

Training Programs for Commissioned Pastors

General qualifications for the office are presented in the CRC Commissioned Pastor Handbook. Individuals, ministries and classes are encouraged to develop a learning plan that is appropriate for the proposed ministry of each potential Commissioned Pastor. The Candidacy Committee has a section of their website devoted to displaying material that may be helpful toward that end. Go to crcna.org/candidacy and look for “Commissioned Pastor” resources. Look especially at Document 5.1.4.

The following organizations have training programs that may be useful for those preparing to be a Commissioned Pastor. These organizations can function as a resource for a classis Leadership Development Network (LDN) or they can fill a need for those ministries and persons whose classis does not have an LDN.

TRAINING PROGRAMS IN ENGLISH

1. Coram Deo

Coram Deo uses a model for equipping leaders that balances and integrates the Knowing, Being, Doing, and Serving aspects of forming leaders. The Coram Deo model uses an approach that combines online resources, face-to-face meetings with mentors (either live or via Zoom), and deeply involving the local church and pastor. Coram Deo has a cooperative relationship with the Reformed denominations for Commissioned Pastor training. It has a highly relational, technology-friendly, contextually-relevant, and personalized approach for those who want to be Commissioned Pastors. You can look at the following website: www.coramdeoassociation.org

For more information:

David Beelen dave@coramdeoassociation.org

Miguel Cruz miguel@coramdeoassociation.org

2. The Timothy Institute

The Timothy Leadership Training Institute (TLTI) is a CRC sponsored ministry that trains and equips pastors, lay leaders, and evangelists around the world for church self-sustainability. Last year alone about 10,000 participated in their trainings. TLTI is now receiving many requests for trainings in North America and therefore is committed to expanding the number of trainings in the U.S. and Canada. You can look at the following website: www.timothyleadershiptraining.org

Contact for assistance:

Albert Strydhorst astrydhorst@tlti.org

3. Christian Leaders Institute/Christian Leaders College (CLI/CLC)

[Christian Leaders Institute](http://ChristianLeadersInstitute.org) (CLI) offers free online correspondence ministry training courses for ministry awards. The courses are accepted into [Christian Leaders College](http://ChristianLeadersCollege.org), a sister correspondence college. Christian Leaders College has applied for accreditation with the [IBHE](http://IBHE.org), a recognized agency for the United



States Department of Education. Christian Leaders College has low administration fees for certificates, diplomas, and degrees.

For those who desire to get a MDiv degree, Christian Leaders College bachelor degree holders are welcome to apply at Calvin Theological Seminary and Western Theological Seminary.

Many commissioned pastors in the Christian Reformed Church and Reformed Church in America have completed courses with Christian Leaders Institute and College.

You can look at the following web site:

<http://www.christianleadersinstitute.org/ministry-opportunity.html>

Contact for assistance:

Rev. Henry Reyenga hreyenga@christianleaders.net

4. Calvin Theological Seminary

Our denominational seminary has a range of resources available for ongoing pastoral formation. You can find a list of Lifelong Learning Resources

at: <https://www.calvinseminary.edu/academics/life-long-learning>. Additionally, Calvin Seminary offers a range of individual online courses, certificates, and degrees. You can find more information on those options at: <https://www.calvinseminary.edu/academics>

Contact for assistance:

Aaron Einfeld, Director of Admissions ame084@calvinseminary.edu

5. Greater Chicago Land

Greater Chicago Land LDN seeks to equip local lay leaders through intensive training and mentoring so that they can advance the mission of God in their churches and in their communities. Training focuses on development of leadership skills, increasing biblical knowledge and maturing in character formation. The LDN is perfect for first time elders and deacons, youth leaders and church staff members.

