

ment, and specialized events will increase by 20 percent in order to strengthen local Children and Worship ministry.

- By 2013, discussion forums and blogs for Children and Worship trainers and local leaders will provide communication and a means for sharing questions and best practices. New Children and Worship networks will also be created.
- By 2013, a network for educators will exist in each region to keep them connected, revitalized, and sustained.
- By 2010, the Season of Discipleship task force will bring a proposal to General Synod outlining how disciples can be fully embraced in the life and mission of the local church.

Data

- A consortium of experts in the field of education was held to discuss the future of and trends in children's ministry.
- In 2008 and 2009 the discipleship office held trainings in every region for adult discipleship. RCA discipleship staff work in partnership with Faith Alive for children's ministry and numerous Children and Worship trainings were offered.
- The discipleship team has been empowered to develop a discipleship team in each region.
- A Season of Discipleship task force has been formed to create new resources and methods that will help churches engage in developing disciples of Jesus Christ for all ages.

Report of the General Synod Council on Leadership throughout the RCA

"Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" And I said, 'Here am I, send me!'" (Isaiah 6:8).

God is still calling people into relationship and sending them to participate in and witness to the reign of God. By God's grace, the Reformed Church in America is joining in that work by identifying, forming, deploying, nurturing, and renewing people with gifts for leadership. Throughout the denomination, this occurs by:

- Forming a new generation of pastoral leaders
- Training elders and deacons in their ministry
- Assisting leaders to discern God's direction
- Connecting ministers of Word and sacrament and congregations
- Creating pastoral networks for support and learning
- Coaching and mentoring pastors in their work
- Nurturing the unique gifts and ministry of women

The GSC nurtures congregational leadership—deacons, elders, ministers, emerging leaders, and longtime leaders—through programs and ministries around four themes: calling people to ministry, forming people for ministry, nurturing people in ministry, and renewing people for changing ministry.

Calling People to Ministry

The major initiative in this area of focus is Call Waiting, a program that helps men and women discern the call to ministry and nurtures them along the way. Call Waiting includes a cooperative program with RCA camps and conference centers.

Call Waiting has led to the initiation of a Fund for Ministerial Leadership, which actively seeks contributions for scholarships to assist RCA members who are called to attend seminary. Call Waiting resulted in the creation of a program of care and nurture for college students who attend General Synod as corresponding delegates, to assist them in their vocational development. It is clear that God's call in the lives of RCA members is at the heart of raising up a new generation of leaders to serve a world in need and a denomination eager to serve.

Call Waiting led to the development of an initiative called "Gracious Welcome." Through this initiative the RCA intends to learn how to most warmly and effectively reach out to and welcome ordained ministers from other denominations as they come to assist the RCA in the revitalization and multiplication of RCA congregations.

Forming People for Ministry

Consistory Training: Our congregational leaders are hungry for tools that can move their congregations toward health and growth. In response to this challenge, the coordinator for consistory training and Ministry Services provides support and training to equip and develop the gifts of pastors, elders, and deacons as they move toward a fuller understanding of being faithful consistories.

Specific training is provided for the effective use of an RCA resource, *Companions on the Way*, which supports the ministry of elders as they tend to the spiritual needs of people who are exploring or rediscovering the Christian faith. This resource, led by elders, supported by pastors, and adaptable for any congregation, has the potential to enliven the whole faith community.

In some regions of the RCA clusters of consistories come together for learning, shared ministry, and support. These consistory clusters provide a way for consistories to learn from one another how they shape ministries in their various congregations. In addition as they become aware of one another's ministry goals, they pray for and support one another.

Nurturing People in Ministry

A primary way the RCA nurtures people in ministry is through a growing emphasis on coaching. Within the RCA, coaching is understood to be the process of coming alongside a person to help her or him discover God's agenda for her or his life and ministry, while seeking the Holy Spirit's guidance to see that agenda become reality. Coaching helps a person listen to God about where change is needed and then equips and empowers a person to make the necessary changes.

The increased awareness and accountability that comes along with coaching will help them be more faithful as we participate in and witness to the realm of God. By God's grace, and through the Holy Spirit's power, the outcome will be more fruitful ministry. This is true for at least three reasons:

1. **Coaching is focused on the present.** Coaches help others understand their present situation in order to discover and implement meaningful actions to address that situation.

2. **Coaching helps people discover their own answers.** Coaches assume that the person closest to the issue typically has the best answers, but that she or he will discover those answers with the help of someone skilled in asking the right questions.
3. **Coaching leads to intentional action.** Coaches help people take inventory of their values and desires by listening to them, asking questions, and speaking the truth, and then helping them develop and take intentional steps toward more faithful action in the future.

Coach training has been offered to pastoral leaders in all the regional synods of the RCA and to some congregational leaders as well. A current goal is to develop the means to train more elders, deacons, and other congregational leaders in coaching skills as a way to nurture existing leadership and develop new leadership in congregations throughout the RCA.

The Call Process within the RCA

The direction of leadership in the office of Ministry Services has shifted focus in the last year in efforts to improve the entire ministerial call process. Major work continues through conversations and meetings with pastoral candidates and search committees. Every church profile and ministerial profile is personally handled by the coordinator of pastoral services, who works with candidates and search committees until a call is accepted. *Kaizen* is probably the best word to describe the philosophy driving this office. It is Japanese for “continual improvement” and speaks directly to our openness in learning and understanding the needs of pastors and churches and in building levels of excellence into every aspect of the call process.

