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## global missions

### Back to God Ministries International

Thanks to faithful support by CRC congregations, Back to God Ministries International (BTGMI) proclaims the gospel worldwide, providing resources that reframe lives with God's story.

- Our Portuguese outreach produces, among other media resources, five television programs that reach millions of viewers throughout Brazil. Vitorio, a former drug and alcohol addict, testifies that he found victory through faith in Christ after hearing the gospel presented through our Word of Truth TV broadcast. Our popular children's videos, *The Ark Clubhouse*, are now available through Brazil's Netflix.
- As the Russian government tightens restrictions on AM radio broadcasting, our media outreach—which is quite diverse—remains strong. With local partners, we produce 13 audio programs, of which nine are live online broadcasts, inviting the audience to participate with their questions. One of these programs specifically addresses questions atheists ask. Another discussion appeals to professionals, especially women. Through media we are sharing the gospel with a diverse population in Eastern Europe.
- Is your church working to communicate better with your members and local community? Consider applying for a grant available through [Church Juice](#), a ministry of the BTGMI English outreach team, [ReFrame Media](#). "The Juicys" provide a way to recognize and reward churches that have worked to improve their communications in the past year,

by giving them a grant to jump-start their next project. Share your latest communications project to inspire other congregations and dream about what's next in increasing your congregation's use of media tools in ministry. Applications for the grants open in the fall. (See also [TheJuicys.org](#).) For communication ideas you can use now, visit [ChurchJuice.com](#).

[BacktoGod.net](#)

### Home Missions

God has a plan to restore all of creation, and we have a role to play. Together with you, Home Missions is committed to demonstrating Jesus' love. North America is quickly becoming one of the largest mission fields in the world. The task of spreading light and life is great, but so is our God. With imagination and hope, we can become more and more a missionary people, sharing Christ's resurrection power in action and in truth.

The people of PIER church in Wyoming, Mich., know and deeply care about each other. Whatever the triumph or tribulation, the disciples of PIER are invested in each other and in God. Pastor Wayne Ondersma is grateful for the support he receives, which goes well beyond finances. "Home Missions is standing behind us saying, 'Go. Do this thing. We believe in what you're doing.' That makes a great impact on us—to have the feeling that someone is behind you and encouraging you."

Joining First CRC's Coffee Break was a life-changing experience for Kim, a woman with a Roman Catholic background but no church home. Through weekly Coffee Break meetings with leaders and friends, Kim was able to realize that it was possible to have a personal relationship with

God. Home Missions is a partner providing support, resources, and coaching for over 700 Coffee Break groups around the world through which God is transforming lives.

An unlikely student-run club at the University of Alberta is getting people to talk about Christ by reading J.R.R. Tolkien. Starting in 2010, Campus Ministry Director Rick VanManen offered a summer book study on Tolkien's *The Hobbit*, and that developed into the ongoing Tolkien group The Last Alliance. It's difficult to talk of Tolkien without also bringing up theology—The Last Alliance has created a space where different ideas are brought up about theology and faith, allowing for engaging dialogue.

[crhm.org](http://crhm.org)

## World Missions

The Christian Reformed Church in North America is reaching beyond its geographical borders of Canada and the United States to respond to the needs of God's people around the world. One of the ways this takes place is through Christian Reformed World Missions (CRWM).

In Cambodia's capital city of Phnom Penh, as in many parts of the world, the effects of urbanization are opening doors for ministry. As young college students, business people, and other future leaders move to this urban center, CRWM missionaries help to shape their biblical worldview and find ways to collaborate ministry efforts.

Justin Van Zee also helps in this important ministry in Cambodia. Justin has been working as a CRWM partner for the past two years, serving at a church in Phnom Penh and discipling college students. Since moving there, he has progressed to an advanced level of Khmer-language learning, has grown to appreciate Cambodian culture, and has improved in his ability to teach and disciple in contextually relevant ways. In September 2016 he will transition to working as a leadership developer in Cambodia, a long-term career position.

CRWM has also been seeking out effective ministry opportunities in Europe to reach out to the rising number of refugees from the Middle East. In response, we are expanding ministry to a new country, Germany,

with the appointment of David Kromminga and Mary Buteyn. David and Mary will equip local churches in discipling immigrant believers and support the creation of new immigrant congregations made up of refugees from Syria, Afghanistan, and other Middle Eastern nations.

David is currently serving as pastor at Sherman Street CRC. Mary recently finished her school year at Calvin College, where she served as an assistant professor of German. "For years we have sensed God's call to serve in a German-speaking country," say David and Mary.

We praise God for working in these newest missionaries' hearts, calling them into service. We pray that God will also bring people forward for four other open positions: currently CRWM is seeking a leadership developer in the Middle East, a missionary to work in Christian education in Uganda, and an evangelist and media developer in West Africa.

[crwm.org](http://crwm.org)

## Timothy Leadership Training Institute

God has been using Timothy Leadership Training to equip pastors to care for the people of West Africa, especially after the devastating effects of the Ebola virus epidemic.

**Stewardship in Ivory Coast:** Master Trainer André Iba reports with thanks to God from a very poor area near the Guinea border, where people live at a subsistence level, saying that his regional church budget went from \$8,000 in 2014 to \$14,000 in 2015. He attributes this increase to Timothy Leadership Training, especially in the area of stewardship.

**Ebola education in Sierra Leone:** Because of the Ebola outbreak, the training group in Sierra Leone was unable to meet in 2014 and 2015. But participants at a training in January reported that they still were able to implement their action plans. One pastor shared how he produced a movie to educate people about Ebola, helping them to care for people affected by the crisis.

**Moving forward in Liberia:** New groups in three areas are hoping to

launch their first training sessions—in Monrovia, Ganta, and Buchanan. The greatest need is for qualified trainers. Local costs will be met by participants and African church partners. TLTI is working to arrange support for master trainers from other African countries to travel to Liberia and lead these trainings over the next three years.

