? Where could I flee from his presence? (Psalm 139:7). In the words of Francis Thompson, the Hound of Heaven caught up with me, and by God’s grace, my faith became my own. In this, I am able to maintain that there was never a day outside the gracious loving kindness of my Heavenly Father, who held me through my rebellion.

God is so good and gracious that, beyond drawing me back into fellowship with himself, he also brought a wonderful spouse into my life. Through my marriage to my wife, Paige, I have learned in profound and daily ways about Christ’s love for his church. She has been a constant conduit of God’s grace to me—steadfast, prayerful, and faithful. The four beautiful children God has entrusted to us have further shaped my understanding of the unconditional, patient, and pursuing love of our Heavenly Father. Through the joys and challenges of family life, the Lord has continued to sanctify me, teaching me humility, dependence, and delight in his good gifts.

As I reflected more deeply on the grace of God and drew upon my heritage of faith, I began to discern a call to ministry. Over time, I noticed a growing love for the church, a desire to open the Scriptures with others, and a particular burden for pastoral care and discipleship. This internal sense of call was graciously confirmed through the church when my pastor encouraged me to pursue licensure to exhort. I entered that process with humility and gratitude, and began lay-preaching in 2018. After completing my undergraduate degree in counseling, I enrolled at Calvin Theological Seminary in order to be further formed for service in Christ’s church.

While still a seminary student, I was blessed to receive a call to ministry and have served as Director of Youth Ministries at Bradenton Christian Reformed Church since 2023. Entering seminary later in life has been a gift. My studies have consistently functioned not as an abstract exercise, but as a means of deepening my love for God and increasing my capacity to serve his people. By God’s grace, I have been spared that age old malady of disconnect between head and heart; theological learning has continually fed devotion, worship, and pastoral imagination.

Faith Journey (continued)

At the center of my life and calling is a simple conviction: my first calling is to belong to Jesus Christ. From that living relationship flows everything else—my love for the church, my commitment to the Reformed confessions, my desire to preach the Word faithfully, administer the sacraments reverently, and shepherd God's people with gentleness and courage. I am deeply grateful for the Christian Reformed Church.

As I look toward candidacy and ordination, I do so with gratitude, humility, and joy. I am eager to continue serving Christ's church wherever he calls, trusting that the God who has been faithful to me every day of my life will continue to sustain and use me for the glory of his name and the building up of his people.

Statement of Reason

I am seeking ordination in the Christian Reformed Church because it is my home. I am proud of my Christian Reformed heritage, growing up as a CRC pastor's kid, and I want to see this denomination continue to grow and thrive. I enjoy reformed theology, love our three forms of unity, admire our theological emphasis on word and sacrament, and appreciate the emphasis we have historically placed on missions and outreach. I believe that there is no place better to encounter the historic Reformed Faith, and I am passionate about handing that faith on to the next generation of Christ's church. I want to serve and shepherd God's sheep in the ways I have been served and shepherded by faithful CRC pastors, elders, and friends throughout my life.



Name: Devin B. Lunshof

Current Place of Residence
Escondido, California

Education

Niagara College
Welland, ON
Electronics Eng. Tech., 2017

Westminster Seminary California
Escondido, CA
M.Div., 2026

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
EPMC, 2026

Experience

Riverside CRC
Wellandport, ON, Canada
Deacon
June 2019 - May 2022

Maranatha CRC
York, ON
Student Pastor
June 2024 - August 2024

Providence RCUS
Lodi, CA
Student Pastor
June 2025

Team Praha
Prague, Czech Republic
Mission Leader
July 2025 - August 2025

Contact

(442) 286-9321
devlunshof@gmail.com

Faith Journey

When, at a young age, my parents taught me that Jesus died for my sins on the cross, I believed. They taught me how I was baptized as an infant, showing me how my sins were washed away with his precious blood, and how he adopted me into the covenant of believers as his own child. There was never a time that I did not know the love of my Savior for me and the wonderful stories of God's historical redemptive plan. Because of this immense privilege and grace, I have been able to serve in a variety of ways, starting off with volunteering for nursery duty, Sunday School, and then running the AV equipment at my church. I have been a member of my home church, Riverside CRC in Wellandport, ON, for my entire life.

Even though I knew I belonged to Christ, I had moments of fear and doubts. When I was around ten years old, I read a book detailing how God would come again in judgment, destroying the world as we know it, casting unbelievers into hell. There was an awful illustration of what this might look like, showing red fire and intense suffering. This image caused me to interpret sunsets as the onset of the end times, and I would run around the house trembling with fear, urging my mom to take it seriously. She did her best to counsel me, not knowing the source of my fears. Eventually, I showed her the image, and she was able to explain that if I believed in Christ, I did not need to fear condemnation. Since then, I've held the proclamation following Paul's argument in Romans 7 extremely comforting: "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1).

After high school, I attended Niagara College for an Electronics Engineering diploma, which I received in 2017. I immediately began working full-time for North America Traffic, working on the product development team. They specialize in portable traffic control equipment and sell units all over North America (and some in Australia). I enjoyed that work very much, solving problems, coming up with solutions, and testing new devices in the electronics and mechanical fields of study.

During my time at North America Traffic, I realized that there were some inconsistencies between my profession of faith and the lifestyle I lived. I hoped to remedy my uncomfortable situation by volunteering for a Christian organization in my community and participating more rigorously at church, joining the praise team, and letting my name stand to be elected as a Deacon. I did all these things, hoping it would fix my conscience, but my heart was deceitful; I still held on to a specific sin. Through circumstances that only God could orchestrate, I was struck down through the Lord's discipline and brought utterly low. He removed something from my life that I treasured, but at the same time, removed the sin that I hated. God knew exactly how to renovate my heart. It was not the easy way, but the hard way – the effective, lasting, and good way. For months, I suffered through the pain of being brought low and feeling inadequate, but it produced perseverance and appreciation of the Lord's discipline. Throughout that season, I held dear the words God spoke to Paul, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12:9). I understood that they were God's waves and breakers, and that he was sanctifying me to be useful for his church (Ps. 42:7).

In the spring of 2022, I responded to increasing nudges to make myself available to take on the role of minister. At first, I did not want to – I knew some of the challenges ministers face, and family members and a pastor

Faith Journey (continued)

advised me not to do it. But God's will is stronger. I'm a natural leader, diplomatic, and a writer, which are gifts I thought I could use for ministry. In addition, God has shown me how he is powerful in my weaknesses. I'm confident, based on years of experiencing the Lord's faithfulness, that he will provide me with what I need when I need it. God is in the future, and he is here with me now, leading and guiding and providing me the strength and abilities I need to fulfil and submit to his will – "his good pleasing and perfect will" (Rom. 12:2).

Statement of Reason

I feel called to be a Minister of the Word for a church family. I desire to lead them in the truths of Scripture, to protect them from a worldly culture and understanding. I hope to lead them by example in the first and greatest commandment - to love the Lord your God with all your heart and mind and soul. I wish to show them the second greatest commandment - to love your neighbor as yourself. Love is perfectly defined multiple times in Scripture as patient, kind, faithful, and trustworthy. Love was ultimately demonstrated by Jesus Christ, who died on the cross to become the propitiation for our sins (1 John 4:10). Without love that is guided by the truth, I am convinced we are nothing but "a clanging cymbal" (1 Cor. 13:1).

These days, I see a lot of hurt and groaning in the church; I see weary pastors and councils who are burning out and really feeling the weight of their office. I wish to stand with them and help shoulder the load. I wish to encourage them and keep the attention of the church focused on Christ, its cornerstone, who endured such opposition from sinners (Matt. 21:42; Heb. 12:3). I desire to boldly proclaim the gospel, nonstop, to those who will hear it. I see a particular need in the Canadian churches of the CRCNA, which have a critical number of vacant churches.

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." – Matthew 11:28-30



Name: Eric W. Lynch

Current Place of Residence

Grand Rapids, Michigan

Education

Cornerstone University
Grand Rapids, MI
Bachelor of Science in Ministry
Leadership, 2016

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
M.Div., 2026

Experience

Work of Christ Community
East Lansing, MI
Youth Leader / Director
May 2016 - August 2020

University Christian Outreach
East Lansing, MI
Mission Leader / Director
May 2016 - May 2020

University Christian Outreach
Huntington, IN
Chapter Director
May 2020 - May 2023

Faith Baptist Church
Kentwood, MI
Pastor of Discipleship
September 2023 - July 2025

Contact

(517) 719-0458
elyn226@calvinseminary.edu

Faith Journey

Hello! My name is Eric Lynch and I am married to the wonderful and beautiful, Clara (8 years this summer) and we have 4 amazing children: Judah (6), Abby (5), Elijah (3), and Samuel (1 yr.). I was born into a non-Christian but good home in Lansing, MI. In high school I was your stereotypical jock, popular, party type who enjoyed a good time and was always the life of the party. The funny thing was that most of my friends (outside of the party scene) were Christians, who ended up inviting me to their youth group. I had nothing better to do on a Thursday night and my girlfriend attended, so the decision was easy to make.

After high school most of these friends started attending a college ministry connected with the youth group that was at MSU and LCC, so I simply traded my Thursday nights for Wednesday nights. My first semester of college was filled with getting into all that the “college scene” had to offer while also attending this ministry which a staff worker started to meet with me regularly. As the semester rolled on I began to realize just how broken and empty I was. It was at the end of the semester where I had finally come to the end of myself and in an evening of wrestling with my sin and depravity I gave my life to Jesus Christ.

Two months after my conversion, while I was sitting in church listening to my pastor’s sermon, I experienced a profound call to be a pastor. A few days later after being unable to shake this feeling I finally brought it to the staff who had been mentoring me. After listening to me talk about this experience, he simply looked at me, smiled, and said “let’s pray.” At the end of this season of prayer we both concluded that maybe God was placing a call on my life to be a pastor!

This was the start of a 14 year journey of seeking God and doing the next thing he’s asked of me. This has led me to places I never thought I would go, which began when I went to Jacksonville, FL for a year to help “plant” a chapter for my college ministry as a student. After moving back and finishing my degree I joined the ministry as a fulltime staff at Michigan State University where I labored for the next 4 years. It was over these years where I had experienced my pastor, my mentor (the same one from my first semester), and several strangers who would continue to affirm the gifts and calling on my life.

In 2020 I ended my work at MSU as the director of outreach and evangelism. At that time the ministry sent my family to Huntington, IN where I would be the director of our newest chapter at a small Christian college for the next 3 years. These were some of the most challenging yet formative times of my life. Over these years I experienced the Lord begin to shape the call to be a pastor more deeply within me as I started to recognize some of the gifts and desires he had been growing in me.

During my second year in Huntington we experienced the Lord leading me to begin seminary studies at Calving Seminary. I began in the online program, but knew I needed to be in person. In 2023 we packed up our family and moved to Grand Rapids, MI for me to continue my studies at Calvin. While at Calvin I have had many moments where I have had to stop and thank God for the journey that he’s brought me on these past 14 years.

Statement of Reason

Fourteen years ago the Lord radically changed my life and invited me on an adventure of a lifetime. Over these years the Lord has affirmed, refined, challenged, and matured, both the call in me and my faith in him. If there’s one thing that I have learned over these years it’s that all I have is a gift from

Statement of Reason (continued)

God that is to be turned to the praise of his glorious name. And what greater gift to give him than my very own life in service to his bride, the church. It is a great privilege to cast my lot in with the Christian Reformed Church, to seek God's glory above all else alongside brothers and sisters whom God has purchased and redeemed with the blood of his only Son, Jesus Christ.