Chaplains

A large number of RCA ministers do not serve congregations. Their ministry takes place in hospitals, mental health institutions, nursing homes, prisons, and the armed forces. They are endorsed by the RCA to the specialized ministry of chaplain. Every year all who have been endorsed and certified by the Ministry Services office to exercise the ministry of chaplain by the Reformed Church in America are invited to attend an annual conference. This gathering, which takes place prior to General Synod, provides a nurturing place of mutual support and accountability as well as renewal and networking possibilities for participants. The conference provides a place to experience a variety of learning models through theological reflection, and participants identify the experiences as transformative and challenging. They return to their workplaces not only refreshed but better equipped for their various ministries.

Chaplain and Clients Make a Joyful Noise

Jim De Hoog’s enthusiasm for his work comes through loud and clear, just like the loving responses he gets from the people he serves. “I’ll walk through a room and get greeted with boisterous cheers. People call out ‘Hi, Jim!’ I’m accepted, and they’re excited to see me. I may have seen them just an hour before, and still, they’re excited to see me again.”

De Hoog serves full-time as chaplain with Mission Road Developmental Center, a home for people of all ages with developmental disabilities in San Antonio, Texas. “The children, adults—the customers we serve—are so warm and welcoming and accepting,” he says. “They accept someone for who they are, not what they are or how important they are.”

Mission Road Developmental Center is part of Mission Road Ministries, which serves nearly 700 children and adults with mental retardation and other developmental disabilities with residential and day services and vocational programs.

“I serve the children, adults, and staff,” De Hoog says. “I am pastor, counselor, and encourager for our kids; I organize worship services and network people into community churches; I make sure those churches are warm and welcoming and able to provide programming for our clients.”

De Hoog says the most rewarding aspect of his work is interacting with the center’s clients and seeing them know, experience, and share God’s love. “I’m the Bible and song-time leader,” he says. “I play guitar. The kids or adults have rhythm instruments and we sing songs, and then I give a message. Right now we’re talking about time—that’s our theme. It’s based on the passage in Ecclesiastes about there being a time for everything.”

Commissioned Pastors

“The vision of the Reformed Church in America in the twenty-first century is to see a new reformation of lay people equipped and inspired to serve Christ and his church.” —Report on the summit to study lay pastoral ministry in the RCA, *MGS 2002*, p. 293

A commissioned pastor is an elder commissioned by a classis to serve in a specific role within a congregation, the classis, or a specialized ministry. Commissioned pastors are church planters, Christian educators, youth leaders, and executive pastors and serve in many other significant ministry roles. They are valuable ministry partners as the RCA identifies, equips, and empowers the leadership necessary to live into Our Call.

The commissioned pastors program works with leaders for whom a seminary education is not practical or possible. A personalized training program is designed around each person’s gifts and calling and usually includes mentoring, coaching, college or university classes, distance learning classes through a seminary, and hands-on ministry experiences. The program equips each participant to serve in his or her specific classis. Training programs vary by region and are coordinated and contextualized by classis. Eighty-two commissioned pastors are currently serving in ministry; an additional eighty-six are in training.

The General Synod Council has created a Commissioned Pastor Advisory Team to facilitate the sharing of learning and best practices; oversight of standards; and coordination of efforts.

Specialized Interim Ministers

Interim ministry continues to be a useful specialty within the RCA. Ministry Services maintains a roster of qualified interims, monitors their current availability, and provides their names upon request. The specialized interim ministers are invited to an annual gathering which provides time for strengthening ties, sharing stories and resources, as well as rest and a renewing awareness of God’s calling.

Commissioned Pastor Program Equips for Ministry

Steve Struikmans, pastor of Rancho Community Reformed Church in Temecula, California, for 38 years, has seen his church grow from seven families in 1969 to a ministry that includes a Christian preschool, elementary, and middle school on a 35-acre campus. Thousands of people attend worship services at Rancho Community each week.

Struikmans believes that the RCA’s commissioned pastor program is critical to revitalization. It has been a central part of Rancho Community since 2005, when youth pastor Scott Treadway asked Struikmans about his succession plan.

“Scott Treadway grew up in our church and had been on staff for several years,” says Struikmans. “I believed that he had the right combination of gifts to take over my position after seeing his work with youth and at our Saturday evening services, but he had never been to seminary.”

Treadway became involved in the commissioned pastor program and was installed at Rancho Community in August 2005. “I have my doctorate, so I certainly see the value of education for pastors,” says Struikmans, “but I also believe in a rapid response to the giftedness that people have.”

Rancho Community offers Equip classes designed to help people recognize and develop leadership skills. “As we see people’s passions emerge,” Struikmans relates, “we encourage them to enjoy the great adventure of pursuing those passions. For some, that means becoming commissioned pastors.”

Struikmans emphasizes the excitement of how the Holy Spirit has moved at Rancho Community. “God’s timing is perfect. We are focusing on equipping people for the work God wants them to do by helping them recognize their giftedness. It’s about positioning ourselves to receive God’s blessings by being faithful.”

Renewing People for Changing Ministry

A major opportunity before the revitalization and leadership staff of the RCA is to listen to God and discern how the powerful and transformative movement of coached revitalizing networks can be extended to more pastors throughout the denomination, and how the benefits of networks be made available to congregational leaders as well.

Already, throughout the Reformed Church in America, elders, deacons, and other congregational leaders are experiencing the benefits of participating in the Purposeful Living process. Purposeful Living is a primary tool being used by pastoral leaders as they develop their personal calling statements in their coached revitalizing networks. As an extension of their work in networks, pastors and network coach/facilitators are guiding congregational leaders through the same process. The result is a growing group of leaders who have a clearer sense of who God created them to be, what God is shaping them to do, and where God is challenging them to go. In this way, renewed leadership contributes to revitalizing existing congregations and multiplying new ministries and congregations.

The Reformed Church in America offers a comprehensive program throughout the denomination that calls, forms, nurtures, and renews ministers, elders, deacons, and other congregational leaders, encouraging them to focus outward in mission toward a world eager to hear and embrace good news.