On behalf of the 1,078 graduates who were certified in 2015, we would like to express our appreciation for the support and encouragement of the many people and agencies of the Christian Reformed Church.

We look forward to continued reports of changed lives and transformed communities.

[www.tlti.org/](http://www.tlti.org/)



## Pastor-Church Relations

(No report this quarter.)

[crcna.org/pcr](http://crcna.org/pcr)

## Sustaining Pastoral and Congregational Excellence

In November more than 100 pastors' wives will gather in San Diego, Calif., for the fifth Pastors' Wives' Conference. These biennial events gather women from all over Canada and the U.S. for a time of encouragement, learning, refreshment, prayer, and fun. (The conference is for pastors' wives and not pastors' husbands. To find out why, visit <https://www.crcna.org/SPE/pastors-spouses>.)

This year's theme is *Oasis of Grace: Resting in God's Goodness*. Keynote speaker Rev. Heidi De Jonge is the pastor of Westside Fellowship in Kingston, Ont. Using Hebrews 4:16 as her starting point, Heidi will speak about God's gift of grace and how it is seen in everyday life.

Often churches do not think about or acknowledge the vital role that pastors' wives play in the ministry of the church. Many do a variety of tasks

required in a worshiping community. However, even if they do not have a “visible” task, they are very much involved in ministry. Supporting and encouraging their husbands is a key role they fill. Each role, that of the pastor and that of the pastor’s wife, is a unique one that only others in the same situation can understand.

The conference allows women sharing similar experiences to be in a safe place where they can talk about the joys and challenges of ministry and be truly understood. This is a gift to all who attend. An attendee from the 2014 conference shared, “This conference is a lifeline—an oasis of love and care that is needed specifically for pastors’ wives and our unique role and concerns.” And a pastor said, “Thank you for these encouraging and empowering events. My wife greatly anticipates them for months and then revels in the blessing she receives for months to follow.”

For more information on the conference, visit

<https://www.crcna.org/SPE/pastors-spouses/pastors-wives-conference>.

[crcna.org/spe](http://crcna.org/spe)

[crcna.org/sce](http://crcna.org/sce)

## Chaplaincy and Care Ministry

We currently oversee a group of 141 endorsed chaplains throughout the U.S. and Canada (plus a few overseas due to military assignments). These pastoral care specialists serve in various kinds of ministry in institutions ranging from hospitals to hospice, and from military to manufacturing (workplace).

Our list of “prospective students” and “inquirers” has also grown—now to more than 70 individuals. The expanding awareness of and interest in chaplaincy continues to generate a 5 percent or greater growth rate in our number of chaplains per year. In the past year we have provided nearly \$25,000 in training grants to such individuals. Contributions to our Development Fund from churches and individuals make this important reality possible.

Much of our recent activity has focused on final preparations for our Chaplains Conference in June (9-11). We expect

90-100 of our chaplains and spouses from all over the U.S. and Canada to be present for this event. This year’s theme is “Spirituality and Psychology—Duality or Dichotomy.” Our two keynote speakers have each played a significant role in researching and/or writing about this reunion of concepts that many (since Freud) have tried to separate.

We also plan with this conference, and at synod just after it, to begin the celebration of our 75th year as an official chaplaincy office. Historical details are being collected, a short video is being produced, and other appropriate attention is being given to this mile marker.

Our continuing rotation of visits to our chaplains has taken us most recently to Texas and Florida. We have spoken to students at a number of educational institutions (most recently at Trinity Christian College and Calvin Theological Seminary). We typically enjoy speaking with 10-50 students in each location.

As chaplaincy continues to grow to become one of the larger and more cost-effective CRCNA ministries, we hope that local churches will see chaplains as an important part of their outreach to a hurting world.

[crcna.org/chaplaincy](http://crcna.org/chaplaincy)

## Candidacy Committee

The Candidacy Committee is the ministry of the Christian Reformed Church that coordinates and facilitates the ordination of pastors. We provide assistance to individuals, churches, and classis leaders as they navigate the process of becoming ministers of the Word or commissioned pastors in the CRCNA.

In the spring of each year, one main area of focus is the process of approving individuals to recommend to synod as candidates for ordination as ministers of the Word. As of May the process is nearly complete, and we anticipate recommending 47 persons to synod. In addition, 26 persons approved as candidates in previous years will be presented as “extended candidates” in order that they may remain eligible for call. This number of extended candidates is slightly lower than in the past two years, an encouraging result even though the

waiting process for these candidates is challenging.

One major project each May is the program called Korean Institute for Ministry (KIM). This ten-day Korean language program gives orientation to pastors who will serve in Korean congregations within the CRCNA. Over 100 pastors have participated in this program, which is now in its tenth year. The program makes use of various faculty of Calvin Theological Seminary (with the aid of translators) and various Korean pastors currently ordained in the CRC. The Candidacy Committee has also been purposefully working with other ethnic leaders to serve their communities in preparing leaders for pastoral ordination.

Candidacy matters being presented to Synod 2016 include a report on the uses of commissioned pastors, a report on continuing education for pastors, and an overture regarding seminary student funding. The summer months will include work with the Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidacy, which engages those attending seminaries outside the Christian Reformed Church, enabling them to receive orientation to the denomination and the expectations of ordained pastoral servant leaders. The candidacy committee is also actively seeking to identify all persons on the journey toward eventual candidacy so that they can participate in the recently approved mandatory two-year vocational mentoring program.

[crcna.org/candidacy](http://crcna.org/candidacy)

## Ministry in Canada

Ministry in Canada is continuing to walk toward a goal of fulsome cross-agency, integrated planning that is meant to serve local churches. What we mean by this is that we desire for the work of all agencies and ministries of the CRCNA to be contextualized for their setting in Canada and done so in a way that demands the best parts of a shared, purposeful workload of all parts of the CRC. This work has continued through the encouragement of the Canada Corporation (Canadian side of the Board of Trustees of the CRCNA) through the office of the Canadian Ministries Director, Darren Roorda.