Name: Amanda D. Mason

Current Place of Residence

Whitby, Ontario

Education

Durham College,
Oshawa, Ontario, Canada,
Animal Care, 2015

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
M.Div., 2026

Experience

Hope Fellowship Church
Courtice, ON
Ministry Intern Seasoned Souls
September 2024-May 2025

Lucknow Community CRC
Lucknow, ON
Solo Pastor-Summer Intern
June 2025-September 2025

Hope Fellowship Church
Courtice, ON
Children's Ministry Coordinator
Nov 2025-Present

Contact

(905) 447-6097
pastor.amanda.mason@gmail.com

Faith Journey

Rather than being defined by certainty, my faith journey has been driven by a longing for community, a sense of self, and purpose, which I didn't always have words for. The path involves both emptiness and fullness, and it reflects God's subtle but constant grace, even before I could perceive it.

My grandmother was a devout woman who took me to the Anglican Church every Sunday, which provided me with my earliest experiences of church. In my childhood, when my mother was the only parent, Sundays gave me a sense of order and steadiness. While steeped in tradition, religious ceremonies, and respect, I never experienced a personal connection with Jesus that changed me. Faith seemed distant, something to observe rather than experience. Though I am thankful for my grandmother's unwavering faith, I didn't feel like I belonged in the Christian faith or had a sense of self founded on God's love as a child.

I experienced instability and homelessness throughout my teenage years, and then intense self-reflection and a search for my identity shaped me as a young adult. Loneliness was a constant companion, and the ache in my heart only grew with each passing day as I turned to addiction and unhealthy coping mechanisms. A desperate fight for survival, not spiritual growth, marked these years. Faith felt disconnected from my daily reality, and yet the longing for meaning and wholeness never fully disappeared.

Eventually, I started a lengthy and important healing process involving therapy, self-reflection, and purposeful revitalization that lasted for years. Through this work, I could recognize patterns created by trauma and loss and start reconstructing my identity based on truth rather than shame. Even though I hadn't fully defined my faith then, these healing years were a key element of God's preparation, building my emotional and relational strength necessary for future spiritual development and pastoral work.

My life took a turn, starting in my mid-thirties, with changes that were both gradual and profound. After I met my husband, the stability, love, and commitment in our relationship allowed me to dream of a future beyond just getting by. As we started raising our kids, a new question came up: it wasn't just about my own beliefs, but what I would teach them. I wished for my children to have a spiritual upbringing unlike mine, but centred on acceptance, mercy, and promise.

That desire led us to the Christian Reformed Church. Initially, my children's formation motivated my return to church life more than my own. Yet it was within the CRC that I encountered Jesus in a way I never had before. Through faithful listening to preaching, deep engagement with Scripture, and a community shaped by grace rather than performance, faith became relational. I encountered a God who meets people where they are, who names brokenness honestly, and who restores without shame.

My faith flourished as I became more rooted in the church's life. Scripture came alive, presenting a story of redemption, a narrative filled with truth and woven with moments of tenderness. The Reformed perspective, with its emphasis on grace, covenant, and God's faithfulness, addressed my history, resonating powerfully. I understood faith as something that was received and lived in response to God's steadfast love, rather than something I could achieve on my own.

Faith Journey (continued)

In this season, people around me started noticing and pointing out my gifts, sometimes even before I acknowledged them. Pastors, mentors, and ministry leaders nudged me towards preaching, teaching, writing, and pastoral care, even when I doubted my abilities. Their insights were a form of grace, showing me that a calling isn't something you find on your own; it's confirmed through community.

I found myself drawn especially to preaching and writing as acts of pastoral care. Through study, proclamation, and reflection, I experienced how God's Word can bring healing, challenge injustice, and offer hope. My writing with Diaconal Ministries further deepened this calling, allowing me to engage issues of justice, compassion, and faithful presence in concrete and embodied ways. These chances convinced me to proclaim the gospel both in word and deed, rooted in love for the vulnerable and a commitment to God's reconciling work in the world.

Pastoral care has also become central to my sense of vocation. Walking alongside people in grief, uncertainty, and transition has taught me that ministry is often less about answers and more about presence. These encounters have strengthened my commitment to spiritual formation across generations. I believe that shared practices, storytelling, worship, and relationships nurture faith over time so that others will not grow up feeling untethered or unseen, as I once did.

Today, humility and gratitude mark my faith. I no longer see my past as something God simply rescued me from but as something God has redeemed and now uses to shape my ministry. I am especially attentive to those on the margins, those who question their place in the world or the church, because I know what it means to live without a sense of belonging.

I understand my call to ministry as one that brings together preaching, pastoral care, justice, and formation for the sake of the church and the world. In community, I keep discerning this call, trusting that God speaks through the voices of those who've walked alongside me and through my desire.

When I consider Jesus' words to Peter—"Feed my sheep"—I hear them not as a demand for perfection, but as an invitation to faithful care. I understand my vocation as a call to tend God's people with honesty, compassion, and hope, trusting that the same God who met me patiently and persistently will continue to lead me as I serve Christ's church.

Statement of Reason

I am seeking ordination in the Christian Reformed Church because I have come to understand my call to ministry as one that is nurtured, discerned, and sustained within a covenant community. shaped by grace, Scripture, and faithful practice. The CRCNA has been the place where my faith has taken root in a personal and transformative way and where my call has been named and affirmed by others. God has opened many doors for me, and as his obedient and faithful servant, I am abiding in his direction through ordination in the CRCNA.



Name: Curtis J. Meliefste

Current Place of Residence:

Enderby, British Columbia

Education

Vanguard College

Edmonton, AB

Certificate in Youth Ministry, 2016

Princeton Theological Seminary

Princeton, NJ

Certificate in Theology and Youth Ministry, 2013-2015

Princeton Theological Seminary

Princeton, NJ

Certificate in Theology and Ministry, 2017

ACTS Seminaries

Langley, BC

Master of Divinity (incomplete), 2020-2022

Calvin Theological Seminary

Grand Rapids, MI

M.Div., 2026 (dv)

Experience

Inglewood CRC

Edmonton, AB

Youth Ministry Intern

2014-2016

Willoughby CRC

Langley, BC

Associate Pastor of Youth and Young Adult Discipleship

January 2016 - September 2022

Faith Journey

In 1990, I was born in a generational Dutch Reformed family. I was baptized and grew up attending church twice on Sunday, singing the Psalms, going to Christian school, attending Cadets, and taking Catechism classes. In the midst of this upbringing, we moved from one place to another, moved churches and denominations (still within the Dutch Reformed tradition), I met my wife, got married, my family of origin began to fracture, my parents would eventually divorce, and I would enter into vocational ministry through an abnormal pathway. All of this was part of God's plan for my life, and while there is joy and pain in it, I am constantly reminded of God's protection and goodness throughout my life.

I have been radically formed by the rhythms and patterns of a Reformed Christian life. The three legs of school, church, and home were pillars of my childhood, and I am thankful for their presence and tutelage over the years. As I began to take my faith more seriously, I turned to the Three Forms of Unity to better understand God and his Word, and so the Heidelberg Catechism and the Belgic Confession hold dear places in my heart as formative documents in my life. The life of the church, through the ordinary means of grace and community, was (and is) an important aspect of my faith journey. The sense of belonging, the love from intergenerational church members, and the special attention I received from mentors have been instrumental in God's work in my life.

As I discerned a call to ministry, I began Bible school and worked at an inner-city gospel mission. This was a marvellous experience of serving the broken and battered, side by side with Christians of various traditions and ethnicities. This season, God worked in my mind to hone my theology and to learn about other church traditions. He also worked in my heart to care deeply for the needs of those who are often neglected and forgotten, many of whom only have hope in Christ and nothing else. These years in the inner city were not easy, but they were beneficial, as I was stretched in many ways by long hours, violent and tense situations, very human moments, being placed in leadership positions at a young age, and working on the fundraising team.

From there, we moved our family and began a season of parish ministry serving as a youth pastor. This was a delightful season exploring the passion God had instilled in me for the church and the youth. In this season, God worked powerfully through my shortcomings and weaknesses to build a healthy and impactful youth ministry culture.

And, more recently, I have been working primarily as a student to complete my Master of Divinity at Calvin Seminary. This would not have been possible without the saintly advice and encouragement from folks at Willoughby CRC, nor would this reflection on my faith journey be so easy without the wonderful years of study and reflection at Calvin Seminary. These last years have been an immense blessing to my family and me as we have all grown in our love and affection for our Saviour. The blessing of Biblical and theological study, paired with the formation process for pastoral ministry, has helped me to become more confident in who God created me to be, helped me grow in my pastoral abilities, increase my self-awareness and knowledge of my shortcomings, and has prepared me well for a continued lifetime of pastoral ministry.

Overall, I am thankful for the men who have dedicated countless hours to mentoring me over the past 15+ years and how God has worked through them. I am thankful for men like St. Augustine, Wilhelmus à Brakel, Thomas

Faith Journey (continued)

Witherow, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Louis Berkhof, Kevin DeYoung, Rod Rosenblatt, and Eugene Peterson who have been a blessing to me in their writings. And, finally, I am thankful to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who offered his life for me two millennia ago outside Jerusalem and has called me into a marvellous ministry of proclaiming His Gospel to the world. May God be glorified through my efforts.

Statement of Reason

I spent many years resisting the call to seminary and pastoral leadership, even though I have always had a deep love for the Gospel and the church. However, over the last decade, it became clear that church ministry is the vocation God has called me to. I am seeking candidacy in the CRCNA because God has used it in my life, and I am eager to participate in and serve within this historic Reformed tradition. I believe that the Three Forms of Unity are faithful to Holy Scripture. I am eager to dedicate my life to the preaching of the Gospel and caring for those God has given me to care for, and I long for lives to be transformed by the Holy Spirit.

East Hill Community Church
Vernon, BC
Pastoral Intern
Summer, 2022

Christian Reformed
Campus Ministries Okanagan
Kelowna, BC

College Chaplain
Fall 2023 - Spring 2026

Contact

(604) 340-3493
curtismeliefste@gmail.com



Name: Grant R. Mensonides

Current Place of Residence
Crown Point, Indiana

Education

Calvin College
Grand Rapids, MI
B.A. Theology, 2020

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
M.Div., 2025

Experience

Bluff City UMC
Memphis, TN
Pastoral Ministry Intern
May - August 2019

Calvin College Campus Ministries
Grand Rapids, MI
Discipleship Intern
August 2019 - May 2020

Community CRC
Wyoming, MI
Pastoral Ministry Intern
August 2020 - May 2021

Dyer UMC
Dyer, IN
Director of Youth and Worship
July 2021 - September 2023

Bethel CRC
Lansing, IL
Director of Worship and Youth
September 2023 - Present

Contact

grantmensonides@hotmail.com
(616) 528-2758

Faith Journey

Hi! I'm Grant. I'm just another guy who's trying - imperfectly - to cling to Christ as my only source of hope and peace. Come and hear a story of how God has been infinitely good and faithful to one of the least of these, and how He has empowered me for ministry in ways I never saw coming.

The church, its people and its traditions form some of my earliest core memories. I grew up in the CRC, come from a strong Christian family whose faith heritage spans generations, and went through private Christian school.

One of those memories was the day I accepted Christ. Sitting on my parent's dining room floor as a small child, a thought weighed on my mind: "I want Jesus." I prayed a small prayer I had learned in Catechism, inviting Jesus into my heart, and the peace that followed is still burned into my memory.

For some time, though, my faith remained predominantly inherited. I learned the songs. I learned the right answers. I learned how to belong. I loved the church, but I hadn't learned to abide.

