



Living the Call

A REPORT FROM THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA

SERVANT LEADERSHIP

From the Executive Director's Desk

The Christian Reformed Church seeks to express God's love by living out five callings:

Faith Formation

As a community of believers, we seek to introduce people to Jesus Christ and to nurture their faith through all ages and stages of life. (Report in August)

Servant Leadership

Understanding that the lifelong equipping of leaders is essential for churches and ministries to flourish, we identify, recruit and train leaders to be servants in the Kingdom of God. (Report in October)

Global Mission

Called to be witnesses of Christ's Kingdom to the ends of the earth, we start and strengthen local churches in North America and around the world. (Report in February)

Mercy and Justice

Hearing the cries of the oppressed, forsaken and disadvantaged, we seek to act justly and love mercy as we walk humbly with our God. (Report in April)

Gospel Proclamation and Worship

Believing that faith comes through the hearing of God's Word, we proclaim the saving message of Jesus Christ and seek to worship him in all that we do. (Report in June)

Servant leadership. Those two words—servant and leader—provide a striking contrast. When we think of servants, we think of washing feet and doing all of those things others think are beneath their pay grade. When we think of leaders, we think of those whose vision, wisdom, and integrity trigger in us excitement—to the point of wanting to follow them. They seem to be contrasts, yet when those two words are put together, we are reminded of how Jesus led.

Wes Granberg-Michaelson, the retired General Secretary of the Reformed Church in America, has some good observations about this in his book Leadership from the Inside Out. In it, he says:

... leadership is not just vision-casting. It also means building a community around common goals, and empowering and serving others. It all depends on what the organization needs at each stage in its journey, and to be effective, today's leaders need to be able to lead in all these ways at different points in the life of their organization, and to sense what style of leadership best serves the group at a given time.

As we all seek to be servant leaders, I suggest that we keep at least two of these things in mind.

First, *it means building a community around common goals*. There's so much good in this statement. It leads me to think about the

Body of Christ as explained in I Corinthians 12:12-14. It helps be to remember leading is a *building* or *constructing* activity. It reminds me that clarity as well as commonality in goals is key.

The truth is, our work is never done this side of heaven. We should always be constructing an improved and more faithful church, but the remodeling job will fail if we are out of step with the Spirit and with each other about our goals, or forget about the need for both unity and diversity in the body.

Secondly, *today's leaders need to be able to lead in all these ways at different points in the life of their organization*. A theme I hear from CRC members across the continent is that things are changing. Young adults are not sticking with the institutional church. Loyalty to the denomination is weakening.

As we lead, we must do so with a desire and sense of urgency around innovation and adaptation to the current context.

Chronicles 12 tells the story of men who decided to follow David. It includes this verse, "from Issachar, men who understood the times and knew what Israel should do."

May we also, whether leading or being led, understand the times and know what to do!

BY STEVEN TIMMERMANS,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Candidacy Committee



The Candidacy Committee is charged with facilitating, coordinating and offering leadership in the ordination processes for pastors in the Christian Reformed Church. One exciting development in the work of our Candidacy Committee has been the growth of training opportunities for pastors who affiliate from other denominations and for persons who begin service as a commissioned pastor. These programs are a piece of a bigger process toward ordination and they offer a significant orientation to who we are and what we do as a denomination.

KIM (The Korean Institute in Ministry) was last held in May 2018, with ten attendees. This Korean language event has been used by over 140 pastors over the past twelve years.

ELIM (Ethnic Leaders Institute in Ministry) is in its second year and had six attendees who participated in an 8-day event in September 2018. This event provides a setting in which English-speaking ethnic minority leaders are in the majority.

Students who attend seminaries other than Calvin Theological Seminary, but who wish to become candidates in the CRCNA, attend an EPMC orientation such as this one in August 2018.

SLIM (Spanish Language Institute of Ministry) will be piloted in October, in partnership with the Consejo Latino. This coalition of Spanish-speaking CRC leaders hopes to plant many churches in the coming decade.

