



Christian  
Reformed  
Church

2019 Issue 3

# Living the Call

A REPORT FROM THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA

## GOSPEL PROCLAMATION AND WORSHIP

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)

## From the Executive Director's Desk

Recently, after I preached at a local prison, someone came up to me and suggested, "You should have ended with an altar call."

A few thoughts crossed my mind. First conducting an altar call would have been a stretch for me. Secondly, I was a guest preacher; I didn't even know if an altar call would be an accepted practice here. And lastly, the Holy Spirit must have been at work if someone thought the time was ripe to bring others to the Lord.

Proclaiming the Word is a significant responsibility that the CRC takes seriously. Calvin Theological Seminary raises up new generations of people to lead worship and proclaim the Word, and is regularly adjusting its curriculum and field experience requirements to keep in step with the Church's needs.

The CRC also welcomes pastors from other seminaries via the Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidates process, which helps to ensure consistency, Reformed training, and solid preparation for ministry. And, recently, we have added a new, alternative route to becoming a Commissioned Pastor that involves classis leaders evaluating candidates according to more than 20 criteria.

These ministry leaders are important, but the CRC also recognizes that the proclamation of the Word must be

appropriately nested in broader worship and might involve a variety of lay leaders. Worship Ministries seeks to assist these men and women by setting up workshops, hosting social media discussions, and publishing *Reformed Worship*.

The creativity and contributions of the Calvin Institute for Christian Worship provide still another resource to the CRC as well as churches of other denominations.

Whether you sit in the pew, stand in the pulpit, sing with the praise team, or play the organ, Sunday after Sunday, every CRC congregations seeks to provide worship where God's Word is proclaimed, hearts are encouraged, and God is honored and praised.

Would you like to know the end of my altar call story? I couldn't reconvene worship for an altar call. Instead, I said to the young man, "Your job this week is to follow up with each inmate who worshiped today and ask if he would like to know Christ as his Lord and Savior."

After all, the preaching of the Word and worship equips us ALL to make disciples.

**STEVE TIMMERMANS,**  
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## Calvin Theological Seminary



Here at Calvin Seminary we are committed to equipping and endowing church leaders who cultivate communities of Jesus Christ, through the good news of the gospel. This happens every day in and among our current student body, as these men and women grow in their understanding of the Word, the church, and themselves. Calvin Seminary also has a number of resources for churches and church leaders, designed to encourage and motivate those outside of our classroom walls. Here are a few resources that you can check out:

- **The Center for Excellence in Preaching (CEP):** Each month, thousands of pastors and lay people use this online resource, utilizing sermon resources on numerous topics. This easy-to-use website isn't just about online resources — CEP regularly hosts events and retreats for pastors centered around the craft of preaching. Visit [cep.calvinseminary.edu](http://cep.calvinseminary.edu) to start exploring.

### Tools You Can Use

**The Center For Excellence in Preaching:**  
[cep.calvinseminary.edu/](http://cep.calvinseminary.edu/)

**Loving Your Neighbor Conference:** Video from the Summer 2018 conference on Ministry for Immigrants, Migrants, and Refugees —  
[www.calvinseminary.edu/neighbor](http://www.calvinseminary.edu/neighbor)

**The Resound Podcast:** [resoundpodcast.com/](http://resoundpodcast.com/)

### People You Should Know

**Scott Hoezee:** Director of the Center for Excellence in Preaching and author of *Why We Listen to Sermons* — [hoezee@calvinseminary.edu](mailto:hoezee@calvinseminary.edu)

- In addition to the website, the Director of CEP, Scott Hoezee, has also recently written a short book titled *Why We Listen to Sermons*. This book, written with the congregation in mind, provides insight on what the listener should be looking for as they listen and engage with preaching.
- **Conference Materials:** Each year, Calvin Seminary hosts a number of conferences and public lectures, open to those who can find their way to our Grand Rapids campus. For many, this is impossible; however, the seminary often publishes the content from these on-campus conversations on to our website. A recent example of this is the first annual Van Zanten Urban Ministry Lecture. This lecture panel highlighted the work of pastors who have worked in an urban context. The full program can be found on our website: [www.calvinseminary.edu/vanzanten](http://www.calvinseminary.edu/vanzanten).
- **Resound Podcast:** Calvin Seminary's first podcast focuses on the conversations echoing in the classrooms, hallways, and digital message boards of the seminary. The topics of Resound vary, but always point back to the mission of Calvin Seminary – developing church leaders. You can explore the most recent season of the Resound podcast at [resoundpodcast.com/](http://resoundpodcast.com/).