During this time, I was also learning how hard school was. An ADHD and socially awkward kid, I suffered from social abuse. Looking to dull the ache, I fell into addiction and carried that sin quietly for years until - in middle school - I came undone. In that moment, completely vulnerable, my mother shared the gospel with me for the 'nth' time. And it stuck. I came to know Jesus that day, not just know about Him.

A couple of years later - as I continued to wander aimlessly through school - I received my call to ministry. I was a junior in high school, taking an internship at a public university as a TA. I had previously discovered a talent for teaching and was trying (and failing) to find a subject I enjoyed enough. When I ended up sharing the gospel with some of the students, I was hooked. I immediately applied to Calvin College, chose a Theology major, and declared a pre-seminary track.

While at Calvin, God gave me three key gifts: He affirmed and further equipped my abilities for teaching and preaching. I met my wife, and through her I discovered music. My ability to skillfully steward all three of those gifts has only grown and matured during my time in seminary.

Now, here I am, employed full-time at Bethel CRC as their Director of Worship and Youth. Week in and week out - I am leading worship in song, preaching the gospel, catechizing the youth, and teaching the congregation to love the Lord through prayer, lived example, song, public confession, reading scripture, and faithful service.

Statement of Reason

I am convinced that the Lord is calling me to continue abiding in his presence and living in obedience to His call to steward the gifts He has given me for the sake of building up His church. Over the course of my faith journey God has been pleased to equip me - through the Spirit - for the work of teaching, preaching, leading worship, shepherding, and pastoral care, and I aim to continue using these gifts in a professional capacity. I feel that many of the tasks I currently perform at Bethel are key responsibilities of a Minister of the Word - as laid out in scripture and in the church order - and humbly request candidacy for ordination in the CRCNA.

Soli Deo Gloria.





Name: Aaron Solomon-Mills

Current Place of Residence
Bellflower, California

Education

St. Xavier University
Chicago, IL
B.A. in Music (Piano), 2007

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
M.Div., 2026

Experience

Eagle Rock Community Church
Homer Glen, IL
Music Director, Youth Director,
Associate Pastor, Lead Pastor
February 2006 - December 2015

First CRC
Bellflower, CA
Ministry Coordinator, Pastor
August 2016 - Present

Iglesia Misionera Renacer CRC
Bellflower, CA
Worship Intern
April 2025-July 2025

Contact

562-556-0156
aaronsolemonmills@gmail.com

Faith Journey

I grew up as a nominal Catholic. Our parish priest lived next door, and I attended Catholic high school for four years. Through that experience, I gained a basic familiarity with the Bible as a historical record and a source of moral instruction, and I learned that serving God meant helping others. I participated in service projects in the inner city and mission trips to South Dakota and Mississippi. While these experiences shaped my sense of compassion and responsibility, my faith was largely cultural. I had never been taught clearly about sin, repentance, forgiveness, or justification by faith. After graduating from high school and experiencing new freedom in the city of Chicago, I drifted further from Catholicism. Yet during this season, the Lord persistently placed Christian witnesses in my life—some strangers, some close friends, including Michelle, the woman I would later marry. Through conversations with her and through studying the Gospel of John with her family, I began to see the difference between religious practice and a living relationship with Jesus Christ. As I encountered Scripture more deeply, I recognized my own sin and my need for a Savior, and one evening I prayed to receive Christ’s forgiveness and entrusted my life to Him.

Following my conversion, I became part of a Bible-centered church and began engaging Scripture seriously for the first time. As I grew in understanding, I came to see the unity of God’s work: the Word of God revealing the heart of God, and the Spirit of God drawing sinners to Christ. During this time, a couple in the church gave us a copy of the Heidelberg Catechism. Reading it alongside Scripture, its pastoral clarity and Christ-centered assurance stirred my heart years before I had any awareness of the Christian Reformed Church, grounding my faith in grace rather than performance.

From the beginning of my time in that church, I became involved in ministry, serving as a pianist on the worship team. Over time, I grew aware of broader needs within the congregation and began to wonder how God might use my gifts more fully. In the winter of 2002, I was unexpectedly fired from my job in the commodities market just days before Christmas. Shortly afterward, I was invited to serve on staff in an administrative role, which deepened my involvement in the life and ministry of the church.

My wife and I continued to grow through service in youth ministry, Vacation Bible School, and short-term missions. A particularly formative experience was a three-week mission trip to Lima, Peru, where we served at a children’s home. Through challenging and even life-threatening circumstances, the Lord clarified our sense of calling toward vocational ministry and deepened our dependence on Him.

After much prayer, we decided I would return to school to complete a music degree, seeking to serve the church through worship leadership and the formation of musicians. Over time, it became clear that our season in that congregation was coming to an end, and the Lord led us into a new church community and ministry context.

In this next season, God continued to form my faith through the life of the church, particularly by re-centering us on Scripture, prayer, discipleship in the home, and hospitality. These practices reshaped my understanding of what it means to be the Church—not merely to attend one. Through these experiences, the Lord has steadily drawn me deeper into faith, service, and trust in His grace, confirming my call to shepherd God’s people through Word-centered ministry.

Statement of Reason

I am seeking ordination in the Christian Reformed Church because I am convinced that the Reformed creeds and confessions offer a faithful and coherent interpretation of Scripture, grounded in the sovereignty and grace of God revealed in Jesus Christ. Over time, I have come to trust the Reformed tradition as a pastoral framework that consistently directs the church to the Word of God and to Christ alone as its head.

I am also drawn to the polity of the Christian Reformed Church, which honors the shared calling of elders, deacons, and ministers, and places a high priority on the rule of Christ alone in His Church. The CRC's commitment to mutual accountability, discernment, and the wise exercise of authority reflects my understanding of healthy pastoral leadership. Within the Christian Reformed Church in North America, I see an emerging community committed to patiently translating a theologically grounded faith into lived practice—holding together a coherent theology, intentional worship, and a willingness to wrestle honestly with difficult questions. I desire to be part of that ongoing work because it was first done for me through patient teaching, shared discernment, and ministers of the Word who were willing to walk with me as faith took shape.

Pastors, classis mentors, elders, and congregations have walked alongside me with generosity and trust, offering both guidance and honest affirmation. I am deeply grateful for the way God has used this church to nurture my faith, clarify my calling, and confirm my desire to pursue ordination as a Minister of the Word.



Name: Samuel Moon

Current Place of Residence

Diamond Bar, California

Education

California State University
Fullerton

Fullerton, CA

B.A. in Religious Studies, 2016

Westminster Theological Seminary
Glenside, PA

M.Div., 2021

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI

EPMC, 2026

Experience

Emmanuel Presbyterian Church
Philadelphia, PA

Youth Intern

July 2017 - June 2021

All Nations Church (CRC)
Sunland, CA

Youth Pastor

October 2021 - Current

Contact

(909) 895-9642

samuel.moon@anconnuri.com

Faith Journey

I grew up in Walnut, California in a Korean immigrant Christian household. I was raised in the church from childhood and had a very complicated relationship with my faith. I was highly influenced by my involvement in youth ministry to be a follower of Jesus, but at many times my faith was also very “part-time” in my life—it was mainly on Sundays and some Fridays where I felt compelled to live as a Christian. In a way, I functionally believed in and lived according to a form of “moralistic therapeutic deism.” I believed in Jesus, but merely as moral example and teacher that gives me a moral guideline for life. Though I was good at being “religious” and “good” my faith was shallow. But God was going to break in and enter deeper into my life, but He would do so first by allowing me to go through trials.

During my time in high school as a teenager, all I wanted during that time was the acceptance and approval of others – I just wanted to be loved and find a place where I belong because I was very broken and experienced a lot of hurt from others to the point that I was sent to a psychiatric hospital because I had severe depression. I just wanted to be loved and find a place where I belong. Little did I know that God would ultimately lead me to Himself. It was at a Christian club on campus where I met my friend Kevin Wu, and there he shared the Gospel with me over and over again, and he did this not only through his own words, but by his very own life. Something about him intrigued me because I never met such a person whose life was Christ-centered and transformed by the Gospel. He was the salt and light in my dark and broken world, and it was through him that I came to understand the truth of the Gospel in such a deeper and authentic way in my life.

In my journey of faith during college I got heavily involved in my own local church and in various campus ministries such as Korean Campus Crusade for Christ, Intersarsity, and EPIC Movement. It was during this season that I was discipled in my faith and became more firmly grounded, but it was also during this time that I felt deeply convicted to go into ministry. I wanted to help and counsel people who were broken, but I’m convinced that there’s nothing that can redeem and restore the broken than the Gospel of Jesus Christ. My pastor at that time affirmed my and I enrolled into Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia for my Masters of Divinity where I got to explore and study the riches of our reformed faith more deeply. It was during my time there I also served as a Youth Pastor at Emmanuel Church. Strangely enough, this experience made me feel like I’ve come full circle because it brought me back to such a formative time for my life and faith that was oddly familiar.

When I concluded my studies at Westminster, I was offered a position to further serve as a youth pastor over at All Nations Church CRC where I am currently. This is probably one of the greatest gifts and opportunities that God has entrusted me with because I have the wonderful privilege of serving and shepherding a youth group of over three hundred students, and being in such an influential position to reach and disciple so many souls for Christ.

Statement of Reason

I am seeking ordination in the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) because I believe that God has called me to make disciples and to shepherd His people through the redeeming, life-giving, and transforming truth of the Gospel of Jesus. I believe that the reformed tradition and faith given to us in the Three Forms of Unity are a rich summation and expression of our faith and I wholly

Statement of Reason (continued)

affirm them and believe they display the beauty of the Gospel. My desire is to be used as an instrument in the hands of our Redeemer to reach the lost and discover their true identity in Him. I believe that God will continue to lead me and shape me to be used for His Kingdom and I am humbled and blessed that He has given me this opportunity.



Name: Trevor M. Mouw

Current Place of Residence
Sioux Center, Iowa

Education

Dordt College
Sioux Center, IA
Bachelor of Arts, 2008

Sioux Falls Seminary
Sioux Falls, SD
MABT, 2020

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
M.Div., 2026

Experience

First CRC
Orange City, IA
Stated Supply
Feb - Nov 2023

Inwood CRC
Inwood, IA
Pastoral Intern
June - Aug 2024 and
June - Aug 2025

Faith CRC
Sioux Center, IA
Pastoral Intern
Oct 2025 - Aug 2026

Contact

(712) 360-2741
trevormouw@gmail.com

Faith Journey

I love that I am not my own but belong to God! God is good.

I was born to loving, Christian parents, Steve and Peg Mouw, who themselves come from generations of loving, Christian parents. God is faithful in His promise to show love to a thousand generations of those who love Him and keep His commandments. I was humbled to discover, when tracing my paternal Mouw line back to the 1500s, that my first ancestor to use the last name Mouw was a “kirkmeester” – a groundskeeper – of a Dutch Reformed Church (shortly after the Reformation in the Netherlands). I am very proud and yet humbled to continue this Reformed heritage!

God’s covenantal work in my life has significantly shaped me as a person. My parents had to sacrifice in order to bless me with Christian education from preschool through college. And through all those years, Christ has never let me go, even if I struggled with doubt or waywardness. The “three-legged stool” held me up: Biblically-committed Christian parents; God’s Word preached, and the Sacraments administered in a local church; and dedicated Christian education combine for a powerful and God-glorifying combination to lead each generation into faith and knowledge of our Living God. I made Profession of Faith at Bethel CRC when I was a freshman in high school.