Contact Person: Pedro Aviles

Email: rev.pedroaviles@gmail.com

Website: www.crosspointstrategicnetwork.org/ldn.cfm

Phone: 773-901-7231

6. Pine Tree Development Network, Pittsfield, Maine

Pine Tree LDN is an ongoing three year cycle of study involving the participant in Exegesis, Hermeneutics, Systematic Theology, Biblical Theology, Old & New Testament Survey, Church History, Apologetics, and Worldview. The typical LDN rubric of Head (necessary knowledge), Heart (spiritual formation), and Hands (ministry skills) is supplemented by a focus on Home (Christian marriage & parenting). This LDN was begun for the purpose of training church planters, but has gradually morphed into a more general Network for training both male and female Christian workers of all kinds. Training to be a Church Planter or a Commissioned Pastor is still available, and is done with a mentor, and modeled along the lines of the Oxbridge Tutorial Model of achieving mastery of these subjects. Four churches have been planted out of this LDN and the planters assist with teaching and mentoring. There are about 40 regular participants from around the State of Maine at present. The LDN meets for four hours on the third Monday of every month, and mentoring takes place in various locations. Leaders in campus ministries (e.g.

InterVarsity and the Navigators) regularly participate in our meetings, as do a number of evangelical pastors from the CRC and other denominations.

Contact Person: William Johnson, Ph.D.

Email: johnsonwi@husson.edu

Phone: 207-838-6380

7. Ascending Leaders

Ascending Leaders is a CRCNA accredited nonprofit for the purpose of coaching churches and church leaders to productive discipleship in churches. Those preparing for ordained ministry in the local church can find with Ascending Leaders superb content around how to understand discipleship well.

Ascending Leaders uses the proven-effective Stages model of the disciple's journey.

Resources:

Videos—search for Ascending Leaders on YouTube to find six 20-25 minute training videos. Search for Ascending Leaders on YouTube.

Podcasts—Listen to any of the 30+ podcasts on issues of discipleship in the local church. <https://www.ascendingleaders.org/podcast/>

Articles—Read various articles written by our staff and will write in the future <https://www.ascendingleaders.org/al-blog/>

Booklets—purchase and read in paperback or ebook form the booklet *The Four Stages of a Disciple's Journey* or *10 Steps Toward a DisciplePath*. <https://www.ascendingleaders.org/resources/>

Learning Cohort—Join a *DiscipleOn BASICS* five month on-line cohort. <https://www.ascendingleaders.org/discipleon/>

Field Learning—lead a church through growing its discipleship culture, even using an assessment like REVEAL for Church or the RENOVO spiritual life inventory, or through *Charting Your Church Course* for your next chapter, guided by an Ascending Leaders discipleship coach. <https://www.ascendingleaders.org/assessment/>

Contact Person: Rev. Dr. Mike Johnson

Email: mike@ascendingleaders.org

8. The Vine Institute

The mission of The Vine Institute (TVI) is to connect, educate, and celebrate the love of Christ across many cultures in the Intermountain West. Students may pursue a Certificate in Christian Leadership in small, multicultural, peer learning groups preparing for ministry. TVI also facilitates Christians and congregations to grow more attentive, wise and faithful in intercultural life among the people of God and with our neighbors. TVI is supported by Classis Yellowstone.

Contact Person: Rev. Dr. Peter Asiamah

Email: pasiamah@vine-institute.org

Website: <http://www.vine-institute.org>

Phone: 801-574-3078

9. British Columbia

BC LDN offers Reformed theological training for the whole people of God, maturing disciples of Jesus Christ conversationally around the text of scripture and the text of our lives. We exist to discover leaders who aspire to ministry leadership in the CRC; develop their character, competence and

content and then deploy them into ministry in accordance with their gifts and calling. We have a great time doing it!

Contact Person: Wilma van der Leek

Email: wilmavdl@shaw.ca

Website: <http://www.bcldn.ca>

Phone: 604-594-6873

10. Sierra

Sierra Leadership Network is the leadership development program of Classis Central California of the Christian Reformed Church of North America. The Sierra Leadership Network has two learning tracks.

