

Candidacy Committee Supplement

I. Candidates for minister of the Word

A. Candidates for ministry

Each year it is a privilege to meet and interview the applicants for candidacy. The interviews for these candidates were conducted this year by teams of four persons. The Candidacy Committee is pleased to recommend for candidacy the thirty-six individuals listed below. These persons include those who graduated from Calvin Theological Seminary (CTS) and from other accredited seminaries. Those attending seminaries other than Calvin Theological Seminary have completed the Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidacy (EPMC). Biographical details for each of the thirty-six candidates can be found in the Candidate Booklet, available for download at crcna.org/candidacy.

The following motion will allow their names to be approved by synod:

That synod declares the following thirty-six individuals as candidates for ministry of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church, subject to completion of all remaining (if any) requirements (the list of candidates eligible for call is available on the Candidacy Committee website: crcna.org/candidacy).

Laurel Ackerman-Lindholm	Amanda Mason
Arthur Agu	Curtis Meliefste
Jason Blunt	Grant Mensonides
Bryan Branderhorst	Samuel Moon
Kwangjun (KJ) Choi	Trevor Mouw
Jihoon (Daniel) Choi	Karlos Palacios
Victor Chua	Sungjin (Tim) Park
Jonathan Coupal	Jin Soo Park
Brady DeBoer	Frank Quijada
Travis Deur	James Reed
Joshua Dykstra	Justin Roukema
John Hall	Dai (Luke) Shi
Caleb Horjus	Aaron Solomon-Mills
Nathan Jansen	Jacob Toman
Yexiang (Debbie) Jin	Joey Tuttle
James Kostelyk	Nick Vander Ploeg
Devin Lunshof	Zihan Xu
Eric Lynch	Jared Yaple

B. Extension of candidacy

The rules of synod require that someone declared a candidate by one synod must request an extension of candidacy status at the following synod if a call has not been accepted. The Candidacy Committee communicates with such persons to determine the validity of their extension and to offer words of encouragement.

The Candidacy Committee recommends the following persons for approval of candidacy extension:

Julia Gho
 Charles Mutinga
 Peter Kranenburg
 Rachel Park

Christopher Smid
 Jonathan Sturuss
 Lorinda VanderWerp

C. Reinstatement of candidacy

Jelle Koersen was declared a candidate in 2022. He decided to withdraw his candidacy in February of 2024 due to very difficult, unforeseen personal circumstances. He wisely recognized that ministry would have been unsustainable at that time. Since then, with the support and guidance of trusted leaders and his church community, Jelle has discerned a renewed sense of call to ordained ministry. He now desires to reinstate his candidacy. We are pleased to affirm his request for reinstatement of candidacy, and we recommend that synod approve this request.

II. Article 8 – need established

Our process for guiding pastors ordained in other denominations who wish to become ordained in the CRC is described in Church Order Article 8. Church Order Supplement, Article 8, E directs the Candidacy Committee to be intimately involved in this process and to submit for synod’s review the names of those approved for Article 8 process. The Candidacy Committee has concurred on the need for the following persons in the past year. In each case the appropriate documents are on file with the Office of Candidacy.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Classis</i>	<i>Ordination Denomination</i>
08/13/2025	Hyun-il Kim	Hanmi	Evangelical Church Alliance
08/14/2025	Chang Yoon	Hanmi	Full Gospel World Missions
08/27/2025	Shawn Gerbers	Georgetown	RCA
09/4/2025	Derek Noorman	Georgetown	RCA
09/04/2025	Cheul Woo Choi	Columbia	Korean Methodist
09/15/2025	Giwoong Kwak	Niagara	Presbyterian Church in Korea
10/06/2025	Anel Becker-Ferreira	Eastern Canada	Dutch Ref. Church of S. Africa
11/20/2025	Jin Wook Ryoo	KoAm	Presbyterian Church in Korea
11/20/2025	Sanghoon Lim	KoAm	Presbyterian Church of Korea
01/14/2026	Justin Njikeu	Hackensack	Evang. Church of Cameroon
01/16/2026	Ryan Landt	Central Plains	RCA
03/03/2026	Luke Johnston	Iakota	Evang. Presbyterian Church
03/24/2026	Jihyung Kim	Eastern Canada	Presbyterian Church in Korea
04/27/2026	Samuel Kaha	Hackensack	Presb. Church in W. Indonesia
05/13/2026	Seong In Chin	Alberta North	Presbyterian Church in Korea

III. Nominations

Rev. Moon Bae Kim is completing his second term on the committee and is not available for reappointment. Rev. Lora Copley would have completed

her first term this year but she withdrew mid-year to take on the responsibilities of interim editor of *The Banner*. Thus the Candidacy Committee submits to synod two slates of nominees for appointment to fill two vacant positions, as presented in the Nominations section of the Agenda Supplement.