GSC LEADERSHIP ENDS MONITORING REPORT

Each spring the general secretary is required to report to the General Synod Council (GSC) on progress on the various ends policies established by the GSC. The monitoring report for leadership follows:

Leadership Ends Policy

The RCA will be a fellowship of congregations that are building a healthy, growing future by renewing existing leadership and identifying, calling forth, and training people with gifts for leadership.

General Secretary's Interpretation

This ends policy calls the GSC staff to collaborate with regional synods and classes in ways specific to each region to make a difference in the experience of three distinct recipients in order that:

- Congregations are resourced for their work of leadership development.
- Existing leadership experiences ongoing renewal.
- Emerging leadership (congregational and pastoral) is identified, called forth, and trained to exercise leadership in the life of the congregation in the world God loves.

This ends policy has a long-term time horizon—2013 and beyond—and therefore requires intermediate benchmarks for the years between 2009 and 2013. Those benchmarks must delineate:

- Specific leadership development processes and tools the GSC offers congregations and a means to account for the use of those processes by leaders.
- The number of congregational leaders intentionally seeking renewal and the impact of those efforts on their lives and leadership.
- The number of emerging pastoral leaders identified, the type of leadership that is needed, and the equipping processes employed to develop, nurture, and support these leaders.

To that end, I and the appropriate GSC staff have identified the following goals.

Objectives and Strategies in Leadership

Goal for Congregational Leader Renewal: *By 2013, congregational leaders (whether in an ordained office and not) in at least four hundred RCA congregations have developed and are guided by a personal calling statement and are drawing on training that helps them lead congregations more faithfully and fruitfully.*

Outcomes

- At least ten to fifteen congregational leaders in each of at least four hundred RCA congregations will have developed their own personal calling statement.
- At least 250 RCA congregations will have a clear plan for nurturing existing leaders; and for identifying, calling, equipping, and supporting new leaders.
- Congregational leaders in 250 congregations, in partnership with their pastoral leaders, will have collaboratively led a process through which they discerned their congregation's mission, vision, and values and have taken specific steps to place God's mission at the center of their life and ministry.
- Consistories in at least 250 RCA congregations will have adopted a governance model that:
 - Is consistent with their discernment concerning God's mission for their congregations.
 - They use to lead their congregations in missional engagement.
 - Draws on an RCA understanding of the parity of the offices.
- Elders and deacons in 50 percent of RCA congregations, when surveyed, will say that they are equipped for their specific role.

Strategies

- Develop a facilitator's guide for the Purposeful Living process and use it to:
 - Equip and empower all coached revitalizing network coach/facilitators to launch the Purposeful Living process in the congregations of all network members, accompanied by a plan to multiply its use in those congregations.
 - Train people in every regional synod to lead Purposeful Living retreats for clus-

ters of congregational leaders and/or to coach individual congregations through the process.

- Equip coach trainers who are trained and provided the resources needed to train coaches to serve within various types of congregational ministries.
- Develop a coached congregational revitalization process that will:
 - Help congregations prayerfully discern God’s mission, vision, values, and future story for them.
 - Take specific steps to move toward their full redemptive potential.
 - Be supported by coaches trained to support this process.
- Develop a resource or process that will help congregations identify, develop, and elect strong spiritual leaders who will place God’s mission at the heart of their work as leaders—especially in consistories.
- Develop consistory training materials that equip and empower consistories for their role of collaborative leadership with their pastoral leader(s) and that focus on their shared role as representatives of Christ and Christ’s mission in and through their congregations.
- Continue to refine, distribute, and employ existing RCA materials that help deacons and elders claim their distinctive roles.

Data

- The Cluster Leadership Team is inviting and training elders and deacons who have completed the Purposeful Living process and developed their own personal calling statement to use this resource within their congregations.
- A supplement to the Purposeful Living process is being developed to assist elders and deacons as they lead this process. Christ Memorial Church in Holland, Michigan, will pilot this resource this year. It will be useful in training participants in the *Companions on the Way* process.
- The Fresh Wind letter, which came from a gathering of elders and deacons in May 2008, provided a providential opening in the middle of Our Call to invite every congregation in the RCA to join a church-wide conversation about the vibrant future that might unfold when RCA elders, deacons, lay people, and pastors all work together as equal partners in ministry, following Christ in mission. The coordinator for consistory training is working with the Fresh Wind Task Force to propose ways for the Reformed Church in America to better select, equip, empower, encourage, and nurture growth in leaders throughout the RCA.
- Through a partnership between the RCA, Western Theological Seminary, the Synods of Mid-America and the Great Lakes, and seventeen congregations:
 - Twenty pastors are participating in Purposeful Living.
 - Leadership teams from seventeen congregations representing 115 congregational leaders are working through the Purposeful Living process.
 - Pastors and leaders together in these congregations are being equipped to lead long-term, deep, and ongoing congregational transformation.
- During the last year, regional leadership training events as well as consistory workshops and retreats have provided opportunities for the coordinator of consistory training to nurture and encourage existing leaders throughout the RCA.
- A training resource for RCA consistories, *Deacons and Elders: Called to Serve*, is widely used to equip deacons and elders to be better prepared to serve as leaders in their congregations.
- The coordinator of consistory training is partnering with the coordinator for discipleship to introduce the concept of triad discipleship and discipling as a mutual process of peer mentoring for congregational leaders. Using Greg Ogden’s book *Transforming Discipleship: Making Disciples a Few at a Time*, they are encouraging church leaders to get serious about making disciples Jesus’ way.
- The coordinator for multiracial initiatives and social justice collaborated with the

coordinator for consistory training to develop the Church-Based Community Outreach Resource Guide, which is available on the RCA website.

