



Christian
Reformed
Church

2020 Issue 5

Living the Call

A REPORT FROM THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA

SERVANT LEADERSHIP

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

Romans 12:6-8 describes some gifts and attributes for humble service in the body of Christ. At the end of that passage we find verse 8 — “if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; *if it is to lead, do it diligently*; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.”

If we are to lead — if we have been given the gift of leadership — then we are to lead diligently. In short, we are to work at it. Leadership is never easy! Though it's a gift, it's one that has to be exercised again and again through service.

In this issue, our theme is Servant Leadership. Our denomination has numerous ministries focused on equipping leaders for service, even as these leaders, in turn, equip others. Ministries contributing to this issue are the Candidacy Committee, Chaplaincy and Care Ministry, Pastor Church Resources, Raise Up Global Ministries, and *The Network*.

I often think of leadership principles when I see God's hand at work in his creation. When we see a flock of birds heading south for the winter, and the lead bird takes the helm for a while, bearing the full force of the oncoming headwinds, then retreats to the rear to rest, giving another the opportunity

to take the lead. When we see images of penguins in Antarctica all huddled together against the bitter cold, and the pack continually rotates, enabling those at the outer edges to move towards the center to warm up, and allow already warm bodies to face the bitter elements. I believe that God gives us these images to allow us to know that in his creation, he ordains leadership which requires diligence — but he also ordains leadership which mandates rest — rest that is always possible in him.

Especially in this age of COVID-19, among our other pandemics, many of us, as leaders, are feeling weary — we are feeling the weight of our call and responsibility. In this light, I offer the following leadership principles as we think about these issues:

- Don't always be the lead bird — Mark 10:43 But it is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant . . .
- Take turns and share the warmth — 2 Timothy 2:24 The Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged . . .

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Candidacy Committee



The work of the Candidacy Committee involves helping people find their way into ordained ministry within the CRCNA. This includes making use of a variety of routes that lead toward ordination as a minister of the Word. This also includes advising and coordinating with classes and local congregations in the localized pastoral ordination called Commissioned Pastor.

Each year there are various events where persons in the process toward ordination have the opportunity to meet each other and to learn and reflect together. These include two yearly opportunities for those in the program called the EPMC (Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidacy), designed to offer orientation to the CRCNA for those who attend seminaries other than the denomination's seminary, Calvin Theological Seminary.

There are also opportunities for affiliating pastors whose primary language is Korean (KIM — the Korean Institute for Ministry) or Spanish (SLIM — Spanish Language Institute for Ministry). An additional program, ELIM, allows ethnic minority ministers who are English speaking to gather in a “minority as majority setting.”

EPMC gathering, August, 2019

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented the need to offer these programs in a “virtual setting” with video media tools. We’re eager to return to “face to face” gatherings, but we’re also making the most of the opportunities presented through gathering virtually.

For more information about Candidacy, contact Rev David Koll, dkoll@crcna.org, Director of Candidacy.

DAVID KOLL
DIRECTOR OF CANDIDACY
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Chaplaincy and Care Ministry

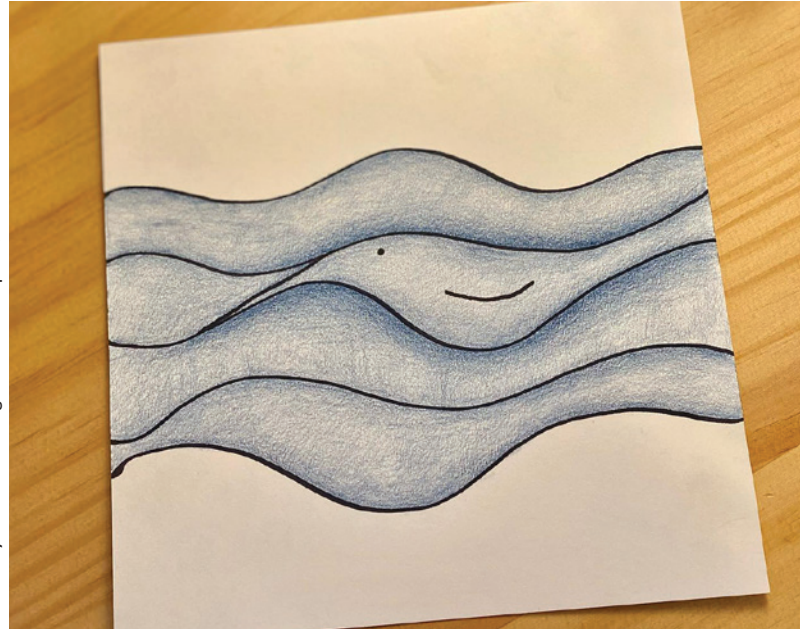
Over these last six months, our 153 CRCNA chaplains have been ministering on the frontlines in a variety of institutions such as hospitals, long-term care centers, prisons, and in military settings. Our chaplains have been creatively adapting to ever-changing policies and safety precautions. They have provided spiritual care within anxious institutions that are struggling with budgets, layoffs, and staff burnout. And they continue to provide pastoral care to lonely and grieving patients and their families. The chaplains' education, special training, and gifts have prepared them to minister during this critical time.

