



Christian
Reformed
Church

2022 Issue 4

Living the Call

A REPORT FROM THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA

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)

FAITH FORMATION

From the Executive Director's Desk

Like many observant Jews and some Christians, I have a *mezuzah*. A *mezuzah* is a small metal or wood box that holds a scroll with the words of Deuteronomy 6:4-9; it is traditionally nailed to the doorframe of a house: "*Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up . . .*"

My *mezuzah* is a cheap souvenir from a trip to Israel many years ago. But it reminds me of many things. I have one God, the Lord, and no other. Living with the Lord means loving him with all my being (and loving my neighbor as myself). But, in addition to all of this, the *mezuzah* reminds me of the generations.

Though my parents didn't have a *mezuzah*, they did impress the Lord's commandments on me in my youth. Daily I have the opportunity to talk

about these same commandments with my own children as I sit at home and when I go out. Perhaps I shouldn't talk about them as I wake my children up (my children are *not* morning people), but I can make God's Word part of my family's life.

Faith formation is recognizing that *formation* is a work of God through the generations. God has chosen us, and he's loved us with an everlasting love. We have the opportunity to share a life of thankful living for our Lord with the generations: grandparents, parents, siblings, children, and grandchildren. Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God, the Lord is one.

BY REV. ZACH KING, PH.D.
GENERAL SECRETARY

Calvin University



Calvin University's mission is to equip students to think deeply, to act justly, and to live wholeheartedly as Christ's agents of renewal in the world. And a key goal of its *Vision 2030* is to allow that mission to be accessible to a greater diversity of learners worldwide.

During the 2021-2022 academic year, the university leaned further into that vision.

- Calvin *expanded its in-person and online graduate-level enrollment* by 50% and now *offers programming in 10 different disciplines* to learners around the globe.
- Calvin *appointed Dr. Adejoke Ayoola* as inaugural dean as well as an accomplished advisory board to lead the School of Health, which was *established in fall 2021* with a \$15 million gift.
- The new School of Business continued to expand its programming. An *online MBA program* kicked off in fall 2021 and a major and minor in *Operations and Supply Chain Management* is starting in fall 2022. The new *state-of-the-art School of Business building* opens for fall 2022 classes.

- In spring 2021, the first three graduating classes from the Calvin Prison Initiative program *received their bachelor's degrees* during a Commencement ceremony held inside the confines of Handlon Correctional Facility in Ionia, Michigan. The ceremony was the first of its kind in the state of Michigan.

This list only scratches the surface, but it explains why donors and alumni continue to engage with Calvin's mission to the point that the university just had its second-best fundraising year ever. And this summer, the university welcomed back 1997 alumnus Dr. Wiebe Boer, as *he began his tenure as the university's 12th president*.

Firmly rooted within the Calvinist tradition and Reformed heritage of Calvin University and globally connected, coming from one of the most populous and diverse cities in the world (Lagos, Nigeria), Boer believes he is uniquely positioned to lead Calvin University as it continues to expand its portfolio of learners and deepen its commitment to the integration of faith and learning from a Reformed perspective.

Boer's experience working across the private and social sectors in four countries over the past two decades has provided him with a distinctive perspective—one that Calvin's board of trustees trusts will help guide the nearly 150-year-old institution into innovative territory.

Faith Formation Ministries



Faith Formation Ministries (FFM) encourages and equips churches and ministry leaders to walk with kids, teens, and adults on their life-long, life-wide faith journeys. Together we seek for all generations to grow in intentional and resilient faith.

Through regional catalyzers, FFM provides free coaching, workshops, and other opportunities to CRC church leaders. Other team members focus on supporting children's ministry, youth ministry, and Dwell curriculum users. Our resource team curates and creates practical, accessible resources that churches and families can use.

