
Each spring, the general secretary is required to report to the General Synod Council about progress on the various ends policies established by the GSC. The monitoring report on ends policy E-3: Equipping Emerging Leaders follows.

ENDS POLICY E-3: EQUIPPING EMERGING LEADERS

The RCA will identify potential leaders and encourage and equip potential and existing leaders for missional, congregational, and pastoral leadership. These leaders will reflect the full diversity of the RCA with regard to such things as gender, age, race, ability, and cultural backgrounds, with a special emphasis on youth.

GENERAL SECRETARY’S INTERPRETATION

“Remember your leaders, those who spoke the word of God to you; consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith” (Hebrews 13:7).

Women and men who are open to being used by God help guide the church as they actively pursue God’s purpose for congregations and ministries. Leaders willingly and passionately live out their calling and giftedness to accomplish a missional vision that brings a gospel of grace and hope to a lost and broken world.

The RCA commitment is to help develop leaders, based on a foundation of discipleship, who:

- know how to lead themselves (their leadership is focused on their inward journey).
- know how to lead others (they are equipped to lead and influence in a God-ordained direction, increasing their leadership gift).
- know how to reproduce new leaders (they view leadership development as a key component of their call to be a leader).

This commitment to leadership development requires environments and accessible opportunities for growth and learning that will help lead RCA congregations forward in mission.

The RCA vision for leadership sees the leadership potential in all followers of Jesus Christ. It helps to raise up servant leaders who develop a courage and competence to lead in the church and in the world in a multiplicity of environments and with an openness to equip and empower all people to be influencers for Christ’s kingdom. This leadership vision has a special focus on empowering people who may not have leadership positions, privilege, power, or even access to them, but who have been called and gifted by God to serve boldly. It is a vision that especially is committed to the next generation and developing leaders for the church of the future.

OVERVIEW

Three initiative teams work within the Equipping Emerging Leaders strategic priority: Emerging Leaders, which focuses on leadership mobilization and development; Thriving Leaders, Thriving Churches, which focuses on supporting the spiritual transformation and health of the leadership teams of RCA congregations; and Women’s Transformation and Leadership, which focuses on full inclusion of the gifts and influence of women.
EMERGING LEADERS

The Emerging Leaders team is guided by a coalition of local pastors and lay leaders representing different regions of the RCA. GSC staff member Eddy Alemán has been leading this since 2014. The work of Emerging Leaders is to increase the awareness that God is calling all people—youth, young adults, and adults—to become leaders in the church and to help RCA congregations develop and design leadership development processes uniquely fitted to their own vision, context, and need. We believe that through this process, RCA congregations will thrive and be spiritually renewed and transformed, and young emerging leaders of today and tomorrow will be identified, developed, equipped, and mobilized to impact their local communities and the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Leadership Development Connection Events

A leadership development connection event is an informational and instructional gathering of one full day or just a few hours. Its purpose is to introduce pastors and congregational leaders in a region or classis to ways in which they might get involved in developing leaders in their local congregations. The desired outcome for these gatherings is for pastors and congregational leaders to join a learning community or a leadership community or to participate in a leadership collaborative.

Leadership Development Leadership Communities

Leadership development leadership communities consist of up to 11 congregations from all geographic regions of the RCA that are already engaged in leadership development and want to further increase their effectiveness. Each congregation commits a team of three to five staff members, pastors, and lay leaders to engage with this two-year process.

Leadership Development Learning Communities

Groups of three to six RCA congregations in different geographical areas will gather for six one-day meetings over the course of two years to learn from one another around different areas of leadership. Each congregation will develop its own leadership development pathway uniquely designed for its own vision, context, and need. Each participating congregation will form a leadership development learning community team of three to five people to be part of the process. Congregations are encouraged, when forming their teams, to include a variety of people with regard to gender, age, ethnicity, etc.