Besides these programs, the Candidacy Committee offers two orientations each year for seminary students outside of the Calvin Seminary community who wish to become candidates in the CRCNA. This orientation is part of the **EPMC (Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidacy)**.

If you know of anyone who may be interested in any of these programs, please let us know.

DAVID KOLL
DIRECTOR OF CANDIDACY
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Chaplaincy and Care Ministry

This year, Chaplaincy and Care Ministry has developed stronger community for CRCNA chaplains. We provide chaplains with the support and resources they need to share the grace and healing of Christ as they work in pluralistic settings. Through community, we enable chaplains to better connect with the church and each other, helping them to be more effective in their ministry.

This past year, because of new legislations in Canada and several US states, healthcare chaplains have had to reflect on how they provide spiritual care at the end of life. With Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID) and Physician Assisted Death policies, terminally-ill people may choose to end their lives. In response, chaplains must discern how to provide spiritual care to people who choose medically assisted death.

At our Chaplains Training in June, we gathered a panel of chaplains to share their concerns and experiences caring for people who chose medically assisted death. This created much dialogue between chaplains as well as physicians and other medical professionals in the CRCNA. It also enabled chaplains to share helpful resources with each other and to think more deeply about suffering and the sanctity of life.

Shortly after the conference, Tim, a long-term care chaplain in Ontario, provided care for a man who requested and received a medically assisted death.

“The key was understanding,” he said, “that in my role, I don’t stop walking beside someone in their spiritual journey because they made a choice I didn’t like. I’m glad that I had put time and energy into discerning how I would respond to a request to be present, so I didn’t need to hesitate when he asked me to be there.”

Through community, we are seeing chaplains that are better supported and prepared for the unique challenges of their ministries. We continue to develop chaplain



A chaplains conference in June enabled chaplains to share helpful resources and think more deeply about suffering and the sanctity of life.

networks to provide care, support, and resources for chaplains. Through meetings, cluster groups, and mentorship, we have seen chaplains become more willing to seek assistance, share their stories, and engage their communities. Through community in Christ, we ensure that our chaplains are spiritually empowered to be there in moments that matter.

SARAH ROELOFS
DIRECTOR, CHAPLAINCY & CARE MINISTRY
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Leadership Development: Women's & Ethnic Ministry

There aren't many things more exciting in the body of Christ than seeing Christians use their gifts in ministry wherever God calls them. It is life-giving and fruitful as the Spirit works through the body of Christ in this way.

The office of *Leadership Development: Women's and Ethnic Ministry* began a little over a year ago. As a first step, the office is focusing on women. This ministry exists to support and affirm women in all levels of leadership—locally, regionally and denominationally. This includes ordained and non-ordained types of leadership. We help churches and ministries create a culture in which, together, men and women thrive in using their gifts and callings in pursuit of God's mission in the world.

This office is concerned with meeting leadership needs in congregations and ministries as expressed in the CRCNA's Ministry Plan, *Our Journey 2020*. We value feedback from women and men, in churches and ministries. This includes emerging leaders and Calvin Seminary students.

To help us understand these needs, we ask, "What is going well in leadership? What are some of the challenges? Where are the gaps?" We welcome ongoing conversations to build relationships, learn from each other and share experiences.

Within the next couple of months, Women's Ministry will launch a website consisting of women's history and legacy in the CRC, resources for developing leaders, a women's clergy page, and the profiles of our committed and gifted regional advisory team members. There will also be an option for women to get involved by



Denise Posie speaks to a gathering of women at Synod 2018.

becoming part of regional clusters. The intent is to create a communication and support structure for this ministry.

May we listen deeply and respond obediently to the Spirit in reaching the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ, serving unselfishly, and being witnesses for his great kingdom. Thank you for your prayers and support!