In the last year, we continued to enrich the support available to churches through online and print resources, the work of regional catalyzers, and the Dwell curriculum. Here are examples of our work in these areas:

Faith formation support for ministry leaders, churches, and families

- As a continuation of the Faith Practices Project, FFM released [Faith Practices: Holy Habits that Help Us Love God and Our Neighbor, Listen to the Spirit, and Become More Like Jesus](#).
- FFM launched [Open to Wonder](#), a podcast exploring how faith is formed in our day-to-day lives.
- Regional catalyzers continued to offer workshops and webinars for CRC churches and small groups.

Dwell curriculum support

- We released year 2 of *Dwell Flex*, stand-alone *Dwell* sessions for use in a variety of situations—whether virtual, in-person, or at home—and across multiple age groups. We created Flex family resources to provide an at-home component for these materials. Years 1-3 of these resources will be released by Fall 2022.
- Our resource team continued to support simple but meaningful at-home faith formation through our [Dwell at Home resources](#), with our [Advent](#), [Lent](#) and [Pentecost](#) devotionals, and a series of [5 Ways](#) family faith formation tip sheets.

As a ministry, we are thankful for the opportunity to serve and support CRC churches and ministry leaders as together we live out our calling of growing to be more like Jesus!

DR. CHRIS SCHOON
 DIRECTOR, FAITH FORMATION MINISTRIES
[CRCNA.ORG/FAITHFORMATION](https://crcna.org/faithformation)



Tools You Can Use

The Banner is an award-winning magazine of the CRCNA. It is free to anyone who wants it. Visit thebanner.org/signup or call 800-777-7270 to subscribe.

- Website: thebanner.org; Facebook: facebook.com/crcbanner; Twitter: [@crcbanner](https://twitter.com/crcbanner); App: “CRC Banner” in app store.
- Articles on Faith Formation: thebanner.org/column/faith-formation
- thebanner.org/free-resources: *The Banner* offers several collections of articles under a variety of topics, including Just for Kids, the Reformation, Abuse of Power, and Reformed Basics.

Dwell (graded) Sunday School Curriculum can help God’s big story come alive for the kids (pre-K to 8) in your church. Visit DwellCurriculum.org for more information including free sample sessions, scope and sequence, and a video tour. Plus teachers can have full online access to all leader resources in the entire curriculum with a subscription to Dwell Digital — free to CRCs.

Dwell Flex (multi-age) Curriculum was created to work with a wide range of ages and in a variety of settings. Every Flex session stands alone so leaders can move through them in whatever order works best for their situation. Flex sessions are included as part of a Dwell Digital subscription — free to CRCs.

Faith Practices is a great starting place for individuals or small groups who would like to become more

aware of and sensitive to God’s voice in their everyday lives. This booklet is a great introduction to some of the practical “spiritual disciplines” that Christians throughout the centuries have used to draw closer to God. Visit FaithAliveResources.org to order. Bulk pricing is available.

Dear Parent: A Guide for Family Faith Formation by Laura Keeley and Robert J. Keeley helps parents lay the groundwork for faith formation in their family by exploring four “Building Blocks of Faith.” Each chapter ends with discussion or thought questions, ideas for living the chapter topic out in the family, and a short resource list. Visit FaithAliveResources.org to order. Bulk pricing is available.

God’s Big Story Cards is a small boxed set of 165 cards that provides families with easy-to-do, interactive (and fun!) ways to form faith as they learn about God’s story together.

Free Family Resources provide tip sheets and activities designed to encourage and equip families as they nurture faith at home.

Faith Alive: Adult/Small Group Resources include Bible study guides, topical studies, and other resources.

Faith Alive: Church Leadership Resources include books and materials for church leadership and development, congregational care and growth.

Want to Learn More?

Stay up-to-date on what the CRCNA is doing in Faith Formation through:

- **CRC News** — Subscribe at crcna.org for a weekly digest of stories in your inbox
- **The Network** — Visit crcna.org/Network to post your questions, participate in discussions around

the topic of “Faith Formation”, or review available resources

- **Find Resources** — Search thousands of resources available at cncna.org/resources

Or call 1-877-272-5125 with any of your ministry questions.