RCA Leadership Collaboratives

Clusters of 12 leaders from RCA congregations in relatively close geographical proximity will commit to a 12-month, 18-month, 24-month, or 36-month leadership collaborative to deepen their personal leadership skills. This experience will provide education, support, and accountability for each participant’s leadership journey. Deciding to participate is a commitment to grow, to invest, to share, and to change. The focus for these leadership collaboratives will be on personal leadership development for greater kingdom impact in their local context, helping participants grow in their leadership skills, discern God’s call for their lives, and clarify their next steps in ministry. The leadership collaboratives will be varied in focus depending on the group’s needs or interests; possible focuses include children and family ministry, youth ministry, young adult ministry, multicultural ministry, or developing a strategic ministry plan.
This process will include both in-person gatherings and video conference calls. Each participant will commit to personally contributing to the process and to peer coaching.

These collaborative groups will focus on three key areas of leadership:

1. Personal leadership: leading from the inside out, developing the capacity to lead oneself before leading others.
2. Organizational leadership: providing the competencies and skills required of effective leaders.
3. Reproducing leadership: helping leaders develop more leaders, not just followers.

Year Five Goals (June 2017 to June 2018)

- Hold five connection events.
- Launch two learning communities in different areas of leadership development.
- Launch two leadership collaborative cohorts.
- Launch one leadership development leadership community.
- Collaborate with seven classis leaders to create an elder/deacon leadership training process.

Progress

- Six leadership development connection events took place:
  - One in the Classis of Queens on June 24, 2017.
  - One for West Michigan Hispanic pastors on July 27–28, 2017. All participants were from different classes.
  - One at Fifth Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan, on September 14, 2017.
  - One in the Classis of California on October 7, 2017.
  - One in the Classis of Ontario on October 21, 2017.
  - One in Sioux Center, Iowa, on April 4, 2018.
- One leadership development learning community launched in Central California in October 2017.
- Two leadership development leadership collaboratives launched.
  - One leadership collaborative launched with 14 leaders in West Michigan in January 2018. The leadership collaborative meets once a month and focuses on leadership development and preaching.
  - One leadership collaborative was scheduled to launch in May 2018 in the Classis of Queens. It will focus on developing elders and deacons as leaders in the local church.
- One leadership development leadership community launched on February 21, 2018. Six RCA churches are participating in this leadership community. It will be an 18-month cohort that meets five times. Here are the descriptions participants received for each session:
  - Meeting #1 (February 21, 2018): Essentials for Developing Your Leadership Pathways
    This gathering lays out the essential structure and foundations of any effective plan for leadership development. You’ll work on the incorporation of discipleship, creating ministry flow charts, and clarification of your specific goals. After this session, you’ll complete a comprehensive audit of your current systems and a clarification of your vision for moving forward.
  - Meeting #2 (June 20, 2018): Process Skills for Developing Leaders
Our second learning community session focuses on the coaching and mentoring skills necessary for developing individual leaders to their fullest potential. Here we’ll not only cover essential communication skills such as listening and asking good questions, but we’ll also look at team leadership and the role of supervision for key leaders. The key outcome of this session will be practicing andsolidifying skills for developing individual leaders.

- Meeting #3 (October 24, 2018): Engaging Your Key Ministry Areas
  Our third session will lead into the development of an apprentice system, how to identify new candidates for leadership, and how to strengthen existing leaders across your system. We’ll look at biblical models of growing ministries, as well as a show-how system you can use for training leaders. From here you’ll work with key leaders across various ministry areas in your church to engage them in identifying key issues and needs within their sphere of influence.

- Meeting #4 (January 23, 2019): Designing Your Leadership Pathways
  After examining your own leadership style and strengths, we’ll look at how you can leverage those to lead the change process within your organization. We’ll look at creating ownership of ministry, bridging to implementation, and how to conduct a strategic planning workshop. Your team will then gather before the final session to engage in a thorough strategic planning workshop.

- Meeting #5 (May 22, 2019): Sharpening Your Leadership Pathways
  During our final session, each team will present their plan for developing leadership pathways within their congregations. They will receive feedback affirming and strengthening that plan in a process of continuing improvement as implementation moves forward.

