



Christian
Reformed
Church

2022 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 General Secretary's Desk

Romans 12:6-8 reminds us that each of us has different contributions we can make to support the Kingdom of God. While our gifts are unique, we are all tasked with using them to the utmost of our abilities in service to God.

"For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; 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" (Romans 12:4-8).

Whatever your leadership gifts may be, I thank you for using them to contribute to the work of the church. I also encourage you to not grow weary in this work.

Many ministry leaders are experiencing burnout following years of the COVID-19 pandemic. Others are feeling isolated in their work. Perhaps you are

feeling stuck in a rut and are looking for inspiration on how to take your leadership gifting to the next level. I want to remind you that the ministries of the CRCNA are here to help.

In this issue of *Living the Call*, our theme is Servant Leadership. Our denomination has numerous ministries focused on equipping leaders for service in their congregations and communities in a variety of ways. Ministries contributing to this issue are Chaplaincy and Care Ministry, Pastor Church Resources, Diversity, Raise Up Global Ministries, and Women's Leadership, although several others are also involved in this work in areas such as worship, faith formation, and mission.

I encourage you to make use of all that the CRCNA has to offer you. Visit The Network (crcna.org/network) to browse resources or connect with other leaders doing similar ministry. Call 1-877-272-5125 to be connected with a staff member who can support you and provide consultation.

Your partner in ministry,

REV. ZACHARY KING, PH.D.
GENERAL SECRETARY

Chaplaincy and Care Ministry



80 years ago, in the summer of 1942, Synod established a chaplaincy ministry. Currently, the Christian Reformed Church has more than 150 chaplains serving in hospitals, prisons, counseling centres, industrial and workplace settings, and other institutions. Of those, 21 chaplains are in the U.S. and Canadian Armed Forces in active duty, national guard, and the reserves. This past year these chaplains were deployed or stationed in Antarctica, Belgium, Japan, Germany, the Sinai peninsula, and Poland.

Army Chaplain Peter Hoffman served a year in the Sinai peninsula in support of the Multinational Force and Observers, which is an international peacekeeping force overseeing the terms of the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel. He reflected on his experience: “I led

a memorial ceremony on the one-year anniversary of the helicopter crash that took the lives of seven MFO personnel. One soldier survived. We dedicated a reflection bench in their memory. It looks over Tiran Island, the site of the crash. I spoke on the need to reflect and examine our days using the text from Psalm 90:12, ‘So teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.’ I also had the amazing opportunity to baptize two soldiers in the Red Sea. The Fijian Choir provided some beautiful background music.”

While Hoffman provided ministry in the desert, Air Force Chaplain Joseph Kamphuis deployed to McMurdo Station, Antarctica. He ministered to a community of over 1000 persons made up of civilians and military. Through worship services and visitations, Joseph served in one of the most isolated places on earth as an ambassador of God’s grace.

The newest active duty U.S. Army Chaplain, Kyu Hahn, signed into his unit at Fort Riley, KS, for his first assignment. He then immediately deployed to Poland as part of a scheduled rotation. His time in Poland was extended several months past the scheduled return due to the invasion of Ukraine by Russia. What was supposed to be a training exercise quickly turned to a high alert posture with other NATO forces. Chaplain Kyu Hahn through his worship services and presence with the soldiers communicated God’s love in the midst of crisis and uncertainty.

**REV. TIM RIETKERK, ENDORSER
DIRECTOR, CHAPLAINCY & CARE MINISTRY
CRCNA.ORG/CHAPLAINCY**

Diversity

I was recently asked to help raise extra donations for the All Nations Heritage scholarship fund. Special offerings by churches keep this fund going, specifically on All Nations Heritage Sunday [October 2, 2022]. Recipients of these scholarships are students of various ethnic minorities and members of CRCNA congregations who are planning or pursuing their educational goals at higher learning institutions affiliated with the denomination.

So, here I was facing this task for which I felt inadequate and ill-prepared. But I quickly remembered two friends from my seminary days who had believed I would become an influential leader. I also knew they strongly believed diverse leadership was vital for the Christian Reformed Church.

The first friend I approached had been involved in supporting up-and-coming minority leaders in the CRC for decades. Over lunch, he shared his frustrations with working inside the denominational structure and feelings that his work wasn't going anywhere. I reminded him that one significant beneficiary of his generous giving to the scholarship fund, and continued mentorship, was sitting right across from his chicken wings and celery sticks. He smiled and ended up giving a substantial gift to the scholarship fund.

I appealed to my other friend with a grand vision of raising funds for developing diaspora leaders to lead God's kingdom work. He politely listened to my speech then flipped the challenge right back on me... with a promise. He challenged me to raise an amount unheard of in the 50 year history of Race Relations. If our fundraising efforts could meet his pledge, he promised to match up to \$50,000 for the scholarship fund. I accepted his challenge as God's dare to me to take a risk on future leaders who will grow the church beyond our wildest dreams.



I am here to report God knows how to prove me wrong every time. He prepared others who have given generously to the scholarship fund and He continues to bring in more through matching a crazy challenge. Diverse CRC leaders matter, and the Lord keeps bringing them to us and providing us the resources to grow them.

REV. REGGIE SMITH
DIRECTOR OF DIVERSITY

Tools You Can Use

[Information on ANH scholarship fund](#)

[Diversity webpage](#)

[Race Relations webpage](#)

Pastor Church Resources



Christian Reformed Church
**Pastor Church
Resources**

40
YEARS

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.