- An initiative to develop regional trainers for consistories is underway.
- Through prayer workshops, discipleship training, and the initiatives of the HOPE team, intentional processes for discernment will be introduced to consistories and other church leaders. The coordinator of consistory training will make this a priority in the next year, collaborating with other GSC and regional staff.
- We will design and begin to conduct surveys of elders, deacons, and consistories concerning their current levels of training and what they still require.

Goal: *By 2013, every pastor in the RCA who desires a coaching relationship will have available a choice of coaches who are well equipped and qualified to provide excellent coaching.*

Outcomes

- By 2013 the RCA will have more than 150 well equipped, qualified, and supported coaches available to come alongside pastors and other key denominational leaders.
- By 2013 more than four hundred RCA pastors will be in a coaching relationship that they will self-identify as helping them be more faithful and fruitful in their ministry.

Strategies

- The Foundational Coach Training process will continue to be offered twice a year in three geographic areas of the denomination: East, Midwest, and Far West.
- From the current list of people who have been trained as coaches, twenty-five each year will be selected to become lead coaches.
- The lead coach development process is being instituted to insure that excellent coaches are available to RCA pastors. Lead coaches will form a pool of people who are being coached by excellent coaches, are constantly developing as coaches, and are being evaluated in order to provide excellent coaching for others.

Data

- Three hundred eighty people have received an orientation to coaching through Foundational Coach Training.
- One hundred fifty people completed the entire Foundational Coach Training process and are prepared to coach.
- Approximately 150 other people have been exposed to coach training in earlier versions of network facilitator training and Natural Church Development coach training.
- Twenty-four people have been invited into the lead coach development process. The director of congregational mission, the coordinator of leader renewal and networks, and the coordinator of church health and coaching will provide coaching and training for them during the first year.

Coaching Relationship Strengthens Ministry

Anna Jackson, pastor of Queens Reformed Church in Queens, New York, met her coach in person for the first time at the RCA's One Thing conference in San Antonio, Texas, in January 2008. At that point, they'd already been in a coaching relationship for six months.

That coaching takes place over the phone, because Jackson lives in New York and her coach, Elizabeth Potter, lives in Michigan. They spend an hour to an hour and a half each month talking about Jackson's ministry.

"Mostly it's been about me and my leadership style," says Jackson. "She helps me to hone

in on what I'm sensing or to better discern what needs to be done or what actions need to be taken. It's been great in terms of accountability. We'll come to decisions about certain things, and I know that the next time I talk to her, her first question is going to be 'So, how'd it go?'"

The coaching experience is helping to strengthen Jackson's ministry by affirming and clarifying her gifts for ministry. "It has helped me in two ways. One has been to really help me sharpen my spiritual antenna, to help me zero in on where the Holy Spirit is moving and where life is happening, rather than getting caught up in the negative. It helps to be able to talk it out and begin to start seeing things in a different way. The other thing is that I've come to a keener sense of where my gifts are and where I'm not as gifted, and I'm figuring out how to complement that."

Along the way, Jackson has picked up some coaching skills, both from Potter and at an RCA coaching seminar she attended, and she has been putting them to work in her everyday ministry. "That's one of the nice things about being coached. I've been using some of the coaching skills with the people that I'm ministering with. It really is a helpful tool, even with the children I work with," she says.

Goal for Development of New Pastoral Leadership: By 2013:

- *At least one hundred new ordained or commissioned pastoral leaders will be entering the RCA annually.*
- *Every new leader who desires it will be supported during at least the first five years of ministry with a coach and a coached revitalizing network.*
- *Pastoral leaders with a clear sense of calling to turnaround ministry or church planting will receive specialized training for those roles.*
- *The RCA's pool of new pastoral leadership will include 35 percent racial/ethnic minorities.*

Outcomes

- By 2013 we will actively nurture openness to God's call into pastoral ministry in the lives of at least five hundred RCA young people from high school through college, and at least 150 of these young people will be racial/ethnic minorities.
- By 2013, of the 150 racial/ethnic minority young people discerning or answering a call to ministry with whom we are in relationship, at least fifty will come from within the RCA.
- By 2013, every new pastoral leader entering RCA ministry who desires it will have been assessed as a potential church planter, and at least twenty-five of these emerging leaders will have received specialized training, coaching, and experience in church planting as part of their preparation for ministry.
- By 2013, every new pastoral leader entering RCA ministry who desires it will have been assessed as a potential turnaround or redevelopment pastor, and by 2013 at least fifty new leaders, in partnership with their congregational leadership, will have received specialized training and coaching for leading a congregational turnaround.
- By 2013, at least 25 percent of the new pastoral leaders entering RCA ministry will have specialized training in multicultural ministry—either as a planter or as a revitalizing leader.
- The percentage of RCA pastoral leaders leaving the ministry in their first five years of ministry will be 10 percent or less than the percentage in 2007.
- Seventy-five percent of pastors who accept a second call after four to ten years will be equipped to discern a potential new call through the lens of a personal calling statement and with the increased self-awareness that comes through coaching and participation in a network.