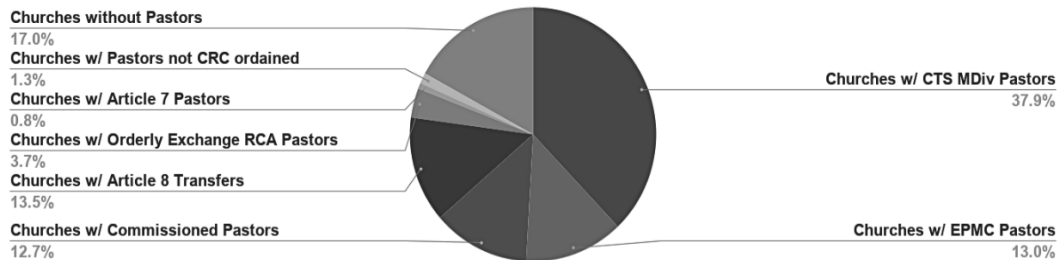
IV. Statistics regarding the theological training of CRCNA ministers

As was articulated in the first portion of the Candidacy Committee report to Synod 2026 (see *Agenda*, pp. 198-199), the Christian Reformed Church in North America has a long history of ensuring that its ministers are theologically trained. We continually hold a deep appreciation for the foundational role that Calvin Theological Seminary has played in the theological training and formation of CRCNA ministers for 150 years. This grounding has contributed significantly to the theological and cultural unity of the CRC. For most of our history, one could walk into any Christian Reformed church and expect to find a pastor who had been trained at Calvin Theological Seminary and formed to share a common set of core values and liturgical practice.

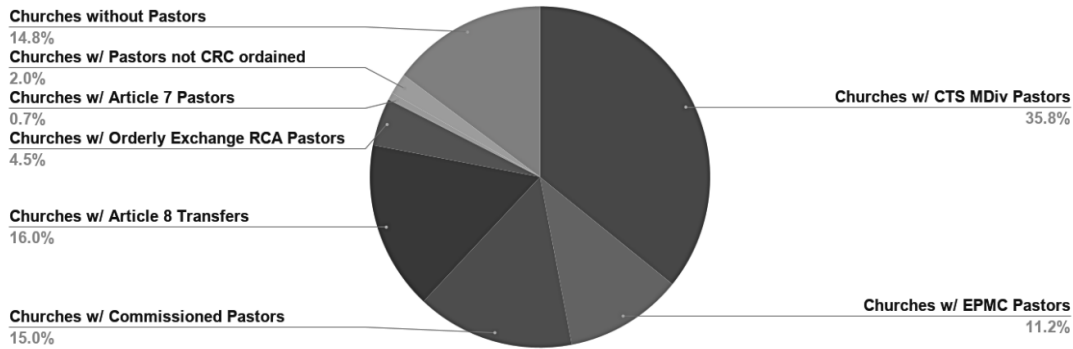
In more recent decades, the CRC has approved more flexible training pathways for those who desire to serve as pastors of Christian Reformed churches. We rejoice that this increased flexibility has made a positive impact on our denomination through increasing the diversity of our leadership and providing additional pastoral leadership for our churches. However, the gradual increase in leaders using alternate pathways to ministry has also led to a decrease in our educational standard for ministers, theological unity, Reformed “accent” or identity, and sense of connectedness to each other. Continued attention should be given to balancing the needed flexibility with our commitment to ensuring that all CRCNA ministers receive excellent formation, thorough theological training, and ample opportunities to build deep connections within their classis and denomination.

The Candidacy Committee is grateful for the efforts of Holly Small, Associate Director of Admissions at Calvin Theological Seminary, for researching the training pathways of all the ministers currently serving as a lead pastor at our 915 organized, emerging, and multisite CRC churches. Mrs. Small created a map of the churches of the CRCNA, categorizing and color-coding each by the source of the minister’s theological training. The following charts portray the statistics revealed by the research.