Celebrating 40 Years

Synod 1982 approved the formation of Pastor-Church Relations (PCR). The mandate for this ministry was that it provide programs of “healing and prevention” for ministers, staff, councils, and congregations. Forty years later, Pastor Church Resources (the new name) has significantly expanded its work—as noted in our mission statement above. Resourcing today continues to include the consultation services that were key back in the early days, Specialized Transitional Ministers, PastorSearch (churches looking for a pastor), conferences for pastors and pastors’ wives, grants for peer groups and continuing education, vocational assessments, mentoring and more.

Pastoral Wellbeing

Pastoral ministry offers a wide variety of opportunities to engage with God’s people. It is a wonderful calling filled with joys and challenges. In order for pastors to do this work well and care for their congregation, they need to care for themselves. PCR offers several ways for pastors to tend to their wellbeing. One of these ways is through peer learning groups where small groups of pastors commit to gather for a year to encourage, support, care, and pray for each other. They are able to connect with others who “get it” and can have open, honest conversations. To date, almost 1,000 CRC pastors have participated in a PCR peer group.

Consultation

The last few years have been especially difficult for churches and ministry leaders. Challenges like the pandemic, political polarization, and decisions made at synod about human sexuality have all made the already demanding call to ministry even more demanding. Sometimes, when the challenges pile up, it helps to invite someone from outside the congregation to offer another set of eyes and ears. As we have for 40 years, Pastor Church Resources continues to accept the invitation of pastors and councils to help them identify the key issues, navigate strained relationships, and develop paths toward thriving again. Every church experiences seasons where they feel overwhelmed, confused, or stuck. With PCR consultation, your churches should never have to walk those seasons alone.

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

Raise Up Global Ministries

Dr. Jane Vella, a pioneer of Dialogue Education™, spent her career teaching adults the value of dialogue and a learning-centered approach. Vella tells about a powerful moment at one of her learning events. During a break, she found a participant, a professor at a local university, crying. Vella asked what was causing the tears. The woman explained: As a teacher, she loved to tell others all the wonderful knowledge she had gained in life. Through the training, she now recognized this was not the best way to impart knowledge. She was grieving the change--the passing of her old role to welcome in the new. She was grieving "the death of the professor." She mused, "It's less about me now and more about them!" Indeed.

Vella's principles and practices of learning through dialogue are embedded in the three programs of Raise Up: Global Coffee Break, Timothy Leadership Training, and Educational Care. These programs have been strengthened by this approach and impact is being seen in profound ways.

For example, a *Discover Your Bible* study like *Discover Micah*, provides learners with well-designed open questions to help groups dig into the text and personalize it. Leaders walk alongside – not at the podium—helping group members learn together.

Another example is Timothy Leadership Training. TLT has more than 25 years of experience helping pastors and church leaders to develop ministry skills through interactive learning. At the end of every manual, participants develop and implement action plans to put learning into practice and reflect on learning. Classis Heartland plans to use Timothy Leadership Training to equip their church leaders by hosting a classis-wide Timothy Leadership Training course in October.

All three programs have been designed to strengthen leaders as they follow Jesus in mission. For more information about training and resources please contact program managers Juan Sierra or Albert Strydhorst (see sidebar for contact information).

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People You Should Know

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Women's Leadership Development

Women's Leadership Celebrates 25 years of Women's Ordination

On the floor at Synod 2022, Rev. Elaine May, the CRCNA's Women's Leadership ministry developer, gave remarks and showed an inspiring video listing the names of 200 women who are currently serving the CRCNA in the role of minister of the Word and commissioned pastor. Many of the names were accompanied by pictures of the women. This presentation marked the start of the commemoration of 25 years of women's ordination to all church offices that had been two years in the making. COVID-19 disruptions postponed events and prevented proper recognition of the 25 year milestone in 2020.

Two months later, over seventy men and women gathered at an anniversary banquet in Chicago. Dr. Rev. Mary Hulst was the opening speaker at the celebration. She was the first woman ordained in the United States as a minister of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church. Hulst challenged the group to think about students they know who may need someone to speak words of confidence and encouragement about the gifts they have from God and how they can contribute those gifts to the building up of the church.

In attendance at the dinner were several female CRC pastors, supporters who had advocated for women's ordination from before 1995, and many who have benefited from the gifts of women leaders in the years since. At their tables, attendees shared about their own journeys to wherever God has called them, and about



Elaine May at Synod 2022

the people who have influenced them along the way. They were also encouraged to think about whom they could mentor or support in their own life.

"The celebration gave us an opportunity to reflect on the past and to recommit ourselves to releasing the gifts of women in the church," said May. "The work ahead requires both men and women working together, just as it did over 25 years ago."

REV. ELAINE MAY
WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT
[CRCNA.ORG/WOMENSLEADERSHIP](https://crcna.org/womensleadership)

Want to Learn More?

Visit the "Leadership" page on The Network (crcna.org/Network) to find blogs, resources, and conversations on this topic.

Sample "Servant Leadership" posts:

- [Have You Listened Enough To Make That Decision?](#)
- [10 Ways for Men and Women Thriving in Ministry Together](#)

- [Diakonia: Serving or Sharing?](#)
- [What Are Some of the Most Undervalued Leadership Traits?](#)
- [Humbled by the Pope's Resignation](#)

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