Strategies

- Continue to improve our Call Waiting program and in that way improve our ability to communicate with and pray for people with leadership potential whom God may be calling into ministry and connect this program with initiatives such as Still Small Voice, Leaders on the Horizon, the Youth Ministry Team, and others which may emerge.
- Assist consistories with ways to use the fourth question in the annual consistorial inquiry concerning nurturing call in the lives of young people in more faithful, intentional, and fruitful ways.
- Evaluate the Seminarian Seminar in order to clarify its unique contributions, and build on the relationships begun there in the years following the seminar.
- Nurture a healthier and more consistent climate for candidate care throughout the forty-six classes of the RCA.
- GSC discipleship, leadership, and racial/ethnic staff will collaborate to develop African American/black, Hispanic, and Pacific-Asian youth as current and future leaders in order to develop more pastoral leaders from within RCA racial/ethnic congregations.
- Deepen our relationship with Western Theological Seminary (WTS) and develop fruitful relationships with New Brunswick Theological Seminary (NBTS) and the Ministerial Formation Certification Agency (MFCA) through which we continuously improve leadership development during students' seminary years and proactively support development of new leaders during the first five years of ministry through coaching, networks, and other means still to be developed.
- Work with WTS to develop specialized training for church planters and turnaround leaders and embed the skills of leading a revitalizing congregation deeply into the curriculum for all candidates.
- Work with NBTS to more fully develop ministry development tracks in multiracial and multicultural ministry and missional urban ministry.
- Work with MFCA to include new pastoral leaders in networks and coaching relationships as these leaders enter ministry.
- Share best practices for training and developing commissioned pastors throughout the RCA and include them in networks and coaching relationships.
- Work with various partners in the translation and/or program development of commissioned pastor training materials, resources, courses, and processes for people for whom English is not the first or primary language.
- Practice continuous improvement in congregational transitions, pastoral placement, and congregational search services so the percentage of pastoral dissolutions that occur under stress or duress is less than 5 percent.

Data

- Call Waiting, Still Small Voice, and Seminarian Seminar have been brought together under the leadership of the coordinator for pastoral services and a more complete database of young leaders is being constructed.
- The RCA and WTS have conducted an in-depth survey of all RCA seminary graduates in the last five years (from NBTS, the MFCA, and WTS) and will use the information from that survey to shape future leadership development efforts. The report was completed in May 2009.
- The MFCA, NBTS, WTS, and the RCA funded a pilot effort to study and improve the process of candidate care. A part-time regional coordinator for candidate care carries out this work in ten RCA classes drawn from three regional synods. What is learned through this contract will be shared more widely.
- The RCA's director of congregational mission, the coordinator of leader renewal and networks, and the coordinator of church health and coaching are active team mem-

bers in the Cooper Missional Leadership program and the Ridder Leadership Initiative at WTS.

- The director of congregational mission convenes the Commissioned Pastor Advisory Team and has initiated conversations about more complete ways to include commissioned pastors in RCA life and ministry.
- The director of communication has assumed responsibility for the translation of significant RCA materials into the major RCA constituencies for which English is not the primary language.

Fresh Wind Letter Energizes Congregation

Reformed Church of Fort Plain in Fort Plain, New York, studied the Fresh Wind Letter at a November congregational meeting, and it has infused the congregation with new energy for ministry. The Fresh Wind Letter was written by a group of RCA elders and deacons, detailing how they felt the Holy Spirit calling the RCA in the area of leadership.

At Fort Plain, church members read the letter before the congregational meeting. “This letter was just authentic,” says pastor Nancy Ryan. “It didn’t feel like or sound like a dictate from on high—it sounded grassroots, and it resonated with folks.” The congregation reviewed the letter and studied related Scripture at its meeting. There was also a presentation by the church’s Finding Our Way committee, which had been studying community demographics, cultural shifts, and missional outreach in an effort to re-envision what ministry in Fort Plain should look like today.

The meeting, according to Ryan, created new energy throughout the congregation. “It’s good to have that kind of energy flowing in more than just committees and consistory, but through a whole congregation,” she says. “It’s really empowered people to do ministry. People are seeing themselves as missionaries. They’re seeing how their lives are affected by the Holy Spirit and how that affects others.”

One thing that has been impacted is the congregation’s involvement with Manna House Meals, a community food ministry that’s hosted by the church and other community organizations. When the ministry started in 2000, Ryan says, “We said that we wanted to feed not just their bellies, but their spirits. We got into a rut of just feeding bellies.”

But since the congregational meeting, Fort Plain has begun offering a worship service once a month as part of Manna House Meals. “We’ve got Scripture, and songs, and prayer, and people who meet and greet the people who come. It’s vital right now. People are hungry; people are lonely. We’ve got a whole spectrum of people who come with a whole variety of needs, and it’s not just about their bellies.

“People have really loved it. It’s a different kind of congregation that we serve, but vitally important to our outreach in the community.”

RETIRED MINISTERS OF WORD AND SACRAMENT

During 2008 twenty-eight RCA ministers of Word and sacrament retired from active service. Those who retired are being recognized by a display of their photographs and service records as well as by General Synod’s endorsement of appreciation for their years of faithful and dedicated ministry in the church.

R-42

To adopt the following resolution:

These have loved Christ and fed his sheep. They have devoted themselves to spreading the Word and equipping the saints for the work of ministry.

Their contribution to a needy world is rich beyond measure; their record is on high.

**The Reformed Church in America, with admiration, deep affection, and overflowing thanks to God, celebrates their lifelong service.
(ADOPTED)**