I graduated from Dordt with a Psychology degree and great memories, but with no real direction for my life. So I went back to school, to Iowa State University, to become a teacher. Teaching was a much better fit for me. After brief stints as an English Teacher and a School Counselor, I’ve been blessed to teach Bible and Theology full-time at Unity Christian High School for almost a decade. I love this job, these students, and this school! And yet, God continues to push me and mold me in surprising ways.

The year I turned 30 (during the School Counselor era), while I was finally successful in reading the entire Bible cover to cover in a year, God grabbed hold of my heart in a new way. In a moment, He changed my desires. Suddenly, I no longer cared about many of the secular (yet good) things that had filled much of my time. In addition, some of the nagging sins I’d struggled with ended abruptly! Beyond that, I became obsessed with reading and studying God’s Word, with reading and studying Reformed Theology, and with going to church! I found myself evangelizing whenever I could. Today, some of that initial blaze has cooled into a pleasant hearth fire, but my commitment to the church, to the Bible, to Reformed Theology, and to evangelism remains as strong as ever. I am humbled that God would use me for work in His Kingdom.

My wife and I live in Sioux Center, Iowa, with our 3 children (ages 11, 9, and 6). As a family, we enjoy a quiet life: spending time together, being creative, and bringing the kids to gymnastics or taekwondo. We’re members of Faith Christian Reformed Church, where the ministry of Pastor Bob Pollema has been a great blessing to our hearts and minds.

In addition to my MDiv at Calvin Seminary, I have earned an MABT from Sioux Falls Seminary. John Calvin, Geerhardus Vos, and Herman Bavinck have had the greatest influence on my theology. There are many wise and godly teachers in church history, but these three are special to me. I appreciate their twin concerns for both the faithful teaching of God’s Word and for the real-world lives of people in the pews.

Statement of Reason

The remainder of my life is dedicated to ministry in Christ's Kingdom, as it has been since my call to teach high school Bible. This is God's will for my life. Increasingly, God has been internally and externally calling me to consider pastoral ministry in His church. I am excited to see what God has in store for us. I love the Christian Reformed Church and the children of God it holds throughout our two nations. I am eager to follow the path that God is laying out for my family and me. Through God's power, I desire to preach the Word, shepherd His people, and reach out to the lost for His glory. By seeking candidacy as a Minister of the Word in the CRCNA, my deep hope is to be a servant to Christ's church with the gifts that God has given to me and my family.



Name: Karlos Palacios

Current Place of Residence
Kissimmee, Florida

Education

Kuyper College
Grand Rapids, MI
B.S. in New Church Development,
2009

University of Central Florida
Orlando, FL
M.A. in Spanish Linguistics, 2011

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
EPMC, 2023

Experience

New Horizon CRC
Paterson, NJ
Pastor's assistant, Preacher,
Mentor and Bible Teacher
January 2007 - December 2008

Oasis Community CRC
Winter Garden, FL
Commissioned Pastor, Church
Planter, Leadership Development
Network Facilitator, Mentor, and
Coach
January 2009- December 2011

Comunidad de Fe CRC
Kissimmee, FL
Senior Pastor, Mentor, Coach,
and Trainer for new leaders and
Church Planters, and Member of
Consejo Latino
January 2012 - current

Faith Journey

My journey to faith in Jesus Christ is a story of displacement, calling, and gradual shaping under the care of the church and the Reformed tradition. It begins amid the turmoil of Peru and unfolds across several countries until I found a home in North American congregations, classrooms, and a growing Latino church in Florida.

I grew up in Peru during a period marked by terrorism, violence, and deep social instability, and as a young man I served in the Peruvian army during this dangerous season. The experience left me longing for a different kind of life, one that would move beyond fear and chaos toward peace and purpose. In 1989 I left Peru, trading familiar surroundings for the unknown promise of North America. At this stage I did not yet know Christ in a personal and saving way. The turning point came in New Jersey, not in a church building but through a voice on the radio. One day I turned on a local station and heard a Pentecostal preacher proclaiming the gospel. The message pierced my heart so deeply that I walked six miles straight to the station to find the people behind the sermon. There they welcomed me, laid hands and prayed for me. That was the day I accepted the Lord in my life.

From that day forward, my faith in Christ moved from vague religious commitment to a living relationship with the Savior who had pursued me through hardship. Soon after my conversion, the Lord began to disciple me within the life of the Christian Reformed Church. I became involved with a Hispanic ministry based at Madison Avenue Christian Reformed Church in Paterson, New Jersey, where a flyer offering Bible studies for Spanish speakers first drew me deeper into Reformed congregational life. These communities introduced me to Reformed theology and worship, offering a structure in which my new faith could grow strong roots. Months later I began teaching English as a Second Language to Spanish-speaking neighbors. Ministry for me was never only about programs; it was about serving people in concrete ways. From there I went on to serve with Pastor Ezequiel Romero and later serving God with Marco Avila at New Horizon Christian Reformed Church in Clifton, New Jersey.

The more I served, the more I sensed the Lord's call to pastoral ministry. My wife, Trini, my daughter Jocelyn and I stepped into ministry roles: I led ESL classes and small Bible study groups, while she and my daughter taught children's Bible classes in the church's Spanish outreach. Our team and shared service confirmed that my marriage itself was part of God's call, as we learned to labor side by side for the gospel. Still, I realized that to become a pastor in the Christian Reformed Church I would need formal training in Reformed theology and church planting.

In God's providence, Christian Reformed Home Missions, Calvin Theological Seminary, and Kuyper College had developed a new online degree program focused on missions and new church development, precisely the kind of formation I needed. When I learned of this distance-education path, I discerned the Lord's leading and enrolled. Academic study and ministry practice came together in powerful ways during these years. I worked through courses in Reformed theology and missiology online while continuing to serve as leader in local congregations. I later spent time in Grand Rapids, Michigan, taking my final on-campus class at Calvin Theological Seminary, a milestone that represented not only academic achievement but also a deepening of his Reformed identity. Upon graduation, I received a B.S. degree in missions/new church development, becoming one of the first graduates of the new program and

Faith Journey (continued)

gaining full credentials to serve as a church planter in the Christian Reformed Church. The training I received, shaped by Reformed confessions, covenant theology, and practical ministry, gave me a framework for understanding God's sovereignty over my own story of migration, conversion, and call.

The next step in that call led my wife and I to Florida. Home Missions, Classis Southeast and Oasis Community Church contacted me about a new ministry opportunity in a predominantly Latino area of Kissimmee. I did not accept the invitation lightly; for three months me and my wife prayed and weighed the counsel of others, hearing both warning voices urging caution "Be careful it may not God's calling" and encouraging voices that said, "Be faithful, maybe God has more for you." In time I became convinced that God was leading me to Florida, I began serving as an intern at Oasis Community Church in Winter Garden while starting a new work in nearby Kissimmee. What began as worship services in my home soon grew into Comunidad de Fe Christian Reformed Church, meeting first in a local high school and gradually becoming an established congregation.

The vision that now guides the ministry flows directly from my own encounter with Christ: to see a community transformed into a "community of faith in Christ." In Kissimmee I helped organize Bible studies, evangelism groups, and leadership training, always with the goal of equipping ordinary believers to serve. As a bi-vocational pastor and college professor, I have learned to delegate ministry, recognizing that God raises up others with gifts for mercy, visitation, and evangelism. Church members now visit the sick, go to hospitals, give rides, and care for those in need, living out the faith that once came to him through a radio broadcast and a praying community. If I recall the past I would say "In this way, the boy who grew up in a violent Peru, the soldier who left his country home in search of hope, and the new believer who walked into a radio station has become a Reformed pastor and church planter, bearing witness to the Christ who pursued him and continues to shape his life and ministry.

Statement of Reason

Having been brought from a vague belief in God to a personal, saving relationship with Jesus Christ, I now sense a deep responsibility to continue preaching the gospel that transformed my own life and to nurture believers in the faith. Ordination as a Minister of the Word would not create that call but would formally recognize and order what Christ has already been doing through my life and ministry.

I am seeking ordination specifically in the Christian Reformed Church because this is the church that received, disciplined, and trained me in a Reformed understanding of the Scriptures. Through Madison Avenue CRC, New Horizon CRC, Oasis Community Church, and Comunidad de Fe, I have experienced a consistent commitment to the authority of God's Word, the riches of the Reformed confessions, and a missional focus on reaching communities for Christ.

My theological training, pursued in close partnership with Christian Reformed Home Missions and Calvin Theological Seminary, has prepared me in the very pathways the CRC has established for Ministers of the Word. To be ordained in this denomination is, for me, to be accountable to the doctrinal standards and Church Order that have shaped my formation, to serve as a pastor and church planter in full fellowship with the broader CRC family. And finally, the most important reason is to participate more fully in the denomination's mission of proclaiming Christ's kingdom among the lost Hispanic communities in North America.

Languages

Spanish (Native Speaker)
English (Fluent)

Contact

407-780-0198
karlospalacios10@gmail.com



Name: Jin Soo Park

Current Place of Residence

Grand Rapids, Michigan

Education

Calvin College

Grand Rapids, MI

B.A. in Secondary Education

Social Studies and History, 2018

Calvin Theological Seminary

Grand Rapids, MI

M.Div., 2026

Experience

Resonate Global Mission

North Africa

Partner Missionary

August 2018 - June 2022

MK BEAM

Jeonju, South Korea

MK School Ministry Leader

August 2021 - August 2023

Korean Grace CRC

Grand Rapids, MI

Ministry Intern

September 2023 - May 2024

Resonate Global Mission

Santo Domingo, Dominican

Republic

Volunteer Missionary

June 2024

Seymour CRC

Grand Rapids, MI

Ministry Intern

August 2024 - May 2026

Faith Journey

My story of faith begins before I could even speak. At one month old, I underwent open-heart surgery. Through the hand of God, I survived and lived to tell of His power and providence. From the beginning of my life, I was sustained by the prayers of the saints. I grew up knowing that my life was not my own—it was preserved by grace.

When I was nine years old, my parents became missionaries, and our family moved to Africa. I lived among other missionary children on the mountainside of the Great Rift Valley. There, I was immersed in a diverse international community that broadened my understanding of the global church. At the same time, I learned to shift and reshape my identity in order to assimilate into the Western culture of my school.

Yet my childhood was not without struggle. Because of my medical history and small stature, I was often harassed. I wrestled quietly with insecurity and questions about why God would allow suffering in the life of someone who believed He had a plan. Those early experiences of weakness became formative. They stripped away self-reliance and slowly taught me to cling to Christ.

At age fifteen, I underwent a second open-heart surgery. Facing my physical fragility again forced me to confront deeper spiritual realities. During that season, I consciously entrusted both my physical and spiritual heart to my Healer and Creator. I did not have dramatic language for it at the time, but I surrendered myself to Christ with renewed trust. In hindsight, I was praying what would later become deeply meaningful to me: “My heart I offer to you, Lord, promptly and sincerely.” Four years later, I would walk the halls of Calvin University and discover that this prayer reflected the very motto of the seminary I would one day attend.

In college, I studied education with the desire to serve in Christian international schools. At the Urbana Missions Conference, I heard testimonies of believers serving in persecuted regions. Their courage and conviction stirred my heart. I sensed that the gospel was not meant to be contained within comfort but proclaimed to the ends of the earth. After graduation, the Lord led me to North Africa, where I taught third culture kids at a small Christian school.

There, my faith matured in new ways. Living and teaching in a cross-cultural context deepened my dependence on God. I witnessed the quiet strength of local believers and the beauty of Christ’s church across cultures. Through conversations, prayer, and shared life, I saw how the gospel sustains faith under pressure. Mentors in that season affirmed gifts in pastoral care and spiritual leadership, particularly for third culture kids navigating identity, faith, and belonging. Their guidance prompted deeper discernment about ministry.