- Seven classis leaders worked with Eddy Alemán to develop a resource called Elder and Deacon Leadership Development Journey. This resource is designed to equip elders and deacons as leaders in the church. The resource was completed in fall 2017 and is available both online and upon request. The resource is based on the following principles:
  - Grassroots
  - Research-based
  - Easy to contextualize
  - Field-tested
  - User-friendly
  - Flexible

Five-Year Goals (June 2013 to June 2018)

- Thirty congregations will have participated in a two-year learning community and are now actively engaged in identifying, equipping, and developing leaders for the work of ministry in the local church and in the world. These congregations will have a clear pathway to develop leaders that is unique to their local vision, context, and need.

- Seven RCA congregations will have completed a two-year leadership development leadership community and are engaged in replicating the process with other RCA congregations. Ten more congregations will be participating in the second cohort of the leadership development leadership community.

- Seventeen congregations are fully participating in an RCA leadership development leadership community, with 17 pastors and 85 church leaders fully engaged in creating leadership development processes to help churches identify, develop, and mobilize young, emerging, and current leaders.
Twenty-seven RCA and CRC congregations are participating in the Reformed Leadership Initiative in six congregational leadership learning networks of ten to twelve congregations each. One of these congregational leadership learning networks will be in Korean and one will be in Spanish.

Forty-eight pastors and church leaders of diverse gender, age, ethnicity, and contexts will have participated or will be participating in a leadership collaborative.

One hundred and twenty congregations from different regions will have participated in a leadership development connection event.

In collaboration with seven classis leaders, the Emerging Leaders team will have created an elder/deacon leadership training process. This will be a resource for RCA congregations to equip elders and deacons as leaders in the church.

Progress

Leadership development learning communities:
- Five RCA Hispanic congregations completed a leadership development learning community in West Michigan. The meetings took place from July 2015 to November 2016. Participating congregations were Alas Conexion Church in Grand Rapids, My Father’s House Church in Holland, La Casa de Mi Padre in Wyoming, Iglesia Alas de Aguila in Allendale, and Iglesia Alas de Aguila in Wyoming.
- Four RCA African American congregations in the New York area completed a two-year leadership development learning community that that launched in May 2016 and ended in November 2017. Participating congregations were Mott Haven Reformed Church in the Bronx, Highbridge Reformed Church in the Bronx, Reformed Church of Prince Bay in Prince Bay, and First Reformed Church of Astoria in Astoria.

Leadership development leadership communities:
- Six RCA congregations completed the first leadership development leadership community done in collaboration with Leadership Network. This leadership community took place in Dallas, Texas, from December 2014 to June 2016. Participating congregations were Emmanuel Reformed Church in Paramount, California; Grace Church Ann Arbor in Ann Arbor, Michigan; Good News Community Church in Okoboji, Iowa; Orchard Hill Reformed Church in Cedar Falls, Iowa; Sunnybrook Community Church in Sioux City, Iowa; and Beechwood Reformed Church in Holland, Michigan.
- Six RCA congregations are participating in the RCA leadership development leadership community that is meeting in the Grand Rapids, Michigan, area from February 2018 through May 2019. Participating congregations are South Blendon Reformed Church in Hudsonville, Elevation Church in Wyoming, Comunidad Cristiana de Grand Rapids in Grand Rapids, My Father’s House Church in Holland, Comunidad Cristiana Internacional in Wyoming, and Nepali-Speaking Community Church in Grand Rapids.

Six congregations in the Detroit Kingdom Enterprise Zone participated in a two-year leadership development learning community that launched in August 2016 and ended in February 2018. These congregations are First Christian Reformed Church Detroit in Detroit, Dearborn Christian Fellowship Christian Reformed Church in Dearborn, Hesed Community Church in Detroit, Grace Church in Allen Park, Center Point in Columbus (Ohio), and Word Encounter Church in Detroit.

Six Reformed Leadership Initiative cohorts (Congregational Leadership Learning Communities, or CLLNs) were launched between September 2016 and January 2017.
○ One is a Spanish-language CLLN with 12 participating congregations.
○ One is a Korean-language CLLN with eight participating congregations.
○ Four are geographically based CLLNs (in New Jersey, Ontario, Central Iowa, and Central California) with a total of 27 participating congregations among them.