This is just a few examples of the many resources we have here at Calvin Seminary. We encourage you to visit our website or follow us on your favorite social media platform.

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## Worship Ministries

Living and growing are intricately connected. Worship Ministries works to support vibrant, living worship, which requires growth on the part of worshipers and leaders alike. One of Worship Ministries' tasks is to point to opportunities for learning and growth around worship and create space for it to happen.

### Endorsed Coaches

The worship needs of our churches are diverse and our 2.3 FTE staff cannot possibly address all of them, which is why we are offering a list of recommended Endorsed Coaches (see the list under "People You Should Know"). These coaches are members of the CRC with specific gifts, experience, and training in areas connected to worship. This is a great opportunity for worship leaders to receive individual coaching as well as for churches to have someone come in and address a specific need or topic. If you or your church would be interested in receiving training or coaching from one of these coaches, or you are interested in becoming a coach, please contact one of our staff or reach out to one of the coaches.

### Online Certificate in Worship Leadership

Worship Ministries has an agreement with Samford University to offer a reduced rate to 10 CRC members to take their 4-course, one-year, fully online Certificate in Worship Leadership. For more information contact [worship@crcna.org](mailto:worship@crcna.org).

## Tools You Can Use

**Monthly e-news** — sign up here: [crcna.org/worship](http://crcna.org/worship)

**Peer learning book groups** form yearly around various worship related topics. A great way to network with other worship leaders.

**Reformed Worship** — a quarterly journal for worship leaders and planners available in print and digitally. Subscribe at [ReformedWorship.org](http://ReformedWorship.org)

**CRC Worship Ministries Facebook group:** mutual support and encouragement for worship leaders and planners in the CRC.

**Webinar Library:** 22 worship webinars are available on our YouTube channel <https://bit.ly/2ww7eSZ>

Participant Analú Reigstad, from Connect CRC, Pella, Iowa, said, "I totally recommend the Worship Leadership classes. Personally I will never be the same after taking these classes. My insight into the "whys" and "hows" of worship has deepened and I was able to apply knowledge into my planning of the services. I have acquired not only informational knowledge, but also spiritual knowledge to be able to use my God-given gifts to bless others."

### Other Opportunities to Learn and Grow

There are many other opportunities to learn and grow as worship committees, pastors, elders, and leaders. The best way to keep informed about them is to sign up for our monthly e-news at [crcna.org/worship](http://crcna.org/worship) and check out the list under "Tools You Can Use".

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## People You Should Know

### Worship Ministries Endorsed Coaches

**Pastor Elly Boersma:** St. Catharines, ON  
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**Mr. Tom Dykstra:** Olympia, WA  
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## The Bridge App

As technology changes the ways we communicate, it brings not only challenges but also new opportunities for the ministry of the local church.

In order to position local churches to be ready for these opportunities, the Christian Reformed Church has partnered with Extreme Technology to develop The Bridge App ([thebridgeapp.org](http://thebridgeapp.org)) for Canadian congregations.

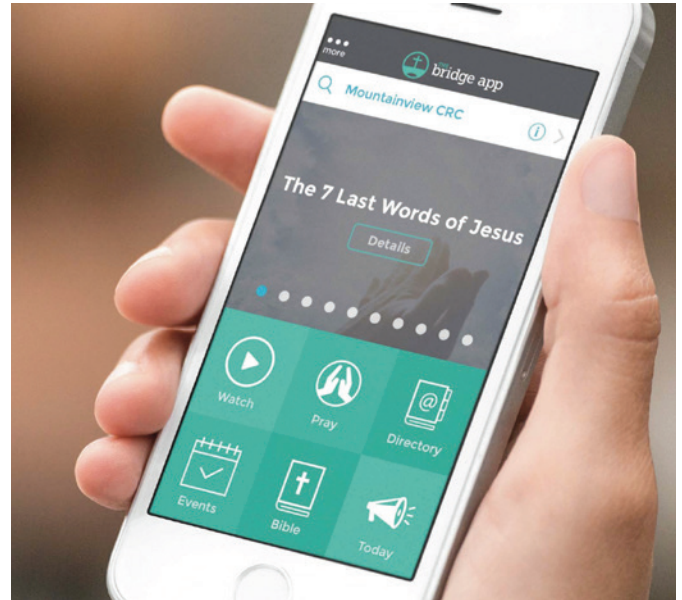
What sets this app apart from other smartphone apps geared toward churches is that The Bridge App aims to be Relational, Missional and Local in a distinctively CRC way with the emphasis on the local congregation.