**Richard Baukema
Grand Rapids, Michigan**

**Warren Bovenkerk
Modesto, California**

**Kenneth Cumberbatch
Brooklyn, New York**

**Leon Draayer
Mira Loma, California**

**John Elliott
Oro Valley, Arizona**

**Dennis Ferguson
Clinton, Tennessee**

**Barbara Fillette
Churchville, Pennsylvania**

**Judith Gorsuch
New York, New York**

**Kenneth Gorsuch
New York, New York**

**William Henkel
Secaucus, New Jersey**

**James Ikerd
Hudsonville, Michigan**

**Richard Koerselman
Gilbert, Arizona**

**Mark Kraai
Basking Ridge, New Jersey**

Rufus McClendon
Plainfield, New Jersey

John Nodop
Wallkill, New York

John Oldenburger
Sacramento, California

Donald Peet
Gloversville, New York

Daniel Ramaker
Branson, Missouri

Ralph Robrahn
Lowell, Michigan

Lewis Scudder
Apaisia Village, Cyprus

Steven Stam
Holland, Michigan

William Steele
Waterbury Center, Vermont

Warren Thompson
Sun City West, Arizona

Donald Veltman
Brownstown, Michigan

Kenneth Westrate
Gary, Indiana

Kenneth Working
Santa Barbara, California

Jerry Zandstra
Safat, Kuwait

Arthur Zeilstra
Kitchener, Ontario

NECROLOGY

Necrology Report 2008

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Carolyn Holloway

Carolyn Holloway was born on September 22, 1942, at Mount Olive, North Carolina. She studied at the College of New Rochelle, from which she graduated in 1988. Her theological education was received at New York Theological Seminary, from which she obtained a certificate in Christian ministry in 1987 and a master of divinity degree in 1992. She received a doctor of ministry degree from New Brunswick Theological Seminary in 2001.

Ms. Holloway was licensed by the Baptist Church in 1986 and ordained in 1990. She was received by the Classis of New York in 1995. She pastored Dewitt Reformed Church in New York City from 1995 until her death.

Ms. Holloway died on January 12, 2008. She was sixty-five years old.

Folkert “Red” Faber

Folkert “Red” Faber was born in 1946, at Sneek, the Netherlands. He studied at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1969. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1972.

Mr. Faber was licensed by the Classis of Ontario in 1970 and ordained by that classis in 1972. He pastored the following congregations: Second, Jamestown, Michigan, from 1972 to 1979; Grace, Holland, Michigan, from 1979 to 1990; and Peace, Middleville, Michigan, from 1990 to 2002.

Mr. Faber died on January 19, 2008. He was sixty-one years old.

Walter Kline

Walter Kline was born on May 27, 1923, at Chicago, Illinois. He began his undergraduate education at Muskegon Junior College in 1946 and then studied at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1950. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1953.

Mr. Kline was licensed by the Classis of Muskegon in 1952 and ordained by the Classis of Schoharie the same year. He pastored the following congregations: Berne, Beaverdam, New York, and West Berne, Beaverdam, New York, from 1953 to 1958; Brunswick, Ohio, from 1958 to 1967; Sanborn, Iowa, from 1967 to 1971; and Faith, Kankakee, Illinois, from 1971 to 1975. He served as a chaplain at the hospital in Oak Forest, Illinois, from 1975 to 1992 and was president of the Particular Synod of Chicago in 1977.

Mr. Kline died on January 22, 2008. He was eighty-four years old.

Raymond Arthur Van Beek

Raymond Arthur Van Beek was born on January 17, 1921, at Westfield, North Dakota. He studied at Ellendale State Teachers College, from which he graduated in 1964. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1967.

Mr. Van Beek was licensed by the Classis of Dakota in 1967 and ordained by the Classis of Wisconsin the same year. He pastored New Hope Community Reformed Church in Wausau, Wisconsin, from 1967 to 1985. Following his retirement he was engaged in prison ministry as a member of the staff of the Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove, California, from 1985 to 1996.

Mr. Van Beek died on February 16, 2008. He was eighty-seven years old.

Joyce Carroll

Joyce Ann Carroll was born on May 2, 1950, at Newark, New Jersey. Ms. Carroll was director of religious education at First Reformed Church in Fremont, Michigan, from 1987 to 1991. She served as pastor of discipleship at North Branch Reformed Church in Bridgewater, New Jersey. At the time of her death she was a volunteer coordinator for Court Appointed Special Advocates for Children (CASA), a national organization that helps abused and neglected children who are in foster care. She was responsible for a three-county area in north-central New Jersey, recruiting, training, and supporting volunteers who worked one-on-one with foster children.

Ms. Carroll died on February 23, 2008. She was fifty-seven years old.

Clarence Greving

Clarence F. Greving was born on August 3, 1915, at Prairie View, Kansas. He studied at Central College, from which he graduated in 1947. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1950.

Mr. Greving was licensed and ordained by the Classis of East Sioux in 1950. He pastored the following congregations: Newkirk, Iowa, from 1950 to 1956; Overisel, Michigan, from

1956 to 1959; Hollandale, Minnesota, from 1959 to 1965; and Alton, Iowa, from 1965 to 1980. Following his retirement he served as minister of calling at First Reformed Church in Sioux Center, Iowa, from 1980 to 1985.

Mr. Greving died on February 29, 2008. He was ninety-two years old.

Albertha Jeanette Biegel

Albertha Jeanette Biegel was born on September 9, 1917, at Grand Haven, Michigan. She studied at Wilson Junior College in 1938 and received her registered nurse degree from West Suburban Hospital in 1942. She completed her undergraduate education at Wheaton College in 1946.

Ms. Biegel entered the RCA's missionary service and served as a nurse in India from 1946 to 1960 and 1963 to 1982.

Ms. Biegel died on March 3, 2008. She was ninety years old.

Steven Brooks

Steven Brooks was born on June 14, 1951, at Holland, Michigan. He studied at Ohio Wesleyan University, from which he graduated in 1973. His theological education was received at Fuller Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1976.

Mr. Brooks was licensed by the Classis of Holland in 1977 and ordained by the Classis of West Central the same year. He served as minister for youth and families at Westwood Community Church in Omaha, Nebraska, from 1977 to 1985. He then served as senior pastor at Springs Community Church in Colorado Springs, Colorado, from 1985 until illness forced his retirement in 2007. He was president of the General Synod from 2001 to 2002.

Mr. Brooks died on March 11, 2008. He was fifty-six years old.

Joseph Bliss

Joseph Bliss was born on June 2, 1937, at Columbus, Ohio. He studied at Reformed Bible College, from which he graduated in 1980. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1983.