Over the past several months, components of this work have included the following:

- A national gathering held in Waterloo, Ont., May 6-8 ([crcna.org/gatherings/canadian-gathering-2016](http://crcna.org/gatherings/canadian-gathering-2016)). At the gathering we wrestled with the denominational ministry plan (*Our Journey 2020*) and its application in Canada, at the same time experiencing the presence of God in the church. By and large, it received high praise from all who attended.
- A cross-country tour of classes by Darren Roorda engaging discussion around the denominational ministry plan and discerning the most relevant components of it in local churches.
- An approved budget plan for Ministry in Canada that includes strengthening communications in Canada, a cross-agency social justice mobilizer to strengthen and encourage local churches, and the development of a phone app to serve local church leaders and members across Canada.
- The continued strategic determination of the ministry ServiceLink to serve as a bridging arm of the CRCNA within Canada between ministry agencies and local churches.
- The participation of the Canadian Ministries Office and ServiceLink in the Connections Project, which seeks to understand the effectiveness of regionalization of ministry. This continues the work being done as a pilot project in Classis Niagara.

[crcna.org/Canada](http://crcna.org/Canada)

## Classis Renewal

(No report this quarter.)

[network.crcna.org/classis](http://network.crcna.org/classis)

## Church Renewal Lab

The Church Renewal Lab is a two-year renewal journey for the purpose of developing intentional missional congregations that make more and better disciples who transform lives and communities for Christ. The Renewal Lab is the flagship of the Institute for Global Church Planting

and Renewal at Calvin Theological Seminary. The Renewal Lab is completing a three-year pilot project and is entering a new phase of imagining how it can better serve CRCNA congregations throughout North America.

The Renewal Lab recently held a Saturday renewal retreat in Classis Alberta North with twelve congregations represented. The retreat focused on essentials for church renewal and a process for changing congregational atmosphere and journeying to mission. The same retreat has been held in Classes Pacific Northwest, Columbia, Greater Los Angeles, Hackensack/Hudson, and Toronto. The retreat is offered as a gift from Calvin Seminary to any classical ministries team interested in hosting. Please contact the Church Renewal Lab at Calvin Seminary for further information.

The present list of Church Renewal Lab CRCNA congregations:

Immanuel	Hudsonville, MI
West Olive	West Olive, MI
Gateway	Zeeland, MI
Providence	Holland, MI
Three Rivers	Three Rivers, MI
Graafschap	Holland, MI
14th Street	Holland, MI
Hamilton	Hamilton, MI
Mayfair	Grand Rapids, MI
Ideal Park	Grand Rapids, MI
Fairway	Jenison, MI
First	Hudsonville, MI
Spring Lake	Spring Lake, MI
West Leonard	Grand Rapids, MI
Calvary	Plainwell, MI
Hope	Grandville, MI
Palos Heights	Palos Heights, IL
Baldwin Street	Jenison, MI
Millbrook	Grand Rapids, MI
New Era	New Era, MI
Second	Grand Haven, MI
Fredericton	Fredericton, NB
Westwood	Kalamazoo, MI
Friendship Chapel	Jenison, MI
Georgetown	Hudsonville, MI
Trinity	Jenison, MI
East Paris	Kentwood, MI
12th Avenue	Jenison, MI
Kibbe	South Haven, MI
East Leonard Park	Grand Rapids, MI
Bauer	Holland, MI
The River	Hudsonville, MI
Fox Valley	Allegan, MI
Ada	Crystal Lake, IL
Faith	Ada, MI
Cedar Hill	Wyckoff, NJ
	Wyckoff, NJ

Unity	Prospect Park, NJ
Ridgewood	Ridgewood, NJ
Midland Park	Midland Park, NJ
Madison Ave.	Paterson, NJ
Princeton	Kentwood, MI
Bethel	Zeeland, MI
Jamestown	Jamestown, MI
Immanuel RCA	Grand Rapids, MI
Christ Community	Grand Rapids, MI
Covenant	Cutlerville, MI
First Cutlerville	Cutlerville, MI
Middleville	Middleville, MI

The Renewal Lab is eager to serve any congregation or classis seeking renewal with a missional focus.

[calvinseminary.edu/the-renewal-lab/](http://calvinseminary.edu/the-renewal-lab/)

## Ridder Church Renewal

Ridder Church Renewal (RCR) has begun the fourth cycle of its 30-month learning process for pastors and church leaders. RCR began in late 2008 and is now bearing fruit in six regions of North America: New York, Ontario, Michigan, Wisconsin, the Heartland, and Western Canada. There are 97 churches currently involved in RCR. Pastors are now completing the initial spiritual formation process called Faithwalking, which leads them to grow in emotional maturity to live and lead their own lives and their congregations more faithfully in mission with Christ. This intense process lasts 24 weeks. At the same time, teams of up to six congregation leaders and their pastor take on the task of learning and living out the values of integrity, authenticity, courage, and love. The pastors and teams also practice five skill sets for adaptive change: the power of mental models, family systems, generating and sustaining creative tension, organizational systems, and effective teams. Churches that participate in Ridder testify to the personal transformation that enables them to deepen their missional engagement in local communities. As Rev. Adrian Van Giessen notes about RCR: "We tend to see programs as the answer to all problems—everyone wants to know 'what's going to come out of this for me.' But I don't think Ridder is like that. I think Ridder is a lot deeper than that—it's really creating an authentic place for the Holy Spirit to do his transforming work. I've seen it happen in my own life and the lives of others in Ridder. It's a continual journey. I

haven't seen a lot of places for this to happen in the church today." As of the end of May, about 700 pastors and leaders completed the second learning event of the current cycle. Praise God for the engagement of pastors and leaders in this important work of church renewal. And pray that God will help bring it to completion in a joyful harvest for the kingdom.