- Leadership collaboratives:
  ○ Six RCA churches in Iowa completed an 18-month leadership collaborative focused on children and family ministries. Participating churches were Adventure Life Reformed Church in Alton, Bethel Reformed Church in Aplington, Cedar Hills Community Church in Cedar Rapids, Crossroads Church in Norwalk, Orchard Hills Reformed Church in Cedar Falls, and Trinity Reformed Church in Allison.
  ○ One Hispanic leadership collaborative launched in California in May 2017.
  ○ Emerging Leaders also launched a TUMI (The Urban Ministry Institute) site in fall 2016 in Los Angeles in collaboration with World Impact, where more than 20 emerging leaders are being equipped to minister in urban centers.

- Two hundred fifteen RCA congregations have participated in 18 leadership development connection events in different regions.
- Seven classis leaders worked with Eddy Alemán to develop a resource called *Elder and Deacon Leadership Development Journey*. This resource is designed to equip elders and deacons as leaders in the church. The seven classis leaders that worked together to develop this resource were Jeff Ludington and Eric Moreno from the Classis of California, Chris Godfredsen from the Classes of East and West Sioux, Fred Bates from the Classis of Southwest, Lyle Zumdahl from the Classis of Wisconsin, Dale Assink from the Classis of Central Plains, and Mike Gafa from the Classis of North Grand Rapids.

New Five-Year Goals (June 2018 to June 2023)

- Four hundred fifty congregations will have participated in a two-year learning community and are now actively engaged in identifying, equipping, and developing leaders for the work of ministry in the local church and in the world. These congregations will have a clear pathway to develop leaders that is unique to their local vision, context, and need.
- One hundred twenty congregations will have completed a two-year leadership development leadership community and are engaged in replicating the process with other RCA congregations.
- Four hundred fifty pastors and church leaders of diverse gender, age, ethnicity, and contexts will have participated or will be participating in a leadership collaborative.
- Six hundred congregations from different regions will have participated in a leadership development connection event.

THRIVING LEADERS, THRIVING CHURCHES

Andy Bossardet has been leading this as the coordinator for equipping thriving congregations since December 2016. Thriving Leaders, Thriving Churches is guided by a coalition of pastors, staff, and regional synod staff. The team’s focus is to empower leaders and congregations to take the next faithful step in their ministries, navigating the complexities of leading change. This empowerment is delivered through high-impact coaching, learning communities focused on personal and corporate transformation, support systems for pastors and congregations in transition, and equipping in vision discernment.
Ridder: Churches Learning Change

Ridder: Churches Learning Change (formerly Ridder Church Renewal) is a partnership of Western Theological Seminary, the RCA, and the Christian Reformed Church in North America that helps leaders develop the tools to confront unhealthy models that hinder personal and congregational growth. Ridder is comprised of two intensive 30-month modules; congregations commit to one module at a time. Each module consists of five retreats, each about six months apart, with coaching and homework between retreats. Participating congregations choose a leadership team of four to six congregants plus the pastor. There are six regional centers in Ridder: Churches Learning Change supporting Modules 1 and 2. With the ending of the Lilly grant that funded the startup of Ridder: Churches Learning Change, the process has morphed into more regionally contextual expressions.

Maximizing First-Call Potential

To maximize their potential, pastors in their first call engage with a coach and a peer group in self-directed learning based on challenges and opportunities in the ministry context. Covenants of support and accountability are drawn up between congregations and pastors to empower the first-call pastors in their learning. The first-call process lays the foundation for thriving congregational and pastoral ministry through a combination of individual work with the pastors and a learning community involving a congregational team. This work is being done in partnership with the Lilly Endowment (Sustaining Pastoral Excellence grant). This year marked a new partnership in the Albany Synod Fellowship Program.

Pastors and Congregations in Transition

The Thriving Leaders, Thriving Churches team is developing new, more effective ways to serve churches and pastors that are in the midst of a ministry transition. This will include training mechanisms for transitional ministers and vocational assessment for pastors between ministries, as well as clarifying the role that each partner in the RCA plays in helping ministers and congregations through transitions. For now, the focus has been on classes and providing training and resources for classis supervision. New work is beginning on empowering search teams through quality consultation and written resources.