Mr. Bliss was licensed and ordained by the Classis of South Grand Rapids in 1983. He pastored the following congregations: Thousand Isles, Alexandria Bay, New York, from 1983 to 1985 and Closter, New Jersey, from 1985 to 1990. He served in specialized ministry at St. Luke's Lutheran Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan, from 1996 to 1998.

Mr. Bliss died on March 15, 2008. He was seventy years old.

Raymond Van Heukelom

Raymond Van Heukelom was born on July 13, 1914, at Pella, Iowa. He studied at Central College, from which he graduated in 1937. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1940. He earned a master of theology degree from Calvin Seminary in 1943 and a doctor of theology degree from Northern Baptist Seminary. He was awarded a doctor of divinity degree from Central College in 1968.

Mr. Van Heukelom was licensed by the Classis of Pella in 1940 and ordained by the Classis of Grand Rapids the same year. He pastored the following congregations: Community, Corinth, Michigan, from 1940 to 1947; Emmanuel, Chicago, Illinois, from 1947 to 1953; First, Holland, Michigan, from 1953 to 1961; and First, Orange City, Iowa, from 1961 to 1979. He also served as a chaplain in the U.S. Army from 1943 to 1946. Mr. Van Heukelom served as the president of General Synod from 1968 to 1969.

Mr. Van Heukelom died on April 18, 2008. He was ninety-three years old.

Corstian Klein

Corstian Klein was born on January 28, 1926, at Armour, South Dakota. He studied at Seattle Pacific College, from which he graduated in 1955. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1958. He studied at the University of Utrecht from 1958 to 1959.

Mr. Klein was licensed and ordained by the Classis of Holland in 1958. He pastored the following congregations: Maranatha, Wainfleet, Ontario, from 1959 to 1962; First, Winnipeg, Manitoba, from 1962 to 1964; Hope, Vancouver, British Columbia, from 1964 to 1969; and Prairie View, Kansas, from 1969 to 1970. He demitted the ministry in 1976. He was reinstated by the Classis of Cascades in 1982.

Mr. Klein died on April 27, 2008. He was eighty-two years old.

Donald F. Crowhurst

Donald F. Crowhurst was received from the United Church of Canada in 1991. He served as pastor at the United Church, Athabasca, Alberta, from 1991 to 1993 and at Ebenezer, Mississauga, Ontario, in 1996. He was also the contract pastor at Maple Leaf Drive, Toronto, Ontario, in 1996.

Mr. Crowhurst died on May 17, 2008. He was eighty-one years old.

Merle Brouwer

Merle Brouwer was born on December 19, 1937, at Chandler, Minnesota. He studied at Central College, from which he graduated in 1959. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1962.

Mr. Brouwer was licensed by the Classis of Minnesota in 1962 and ordained by the Classis of Schoharie the same year. He pastored Schoharie, New York, from 1962 to 1966 and Church of the Master, Warren, Michigan, from 1966 to 1969. Mr. Brouwer served the United Church of Christ from 1969.

Mr. Brouwer died on May 20, 2008. He was seventy years old.

Auriel Mae Aalberts

Auriel Mae Aalberts was born on December 20, 1914, at West Olive, Michigan.

Ms. Aalberts served with RCA missions at Winnebago, Nebraska, from 1942 to 1958 and from 1964 to 1970. She was engaged in work among Native Americans in Minneapolis, Minnesota, from 1958 to 1964. She also served as a house mother at Annville Institute in Annville, Kentucky, following the death of her husband in 1970.

Ms. Aalberts died on June 2, 2008. She was ninety-three years old.

Daniel Oltman Reeverts

Daniel Oltman Reeverts was born on March 12, 1918, at Oregon, Illinois. He studied at Central College, from which he graduated in 1939. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1942.

Mr. Reeverts was licensed by the Classis of Pleasant Prairie in 1942 and ordained by the Classis of Germania the same year. He pastored the following congregations: First, Monroe, South Dakota, from 1942 to 1945; Trinity, Sibley, Iowa, from 1949 to 1957; Bethel, Leota, Minnesota, from 1957 to 1966; and Trinity, Ridgewood, New York, from 1966 to 1983. Mr. Reeverts also served as director of the Lay Leadership Department and as a teacher at Pleasant Prairie Academy in German Valley, Illinois, from 1945 to 1949. He was stated clerk of the Classis of Philadelphia from 1985 to 1992.

Mr. Reeverts died on June 7, 2008. He was ninety years old.

Imre George Bertalan

Imre George Bertalan was born on June 3, 1918, at Nyírtass, Hungary. He completed his undergraduate and theological education at the Kollegium in Sarospatak, Hungary, in 1940. He also undertook postgraduate studies at Halle, Germany; in Basel, Switzerland; and at Princeton Theological Seminary in Princeton, New Jersey. He received honorary doctoral degrees from the University of Debrecen and Hope College.

Mr. Bertalan was licensed and ordained by the Classis of Miskolc in Hungary in 1940. After arriving in the United States, he pastored the following congregations: Magyar, Staten Island, New York, from 1946 to 1954; Magyar, Manville, New Jersey, from 1948 to 1954; the Hungarian Reformed Church, Passaic, New Jersey, from 1954 to 1963; and Magyar, New Brunswick, New Jersey, from 1963 to 1980. He also served as president of the Hungarian Reformed Federation of America in Washington, D.C., from 1980 to 1992.

Mr. Bertalan died on July 10, 2008. He was ninety years old.

John Edward Lucius

John Edward Lucius was born on June 13, 1917, at Long Island City, New York. He studied at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1944. His theological education was received at New Brunswick Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1947. He also earned a masters degree in counseling from Arizona State University in 1973.