[westernsem.edu/journey/ridder](http://westernsem.edu/journey/ridder)

## Reformed Leadership Initiative

The Reformed Leadership Initiative (RLI) is a CRC and RCA leadership development collaboration working within the context of six Congregational Leadership Learning Networks (CLLNs) in the U.S. and Canada. CLLNs are being created for the purpose of learning, sharing, and identifying good resources and practices to implement in the network's participating churches, with the goal of developing a sustainable process for leadership development. In each CLLN, coleaders help create an environment conducive for pastors and congregational leaders to connect with their own team members and to connect with churches within their CLLN based on a common vision, interests, and goals. In these gatherings, leadership challenges and opportunities will be identified and explored together.

The CLLN approach is about creating and using processes and/or models for leadership development at all levels of leadership in our churches. Teams are encouraged to dream, imagine, and prayerfully try new ways of developing leaders. As equipping teams return to their churches or ministries, they will seek opportunities to share and implement what is learned in their CLLN.

To maximize this learning experience, the coleader team participates in a monthly session with an experienced coach. The equipping teams will also have an opportunity to regularly meet with a coach to work with them on this project. These connections will strengthen our learning community. Congregational equipping teams will be encouraged and energized by each other, as they address current

leadership challenges and opportunities with the hope of making a greater impact on leading their congregations in kingdom service; a CLLN provides a platform for this to happen.

Please pray for the Spirit's guidance and provisions.

[crcna.org/ministries/initiatives/together-again](http://crcna.org/ministries/initiatives/together-again)



## Worship Ministries

**A Big Question** Worship Ministries' Spring Advisory Committee meeting took place at Madison Avenue CRC in Paterson, N.J. By locating our meeting there, we were able to meet with worship leaders from other area churches, be led in worship by members of the Madison Avenue CRC worship team, and expand our knowledge and experience of worship in the CRC and the varied contexts in which it occurs. Also, as part of our time in the New Jersey/New York area, one of our advisory members, Pastor Sandra Van Opstal from Grace and Peace Community CRC in Chicago, offered a workshop on multicultural worship based on her book [The Next Worship: Glorifying God in a Diverse World](#).

The context, the workshops, worship, and conversations all fed into this big question: "Given the great diversity of worship expressions within the CRC, what are the fundamental truths that we hold in common that identify our worship as theologically Reformed?" This question is not easy to answer and will need to be asked in various contexts around our denomination, but it is vital that we seek to find an answer as a denomination. We are grateful that we don't begin the conversation in a void but on the shoulders of great work done by previous liturgical committees as presented in the 1968 and 1997 *Acts of Synod and Authentic Worship in a Changing Culture* (available in the Digital Library).

**A New Facebook Group: CRC Worship Ministries** In January Worship Ministries began a Facebook page. We currently have 135 members using this platform to ask questions and share resources.

**Help Needed:** We are continually

amazed at two things:

1. The great wealth of talent and gifts residing in our local churches and the willingness to share those gifts.
2. The number of worship leaders who do not know that resources exist within the larger denomination or their own classis.

Worship Ministries desires to learn about resources that already exist and to identify the worship leader/musician/artist/pastor who feels rather alone amid the demands of weekly services and help that person connect with a supportive community of worship leaders. But we need your help. Please spread the word and encourage your area's worship leaders, planners, musicians, artists, pastors to plug in by

1. signing up for our monthly newsletter at [crcna.org/worship](http://crcna.org/worship).
2. joining the Facebook page: CRC Worship Ministries.
3. joining a Peer Learning Group (new groups are forming this fall).
4. dropping us a line! Please email [WorshipMinistries@crcna.org](mailto:WorshipMinistries@crcna.org) or call one of our staff (1-800-333-8300).

[crcna.org/Worship](http://crcna.org/Worship)

## Calvin Theological Seminary

**Commencement** On Saturday, May 20, 80 students graduated from Calvin Theological Seminary in various degree programs. Eleven different nations were represented in this graduating class: Brazil, Canada, China, Indonesia, Japan, Madagascar, Nepal, Nigeria, South Korea, Trinidad & Tobago, and the United States. Thank you for praying for these graduates!

### Faculty Emeriti Status

Commencement was also the time when the following persons were noted for their years of service and provided with an emeritus title related to their field: Rev. Al Gelder (Five years – Director of Mentored Ministries, *Emeritus*), Rev. Lugene Schemper (16 years – Theological Librarian, *Emeritus*), Dr. Cal Van Reken (25 years – Professor of Moral Theology, *Emeritus*), and Dr. Arie Leder (29 years – Johanna K. and

Martin J. Wyngaarden Senior Professor in Old Testament, *Emeritus*). We invite you to give thanks for these persons and their service to the church!

### **Distinguished Alumni Recipients**

Rev. Lugene A. Bazuin and Rev. Dr. Leanne Van Dyk received the seminary's Distinguished Alumni Awards for 2016. Rev. Dr. Leanne Van Dyk is the first female recipient of the seminary's Distinguished Alumni Award.

### **Board Appointments**

The CTS Board of Trustees appointed Dr. Young Ahn Kang as Visiting Professor, Philosophical Theology for the period of July 1, 2017, to June 30, 2019. The board also appointed Rev. Wayne Ten Harnsel as Lee S. Huizenga Distinguished Missionary in Residence for the spring 2017 semester. The board earlier appointed Ms. Ann Plantinga Kapteyn as Lee S. Huizenga Distinguished Missionary in Residence for the spring and fall semesters of 2016.

### **Spanish Language Certificate**

In addition to the current Hispanic Ministry Certificate Program, the Board of Trustees of CTS approved a Spanish-language Certificate in Family Counseling. Both certificate programs have nearly 40 students in them.