The single event learning track is open to anyone who wishes to learn more about ministry in the local church from recognized leaders in their fields. We've done seminars on grief, adoption, Islam, church fathers, and a number of other topics. You can also find mp3 recordings of past seminars.

The ordained ministry training track is for participants who are interested in developing their gifts for more formal ministry in their local church. Graduates of this program may become ordained as Commissioned Pastors in the Christian Reformed Church to serve as staff persons, youth pastors, associate pastors or church planters. The program involves training in biblical studies, theology, preaching and teaching, and other elements of ministry today. The program can be completed in three years but can also be pursued at a participant's own pace.

Contact People: Kevin Adams, Granite Springs Church, 916-645-9620

Paul Vander Klay, Living Stones CRC, 916-422-0550

Email: kadams@granitesprings.org
vanderklay@sbcglobal.net

11. Leadership Resources International is a non-denominational organization that pursues two primary ministry outcomes—the first is skill-oriented; the second is heart/attitude/character-oriented. They are:

- **How to Preach Expository Sermons:** We want to expand the knowledge of pastors and pastors-in-training and develop their skills to more effectively study, teach and preach God's Word, utilizing a "hands-on" training model that emphasizes basic hermeneutics. The goal is to develop significant skill in Expository Preaching of God's Word.
- **How to Shepherd:** We want the pastor and pastor-in-training to embrace a biblical philosophy and model of ministry including concepts such as servant leadership, humility and vulnerability, viewing the church at the center of God's purposes, and multiplication of other leaders.

Leadership Resources International seeks to foster a fellowship of pastors who desire to sharpen their proclamation of God's heart as it is revealed in His word. Our time together will focus on a conversation through a book of the Bible, employing simple principles to hear what the author was saying to the original audience, to identify the transforming response he desired to see in them, and to explore how that response might be expressed in our churches and communities. We trust that all who attend will find the same encouragement we have experienced with pastors through this ministry of God's word around the world. This training will include study of 8 hermeneutical principles and 8 books of the Bible.

For further information contact:

- Leadership Resources International at 800-980-2226 or
- Pastor Ken Van De Griend at 616-808-9920. (kvandegriend@firstbyroncrc.org)

TRAINING PROGRAMS IN SPANISH

Certificate in Theology and Biblical Studies - Concentration in Reformed Theology

Revelation Seminary has designed a learning and orientation program for prospective candidates who will serve as Commissioned Pastors (Article 23) of the Christian Reformed Church of North America (CRCNA). It is commonly known as the [Luke 10 Program](#). The purpose of this program is to prepare new church planters who have access to online courses, and the curriculum is based on the Learning Plan for the Candidacy office of the denomination.

The program contains eleven courses, which will be offered in twelve months. The entire program will have 30 credits. The teachers who will teach the courses have the academic and theological preparation at the master's level, specifically in terms of reformed hermeneutics and relevant experiences that allow them to teach each course.

Contact Person: Mirtha M. Villafane

Email: mvillafane@crcna.org

Phone: (626) 824 0438

Website: <https://www.revelationuniversity.us/about-4>

TRAINING PROGRAMS IN KOREAN

Korean Institute in Ministry (KIM)

[KIM](#) is a program for the orientation of Korean-speaking pastors to the Christian Reformed Church. It includes an initial orientation session, several months of independent study through video coursework and an in-person connection event in Grand Rapids, MI where participants have an opportunity to meet professors from Calvin Seminary and denominational staff, to process their questions and learn about their resources for ministry in the CRCNA.

Contact Person: Rev. Chris Choe

Email: cchoe@crcna.org

Website: <https://www.koreancrc.com/kim>

Suggestions for other training programs may be made to the CRC Director of Candidacy, Rev. Susan LaClear, slclear@crcna.org. You are also welcome to contact Rev. Koll with questions regarding any organization on this list. Keep an eye on this web page for future updates based on your input.