DENISE L. POSIE
DIRECTOR
OFFICE OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT:
WOMEN'S AND ETHNIC MINISTRY

Pastor Church Resources

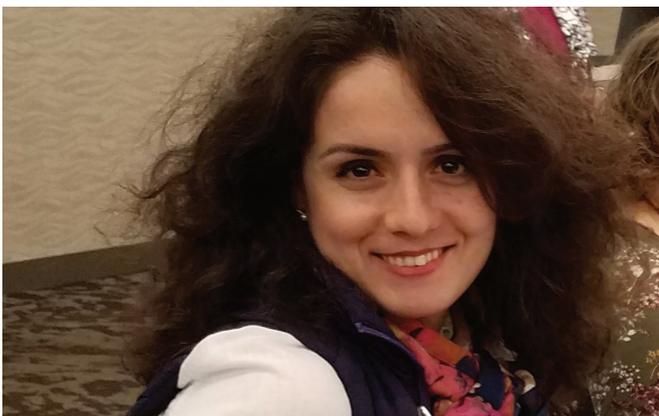
The goal of Pastor Church Resources is to equip leaders in the church to be healthy, and to also model health for every member of the body of Christ. This includes advocating for the sustainable rhythms of work and rest, for the blessings of keeping Sabbath even when the demands of ministry never seem to stop, for the benefits of ongoing learning, for developing and honing the gifts God has given, and for the self-examination and accountability which are so important to our maturation as children of God.

So much of leadership in the church, and life in the church, is built on the strength and resilience of the relationships we have as members of the body of Christ. Pastor Church Resources attends to relationships of many kinds: a leader's relationship to God; a leader's relationship to self; interpersonal relationships between pastors and councils; relationships between church leaders and congregation members—and even relationships between churches in a classis, and the leadership functions there.

Here are four ways in which we are living into this call of equipping leaders to be healthy servants:

Pastor Peer Learning Groups

Self-care is important for all of us, and especially for those who are in the helping professions. How well a pastor takes care of him or herself is directly related to their well-being.



Blerta Rizallaraj from Bryon Center, Mich. was one of 78 women who attended the Pastors' Wives retreat in Calgary, Alta in September.

The Flourishing in Ministry Study has much to say about this. One key way a pastor can tend to wellbeing is by participating in a peer learning group. Grants are available for pastors to gather to learn, support, and encourage one another, and be with others who “get it”. To date, 76% of CRCNA pastors have been in such a peer group.

Pastors' Wives' Conference

In mid-September, 78 women gathered in Calgary, Alta., for the seventh Pastors' Wives' Conference*. The theme, “Belonging”, was focused on Psalm 90:1, “God, it seems you've been our home forever” (The Message). The role of the pastor's spouse is often overlooked, and it's not an easy one. In fact, keynote speaker, Rev. Dr. Chris Adams said, “Being the wife of a pastor can be even more stressful than being a pastor.” The conference provided a safe place to share laughter and tears as the women embraced the deep truth of belonging to God.

*We've surveyed male spouses and they indicated they aren't interested in attending a conference—so we focus on the women.

Vocational Assessments

A standardized assessment tool is being used in the formation of students on the journey into ministry, and is now being offered to regional pastors as well. This tool is especially helpful in sorting through a pastor's giftedness so that they can serve well in a ministry capacity which especially suits them. Good fits bless both ministers and the persons among whom they minister.

Council Training

Pastor Church Resources has committed to a new and specific goal: to focus attention on training that will bless those who have been called to serve as elders, deacons and together as Council. We will include attention on governance structure and duties, the process of selection, the kinds of orientation and training which will equip office-bearers to do well, and other key topics.

Tools You Can Use

Unless otherwise noted, all of these resources can be accessed from crcna.org/resources.

Chaplain Prayers — Prayers for the broken, wounded, and suffering. These are prayers for chaplains and spiritual companions to share as they walk alongside those who are in different crisis situations.

Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) Guide — A useful tool for those who are interested in learning about specialized training for pastoral ministry or enrolling in a program.

Video: What IS Chaplaincy — In this video, current and former CRC chaplains share about why they serve and how they connect the church with communities. We encourage churches to share this with their congregations on Chaplaincy and Care Sunday (2:30 minutes).