### **July 19-21, 2016: Conference on**

**Loving Your Neighbor Today** Jesus tells us, "Love your neighbor as yourself." But what does that mean for us today? Does loving our non-Christian neighbors mean evangelizing them or engaging them in dialogue? How do we love those who are hard to love because they suffer from dementia or trauma? Calvin Seminary invites you to attend a conference that will ask, from a variety of perspectives, "What Does 'Love Your Neighbor' Mean Today?" The conference features Dr. Richard Mouw, Professor of Faith and Public Life and President *emeritus* of Fuller Theological Seminary, as well as many of the newer faculty members at Calvin Seminary. To learn more or to register, please visit our website.

[calvinseminary.edu](http://calvinseminary.edu)

## **Calvin Institute of Christian Worship**

At the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship we are looking forward to two

significant collaborative learning events—one in June, and one in September:

### **June 22 - Taking Your Church to College: Strengthening Congregational Life through Liberal Arts-Style Learning**

This one-day event explores how liberal-arts style learning can strengthen congregational life, with wisdom from insightful Calvin professors in nine disciplines and with gleanings from 30 Vital Worship grant-funded congregational renewal projects, culminating in an inspiring worship service in the Calvin Chapel. (Cosponsored with Calvin College Alumni Office.)

### **Sept. 13 - Universal Design for Worship: Shaping Worship for People of All Abilities**

This one-day event equips teams from congregations and worshiping communities who want practical ways to implement universal design in worship. "Universal Design" is now standard in architecture. We don't want to retrofit buildings to make them accessible; we want to build them that way from the start. What if this vision were extended to the worship services we plan and lead and for all ministries of the church? What if we didn't need to retrofit our worship services to be accommodating to persons across the range of abilities and disabilities, but we planned them that way from the start?

A separate related event that evening—Ministry Leadership Training—will provide training for deacons, elders, pastors, and other leaders in the church. (Cosponsored with Christian Reformed Home Missions and the Department of Congregational Ministry Studies at Calvin.)

Register for all events at

[worship.calvin.edu](http://worship.calvin.edu)



## **Faith Formation Ministries**

The first few months of 2016 have been filled with introductions at Faith Formation Ministries (FFM), as this young ministry continues to grow. At the beginning of the year, FFM welcomed three new people to their

team: [Sandy](#) as a Resource Development Manager, [Christine](#) as an Administrative Coordinator, and [Paola](#) as a Communications Specialist.

[FFM's Regional Catalyzers](#) have been introducing themselves to church leaders as a resource to help them continue to grow their congregation's faith formation efforts.

FFM has also been preparing to introduce new toolkits. In addition to the [Welcoming Children to the Lord's Supper](#) toolkit, FFM is putting the finishing touches on two toolkits that will be launching this summer—Faith Storytelling and Building Blocks of Faith—and compiling contents for future toolkits on faith commitments and intergenerational ministry. Visit [crcna.org/FaithFormation/Toolkits](http://crcna.org/FaithFormation/Toolkits) to access these new resources in July!

The hope is that all of these introductions will help FFM continue to connect with congregations and their leaders to better learn about and support their congregational faith formation efforts!

In addition to these introductions, the FFM team has been traveling, connecting with congregations around the country, and leading workshops. Syd Hielema, FFM's Team Leader, and Shannon Jamal-Hollemaans, FFM's Collaborative Program Developer, led workshops for more than 50 people in Ripon and Alameda, Calif.

Through a partnership with the Office of Social Justice and World Renew, FFM was able to bring an intergenerational group of 36 CRC members from three churches in Grand Rapids and from Calvin College to [Ecumenical Advocacy Days \(EAD\)](#). You can read more about the experience in this [CRC news article](#). Learnings from that trip will be integrated into a toolkit about intergenerational ministry. In April, FFM also participated in the [Faith Forward](#) conference in Chicago, where members of the team learned about the importance of doing faith formation work in community and about experiential learning.

[crcna.org/FaithFormation](http://crcna.org/FaithFormation)

## **Calvin College**

Calvin prepares the heart and mind for rigorous inquiry, always seeking God's truth. Congratulations to the recipients

of the [faculty awards for 2016](#), all of whom were honored at the Tributes and Awards Dinner held on campus in early May.

Calvin fosters communal connections that inspire wonder, curiosity, and action. A gift from Bob and Shelley Hudson established the Calvin College [Center for Faith and Writing](#) to “celebrate a Reformed engagement with the written word, championing faithful and intelligent conversation about the intersections of religious belief and literature, broadly defined.”

Commencement is always an exciting weekend and one of many special moments takes place at the annual breakfast for the parents of Calvin graduates. Our Calvin Parent Council asks a faculty member who is the parent of a graduating senior to talk about being both a professor and a parent at the college, and the reflections are always inspiring.

ArtPrize has become an international cultural phenomenon, with more than 1,500 works of art on display for two weeks in downtown Grand Rapids each fall. This October, the [Calvin Academy for Lifelong Learning](#) is offering a three-day living-learning ArtPrize experience.

The college has been working for many months with a consulting firm to develop immediate, 10-year and 20-year priorities for the development of the Calvin campus. The [campus master plan](#) was recently presented to the campus community and is now available for alumni, parents, and other friends of the college.

Students are coming to Calvin because they are captivated by what Christ is doing here through our faculty, staff, and students. But, first, they had to hear about us. Please keep recommending Calvin.

[calvin.edu](#)

## ServiceLink

(No report this quarter.)

[crcna.org/servicelink](#)

## Dynamic Youth Ministries

### Calvinist Cadet Corps

The Cadet organization continues to work toward its mission of helping boys grow more Christlike in all areas of life. While weekly meetings may not continue over the summer months, the mentoring relationships between the boys and Christian men do. During the summer there will be regional camp-outs in Michigan, Alberta, and Ontario. Each of these will involve four to six days of outdoor adventures, the building of friendships, and God’s working in the lives of boys and men. We pray for good weather and good times for each of these events.

