

# 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 twenty-five individuals listed below. These persons include those who graduated from Calvin Theological Seminary and from other accredited seminaries. Those attending seminaries other than Calvin Theological Seminary have completed the Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidacy. Biographical details for each of the candidates can be found in the candidate booklet available for download at [crcna.org/candidacy](http://crcna.org/candidacy).

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

That synod declare the following twenty-five individuals as candidates for ministry of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America, 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](http://crcna.org/candidacy)).

Jeremiah Basuric	Yohan Lee	Jonathan Sturrus
William Brouwers	Young Geol (Jon)	Matthew Timms
Melissa Burmaster	Lee	Daniel Unterkofler
Robert Golding	Daniel Le Forestier	Nick Vander Ploeg
Caleb Harper	Patrick Lin	Lorinda
Keith Hoekstra	Michelle Oh	Vanderwerp
Josiah Huisman	Jeremiah Mitchell	Micah VanDyken
Austin Kammeraad	Kevin Moxon	Sarah VerMerris
David Kerkstra	Charles Mutinga	Yanyan (Ruth) Xing

### B. Extension of candidacy

The rules of synod require that a person who is 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 in order to determine the validity of the request and to offer words of encouragement.

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

Rebecca Bokma	Kennedy Muli Kailiti
Yoon Chul Choi	Sung Su Lee
Carol Hulin	Matthew Mulder
Jake (Minho) Jeong	Micah Ringelberg

## II. Article 8 candidates approved

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 director of the Office of Candidacy.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Classis</i>	<i>Ordination Denomination</i>
10/19/2023	Jun (Mark) Park	Hudson	Korean American Presbyterian
11/2/2023	Lloyd Hong	Hudson	Presbyterian Church of Korea
1/16/2024	Jose Pinero	Calif. South	Reformed Church of Venezuela
2/5/2024	Michael Johnson	Hudson	Reformed Church in America

## III. Expectations about signing the Covenant for Officebearers

Since candidacy applicants have always been asked, as part of their candidacy interview, whether they can in good conscience sign the Covenant for Officebearers, the committee has fielded many questions in recent years about how the decision of Synod 2022 (to add an interpretation of the word "unchastity" to Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 108) would affect this expectation for candidacy applicants. The paragraph below, included in communications to candidacy applicants in 2023-2024, explains how the committee has handled this matter:

Although the covenant for officebearers uses the word "wholehearted" in several places, the committee has always allowed candidates to express some measure of wrestling with points of doctrine which they find challenging, as long as they are comfortable agreeing to teach, preach, and guide their congregation in ways that are consistent with the confessions. The committee desires to remain consistent in this practice. If a potential candidate indicates that they are wrestling with this interpretation in the catechism (Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 108), but they can still "in good conscience" teach, preach, and pastorally guide a congregation in a manner consistent with it, this will be acceptable to the committee.

## IV. Comments regarding learning plans for commissioned pastors

Following a review of the survey that was recently completed (included in the Candidacy Committee's report in the *Agenda for Synod 2024*, pp. 299-311), in which the steady increase of the use of the office of commissioned pastor was observed, the committee believes that the following should become a focus in the coming years:

- development of more consistent approaches to contextual individualized learning plans for commissioned pastors

- development and prioritization of pathways that provide a helpful bridge between commissioned pastor learning plans and the theological education required for candidacy as minister of the Word.

The Candidacy Committee is willing to explore these matters in conversation with any others who may desire to engage in this work, if synod should so direct.

## **V. Nominations**

Rev. Andrew Beunk and Pastor Caleb Dickson are completing their first term on the committee and are willing to serve a second term. Pastor Deb Chee is completing her second term and is not available for reappointment. The Candidacy Committee therefore presents to synod the following slate of nominees for appointment to fill one vacant position:

*Rev. Mirtha Villafane*, an ordained minister of the Word and a CRC pastor, earned a master of divinity degree from Fuller Theological Seminary and a bachelor of arts degree from the Evangelical Seminary in Caracas, Venezuela. She served as the pastor of the Latin American CRC in Anaheim, California, from 2008 to 2021. During this time she successfully revitalized the church facing a steep decline. In her current role as a local mission leader in the Eastern region for Resonate Global Mission, she identifies, recruits, and trains church planters within the CRC. Nationally she is a leader in Consejo Latino, contributing to its executive team. In this capacity she communicates vision and plays a key role in developing strategies to mobilize and coach new Hispanic pastors. Since 2022 she has been the Latino coach network developer, focusing on equipping Hispanic pastors and leaders for effective service in local churches by providing coaching and mentoring. Her overarching goal is to empower individuals for service in the extension of the kingdom of God.

*Rev. Michelle Kool* is the pastor at Covenant CRC in Edmonton, Alberta. Before going into pastoral ministry she worked in a bank as a financial planner. She received her undergraduate degree at The King's University, then studied at Taylor Seminary, earning a master of divinity degree, and completed the requirements of the EPMC program at Calvin Theological Seminary. She is currently working toward a doctor of ministry degree in church renewal with Western Theological Seminary. She has served the denomination on the Council of Delegates as well as at the classis level as part of the classis interim committee. She currently serves on the student support committee for Classis Alberta North.

## **VI. Recommendations**

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

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

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

D. That synod elect one of the nominees in section V to fill the open position on the Candidacy Committee.

Candidacy Committee  
Susan LaClear, director