1997 Report to Synod: End of Life Issues — This report assists the church in facing the challenges that accompany the approaching end of life in a pastorally sensitive way. Available in the list of reports at crcna.org/resources/synod-resources

Palliative Care Toolkit — Produced by the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, this free resource helps us understand what's going on with end of life care and how we respond as Christians.

Evaluation Essentials for Congregational Leaders — Regular evaluations benefit all involved *if* conducted in a healthy manner. This tool addresses the why, when, where, who, and how of evaluations. A number of practical appendices are included. A must read for all who are involved with nurturing pastors and ministry staff as they serve the church and its members.

Faith Formation Ministries “Ten Ways”

Tools — This popular and growing series of one-page resources shares ten easy, practical ideas that provide a springboard for conversation, training, and planning around a variety of topics. Three focused on leadership are 10 Ways “to be a caring elder”, “to be a caring deacon”, and “to discern a call to ordained pastoral ministry”.

Flourishing in Ministry Report — In 2017, almost 350 CRCNA pastors participated in Notre Dame’s *Flourishing in Ministry Study*. The results showed that the highest measure was in spiritual wellbeing (4.68/5) and the lowest was burnout (3.21/5). While a “low score” in burnout sounds like a positive, it’s not. The entire report can be found at crcna.org/spe

More Than a Search Committee — The process of looking for a new pastor can feel like a daunting task. This tool will help congregations (specifically search committees) explore opportunities during the time of transition. It walks churches through the entire process from “we need a pastor” to “the new pastor is here”.

Pastors’ Spiritual Vitality Toolkit — This online resource will bless pastors and anyone in leadership. It explores retreats, spiritual companions, self-awareness, and ongoing rhythms essential to spiritual health. While the name implies it’s for pastors, anyone desiring to dig deeper will find it helpful.



People You Should Know

Candidacy – Need help with the candidacy process or want to nominate someone for one of Candidacy’s programs? Contact David Koll at dkoll@crcna.org

Chaplaincy – Looking for resources to support your chaplain ministry? Want advice on the endorsement process? Contact Sarah Roelofs at sroelofs@crcna.org

Classis Renewal Consultant – Rev. Al Postma serves classes with direct support around ministry planning & renewal, as well as support for people serving in classis roles such as regional pastors, church visitors, mentors, stated clerks, church counselors, and others. apostma@crcna.org

Ministry Assessment Consultant – Rev. Samantha DeJong McCarron works with pastors who are exploring ministry fit. Vocational assessments bring clarity to the giftedness of a pastor and open the conversation about what kind of ministry makes that pastor’s heart sing. sdejongmccarron@crcna.org

Pastoral Wellbeing – Including: Peer Group Grants, Flourishing in Ministry Study, Continuing Education Grants, and Pastors’ Wives’ Conference. Lis Van Harten Ivanharten@crcna.org

Pastor Church Consultants – Rev. Cecil van Niejenhuis cvanniejenhuis@crcna.org and Rev. Dave Den Haan ddenhaan@crcna.org are able to assist pastors and church leaders in sorting through dynamics present in times of transition, discernment, and conflict by serving as consulting pastors who can help with practical wisdom and in navigating Church Order parameters.

Searching for a Pastor – Questions about accessing minister profiles, engaging the search process, and seeking interim pastors, may be directed to Kim Rankens. pastorchurch@crcna.org.

Women’s Leadership – Want to learn more about creating a culture in which, together, men and women thrive in using their gifts and callings in pursuit of God’s mission in the world? Contact Denise Posie at dposie@crcna.org

Help is Only a Call, Click, or Chat Away



Click Call Chat

We’re making it easier for you and your church to access CRC resources. If you’re involved in a church ministry and wonder if your denomination can help with something, just CALL (800-272-5125), CLICK (www.crcna.org/Resources), or CHAT (from any page on www.crcna.org). We’re here to serve, and would love to connect you with people and resources to support your ministry.

AUGUST 1-3 WINDSOR

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