Cadets suffered a tremendous loss on April 10, when our executive secretary, Kathy Door, unexpectedly passed away. Kathy had recently celebrated 20 years of working for Cadets. The loss of a friend and coworker is difficult for the others in the office and is felt throughout the organization. We pray for strength for office staff as they pick up the extra tasks that need to be done, and we pray for the hiring process as we look for someone new to work on our publications and program materials.

In summer we host several fundraising events. Golf tournaments in Michigan and Ontario, a fishing tournament, and a sporting clay shoot are all scheduled between now and Labor Day. We pray for safety, for good times, and for the support of the community to make these events successful.

We are thankful for ongoing prayers that support the delivery of God’s message to boys in Canada, the U.S., and around the world.

[calvinistcadets.org](#)

### GEMS Girls’ Clubs

(Girls Everywhere Meeting the Savior)

One of the main ways GEMS achieves its mission of bringing girls into a living, dynamic relationship with Jesus Christ is by equipping women to mentor well.

This past April key volunteers from across North America traveled to Grand Rapids, Mich., for a training event on the 2016-17 GEMS theme: Love Overflows, based on 1 Thessalonians 3:12. These leaders will be hosting events in their local areas this fall—preparing hundreds of women for their work with girls through workshops and focused times of discussion and sharing.

In addition, the GEMS Leadership Conference will take place this July in Bozeman, Mont. From personal and spiritual refreshment to curriculum-specific instruction, the goal is for every attendee to be equipped for effective service in the year ahead.

This summer over 180 early-teen girls will also be traveling to Rockwood, Ont., for a weeklong GEMS camp. This fun-filled experience gives girls space to connect with new friends, mentors, and—most importantly—God. After every camp experience we hear amazing stories of growth and transformation from girls who attend.

Prayers are also appreciated as GEMS continues to create new materials with the hope of reaching girls from all backgrounds, situations, and walks of life. We believe that when girls understand the depth of God’s unending love for them, they can change the world. So GEMS is constantly innovating new ways to impress this truth on girls’ hearts.

Munyiva Wa Kitavi, GEMS representative from Kenya, is part of that progress as she continues to train and inspire women in her region to start GEMS clubs.

[gemsgc.org](#)

### Youth Unlimited

Youth Unlimited’s desire is to serve every Christian Reformed congregation by providing life-changing, faith-forming events that include scriptural teaching, time for personal devotions, corporate worship, prayer, and focused community service. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we believe these disciplines will provide each student a better understanding of what faith in Jesus Christ really means and how to live that out day-to-day.

We’re grateful to be working closely with the CRC because of movements making an impact, such as Faith-Formation Ministries and the Youth Ministry Canadian Pilot Project, and we’re excited to see how these will enhance our opportunity to best serve Christian Reformed congregations!

The theme of Youth Unlimited’s 2016 *Serve* experiences is *Make Change. Be Changed*, based on the gospel of Mark. We are praying that God uses this Scripture and theme to help students encounter the person of

Jesus Christ in very real ways during their time at *Serve*. With their ministry of service, relationships with peers, and mentoring from small group leaders, this curriculum will allow students from all places in their walk of faith to meet more fully the Savior who humbly came to serve, pouring out his love for us.

Youth Unlimited is truly honored to serve students and youth leaders from Christian Reformed congregations. We do not take this calling lightly. We are committed to give our very best. Your students and the church are the way Christ will shine his light and love in our world, and we desire to help them shine brightly!

If you desire to join us in this great adventure of investing in students and the church, or if you simply need a refresher on who Youth Unlimited is, we would enjoy connecting! You can find us at [www.youthunlimited.org](http://www.youthunlimited.org) or by emailing [jeff@youthunlimited.org](mailto:jeff@youthunlimited.org).

[youthunlimited.org/](http://youthunlimited.org/)



## World Renew

“He had compassion on them” (Matt. 14:14). “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.” And “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Mark 12:30-31). World Renew is grateful for both the resources and the inspiration to follow Christ’s command and example.

By the end of May, the refugee office in Burlington, Ont., had assisted in submitting 84 applications, consisting of 249 family members cited on those applications, and the resettlement of 112 refugees (arrivals), many from Syria. By the beginning of June, Disaster Response Services and the churches in northern Alberta had begun to assist evacuees from Fort McMurray (where fires had burned the equivalent of 2.5 Rhode Islands, or 8.5 Lake Simcoes). Over 100 masons have been taught earthquake-proof building methods in Nepal. While receiving food aid, communities in southwestern Zambia are doing agriculture training in the drought

conditions of El Niño.

One of the hallmarks of World Renew is its accountability and transparency (although at times, the inevitable reporting seems onerous). Reporting, reassessment, and possible midpoint shifts make World Renew thoughtful and nimble. Throughout the summer, a careful evaluation on the Constituency Relations team is being carried out, to find how we can (even) better honor God as we seek to live justly, love mercy, and serve Christ.

Summer is also the time to plan our autumn campaigns: the World Hunger Campaign and the Gift Catalogue Campaign. We are grateful for the work of inspired staff, themselves inspiring the church into attitudes and acts of compassion and love.

[worldrenew.net](http://worldrenew.net)

## Centre for Public Dialogue

This quarter, the Centre for Public Dialogue has been hard at work developing a new website that will provide more easily navigable justice content to CRC and RCA members, better support them as they integrate their faith and the call to do justice, and help to connect them to their political representatives for faith-powered dialogue and advocacy. We are particularly excited about new justice-themed worship materials, including specific materials on our tier 1 issues: Indigenous justice and refugee justice.

Following up on our submission to the Special Joint Committee on Physician-Assisted Dying last quarter, we sent a letter to Minister Wilson-Raybould in response to the committee’s report and also sent a letter to congregations calling for citizen advocacy on the topic. We covered the issue through two articles on our blog, *Do Justice*, and via social media coverage.