Coaching

The initiative is developing a catalytic coaching network that will be made up of all the coaches who are working with the various learning community pilots. A catalog of best practices has been developed, and a small cadre of catalytic coaches is in effect.

The team also plans to maximize current content-neutral training through better tracking and assessment of coaches. By tracking relationships, we will be able to more easily assess coaches and provide ongoing training and accountability for desired ministry outcomes across the RCA. Salesforce (the RCA’s database system) will provide a great platform for helping coaches succeed.

Congregational Vitality Pathways

Congregational Vitality Pathways (CVP) is a tool created by the Evangelical Covenant Church and utilized by the Far West Region to help congregations discern and live into God’s vision for their church. Health and vitality are measured by ten markers. CVP uses assessment tools, events, and an empowered vitality team to help a congregation
move toward its goals. RCA congregations engaging with CVP are intended to do so in a learning community format.

The Ezra Project

The Ezra Project is a learning community designed to empower and encourage African American pastors in the RCA. The learning community would involve five pastors who would spend time with African American pastors in thriving ministries, learning personal, organizational, and multiplying leadership content over the course of a year. Ezra graduates would then become facilitators and teachers for the next cohort of Ezra pastors.

Year Five Goals (June 2017 to June 2018)

- Complete module of Ridder: Churches Learning Change.
- Complete phase one of the Ezra Project.
- Launch learning community for Congregational Vitality Pathways.
- Launch one leadership collaborative.
- Ten churches will utilize the Transformational Church Assessment Tool (TCAT).
- Launch one learning community for pastors in their first call.

Progress

- The most recent modules of Ridder: Churches Learning Change were completed as conversations ceased about continuing the movement after the end of the Lilly grant and central staff.
- Phase one of the Ezra Project was completed in January 2018, with current participants committing to quarterly virtual meetings.
- One Congregation Vitality Pathways learning community outside the Far West Region is happening, involving two churches in the Regional Synod of the Heartland.
- One leadership collaborative has been launched for specialized transitional ministers.
- Four churches have utilized the TCAT this year.
- In partnership with the Regional Synod of Albany, one learning community has launched involving six pastors in their first call.

Five-Year Goals (June 2013 to June 2018)

- One hundred fifty churches will have engaged Ridder, either having completed both modules or actively engaging the process.
- At least three First Call learning communities will have been launched and the Albany Synod Fellows Program will be supported.
- A partnership of classes, regional synods, and others will have created resources for all stages of pastoral transition. At least 50 congregations will have benefitted from one or more of these resources.
- Two learning communities for Congregational Vitality Pathways will have been launched with at least eight churches participating outside the Far West Region.
- Phase two of the Ezra Project will have been completed; the original six pastors will have completed the Ezra Project and ten more will have been recruited.
- Twenty congregations will have used the Transformational Church Assessment Tool as a connection event toward ongoing transformation and (potentially) another learning community.
Progress

- One hundred sixteen congregations have completed at least one module of Ridder: Churches Learning Change. Those congregations are split across six regions, representing 12 learning communities. Additionally, there is a team of RCA chaplains participating in Ridder in the Great Lakes (a first for Ridder). At the time of this report, each of the six regional centers for Ridder: Churches Learning Change are recruiting. Those recruiting efforts will have wrapped up by General Synod 2018, meaning that the goal of 150 is well within reach.

- First Call learning communities
  - The first learning community for first-call pastors wrapped up Albany in May 2017. A new learning community of six congregations launched in November 2017 for a two-year learning experience. Graduates of the first round are being employed as guides and content facilitators for the second round.
  - A second group of four first-call pastors are partnering with Thriving Leaders, Thriving Churches to create retreats and times of connection. These pastors are serving in multiple regional synods.

- Transitional ministry
  - Classis supervisor training has been sent to classis clerks and posted to the RCA website at www.rca.org/ministrieservices. Pilot training included approximately 20 supervisors in the regional synods of New York and Mid-America. Response has been positive for the training videos—they have been viewed a total of 314 times (across five videos).
  - Seven transitional ministers and regional staff in the regional synods of the Far West, Heartland, and Mid-America have joined a leadership collaborative around specialized transitional ministry. That leadership collaborative launched in December 2017.