Mr. Lucius was licensed by the Classis of North Long Island in 1947 and ordained by the Classis of Schoharie the same year. He pastored the following congregations: Prattsville, New York, from 1947 to 1949; Second, Astoria, New York, from 1949 to 1953; Macy, Nebraska, from 1953 to 1957; and Dulce, New Mexico, from 1957 to 1961. He was director of Phoenix Indian School in Phoenix, Arizona, from 1961 to 1983 and served as assistant pastor at Christ's Community Church in Glendale, Arizona, from 1984 to 1985.

Mr. Lucius died on July 23, 2008. He was ninety-one years old.

James David Boyce

David Boyce was born on January 26, 1922, in Santiago, Chile. He studied at Western Reserve University, from which he graduated in 1947. His theological education was received at New Brunswick Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1960. He also earned a master of sacred theology degree from New York Theological Seminary in 1972.

Mr. Boyce was licensed by the Classis of Paramus in 1959 and ordained by the Classis of Raritan in 1960. He served as the student pastor at Fourth Raritan in Somerville, New Jersey, from 1957 to 1960. He then served the church in Glenmont, New York, from 1962 to 1969 and the Newtown Church in Elmhurst, Queens, New York, from 1969 to 1987.

Mr. Boyce died on August 19, 2008. He was eighty-six years old.

Cornelis Keith Geense

Cornelis Keith Geense was born on March 6, 1948, at Hoedekenskerke, the Netherlands. He studied at Northwestern College, from which he graduated in 1974. His theological education was received at New Brunswick Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1977. He earned a certificate from the Blanton-Peale Graduate Institute in 1990.

Mr. Geense was licensed and ordained by the Classis of Ontario in 1977. He pastored the church in Rhinebeck, New York, from 1977 to 1991 and the Servants of Christ Church in Federal Way, Washington, from 1991 to 1999. He was a bereavement services coordinator at Mountain View Funeral Home and Memorial Park in Tacoma, Washington, from 1999 until his death.

Mr. Geense died on September 10, 2008. He was sixty years old.

John Hains

John Hains was born on April 12, 1921, at Detroit, Michigan. He studied at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1942. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1945.

Mr. Hains was licensed and ordained by the Classis of Muskegon in 1945. He pastored the following congregations: First, Fremont, Michigan, from 1945 to 1951; Trinity, Holland, Michigan, from 1951 to 1957; Beverly, Grand Rapids, Michigan, from 1957 to 1961; Faith, Zeeland, Michigan, from 1961 to 1972; Bethel, Grand Rapids, Michigan, from 1972 to 1978; and Beverly, Wyoming, Michigan, from 1978 to 1983. He served interim pastorates at Laketon-Bethel, Muskegon, Michigan, in 1984 and at Ebenezer, Holland, Michigan, in 1985. He was associate pastor at Fourth, Holland, Michigan, from 1986 to 1990 and minister of calling at Faith, Zeeland, Michigan in 1999. Mr. Hains served as the president of the Particular Synod of Michigan in 1962.

Mr. Haines died on October 7, 2008. He was eighty-seven years old.

Florence Pert

Florence Pert was born on March 22, 1930, at Birmingham, Alabama. She studied at Birmingham Southern College, from which she graduated in 1951. Her theological education was received at New Brunswick Theological Seminary, from which she graduated in 1987.

Ms. Pert was licensed and ordained by the Classis of New York in 1987. She served as assistant pastor at Marble Collegiate Church in New York City from 1987 to 2003.

Ms. Pert died on December 9, 2008. She was seventy-eight years old.

John James Arnold

John James Arnold was born on April 13, 1928, at Paterson, New Jersey. He studied at Rutgers University, from which he graduated in 1949. His theological education was received at New Brunswick Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1952. He earned a master of sacred theology degree at Hartford Seminary in 1959 and a doctor of philosophy degree in 1967. He also earned a law degree from Capital University in 1975.

Mr. Arnold was licensed by the Classis of Paramus in 1952 and ordained by the Classis of Montgomery the same year. He pastored the following congregations: Owasco, New York, from 1952 to 1953; Rhinebeck, New York, from 1956 to 1958; Trinity, Grand Rapids, Michigan, from 1960 to 1968. Mr. Arnold served as a chaplain in the U.S. Navy from 1953 to 1955. He became a professor of philosophy at Ohio University in Zanesville, Ohio, in 1968.

Mr. Arnold died on December 11, 2008. He was eighty years old.

Frederick Hearn Musson

Frederick Hearn Musson was born on December 16, 1916, at Woodcliff Lake, New Jersey. He began his undergraduate education at the National Bible Institute in 1936, then studied at the University of California in 1949. He completed his undergraduate studies at Westmont College in Santa Barbara, California, from which he graduated in 1951. His theological education was received at New Brunswick Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1964.

Mr. Musson was licensed by the Classis of Newark in 1964 and ordained by the Classis of Columbia-Greene the same year. He pastored the following congregations: Gallatin, New York, from 1964 to 1969; West Copake, New York, from 1964 to 1975; and First, West Coxsackie, New York, from 1975 to 1982. He was also the stated supply at Annville, Kentucky, from 1983 to 1987.

Mr. Musson died on December 15, 2008. He was ninety-two years old.

Barbara Ann Pekich

Barbara Ann Pekich was born on March 23, 1950, at South Amboy, New Jersey. She studied at Alma College, from which she graduated in 1972. Her theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which she graduated in 1992. She earned a master of arts degree from Southern Illinois University in 1973.

Ms. Pekich was licensed and ordained by the Classis of North Grand Rapids in 1992. Beginning in 1992 and until her death, she served as executive director and pastor of Heartside Ministry in Grand Rapids, Michigan,

Ms. Pekich died on December 29, 2008. She was fifty-eight years old.