In their Call to Action #48, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) commissioners asked churches in Canada to endorse the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN Declaration) as a “framework for reconciliation.” We worked with the Canadian Aboriginal Ministry Committee (CAMC), Diaconal Ministries Canada, World Renew, and Canadian Ministries, along with many

other Canadian denominations, to endorse this declaration on March 31.

In partnership with CAMC, we developed a BOT-approved plan to follow up on the good work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). We will continue to monitor the government’s progress on, and advocate for, Indigenous education reform; to educate congregations about the UN Declaration; and to work ecumenically for reconciliation.

We have also been busy with visits to Members of Parliament, following up on our introductory letters last quarter.

Finally, on *Do Justice*, voices from across the denomination have written about the importance of and tips for respectful dialogue about contentious topics for our #CRClistsens series.

[crcna.org/pages/publicdialogue.cfm](http://crcna.org/pages/publicdialogue.cfm)

## Canadian Aboriginal Ministry Committee

The Canadian Aboriginal Ministry Committee (CAMC) has the specific role of educating and mobilizing CRC members and congregations to live in reconciled relationships as covenant (treaty) people before our Creator.

### CAMC works toward three goals:

- Awareness and education of CRC members and communities of the shared history of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in Canada, of the present lived reality of Aboriginal people in Canada, and of the need for reconciliation and renewed relationships
- Engaging in and building relationships with our Aboriginal neighbors to better understand each other and journey along the path of justice and right relationships
- Advocacy and seeking justice for Aboriginal peoples

Sunday, June 19, 2016, marks the day for the CRC to devote to Aboriginal Ministry. This year, the theme for Aboriginal Ministry Sunday is “Creating a New Family.” Using the painting titled “Creating a New Family” from the series *Kisemanito Pakitinasuwin (The Creator’s Sacrifice)* as the image for the bulletin, we are reminded that God created families for us to be in relationship with one another. John

19:25-27 tells us, “Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, ‘Woman, here is your son,’ and to the disciple, ‘Here is your mother.’ From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.” In this way, we also are being built together with all other people into a community where the Creator lives through the Holy Spirit. As followers of Christ, we are instructed to live at peace with each other and to pursue unity with the brothers and sisters we have received from the Creator.

You can find a litany and a prayer available for use for Sunday, June 19, 2016, at this link: [aboriginalministry.wordpress.com/worship-resources/aboriginal-sunday-reconciling-relationships/](http://aboriginalministry.wordpress.com/worship-resources/aboriginal-sunday-reconciling-relationships/)

Within the website [aboriginalministry.wordpress.com/](http://aboriginalministry.wordpress.com/) is a statement from the Christian Reformed Church in North America affirming the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Affirming the declaration was also a call to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada recommending churches to adopt the declaration as a framework for reconciliation. The CRCNA Canada Corporation met the commission’s Call to Action #48 before the March 31, 2016, deadline. The Canadian Aboriginal Ministry Committee and the Christian Reformed Centre for Public Dialogue were both essential to the development of the statement.

The Canadian Aboriginal Ministry Committee is also committed to fulfilling Calls to Action #59-60 from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. These two calls recommend that church members and leaders learn and teach the legacy of Canada’s residential schools for Indigenous children. One way the Canadian Aboriginal Ministry Committee will do that will be to continue offering the Blanket Exercise and the “Living the 8th Fire” curriculum. Both resources offer an opportunity to create a space for learning and sharing. The commitment made by the Canadian Aboriginal Ministry Committee was approved in the TRC Follow-up Action Plan at the

CRCNA Canada Corporation meeting in May 2016.

The Canadian Aboriginal Ministry Committee is committed to its goals of education, relationship building, and advocacy.

[crcna.org/aboriginal](http://crcna.org/aboriginal)

## Office of Social Justice

As the Office of Social Justice (OSJ) has shared the Immigrants Are a Blessing, Not a Burden campaign throughout the United States, we have seen firsthand how the words we use and the attitudes we have can either give people a sense of belonging and inclusion or make them feel disconnected or excluded. We have met hundreds of people affected by our broken immigration system, and we have been overwhelmed by the response to this campaign.

A seminary student was moved to tears when she heard the Blessing, Not Burden message because, until that gathering, no one had recognized her contributions as an immigrant and made her feel that she belongs. Imagine both the policy and personal impact we could bring if we all boldly shared this message. For ways to share this message, visit [BlessingNotBurden.org](http://BlessingNotBurden.org) and “like” the campaign page at [facebook.com/BlessingNotBurden](https://facebook.com/BlessingNotBurden).

OSJ helps congregations and individuals work toward a just world in which structures and institutions give every person the opportunity to thrive. We have developed a new resource called Biblical Advocacy 101 to help people learn the basics of advocacy for any issue and begin to steward their voices more effectively. You can find both a Canadian and United States version by visiting [justice.crcna.org/action-center](http://justice.crcna.org/action-center).

We also launched the next phase of the [CRC’s Climate Witness Project](http://CRC's Climate Witness Project). Phase One of the project brought together 35 congregations and 200 climate witness partners to learn more about the issue of climate change and, in turn, to educate others about it. Now the project is on to Phase Two.

Upcoming focuses on [Do Justice](http://Do Justice) will be immigration and refugees, advocacy work, and best practices for short-term mission trips.

[justice.crcna.org](http://justice.crcna.org)

## Safe Church Ministry

***Safe Church Ministry equips congregations in abuse awareness, prevention, and response***

Safe Church recorded over 280 interactions with congregations and individuals in the first quarter of 2016 on topics such as awareness, policy, safe church teams, and situations of abuse.

Safe Church piloted a mini-grant program to assist local volunteers in hosting educational events. Three applications were processed—two in Ontario and one in New Mexico. So far, feedback has been extremely positive. We hope to expand this program in the future.