- The home screen appearance can be customized for the local church, and key functions can be enabled or disabled based on the preference of your congregation.
- Prayers, Events and Announcements can easily be posted and instantly shared to either 'verified members' or made 'public.'
- The Give function allows giving to church budget, customizable local causes and CRC ministries, and will soon have the added ability to process debit and recurring transactions.
- *Today* devotionals from BTGMI are available daily, plus the Bible can be accessed in various languages and versions.
- An always up-to-date version of your local church directory (including photos) can be turned on if you want to use it.

For more information, contact [bridgeapp@crcna.org](mailto:bridgeapp@crcna.org)

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## Calvin Institute of Christian Worship



The Calvin Institute of Christian Worship is an interdisciplinary study and ministry center located at Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary. We offer a wide range of practical resources and scholarly works for congregational leaders, pastors, teachers of worship, students, artists, and all interested in worship.

Here are a few things that you might want to be aware of:

- 50 new **audio and video resources** from the 2019 Calvin Symposium on Worship are available for free at [worship.calvin.edu/resources/audio-video/](http://worship.calvin.edu/resources/audio-video/)

## The Network

Head over to [crcna.org/Network](http://crcna.org/Network) to connect with others across the CRC on the ‘nuts and bolts’ of ministry. Designed for local church ministry leaders and volunteers, the site is a treasure trove of resources and conversations on topics such as worship, small groups, young adults, preaching, evangelism, and so much more. You can even find or share church positions.

- **The 2020 Calvin Symposium on Worship** is coming January 30-February 1. Save the date.
- New bilingual **children’s book** on the Psalms: *En la escuela de los Salmos/At Psalms School*, by María Cornou and John D. Witvliet is now available at [worship.calvin.edu/resources/publications/en-la-escuela-de-los-salmos-at-psalms-school/](http://worship.calvin.edu/resources/publications/en-la-escuela-de-los-salmos-at-psalms-school/)
- This summer, consider gathering a small team from your church to discern if a **Vital Worship grant** would help your worshipping community: [worship.calvin.edu/grants/worshipping-communities/](http://worship.calvin.edu/grants/worshipping-communities/)
- Consider a fall **intergenerational Sunday School book group** on Rev. Scott Hoezee’s new book *Why We Listen to Sermons*. This brief but impactful book makes for a great discussion. [worship.calvin.edu/resources/publications/why-we-listen-to-sermons/](http://worship.calvin.edu/resources/publications/why-we-listen-to-sermons/)

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Curious how other churches introduce new worship songs? Looking for practical ways to welcome a new pastor? Big or small, your question is welcomed here. Post your question today or email [network@crcna.org](mailto:network@crcna.org) and we’ll post it for you!



Registration Now Open!

AUGUST 1-3, WINDSOR, ONTARIO, CANADA

# Inspire 2019

*Discover. Connect. Reimagine.*



**Gospel Proclamation & Worship will be a key area of focus at Inspire 2019, with workshops such as:**

- Being a Worship Leader
- Learning to Pray Together
- How Your Personality Impacts How You Pray
- Preaching to Millennials and Gen Z
- As it is in Heaven
- Learning to Love to Pray
- Praying in the Kingdom
- Why Worship?
- Designing a Creative Worship Series
- Listening Prayer

Register today at [crcna.org/Inspire](http://crcna.org/Inspire)

## Want to Learn More?

Stay up to date on what the CRCNA is doing in Gospel Proclamation & Worship through:

- **CRC News** — Subscribe at [crcna.org](http://crcna.org) for a weekly digest of stories in your inbox
- **The Network** — Visit [crcna.org/Network](http://crcna.org/Network) to post your questions, participate in discussions around the topic of “Worship”, or review available resources

- **Find Resources** — Search thousands of resources available at [crcna.org/resources](http://crcna.org/resources)

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