- Two churches are engaged with Congregational Vitality Pathways in the Regional Synod of the Heartland. Thriving Leaders, Thriving Churches is committed to partnering with these congregations through resourcing.

- The Ezra Project was significantly affected by the passing of GSC staff member Tony Campbell. The first leadership collaborative wrapped up in January 2018. With disrupted grant funding for phase two, the first leadership collaborative will continue to meet virtually for encouragement and support while we strategize how to recruit for a future collaborative.

- To date, ten churches from the Regional Synods of Mid-America, the Great Lakes, and Canada have utilized the Transformational Church Assessment Tool as a discernment tool. Pastors from those churches have reported positive results in their own strategic goals and ministry development.

- Catalytic coach training has been completed, and the coaching catalog has been given to every initiative leader for use with their learning and leadership communities. The coach training video was filmed during a live training and has been used in at least one classis training event. Further, catalytic coaching has been provided for learning communities in all three priority areas.

New Five-Year Goals (June 2018 to June 2023)

- A new system for ongoing support for new ministers will have helped 30 new pastors and their congregations.
- Ridder: Churches Learning Change will have impacted 90 additional churches (which will have graduated or are currently in the process).
- Leadership collaboratives will network specialized transitional ministers; 40 specialized transitional ministers will have participated in a network.
• The catalytic coaching network supporting other learning communities will include ten coaches with ongoing training opportunities and feedback loops.
• Forty additional congregations will have gone through a mission discernment process (with TCAT or another process).
• Phase two of the Ezra Project will have impacted ten churches in an ongoing leadership collaborative.

WOMEN’S TRANSFORMATION AND LEADERSHIP

Women’s Transformation and Leadership has been established as part of Transformed & Transforming to help the Reformed Church in America pursue a vision for the full inclusion of women’s gifts and influence in all areas of the church and beyond. Liz Testa leads the Women’s Transformation and Leadership team. Lorraine Parker serves as part-time administrative assistant and Lesley Mazzotta is the educational consultant and lead facilitator. A cross-sector group of RCA leaders serves as the guiding coalition for Women’s Transformation and Leadership, helping to champion the mission, create new processes, and provide critical insights and advisement.

We are committed to ensuring that women of all generations and geographical and cultural contexts are able to experience transformation, be raised up for leadership, and live vibrantly into their God-given potential. As we encourage, equip, and empower women to fully and freely use their gifts and be developed as leaders, we usher in a vision of God’s reign where brothers and sisters work together to build the body for mission in the world. An essential component of this mission is that we equip congregations to welcome the gifts that women bring and invest in healthy, flourishing ministry partnerships between men and women.

Women’s Transformation and Leadership has the following components:

• A ministry initiative to help the RCA pursue the full inclusion of the gifts and influence of women in the life of the church and as an integral part of Transformed & Transforming.
• A hub for opportunities that encourage, equip, and empower all women in their callings and connect them more deeply with God, each other, and the church.
• A place for congregations to begin or continue a journey of recognizing and exploring the gifts that women bring, designing ways to equip women for ministry, and creating a healthy, thriving ministry environment where men and women can serve together.
• A catalyst for change, opening the RCA as a whole and women as individuals to the Spirit’s movement in women’s lives and ministries.

Women’s Transformation and Leadership lives out its vision by:

• Ensuring women have barrier-free access to RCA resources and opportunities.
• Celebrating the rich history of women in the RCA, past and present, through the Women’s Sankofa journeys, the “RCA Women: A Legacy of Leadership” booklet, and our She Is Called campaign.
• Being an innovation incubator for new ideas such as the Lenten devotional video series, the She Is Called social media campaign, and the We Are Speaking call to action statement.
• Encouraging and equipping women through transformational connection events and the Honoring Our Stories story-sharing process.
• Offering congregational learning communities to empower women to lead in ministry.
• Developing a learning process that will help congregations to welcome the gifts women bring and to nurture healthy, thriving ministry partnerships between men and women.