In returning to Calvin to pursue a Master of Divinity, I encountered the richness of Reformed theology in transformative ways. I came to see that the gospel is not only about individual salvation but about the renewal of all things—hearts, communities, and societies—under the lordship of Christ. This theological vision gave language to what I had experienced globally: God is redeeming people from every tribe and nation and restoring His world.

Looking back, I see the steady hand of God through every season—surgery, suffering, transition, calling, and sending. My weakness became the soil where trust in Christ grew. My cross-cultural life shaped my heart for the global

Faith Journey (continued)

church. And my studies deepened my conviction that Christ's kingdom is both personal and cosmic.

Now, I live in hopeful anticipation of Christ's return and the full renewal He promises. Until that day, I desire to offer my heart promptly and sincerely in service to Him—proclaiming His love, embodying His justice, and caring for the hearts of those He entrusts to me.

Statement of Reason

My call is to embody the presence of Christ by reflecting His love and justice through spiritual and pastoral care in the mission field. I sense a deep conviction to walk alongside people across cultures—listening to their stories, tending to their wounds, and proclaiming the hope of the gospel with gentleness and courage.

I am seeking ordination in the Christian Reformed Church because I desire to serve within a covenant community that is rooted in Scripture and grounded in the Reformed confessions. Through ordination in the CRC, I trust that I will be supported by the prayers, accountability, and mentorship of faithful saints who will both shepherd and strengthen me. The CRC provides theological depth and ecclesial structure that anchor my ministry within the boundaries of our creeds and confessions.

Resonate Global Mission has especially shaped my understanding of mission as incarnational presence—entering culture humbly as a guest, honoring diverse perspectives, and bearing witness to Christ in word and deed.

Languages

Korean (Native)

English (Native)

Contact

(616) 328-3575

solomon8023@gmail.com



Name: Sungjin Park

Current Place of Residence
Fullerton, California

Education

Biola University
La Mirada, CA
Bachelor of Arts, 2018

Talbot School of Theology, Biola
University
La Mirada, CA
Master of Divinity, 2022

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
ThM., 2025

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
EPMC, 2026 - Present

Experience

Open Door Church
of Orange County (PCA)
Placentia, CA
Pastoral Intern
September 2014 - March 2016

Saddleback Church
Lake Forest, CA
Summer Online Campus Intern
May 2021 - September 2021

Sanctification Presbyterian Church
(KAPC)
Gardena, CA
English Ministry Pastor
May 2017 - September 2023

Faith Journey

I was born in a small town in South Korea as the son of a Presbyterian minister. In that cultural context, one deeply rooted in a system of honor and shame, my identity was not my own; I was primarily known as “the pastor’s son”. This title quickly became a burden rather than a gift, as it demanded a life of specific behaviors and performance. While I faithfully maintained this performative exterior in the church and the community, I lived a “two-faced” life; I lacked a personal relationship with the God I professed to believe in. To me, God was a distant, far-off judge who was loving toward others but strictly demanding of me. My life appeared well-put-together on the surface, but I was internally stuck in a cycle of performance.

Cracks began to form in my facade when I moved to Georgia at the age of 17. Faced with a significant language barrier, I could no longer explain or excuse myself as I once had. I was forced to repeat a grade due to a lack of English proficiency. This season of humbling was the beginning of God breaking down my self-reliance and bringing me into a new season of openness. Later, after my freshman year at Biola University, I returned to Korea for three years of military service. It was during these years, the lowest point of my life, that my family entered a “wilderness” period marked by a family member’s depression, divorce, and financial bankruptcy. I felt helpless, stationed in the military and unable to provide any tangible contribution to my family’s crisis.

However, this was the season when the Lord encountered me with profound tenderness and intimacy. I realized that the gospel was not about my performance for God, but Christ’s performance for me. This realization turned my life upside down, transforming everything from my theology to my sense of calling. I transitioned from seeking ministry as a place to earn approval to seeing it as a place to simply be with God and others.

By God’s grace and the support of sponsors, I returned to California to complete my Bachelor’s degree in Biblical and Theological Studies and eventually an M.Div. in Spiritual Formation, a truly transformative time. Toward the end of my undergraduate studies, I began serving as an English Ministry pastor. Those years taught me that true leadership in the church is not found in the charisma of a leader, but in the Word of God alone.

During this time, I came to sense the reality of total depravity in my own heart and the power of the grace that saved me, the very same power that continues to sustain me. Today, as a husband and father, I believe God is grounding me in the daily reality of being His child. I am chosen and adopted not because of my performance, but because of the perfect life and sacrifice of Jesus Christ. My desire now is the same call I sensed at the start of my ministry: to obey the Great Commission and the mandate of Isaiah 40:1, to comfort God’s people with the powerful gospel.

Statement of Reason

I am seeking ordination in the Christian Reformed Church because I believe God has called me to the ministry of the Word and the shepherding of His people. My understanding of the Scriptures is rooted in the Reformed tradition, strictly aligning with the Three Forms of Unity. I value the CRC’s commitment to the inerrancy of God’s Word, as the authority of the church rests not on the charisma of a leader or even a church, but on God’s Word alone.

Statement of Reason (continued)

I hold on to God's call through Isaiah 40:1 to comfort His people with the power of the gospel, as well as the Great Commission. Having transitioned from a performative legalist's mindset to one of vulnerability before God, I am passionate about sharing how the ordinary means of grace, the Word and the Sacraments, have the power to shape the formation of His people. Serving in a city like Los Angeles, where a person's identity is often defined by performance and salary, I seek to lead God's people to find rest in Christ's finished work. It is one of the utmost honors to serve within a denomination that honors the sovereignty of God over all of life.

Ttokamsa Home Mission Church
(CRC)
Los Angeles, CA
English Ministry Lead Pastor
November 2023 - Present

Languages

Korean (Primary Language)
English (Fluent)

Contact

(714) 804-2412
timsjpark0911@gmail.com



Name: Frank J. Quijada

Current Place of Residence
Tacoma, Washington

Education

Faith Seminary
Tacoma, WA
B.A in Religion

Faith Seminary
Tacoma, WA
M.Div., 2015

Faith Seminary
Tacoma, WA
Master of Arts in Christian
Counseling

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
EPMC, 2026

Experience

Tacoma CRC
Tacoma, WA
Youth Leader/Worship Director
August 2021 - January 2023

Languages

Spanish (Native Speaker)
English (Fluent)

Contact

(253) 208-9321
quijada1517@gmail.com

Faith Journey

I don't remember fully growing up in the church. My father was incarcerated during my early childhood, and my mother was a very young immigrant from Mexico. When my father returned to our family when I was approximately nine years old, instead of bringing order and blessing to our life, our home life was unstable and marked by significant brokenness, including alcohol abuse and domestic conflict.

Several years later, our family began attending church, where I was introduced to the Christian faith. During that season, the Lord worked powerfully in our family. Relationships were restored, our home life stabilized, and patterns of conflict were gradually replaced with peace and reconciliation.

As I became involved in the life of the church, I began serving in the music ministry, first as a guitarist and later as a keyboardist. In time, I was given the opportunity to lead congregational worship. I was also invited to preach occasionally and to teach Sunday School, experiences that helped confirm my growing sense of calling to ministry.

After several years of service, I began to examine more carefully the theological teachings of my charismatic/Pentecostal context. During this period, I encountered R.C. Sproul's *The Holiness of God*, which significantly shaped my understanding of the character of God and theology. I pursued further study through Sproul's writings and lectures. When I raised theological questions with my pastors who were uncles of mine, I was discouraged from continuing this line of inquiry. As a result, my wife and I prayerfully discerned that it was appropriate to seek a church home more closely aligned with these convictions.

We subsequently joined Tacoma Christian Reformed Community Church, where we found both theological alignment and a welcoming faith community. Several years later, I met a retired CRC missionary, Dr. Stephen Whatley, and his wife, Lorrie. Through their encouragement, I enrolled in the local seminary where they served as professor of Systematic Theology and admissions counselor, respectively. I completed both a Master of Divinity and a Master of Christian Counseling and then entered a season of prayerful waiting, seeking the Lord's direction regarding vocational ministry.

The Lord began to open a door when I was called to serve as Worship Director and Youth Leader at our home congregation. During this time, the Senior Pastor announced his intention to retire. Although I did not receive formal mentoring or preparatory guidance for pastoral transition, I applied for the Senior Pastor position despite not meeting the initial five-year pastoral experience requirement. I was not considered at that time.

Following an extended search process that did not result in a call, the search committee revised the position requirements. I was subsequently interviewed again and recommended by the committee. Two months later, I was ordained as a Commissioned Pastor and entered the Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidacy (EPMC).

Statement of Reason

I am seeking ordination in the Christian Reformed Church in North America because I am persuaded that God has called me to the pastoral office. I have come to love the CRCNA for its history, its theological depth, and its faithful-

Statement of Reason (continued)

ness to the Reformed confessions. I love and affirm the creedal standards of the church as articulated in the Three Forms of Unity.

I believe the Lord has called me to serve His church as an under-shepherd, faithfully preaching the Word, administering pastoral care, and equipping the saints for works of service. It is my earnest desire to serve the people of God within the CRCNA with humility, fidelity, and devotion to Christ.



Name: James L. Reed

Current Place of Residence
Wesley Chapel, Florida

Education

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
EPMC, 2026

Southern California Seminary
El Cajon, CA
M.Div., 2017
MA, Biblical Studies, 2013

University of Phoenix
Phoenix, AZ
BS, Business Administration, 1996

Community College
of the Air Force
Maxwell AFB, AL
AS, Avionics Systems
Technology, 1996;
AS, Aviation Operations, 2001

Experience

Green Meadow CRC
Helena, MT
Pastor
November 1, 2022-July 27, 2025

Northeast Park Baptist Church
Saint Petersburg, FL
Worship Pastor (Music)
July 2014-April 2018

Calvary Chapel
Casa Grande, AZ
Assistant Pastor
February 2009-June 2014

Contact

(520) 709-7635
jreed113@icloud.com

Faith Journey

I was raised in a Christian home. My earliest memories are of church attendance, singing around the piano, memory verses, and Bible stories suitable for a five year old boy. Through my middle and high school years I was encouraged to pray, study, and develop my budding musical ability. From 1979 to 1984, summer youth camps always featured nights of music and worship. As an adult looking back on these encounters, I am grateful for the effectual call of God upon me at such a young age!

During my senior year of high school, however, I became very disillusioned with religion as I saw and understood it. I was convinced that Christianity was the truth, but I was also equally convinced that what I had seen modeled throughout my young life, especially in times of crisis could not be correct. This observation led to a time of wandering, confusion, and sin. I felt God calling me into ministry for Him; however, due to shame, guilt, and personal failures, I could not find a way to fulfill that calling. In 1987, I joined the Air Force. My wife and I left our surroundings with hopes to start anew. The journey was far from over, and in July of 1991 after I returned from the Gulf War, instead of feeling that I was growing closer to God, I began to feel further isolated from Him.