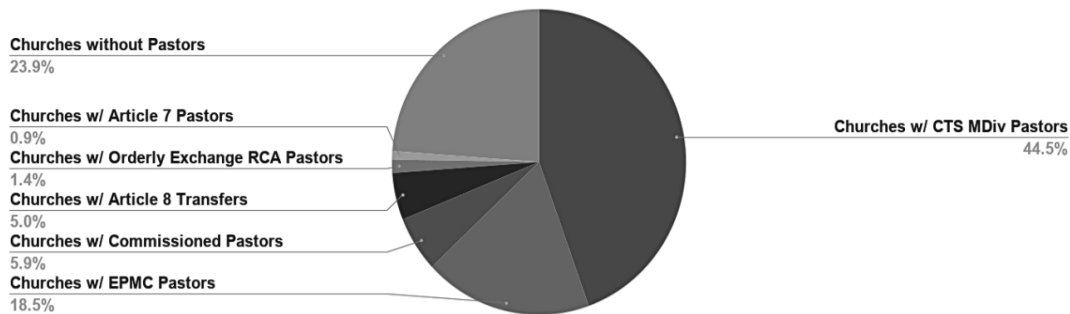
All Christian Reformed Churches in North America



All Christian Reformed Churches in the United States



All Christian Reformed Churches in Canada



Breakdown of charts

Ministers educated at Calvin Theological Seminary: 50.9%

- 37.9% received their MDiv from CTS
- 13% gained substantial exposure to CTS through the Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidacy's required 9 credits at CTS

Ministers with ordinations in other denominations: 17.2% (completed MDiv at a different seminary)

- 13.5% transferred their ordination into the CRCNA from another denomination through Church Order Article 8-c
 - 76% of these ministers completed the Korean Institute in Ministry (KIM) training program (Until recently the KIM program consisted of only 10 days of study. Currently, participants complete a more extended video and book curriculum while guided by a mentor.)
 - 24% of these ministers completed an independent learning plan or four to five courses at CTS through the Modified Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidacy (MEPMC)
- 3.7% are Reformed Church of America ministers serving orderly exchange (Article 8-b)

Ministers with little/no/unknown levels of seminary-level training: 14.8%

- 12.7% are commissioned pastors, an ordination that does not require seminary training
- 1.3% are individuals who have no CRCNA ordination (This demographic exists only in the US, not in Canada.)
- 0.8% came in through an “exceptional giftedness” route (Article 7; no M.Div. required, some may have completed MEPMC courses at CTS)

Finally, approximately 17% of churches currently have no pastor.

The Candidacy Committee presents these statistics to synod for information along with an encouragement to classes to keep the following factors in view as they work to identify, guide, and equip emerging leaders.

- Training routes that were once the exception have gradually become more of the norm throughout recent decades (this has had both positive and negative impacts, as noted above).
- Since a larger percentage of our leaders are being trained through classis-designed learning plans (commissioned pastor and Art. 8-c), it would be beneficial for Classis Ministerial Leadership Teams to ensure that these plans are appropriately thorough and formative, including elements that will foster the individual’s knowledge of Reformed theology and sense of connection to the classis and denomination.
- Calvin Theological Seminary has worked with the CRCNA to provide additional flexibility in the standard MDiv training pathway. They have made both distance and competency-based learning possible and have created a Commissioned Pastor Certificate program. It would be beneficial for classes to encourage emerging leaders to utilize these CTS programs.

V. Correction to Candidacy Report to Synod 2026

It was noted, after the publication of the Candidacy Committee’s report in the Synod 2026 agenda, that an oversight was made in failing to include Rev. Aaron Vriesman’s name in the list of current EPMC Facilitation Team members. Rev. Vriesman is a general member of the committee from Classis Zeeland.

VI. Recommendations

A. That synod declare those listed in section I, A as candidates for ministry in the Christian Reformed Church.

B. That synod approve the extensions of candidacy as recommended in section I, B.

C. That synod approve the reinstatement of candidacy recommended in section I, C.

D. That synod approve the action of the Candidacy Committee in declaration of need for those listed in section II for affiliation under Church Order Article 8.

E. That synod elect one of the nominees from each slate presented in the Nominations section of the Agenda Supplement to fill two open positions on the Candidacy Committee.

F. That synod encourage classes, and particularly Classis Ministerial Leadership teams, to keep the factors outlined in this report in view as they work to identify, guide and equip emerging leaders.

Candidacy Committee
Susan LaClear, director of Candidacy