Safe Church continues to offer a variety of resources, which have been designed to boost efforts toward effective abuse prevention and response. Most can be easily adapted for use in diverse contexts. Our new [Safe Church video](http://Safe Church video) is now ready to view! It can be used to quickly highlight the work of Safe Church Ministry. Plans are under way to make our newsletter more accessible and more fruitful by adapting to a new electronic format and by adjusting from a monthly to a bimonthly schedule. Browse our website, [crcna.org/safechurch](http://crcna.org/safechurch); it’s regularly updated with new information.

Please pray for the ongoing work of Safe Church Ministry to help build communities where the value of each person is honored and abuse is unthinkable. And until that day, please also pray for the director and for volunteer team members as we continue to walk alongside and offer consultation in difficult and complicated situations of abuse arising in CRC congregations. If you would like to receive a Safe Church prayer guide each month to inform your prayers, please contact us. We depend on your prayers. Thank you.

[www.crcna.org/safechurch](http://www.crcna.org/safechurch)

## Race Relations

The Race Relations staff continues its work in sharing the CRCNA vision for reconciliation, diversity, and equality to congregational and classis leaders. We are committed to helping leaders

understand and navigate the diverse ethnic cultures in their communities. The team has learned that to grow credibility among diverse ethnic groups, church leaders need to develop solidarity with the struggles that each group faces as they work to integrate into a broader community. Our staff members engage with various agencies, institutions, and organizations to collaborate in efforts to create actions that will help its leaders develop credibility with diverse ethnic groups and with the younger members who have a palate for diversity and equity.

Race Relations was recently involved in the Canadian National Gathering 2016, May 6-8, in Waterloo, Ont., and we look forward to fruitful interaction at Engage 2016: A Multiethnic Gathering, June 8-10, in Grand Rapids, Mich., at Calvin College. We are also excited about the launch of the Youth Ambassador of Reconciliation Program in Canada led by Canada Race Relations Coordinator Bernadette Arthur and Centre for Public Dialogue organizer Shannon Perez, a program designed to equip and support young adults in the CRC with leading the work of building healthy relationships between their home churches and their First Nations neighbors. The program includes a weeklong immersion trip to a northern reserve in June 2016!

Our more recent workshops, The Blanket Exercise and Restorative Practice Circles, are making headway as we're seeing more demand for these resources among congregations, classes, boards, and even Synod 2016 delegates.

We continue to covet your support through prayer and financial resources to help us continue this vital ministry of reconciliation.

[crcna.org/race](http://crcna.org/race)

## Disability Concerns

### **Life to the Full. Ability. Belonging. Community.**

This coming fall, Disability Concerns will host a training event in Niagara Falls, Ont., Oct. 28-30, for church staff, lay leaders, teachers, group leaders, disability advocates, people with disabilities, and their families. This event will motivate and equip participants from across North America

to foster belonging with people with exceptional needs and their families. Hosted with Christian Horizons, our vision through this event is that everyone may experience full and abundant life in Christ in accessible communities where their gifts and abilities are valued and respected.

Keynote speakers Amy Julia Becker (author), Dr. Erik Carter (researcher), and David Onley (former lieutenant-governor of Ontario) will guide our conversation by focusing on Ability, Belonging, and Community:

*Ability*—People with disabilities are often seen in light of their disability rather than their gifting and ability. We need transformed eyes to see each person as fearfully and wonderfully created in the image of God and called to serve Christ in the building of his kingdom.

*Belonging*—True healing from a scriptural perspective centers on the person of Christ and restoration with God and community through Christ's transforming power.

*Community*—Only when all people, including those who have been marginalized and excluded, truly belong and contribute does Christ-shaped community become a reality.

Workshops led by ministry leaders and notable organizations will equip participants with practical resources to be leaders in models of accessible ministry and education.

Please pray that God will continue to guide the planning process, that funding for the event will fall into place, and that many people will take advantage of this excellent opportunity. For more information or to register, see [www.lifetothefull2016.org](http://www.lifetothefull2016.org).

[crcna.org/disability](http://crcna.org/disability)

## Partners Worldwide

Partners Worldwide and World Renew are hosting the Sea to Sea 2017 Ride—Cycling to End Poverty event starting in June 2017. Sea to Sea is a bicycling mission that started in 2008 and has helped raise awareness and several million dollars to further its mission to end poverty. A new website will be launched this summer so that riders can register and begin to fundraise. The goal is to increase awareness about the numbers of

people living in poverty and how taking part in and supporting this event brings us closer to our goal to end it. Stay tuned for more information.

Another example of how we're helping to end poverty around the world is the story of Javier in Honduras. Javier has his own woodworking business; through Partners Worldwide and our local partner Diaconia Nacional, Javier has been able to grow his business with loans and business training, and he is now able to send his three children to school. Since his involvement with both organizations, Javier's faith has grown stronger. He shares devotions and prayers with his employees each day to teach them the good news, and he has been called to make and donate desks to local schools, as well as spend time caring for the elderly in his community. We are grateful to people like Javier connected with Partners Worldwide and making a positive impact in their communities.

If you're interested in how you can help people like Javier move themselves out of poverty, visit [partnersworldwide.org/engage](http://partnersworldwide.org/engage) to discover the ways you can support Partners Worldwide using your unique, God-given skills.

Partners Worldwide mobilizes long-term, hands-on global relationships to form a powerful Christian network that uses business as the way to create flourishing economic environments in all parts of the world. We use partnerships to build up permanent local capacity designed to catalyze entrepreneurs and job creators and to celebrate business as a calling to do God's work. Visit [partnersworldwide.org/](http://partnersworldwide.org/) and subscribe to our blog at [partnersworldwide.org/subscribe](http://partnersworldwide.org/subscribe).

[partnersworldwide.org](http://partnersworldwide.org)