Filled with questions, and guided by God's providence, I began a quest for answers. I had no idea where my journey was about to take me. By God's grace, a friend invited me to join his worship band playing at Calvary Chapel of Tucson. The year was 1995. Calvary was a fellowship where expository teaching through the entire Bible was the focus. Worship time and music were modern, spirited, but not out of order. I had grown up learning traditional hymns, but the modern worship music and words seemed to be more personal and intimate. I would remain in the Calvary Chapel movement for almost 20 years. There were three major life-lessons which I learned during my time in the Calvary movement: 1. There is no substitute for reading the Bible verse by verse, chapter by chapter while being taught in an expository method. 2. Love is what true believers in Christ demonstrate to each other and to the stranger in their midst. 3. God had indeed called me to serve Him; the calling was confirmed. By 1998, I experienced a true revival of the Spirit, confessed my sins, and responded to the call of God placed upon me from my youth. I was ordained to gospel ministry in 2006.

I retired from the Air Force and followed this calling, becoming an Assistant Pastor in 2009. Seminary education led to where I am today theologically speaking. I embraced Calvinistic thought around 2014, and within four years, I was fully Reformed, and had embraced the Three Forms of Unity.

I was commissioned by Classis Yellowstone and on November 1, 2021, I accepted the call to be the pastor of Green Meadow Christian Reformed Church (CRC) in Helena, MT. Having the privilege to minister in this context confirmed the calling even more.

In July 2025, God opened the doors to begin Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) at James A. Haley VA Medical Center, Tampa, FL. I am currently completing CPE, with an estimated completion date of November 2026.

It is an honor beyond words to proclaim the gospel of Christ. The spiritual and ministry formation experienced at Green Meadow, and now in a hospital setting has truly been priceless. I have seen professions of faith, discipleship, cross-cultural Christianity in practice, and unity in the Body of Christ.

Faith Journey (continued)

My journey has been a long one, but God has been gracious to me. This is why I can truly minister to those who may be spiritually wounded and/or come from a different tradition than my own. In the CRC I have found an ecclesiastical home where I can fulfill the calling of God which began during childhood.

Statement of Reason

I desire to be ordained in the Christian Reformed Church because of the call of God first and foremost. He has given me the gifts of pastor-teacher, administration, knowledge, wisdom, faith, leadership, and service. To use these gifts as a Minister of the Word is a serious undertaking. I am not only called and gifted by the Holy Spirit, but now through education and ministry formation, equipped to do the work of the ministry. God has placed within me a deep love for Reformed thought, biblical theology, and The Three Forms of Unity. I desire to preach the gospel of Christ, educate His people, and, God helping me, generally edify His Church through whatever means He sees fit to use. All life—all for the glory of God!



Name: Justin P. Roukema

Current Place of Residence
Langley, British Columbia

Education

University of Victoria
Victoria, BC
Bachelor of Arts, 2005

Canadian Reformed
Theological Seminary
Hamilton, ON
M.Div., 2011

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
EPMC, 2026

Experience

Brampton CanRC
Brampton, ON
Ministry Intern
June 2010 - August 2010

Brampton CanRC
Brampton, ON
Assistant Pastor
October 2011 - June 2012

Abbotsford CanRC
Pastor
July 2012 - June 2017

Fleetwood CRC
Surrey, BC
Lead Pastor
February 2024 - current

Contact

(604) 615-2589
jroukema@fleetwoodcrc.org

Faith Journey

I was blessed by being born to Christian parents who presented me for baptism when I was a baby. Through my childhood I was formed in a Christian home and school and raised as a disciple of Jesus in a Reformed worldview.

I graduated from the University of Victoria in 2003. The faith that had been formed in me prior to university was mostly intellectual and practical, and this posed challenges for me during my university years. God used this time to transform my faith into something that was much more relational, and I began to come to a new awareness of experiencing the grace our Lord Jesus Christ, and love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit in daily life. What was once more abstract in my mind was now becoming a reality in my own life.

Through this transformation, I began to feel called to ministry and pursued this call by enrolling in our denominational seminary. After seminary, I first accepted a role as assistant pastor in Brampton Ontario and then accepted a call at a Canadian Reformed church in Abbotsford, BC. While at this church, my journey toward the Christian Reformed church began through various twists and turns.

One of these turns happened after 5 years of ordained ministry, when I took a role as an estimator/project manager for a medium sized restoration and painting company. During my time there I grew in my leadership and communication skills. I also discovered how important ministry was to me, as I found myself eagerly jumping into leadership roles and facilitating discipleship groups.

This experience led me to a sense of longing for ministry again. We joined Immanuel Christian Reformed Church in 2023, and I began to look for possible opportunities in the CRCNA. Before long, I was in conversation with Fleetwood CRC. I was very open and honest with them about my own discernment process and apprehensions. They were gracious and happy to help me discern whether God was calling me to ministry in the CRCNA. In 2023, I accepted their offer to serve as lead pastor, with the understanding that I would complete the EPMC in 2 years.

My lovely wife Amanda was with me through over 20 years of this journey. We were married in 2003, and God has blessed us with four children.

Statement of Reason

Through these past three years as members and in ministry here, the intergenerational, intercultural, and missional distinctives of the CRCNA have felt like home. This has been fertile soil of a Reformed world view where I have been encouraged and grown in a holistic faith that seeks to answer God's call in all areas of life, including for myself, for covenant community, and for all creation. I am blessed to serve God in a way that can ignite my curiosity and joy in the gospel in fulfilling ways, where there is room for deep study of the gospel that finds a way to hit the ground running in worship, in family, in community, and in work. So far, I feel my own sense of call being fulfilled in a place that is devoted to the whole council of God in all these areas and walks of life. And I look forward to the opportunities God might give me to serve his church in leadership, in proclaiming the good news of our Saviour Jesus, in pastoral ministry, and in seeking the welfare of the city.





Name: Dai Shi

Current Place of Residence

Richmond, British Columbia

Education

Tianjin University of Science and Technology
Tianjin City, China
Bachelor of Financial Management, 2008

Biblical Seminary of the Philippines
Manila, the Philippines
M.Div. in Pastoral Counseling, 2011

Regent College
Vancouver, BC
Graduate Diploma in Christian Studies, 2017

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
EPMC, 2026

Experience

Xiahu Christian Church
Xiapu Town,
Fujian Province, China
Mandarin Ministry Pastor
2011-2013

Edmonton Good Shepherd Chinese Lutheran Church
Edmonton, AB
Mandarin Ministry Pastor
2017-2022

Faith Journey

My name is Dai Shi. In Chinese, this name means “era”. I was born and grew up in an atheist family in China. My mom is the first one to believe in Jesus. I believed in Jesus when I was 13 years old. My mom told me at that time, “Dai, you want to believe in Jesus, because He is the Lord.” I obeyed and accepted Jesus as my Lord and Savior.

I went to Tianjin City to study at university. During that period of time, I went to church at least 3 times every week. I was a volunteer in that house church, served at the prayer meeting, Bible study group, youth fellowship as well as Sunday service. I believe the church time during those 4 years of university life is the most meaningful and precious time.

After university, I went to the Philippines and studied at Biblical Seminary of the Philippines in the same year. It was the first time that I had formal theological training. I am grateful to my Systematic Theology Professor, Rev. Dennis Yam. He graduated from Westminster Theological Seminary. He brought me into the door of Reformed Theology and built a firm theological foundation in my life. I have not studied others, except Reformed Theology. This formal theological training helps me in my ministry. Rev. Dennis Yam visited me and my family in 2025. He was very delighted to see me serve in a reformed church.

I got married with my wife, who was a school mate of mine in the Biblical Seminary of the Philippines. We served together at her hometown in Fujian Province for about two years. I applied to Regent College and we arrived in Vancouver in October 2014. The journey in Regent College was different from what I had planned, and I graduated earlier than what we expected in 2017. I went to Edmonton, Alberta and served in a Lutheran church there.

I served in Edmonton Good Shepherd Chinese Lutheran Church for 5 years. It was the first time that I served without my wife co-working with me. It was also a faith-strengthen and life-transformed experience for me. One one hand, I applied what I learnt in daily church ministry. I taught Westminster Shorter Catechism with the teenagers as their conformation class. That was not a Lutheran document, but that was a good reformed theological course for me to teach the teenagers, so that they will learn basic Christian doctrine. On the other hand, I prayed eagerly everyday. There has been a period of time that I would not get out of my car before prayer. I felt I didn’t have enough strength to face the new day if I did not pray first. It was surely not easy, but it was also an important experience in my life to believe and feel the love and faithfulness of Jesus our Lord.

My whole family moved back to Richmond, British Columbia in July 2022. I became the Mandarin Ministry Pastor at Immanuel Christian Reformed Church in September 2022. Now I have served at this church for more than 3 years. It was joyful and beneficial to serve at Immanuel CRC. The calling from God as a pastor is being sharpened and renewed again and again. The word “Pastor” has a deeper meaning in my heart. I don’t know the future of my life, but my life is in Jesus’ hands. Therefore, my life is beautiful and meaningful, not only in this earthly life, but also in eternity.

Statement of Reason

Jesus guided my whole family to move from Edmonton to Richmond, and serve at Immanuel Christian Reformed Church. He prepares the reformed

Statement of Reason (continued)

theological training for me, so that I can serve with a firm reformed theological foundation and teach the congregation sound doctrine. As a Chinese, my language and background helps me to serve Chinese members in Canada.

I am able to know more about CRCNA through taking the EPMC program. I appreciate the courses provided in this program, especially CRC History and CRC polity. By studying Church Order together with the elders and deacons, we are able to learn from the wisdom of other CRC leaders. As an immigration church in Canada, it is always important to build a conversation with our denomination. CRCNA allows this conversation to be applied in many aspects. I am grateful to be an ordained minister of CRCNA. I will continue to help our church grow together with our denomination.

Immanuel Christian
Reformed Church
Richmond, BC
2022-present

Languages

Mandarin (Native Speaker)
English (Fluent)
Cantonese (Fluent)

Contact

+1(604)276-8250
luke@icrc.ca



Name: Jacob P. H. Toman

Current Place of Residence

Ada, Michigan

Education

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
EPMC, 2026

Covenant Theological Seminary
St. Louis, MO
M.Div., 2013

Central Michigan University
Mount Pleasant, MI
B.S. in Human Interpersonal Communication and World History
August 2009

Experience

Ada Christian Reformed Church
Ada, MI
Lead Pastor
April 2023-present

Heritage Presbyterian Church
Wildwood, MO
Pastoral Assistant
June 2019-December 2020

Midtown Presbyterian Church
St. Louis, MO
Ministry Coordinator
June 2015-June 2017

Gospel & Gaming
St. Louis, MO
Lead Missionary
May 2013-May 2018

Faith Journey

My faith journey starts with the blessing of being born into a multi generational Christian family. Both of my parents had strong faith in Christ. The Lord allowed me to see the fruits of my own ways during my teenage years. During my worst years of backsliding and rebellion, I was known for my deceit and lies. I'm thankful that due to God's grace I've been changed and charged by God to speak the truth of Christ to those around me.

It was nothing short of the glory and grace of God that transformed me from the miserable liar I was, into the servant of truth I am now. Many mentors, elders, deacons, pastors, and dear believers have poured the love of God into my life. I'm thankful for how God has remade me, and repurposed me by His Spirit and church for the work of serving the body of Christ.

God had a new life for me with forgiveness, family, and a future I could never have imagined apart from Christ. In 2009 my beloved Amy and I graduated from Central Michigan University, got married, and began serving at a church plant. During this time we learned to serve in children's ministry, small groups, and evangelistic efforts in an urban environment. From there our family moved to St. Louis Missouri to pursue a M.Div from Covenant Theological Seminary. Over the next 13 years God brought us to many various churches of various reformation heritages throughout Missouri and Southern Illinois. We were thankful to see our living children baptized as covenant children and now rejoice in raising a teen driver, a pre-teen comedian, an elementary dancer, an energetic kindergartener, and a newborn.