As a part of our denomination's ongoing commitment to the ministry of our chaplains, Chaplaincy and Care Ministry (CCM) provides regular pastoral care and support to chaplains. One of the ways our ministry provides care is through a three-day annual training event. This year, CCM virtually hosted 108 chaplains during our "Come to Me: Sufficient Grace, Perfect Power, and Humanity" training event that included worship, plenary sessions, small group breakouts, and fellowship. Additionally, we had designated times and resources to engage in spiritual disciplines, and offered grants for one local overnight stay. These three days provided time of rest, reflection, worship, and connection.

Rev. Sarah Hoogendoorn, a Veterans Affairs chaplain in St. Cloud, Minnesota, shared her reflection from one of the plenary sessions, "Art as Prayer", in which chaplains were encouraged to create artwork as a way of practicing a posture of resting in the Spirit. She writes:

"I struggled at first. I'm a perfectionist and annoying about coloring 'properly'. I wanted to produce something good. I have a stack of 'rejects' I wasn't happy with. Then I stopped. I followed the instructions: rest, receive, and respond. Perhaps I found still and calm waters, and perhaps there's chaotic currents underneath. I found a bird - perhaps a sparrow resting in God's care, or perhaps a symbol of the Spirit, sustaining in the midst of life. There is ambiguity in art, but there is also deep and abiding truth. I rest in the mystery."

Created by Rev. Sarah Hoogendoorn on Sept. 25, 2020



Rev. Sarah Hoogendoorn encouraged chaplains to create artwork as a way of resting in the Spirit.

Rev. Hoogendoorn's experience is like most of our own ministering during this difficult time. The plenary sessions from our chaplains training will be posted on our website crcna.org/chaplaincy in October, and we invite pastors and church leaders to rest, receive and respond.

SARAH ROELOFS
DIRECTOR, CHAPLAINCY & CARE MINISTRY
Crcna.org/chaplaincy

Pastor Church Resources

Pastor Church Resources (PCR) serves pastors, churches, and classes as they seek to promote healthy relationships, encourage one another in ministry, and discern next steps in seasons of growth, transition, or challenge.

Wellbeing for Pastors and Churches

During COVID-19, PCR has published pandemic-specific resources for pastors seeking guidance. PCR's Financial Shalom program has provided grants for pastors with financial needs and runs the CRCNA's Church Engagement Fund, which has financially supported over 140 churches most affected by the virus. As PCR has served pastors and churches amid economic struggles and ministry challenges, it has witnessed their creativity. As Jose Figueiredo, an elder at One Hope Church in Philadelphia, put it: "it has been amazing to see God move in these tumultuous times."

Crossroads Discernment Toolkit

Even before COVID, many congregations found themselves facing hard questions about their mission, identity, and even viability. The Crossroads Discernment Toolkit, a collaboration between Resonate Global Mission and PCR, equips churches with a process for Spirit-led, group-engaged, mission-oriented discernment. The toolkit helps churches navigate hard conversations in ways that acknowledge the past, investigate the present, and look forward to what God will do in and through them.

Virtual Gatherings

PCR has observed that isolated pastors tend to struggle, whereas pastors with intentional collegial relationships tend to thrive. Though COVID has made physical connection more difficult, PCR has continued to gather pastors to build the kinds of meaningful relationships so critical to their growth and health. This fall, PCR will host virtual conferences specific to: pastors early in their second call, pastors late in their careers, and pastors' wives.



With denominational support, One Hope Church in Philadelphia paid its bills, led Bible study over Zoom, and distributed food to its neighbors—meeting 50 new families in the process.

Pastors' Spiritual Vitality Toolkit

With usual routines of self-care and personal spiritual growth disrupted by COVID, PCR has redoubled efforts to encourage pastors to tend their spiritual health. The Pastors' Spiritual Vitality Toolkit provides practical suggestions and a clear framework to nudge pastors toward sustainable rhythms of faithful living.

