

August 14, 2020

Dear CRC Chaplain,

Thank you for the creative, meaningful, and Spirit-inspired ministry that you have provided over the past year. With the COVID-19 pandemic and other issues, 2020 has become a challenging year for our world, our churches, our families, and ourselves. You have been adaptive to ever-changing policies and safety precautions. You have taken on more responsibilities and are being pulled in many different directions at work and home. You've graciously taken on new tasks such as chauffeur, laundry worker, video and technology guru, etc., in the midst of your work in anxious institutions and systems that are struggling with budgets, layoffs, and staff burnout. Life outside of work has also been difficult and disappointing as special celebrations, recreation, and trips have been drastically changed or canceled.

In the midst of all of this you have found *new* rhythms in ministry and life. Your education, special training, and gifts have prepared you to minister during this time. You have embodied the gospel and provided spiritual care for folks during critical times in their lives. We can see the Holy Spirit working in this world through simple acts of kindness, the sound of laughter, and the beauty of creation.

As an ongoing part of your work, our annual Chaplains Training enables you to collaborate with peers, find spiritual renewal, hone skills, and implement best practices within your profession. This year we will be hosting our very first *virtual* Chaplains Training on September 24-26. We consider each chaplain's attendance at this event critical for effective ministry and for continued ecclesiastical endorsement. Your spouse is also welcome to attend. Though it won't be the same as meeting in person, I trust that for many of us this gathering will still be like a homecoming. To be inclusive of everyone, especially those who are among and who care for people with compromised immune systems, we are moving to a virtual format for this training.

Please join us! The theme for this virtual event is "Come to Me: Sufficient Grace, Perfect Power, and Humanity" in consideration of the challenges everyone is facing this year. We have adjusted the timing and schedule to mitigate video fatigue. And we are eager to be connected with others in the church who understand our work—colleagues who speak our own faith language and who have a desire to worship together, learn, laugh, and share.

Conference highlights:

- Robust, engaging opening worship led by our CRC chaplains
- Plenary sessions
 - "Ministry on a Human Scale," led by Rev. Mandy Smith
 - "Post-Traumatic Growth—Not Sinking with the Titanic," led by Alida van Dijk, Ph.D., R.P. and Rev. Joseph Kamphuis
 - "Art as Prayer" (no art experience required!), led by Rev. Mandy Smith
- Breakout sessions to discuss relevant topics in our lives, work, region, and denomination
- Connecting with chaplains during our Virtual Fellowship
- Designated time and resources for practice of spiritual discipline and self-study

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- Spiritual retreat and overnight stay. We know that you may need a night away from your home to relax and fully engage in our training (please follow local and state/provincial safety guidelines).
- Free registration and Welcome Bag for all active chaplains

Our virtual Chaplains Training 2020 will include many opportunities to learn, worship, and connect with one another. We will return to our Reformed roots, remembering our calling, and deepening our identity in Christ. We are committed to ensuring that our training meets your spiritual and professional development needs. By attending this training, participants will complete 11 hours of continuing education. We will encourage each other to share our stories, ask difficult questions, and extend hospitality in our ministries. Through dynamic presentations, intentional worship, and honest dialogue, we will be better equipped to serve and speak about these topics. We look forward to worshiping, learning, and growing together with you.

We also look forward to engaging discussions in person next year around the topic of human sexuality.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call my cell phone at (616) 460-8814; or visit our [event website](#) to learn more.

Register Today

Registration for Chaplains Training 2020 is now open! [You can register for the conference by going to our website.](#)

- Free registration for active, endorsed chaplains and \$40 registration costs for retired chaplains and guests.
- Active, endorsed chaplains are eligible for meal reimbursements (Friday's lunch and dinner and Saturday's lunch) and for up to \$150 as reimbursement for an overnight stay (camping, rental, or hotel) during the dates of our annual training (Sept. 24-26).

Sincerely,



Rev. Sarah Roelofs, Endorser

Director of Chaplaincy and Care Ministry for the Christian Reformed Church in North America