Statement of Reason

In 2023 God made it clear that the CRCNA would be our family's home. I had begun prayerfully considering church calls in the CRC in the Midwest, Southern Canada and East Coast. During this period of discernment the people of Ada CRC in Michigan invited me to serve as their pastor. The combination of people who demonstrated Christ-like care for us, along with robust confessional heritage was a clear sign that God was calling me and my family to join the mission and work of the CRCNA.

Having had the blessing of serving alongside many different reformed and reformation adjacent churches and parachurch organizations, I've grown to appreciate the unique way the CRC approaches and embodies biblical Christ-like living in community. Through my time at Calvin Seminary in the EPMC program, Classis Thornapple Valley on the Classis Ministry Leadership Team, and serving as Lead Pastor at Ada CRC, I have gotten first hand experience at the loving balance and precision of the CRCNA at local, regional, and denominational levels.

As a former Calvin Seminary president once joked "The Pentecostals have ardor, the CRC has order". That quote makes me chuckle, but with thankfulness. I have gotten to witness both in my few years so far in the CRC. I've experienced the genuine love for the Lord that is expressed through sincere service of believers and the lost. This love mixes well with a rigorous foundation rooted in the scriptures and our continentally reformed accent. I'm thankful for the growing friendships and family of the CRCNA and I'm looking forward, Lord willing, to many Spirit filled years of service to come.

Sunshine Ministries
St. Louis, MO
Ministry Assistant
December 2011-June 2013

Providence Presbyterian Church
Plant (PCA)
Lansing MI
Pastoral Intern
August 2009-December 2011

Contact

(618) 409-9343
toman.jp@gmail.com



Name: Joseph A. Tuttle

Current Place of Residence
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Education

Calvin University
Grand Rapids, MI
B.A. in Religion, 2023

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
M.Div., 2026

Experience

Alger Park Church
Grand Rapids, MI
Ministry Intern
June 2025-May 2026

Cascade Fellowship CRC
Grand Rapids, MI
Seminary Intern
September 2023-May 2025

Fifth Reformed Church
Grand Rapids, MI
Jubilee Fellows Intern
June 2022-November 2022

Heritage CRC
Grand Rapids, MI
Summer Intern
June 2021-August 2021

Contact

(616) 583-2001
joey.tuttle@gmail.com

Faith Journey

I grew up in a Christian home in the West Michigan area, and was baptized as a baby in the same church that I've called "home" since then. My parents modeled servant leadership and leading in the church through their work with sound and music, and a dear woman in my church saw that I was always at church early, since mom and dad were anyway. She decided to pair me up with an older gentleman at my church to greet because of this. There was my first taste of serving in the church. My home church modeled service with and to one another, and they equipped, encouraged, and guided me and others in that!

Along the way, my faith grew through baby steps as God formed me into who he has made me to be (and still continues to form me!). From some early years, God prompted further connection and heart transformation through a really grace-filled experience. In fifth grade, I was struggling with doubt of belief in God. I found myself frustrated by all the brokenness in the world—from family deaths, to broken relationships, to frustration in everyday life from worry or bullying. In Fifth grade English class on an April afternoon, I prayed a very dangerous prayer...and I thank God he chose to answer it kindly instead of chidingly. I prayed "You know, God, if you're real..." (a dangerous prayer indeed!) "...make it snow today." I looked outside. Not a cloud out there. "Actually, if you're real, make it rain today."

It snowed that day.

And so, my faith journey has been one where God has continued to show up in ways that exceed my finite expectations, surprising me in both the extraordinary and the seemingly ordinary. After a taste of communion (one of those 'single serve' communion cups) at a "Nerd Chapel" service at Grand Rapids Board Gaming Convention, I made Profession of Faith later in Middle School. This experience led me to wish to publicly declare my faith in God before the Body of Christ through Profession of Faith.

I found continued connection with the church through greeting at church services. I found great delight in theater and learning to love stories, praying with fellow students who had anxiety leading up to performance, and continued to dive in for learning about God and his world. And I so enjoyed going to a Christian school where we could discuss Scripture, wrestle with tougher concepts, and be mentored.

After a worship camp at Hope College further clarified that God was leading towards ministry, I went off to Calvin University. There, God taught me a lot through joys and sorrows. Joys included being an RA, taking tough, fascinating classes, long and late conversations, leading Bible studies, and internships that broadened my understanding and willingness to understand others. Sorrows and struggles included (once again!) being an RA, wrestling with tough texts and pastoral conversations, Covid, and mourning the death of a suitemate.

Then, at Calvin Seminary, things were also such a joy...and full of sorrows, struggles and laments. Classes taught me the importance of spiritual disciplines and how to study Scripture. An Internship at Cascade provided space to learn what it looks like to work with and lead a large staff through conversations with the head pastor/mentor. Alger taught me through consistently preaching for a beautiful and genuine community and helped me realize how much I enjoy spaces with lots of liturgy. A two and a half week internship in Nebraska with some close seminary friends taught me about the power of an authentic,

Faith Journey (continued)

testimony-filled church full of powerful outreach spaces, reconciliation, and warm community that bears witness to Christ's work in their lives, in the good, the bad, and the ugly! Counseling, a retreat studying Psalms, and pastoral care class all provided healing from a really tough summer in 2024. God worked in the good and bad spaces for his glory and good. In all these spaces, I had such a beautiful community to connect with and grow in formation together.

I'm thankful to God for so many mentors and friends that have continued to form me and guide me! My mentor pastor Bob Huisman has continued to provide feedback and guidance since 2021 when I interned at my home church—he's seen a whole bunch of those joys, sorrows, and everything in between. Professors, teachers, and mentors continue to speak into my discernment of call. Friends at the seminary continue to be delightful support for one another as we encourage and pray with one another. My parents have continued to provide insights and encouragements; my home church keeps encouraging and providing opportunities to reconnect with them through pulpit supply and conversations! And some of my closest friends from college have remained an incredibly important and consistent connection of praying with one another and offering guidance on discernment (...with some of them that's often at a Denny's for breakfast!). I'm so delightfully grateful for God's continued forming me through folks in my life, those named and those left unnamed!

And so often it's a surprise! I delight that God has brought guidance throughout my life and continual heart transformation, but I also am joyful that he often does so in ways that aren't exactly how I expect. And you know what?

He's going to keep on surprising you and me time and time again. In the joys and sorrows, the good and bad, we can know that this remains true: God is good, all the time. And all the time, God is good.

Statement of Reason

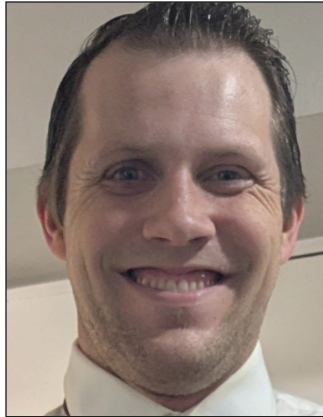
Here's another important truth for us to constantly remember: "I am not my own, but belong, body and soul, in life and in death, to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ." Because of that, in an attitude of gratitude, we submit, to the best of our ability, to the will of "Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we can ask or imagine."

Through various mentors, friends, and experiences, God has pointed me towards a life in ministry. I am seeking ordination in the CRC for that reason. I grew up in the CRC, and I find the creeds and confessions to be so important and helpful guides, as well as beautiful throughlines like Covenantal theology being key to our understanding.

In college and seminary, to pair with an internal/external call, I found out that I also deeply enjoy community connection, learning and growing together, and the process of praying through and writing a sermon. I thank God that he has also provided experience that helps clarify more of the specifics of call and of self as well.

Wherever God leads, I look forward to continuing to: learn and teach; be guided and guide; love and be loved; be shepherded and shepherd; be equipped and equip; be formed and point towards how God is forming someone; work with the Body of Christ.

Soli Deo Gloria!



Name: Nicholas B. Vander Ploeg

Current Place of Residence

Toronto, Ontario

Education

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
EPMC, 2026

Tyndale Seminary

Toronto, Ontario

M.Div. in Pastoral Ministry, 2026

Grand Valley State University
Allendale, MI

Bachelor of Arts, 2018

Experience

Friend of Nations CRC/Logos
Christian Fellowship
Ministry Intern
September 2025-August 2026

Life in Messiah Ministries

Jewish Ministry Intern

March 2026-August 2026

University of Toronto Graduate
Student Fellowship

Emerging Leader

September 2024-June 2025

Trekking Intern with Resonate

February-August 2020

Contact

(647) 385-8537

vanderpn.2012@gmail.com

Faith Journey

My formative years are no doubt similar to those of many who grew up in the CRC. Having been born to a Christian family, and baptised, as an infant, at Fellowship CRC in Grandville, I have been blessed by many over the years who have sought to pass on the faith to me. From my teachers at Hudsonville and Unity Christian schools, to those who discipled me at Immanuel CRC in Hudsonville, to my own family, including my parents Tim and Ellen, I have been blessed to receive the wonderful gift of faith from a very early age. While my early years were influential in forming my faith, it was not until college that my faith really began to take shape.

As I journeyed through my university years, the leaders and experiences I had through Campus Ministry at GVSU, instilled in me a Kingdom vision, while at the same time fostering the giftings that led to my journey into vocational ministry. I can see God's faithfulness in preparing me as he led me in my freshman year to the CMGVSU's newly formed Well Downtown ministry, in the basement of Gold Avenue Church, where I would take on a leadership role. I also see God's faithfulness in His leadership from that basement college ministry, to the Sunday morning services at Gold Avenue, where God even further developed my kingdom identity through faithful pastors and leaders like Pastor Dave, Pastor Gina, and more. These kingdom influences on my life were deeply impactful, but the vocational outworking of them did not become clear until the year 2020.

On February 18, 2020, I departed from Grand Rapids to serve with Resonate Missionaries in West Africa. What was intended to be a 2 month internship was eventually extended to a 6 month internship as the COVID pandemic led to the closure of the airport. While in Africa, God began to sanctify and deepen my understanding of who He was. He also developed my love for His word. As I continued to meet with Him in this isolated rural community I continuously sensed God's calling me to ministry. When I eventually returned home I remained unsure as to the ministry God was calling me to, until I went to Israel. While in Israel I recall a clear direction from the Lord that He was leading to teach and proclaim His word. It was at this point that I knew God was calling me to prepare for vocational ministry.

As I began to discern where the Lord might lead, I also proposed to my now wife. Since my wife is Canadian it became clear that the best place for me to begin my studies was in Toronto at Tyndale. Much like He did in Africa, when God sovereignly and surprisingly brought Jessica and I to Toronto, I saw God working in remarkable ways. From leading us a multi-cultural CRC community that has begun to feel like family in this bustling city, to providing great ministry mentors like Brenda Kroenemeijer, Steve VenHuizen, Ruth Hofman, and more. These people and experiences have been essential in helping me prepare for ministry. As I turn towards candidacy I am seeing God work in even surprising and exciting ways. Even as I prepare for ministerial candidacy I am preparing to begin an evangelistic internship to a sensitive community that I would never have expected I would. I continue to pray that the Lord will continue to show His faithfulness to my wife and I as we enter this next chapter of our faith journey.

Statement of Reason

As I come to the conclusion of my studies at Tyndale, I believe that the Lord has uniquely led me to seek ordination in the CRCNA. Even though I

Statement of Reason (continued)

have spent my entire life in this denomination, I am convinced that God has uniquely equipped our denomination for ministry in the 21st century. In light of theological and missiological heritage I believe this denomination is the place where I can most effectively engage in vocational ministry. I believe God can powerfully use a people, committed to His word, that are available to be used by Him to be His hands and feet in the world, and I believe this denomination is uniquely positioned to do that, and thus I want to minister inside of it.