LIS VAN HARTEN
DIRECTOR, PASTOR CHURCH RESOURCES
[CRCNA.ORG/PCR](https://crcna.org/PCR)

Pastoral Formation Advisory Team

Rev. Amanda Bakale, Pastor-Faith Formation,
Community CRC, Kitchener, ON

Rev. Jana Vander Laan, Co-Pastor, Sahali Fellowship
CRC, Kamloops, BC

Rev. John Lee, Pastor, Bethel CRC, Sioux Center, IA

Rev. John Terpstra, Retired, Fort Collins, CO

Rev. Joshua (Kyong Won) Jung, Church Planter,
Grace Church, Orlando, FL

Rev. Sheila Holmes, Pastor, Northside Community
CRC, Paterson, NJ

Raise Up Global Ministries

Raise Up Global Ministries resources global church leaders by developing interactive study materials and training leaders for relational, small group learning that leads to life change. Raise Up's programs—Global Coffee Break, Timothy Leadership Training, and Educational Care—reflect CRC leaders' passion for the church's mission, evangelism, and leadership development.

Discover Your Bible (DYB) released *Discover Genesis 1-11* this August as part of our series to help friends discover Jesus through his Word. The study guide serves as an outline for conversation around the passage. Additional tools in the study guide are intentionally designed to help adult learners discover together what the Bible says and means.

The DYB leader guides mentor leaders to facilitate rather than tell. Leaders are equipped to confidently contextualize the study for varying levels of Bible experience—from seeker to seasoned Christians. Sara Schrieber, from Calvin Seminary, provided the theological review, commenting how it provokes thought and helps participants enter the

story. *Discover Genesis 12-25* will be released in December, and *Genesis 26-50* in spring 2021. *Descubra Génesis* will be available Spring 2021. You can order Coffee Break materials, and connect with other leaders and leadership resources at www.DiscoverYourBible.org in Spanish, English, or Korean.

COVID-19 provided a catalyst for shared learning and innovation. Creativity abounds! A Danish TLT partner adapted the COVID curriculum for WhatsApp training. In the US, a New Jersey Coffee Break group moved to Zoom and found it an opportunity to include friends in a hospital, home-bound, and from 800 miles away. A California group will combine Zoom, in-person, and monthly parking lot meetings to continue to study God's Word. Korean Coffee Break hosted a leadership event on Zoom for 200 leaders. Raise Up is committed to following God in this adventure of adapting and innovating.

SAM HUIZENGA
DIRECTOR, RAISE UP GLOBAL MINISTRIES

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- It's okay to follow; the Lord has broad shoulders — Matthew 23:10 Nor are you to be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Messiah.

As ministries of the denomination of the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA), though we are called to lead, we are called to serve — that is our greatest call. The ministries listed above are an extension of the local church. We are your arms and limbs extended to minister beyond your local community, to the cities, the nations, and to the ends of the earth.

Thank you for your continuing partnership in the gospel. Leadership is never easy, but it can be a joy; it can be fulfilling; it can be restful — as long as we continue to rest — in Christ!

COLIN P. WATSON, SR.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Juan Sierra joined the Raise Up team as the Global Coffee Break Program Manager. Juan, a commissioned CRC pastor, planted a church with Sunlight Community Church in Port St. Lucie, Florida and used Coffee Break for outreach and discipleship.



Tools You Can Use

COVID-19 Church Engagement Fund

If your congregation is facing financial hardship because of COVID-19, consider applying for a grant from the COVID-19 Church Engagement Fund. If your church has financial resources to share, please consider donating to this fund. Grants can be used to support salaries, mortgage costs, technology, community outreach, and a variety of other needs. crcna.org/financialshalom/covid-19-church-engagement-fund

COVID-19 Resources

Traffic on The Network jumped 50% this year as people shared resources and asked questions about being the church during COVID-19. Browse all COVID-related posts on The Network (crcna.org/Network) or visit crcna.org/covid19 to find curated lists on topics such as Children's Ministry, Church Communication, Church Finance, Deacons, Elders, Pastors, and Worship.

Crossroads Discernment Toolkit

Is your congregation facing an uncertain future? The new Crossroads Discernment Toolkit can help you prepare for and lead a congregational conversation in which your people engage the past, name the present, and discern the future together. crcna.org/crossroads

Justice Resources

Is your church or small group looking for tools to combat racism? Interested in walking alongside refugees? Curious about creation care? Visit the Biblical Justice topic on The Network (crcna.org/Network) for resources to get you started!

Pastors' Spiritual Vitality Toolkit

The Pastors' Spiritual Vitality toolkit is a new way to help nurture your life with God. It's designed for and by pastors to strengthen you on this journey, but many of the resources are easily adapted to support your ministry leaders and congregations as well. crcna.org/spe/pastors-spiritual-vitality-toolkit

Want to Learn More?

Stay up-to-date on what the CRCNA is doing in Servant Leadership 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 "Servant Leadership", or review available resources

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

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