Name: Zihan Xu

Current Place of Residence

Durham, North Carolina

Education

University of California, Irvine
Irvine, CA
Bachelor of Science, 2020

Talbot School of Theology (Biola
University)
La Mirada, CA
M.Div., 2024

Duke Divinity School
(Duke University)
Durham, NC
Th.M., 2025

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
EPMC, 2026

Experience

CrossPoint CRC
Chino, CA
Youth Leader
August 2019 - July 2023

Social Media Team
August 2018 - July 2023
Daily Devotional Team
January 2024 - December 2024

Benevolence Ministry
September 2025 - Present

Oversea Campus Ministry
Torrance, CA
Chinese Church Leaders Trainer
August 2021 - Present

Faith Journey

I lived with my maternal grandparents during my childhood. During that time, my Catholic grandmother was the only Christian in the family. She took me to her church's Children's Summer Camp in the summer of 2005. For the first time, I heard the Gospel, and though I did not fully understand it, I believed immediately. At the end of the camp, my grandmother signed me up for baptism, and I was seven. At the end of camp, they hosted a service and for two years, I was selected to read the Scripture for the evening message. In the second year's camp (2006), the church asked me to read 1 Samuel 3:1-10. My heart said: How wonderful it would be if one day God called me the way he called Samuel, and I could respond, "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening." Quietly, I said in my heart, "I don't want to be just a lector. I want to preach on the pulpit."

In 2014 my family moved to California, and our neighbor brought us to a local Chinese Baptist church. At first, I went because I wanted to be part of a community. I saw Christianity as one of the world's religions and God as one of many gods. I thought I should appear more Christian, so I began reading the Bible seriously. God revealed who he is and what he has done. A desire to devote my whole life to studying the Bible grew, but I was afraid that God would not allow me to do it. So, in order to see what God would say, I did something rather foolish: I tried to manipulate God.

At that time, I was applying for college. So before yet another ACT test, I prayed that if God helped me finish the test in peace, I would serve him in ministry for my whole life. It was a calculating prayer, as if I were trying to trade something I didn't really value for something I desperately wanted. But to my surprise, that day I felt none of the anxiety I had always felt before. I finished the test calmly and peacefully. When I turned in my paper, I thought to myself, Wait... that's it? Does that count? Then suddenly, it felt as if a voice spoke to me: I have answered your prayer. My rationality immediately thought, Maybe that was just my own inner voice. But I carried that moment with me. So, I started seeking signs and affirmation. I tried many things; they all pointed positively toward the calling, but I still didn't feel satisfied. Until one day, when I read John 4:35, I suddenly felt strongly convinced that God had indeed called me.

I decided to attend seminary after completing my undergrad, but I faced challenges with my family and financial support. I almost abandoned my calling, but I prayed. God answered me through Hebrews 11:1 and Psalm 27:10. As I approached my family again, with faith rather than fear, the Lord even used my Buddhist paternal grandmother to help my parents accept my calling.

During my sophomore year of college, I desired to be a part of a denomination. Many Chinese churches do not have a strong denominational identity, so I did not know how to choose. I prayed a simple prayer that the first denomination I entered would become my spiritual home. Not long after my prayer, a pastor who I'd known began a Chinese congregation at CrossPoint CRC in Chino. As I stayed, learned, and grew, I discovered the richness of the Reformed tradition which to my surprise, deeply resonated with me. This church remained my church home throughout college and seminary.

What struck me most, and gradually reshaped my faith, was the Reformed emphasis on God's covenant. Covenant theology helped me see that Scripture is not a collection of disconnected religious teachings, but one unfolding story of

Faith Journey (continued)

God's faithful promises. God draws a people into a lasting relationship, binding himself to them by his own grace. I began to understand that my Christian identity was not something I had to earn through performance, but something God had already secured for me in Christ. Although I had known about God since childhood, the gospel itself and the hope it offers had remained distant to me. The gospel showed me that God is already pleased with me and that my efforts were never meant to earn his approval. They were meant to testify to his grace. That realization freed me from the constant pressure to perform, and gave me a new kind of motivation, one rooted in gratitude rather than fear.

Through serving in churches and studying in seminary, I have been repeatedly brought back to this gospel hope. Now, graduating from seminary, I still remember what the Lord has called me to do: to study his Word for the sake of his people, to use what I have learned to equip the church, and to continually remind others of the hope of the gospel. I have come to see that ministry is not a way to earn God's approval, but a response to the fact that in Christ, God is already deeply pleased with his children. His faithfulness is what sustains me. And through the years, in the midst of many challenges, I have learned this: again and again, I must return to the promises of the gospel. In seasons of uncertainty, God's Word is the surest ground I can stand on.

Statement of Reason

I want to be a bridge between the Church and academia, letting the Church taste the sweetness of the good findings in academia and also letting academia know the need for the Church. To respond to the calling, I would need to connect to both academia and the Church. As part of the Christian Reformed Church, upholding the Reformed tradition, I sincerely appreciate the spirit of our Reformation: "Ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda (the Church Reformed, always Reforming)." On the one hand, this spirit reminds me that being reformed is not only a theological posture, but a spiritual discipline. As people renewed by the Gospel, we are continually invited to return to Christ in repentance and faith, allowing the Spirit to "reform" us again and again. In this way, "always reforming" is the daily rhythm of the Christian life. On the other hand, I believe this same spirit makes our denomination both deeply rooted and forward-looking. It calls us to be conservative in the best sense of the Word, while also remaining humble and open to further growth. Because God is always greater than our understanding, the Church must be willing to explore new questions, listen carefully to new voices, and discern fresh possibilities in how we understand God, ourselves, and the world we are called to serve. Therefore, I find CRCNA to be a fitting spiritual home for my vocation. I am eager to serve and contribute to CRCNA as a Minister of the Word.

First Reformed Church of Cary
(RCA)
Cary, NC
Ministry Intern
August 2024 - December 2025

Languages

Mandarin Chinese (Native Speaker)
English (Fluent)

Contact

(949) 247-6996
zihanxu219@gmail.com



Name: Jared M. Yaple

Current Place of Residence
Traverse City, Michigan

Education
Moody Bible Institute
Chicago, IL
Bachelor of Arts in
Youth Ministry, 1999

Trinity Graduate School
Deerfield, IL
Master of Arts in Communication
and Culture, 2003

Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI
M.Div., 2025

Experience
Watershed Church
Traverse City, MI
Commissioned Pastor
October 2015 - Present

Goodwill Northern Michigan
Traverse City, MI
Hosing Based Case Manager
December 2025 - Present

Cedarstone
Wheaton, IL
Ministry/Nonprofit Consultant
April 2016 - September 2019

Oneupweb
Traverse City, MI
Senior Account Manager
July 2013 - June 2016

Contact
(231) 944-6092
jared.watershedtc@gmail.com

Faith Journey

I was born in 1976 and grew up a military kid in Leelanau County, located in northern Michigan. My dad served on the Great Lakes with the Coast Guard, and my mom was an educator and grant writer. I have three younger brothers, and the phrase that guided our home was, “God loves you and so do we.”

My childhood church was a small United Methodist congregation in the country where people felt like family. That community was very formative for me, teaching me what it means for a congregation to love and care for each other. As a pastor, I hope to instill in others a sense of being beloved and belonging, and becoming like Jesus, that reflects this early church experience.

During the summer between eighth and ninth grade, I began reading the New Testament in my bedroom, lying on the fire-engine red carpet I had chosen when my family built a new house. In that moment, I experienced the overwhelming love of Christ in a way that transformed my heart. I often say that “my heart was strangely warmed by an irresistible grace,” a playful way of linking my United Methodist upbringing with a nod toward John Wesley’s Aldersgate experience, and my Reformed convictions. It was a joy-filled encounter with Jesus, who brought me out of darkness and into his light and life.

After high school, I moved to Chicago and pursued a B.A. in Youth Ministry at Moody Bible Institute. Following college, I entered a spiritually dry period, during which I questioned my faith and ministry calling. That season was broken open when I spent a summer helping students serve the people of the Northern Cheyenne community in Southeastern Montana. Out in “Big Sky Country,” I witnessed the hand of God guiding us in ordinary and extraordinary ways, and my faith was restored and deepened. After this experience, I continued my studies at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Harvard Divinity School, and Trinity Graduate School, earning an M.A. in Communication and Culture.

From there, I entered vocational ministry as a youth director at a church just south of Pittsburgh. In my thirties, I experienced a painful church split while serving as an associate pastor. The conflict was difficult, and after leaving that position, I stepped away from vocational ministry. During this period, I worked professionally in nonprofit consulting, marketing, communications, curriculum development, and account management.

God’s unexpected provision led me back into ministry. After moving back to northern Michigan to work at a marketing agency, I was asked to preach at Watershed Church, an Emerging Congregation in the CRC. Watershed’s pastor had just resigned. Over the next year, I preached thirty times, and our family became an active part of the congregation. During that season, I felt a strong call to serve Watershed as its pastor. I was installed as pastor in October 2015 and became a Commissioned Pastor in 2023. I am grateful to be a part of Classis Northern Michigan, and for the friendships, mentoring, and collegiality I have found there. I currently serve on the Home Missions Committee and the Board of Delegates for World Renew.

I returned to seminary in my mid-40s with the goal of completing a Master of Divinity. That time of study was deeply rewarding, not only for the intellectual engagement but for the relationships I built with fellow classmates, pastors, and future pastors. This goal was meant to be a stepping stone toward ordination in the CRC as a Minister of the Word.

Faith Journey (continued)

At Watershed, I seek to cultivate a ministry that is attentive, patient, and relational. We have restored a historic worship space in Traverse City and offered community events to foster listening between neighbors and share Christ's love. I approach pastoral work with what Eugene Peterson describes as "meticulous eyes for the signs of grace," valuing slow, relational discipleship and careful noticing of God at work. My theological vision is rooted in Reformed convictions: God's grace is central, Christ makes all things new, and God's covenantal faithfulness shapes both our lives and our churches.

In addition to pastoring at Watershed, I work at Goodwill Northern Michigan as a housing-based case manager, serving people who have exited homelessness and entered supportive housing. It is a rich and meaningful experience.

I am married to Jennifer, an artist and graphic designer. We enjoy hiking and traveling together. We have three children: Matthew, Kaitlyn, and Jackson. Kaitlyn is married to Dylan, and Matthew is engaged to Kate. I also enjoy reading and listening to music. My vision for the future is simple: to serve the church faithfully.

Statement of Reason

I am seeking ordination in the Christian Reformed Church because I believe God has called me to serve His people through preaching, teaching, and shepherding in a Reformed context. My faith was shaped in a small congregation in northern Michigan, where I first experienced the power of a loving, Christ-centered community. It was here that I encountered Christ as my heart was "strangely warmed by an irresistible grace." This moment changed my life.

God has prepared me through diverse educational and vocational experiences: youth ministry, Bible school, seminary, a summer serving the Northern Cheyenne community in Montana, ministry consulting, account management at a marketing agency, and case management. In all of these, God has strengthened my pastoral character and deepened my reliance on God. His provision also led me to Watershed Church, where I have served as pastor since 2015 and as a Commissioned Pastor since 2023.

I am drawn to the CRC for its people, theological depth, covenantal vision, grace-centered discipleship, and commitment to God's mission. Through ordination, I desire to faithfully proclaim the gospel, equip others for service, and cultivate Christ-centered communities to the glory of God.