• Supporting established and emerging female leaders through leadership collaboratives, mentoring, clergy networks, and opportunities to connect and collaborate.

• Offering an annual global experience for women. Trips to Oman, Israel/Palestine, and Italy have been offered so far. Bahrain/India, South Africa, and Scotland are being explored along with “multiplier” trips to the original three countries for 2018 through 2020.

• Providing tuition assistance to female seminarians through the Beth E. Marcus Scholarship Fund.

• Connecting women virtually through Facebook groups and a quarterly e-newsletter.

• Creating a dynamic web resource featuring blogs by women; historical, biblical, and theological support for women in ministry; and ways for congregations, classes, and synods to intentionally integrate women’s gifts, voices, and leadership.

• Collaborating with RCA seminaries, the Commission for Women and other commissions, other Transformed & Transforming initiatives, and other GSC staff to empower women in ministry and intentionally include their gifts, influence, and leadership in our assemblies.

• Helping to create lasting change via the We Are Speaking statement, a call to the church to end harassment, abuse, and sexual violence against women and girls (and others), in partnership with Local Missional Engagement.

Year Five Goals (June 2017 to June 2018)

• Hold three to five connection events that encourage, equip, and empower female RCA lay leaders and clergy to live into their God-given callings.

• Develop and pilot a learning process, curriculum, and resources focused on equipping congregations to more fully include women’s gifts and influence.

• Complete a learning community focused on strengthening and expanding women’s leadership in church and society.

• Continue the pilot of the women’s leadership collaborative 18-month process in English, Korean, and Spanish, and develop a “Train the Trainer” model in English and Spanish.

• Create global women’s experience trips for 2018–2019.

• Develop, along with other RCA and CRC partners, a year of celebration of women’s gifts and leadership in the RCA, including the She is Called campaign and special activities at General Synod 2018.

Progress

• Since March 2017, the following regional connection events have taken place, each customized for the local context and leadership needs:
  o The third annual Celebration of Women in Church Leadership at Western Theological Seminary.
  o Women on the Move in the Bronx, New York.
  o Women’s Connection Dinner at General Synod in Holland, Michigan.
  o Her Story in Artesia, California.
  o Women’s Stories Day at New Brunswick Theological Seminary.
  o Honoring our Stories in Monument, Colorado.
Women’s Sankofa Journey through New York City and New Jersey.
Empowering our Stories in Grand Haven, Michigan.

For 2018, connection events are currently in development with local partners in Canada; the Mid-Atlantics; Orange City, Iowa; New York City; Midland, Michigan; and Mesa, Arizona.

A delegation of coalition members attended the Commission for Biblical Equality’s conference, “Mutual by Design,” in July 2017 to inform the development of a learning community model that assists congregations who want to explore and discern women’s leadership in the church. This has led to a comprehensive learning process called “Building God’s Church Together” that includes web resources, connection events, mini-leadership collaboratives, and learning communities to equip congregations to welcome the gifts women bring and develop healthy, thriving ministry partnerships between men and women.

Our year-long “Doing a New Thing” pilot learning community in New York City was completed in January 2018. Five congregations discovered the new ministries God is calling them to develop and invest in. The five congregations and their team leaders were Bethany Memorial Reformed Church (Sharon Atkins), Dewitt Reformed Church (Irma Williams), Church on the Hill (Blaine Crawford), Elmendorf Reformed Church (Patricia Singletary and Belinda Perry), and Middle Collegiate Church (Lynn Min and Marte Samuelson).

Six women’s leadership collaboratives launched in February 2017 and will be completed in August 2018. Women meet virtually and at an in-person gathering for personal, organizational, and multiplying leadership development over the course of a year and a half. A trilingual, in-person gathering was held in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in July 2017. Among the six cohorts there are three languages (English, Spanish, and Korean), five facilitators, and 42 participants, involving 47 women total.

Of the six cohorts, one is composed of all clergy, three are elders, deacons, and lay women, and two are mixed groups.

The five facilitators are from three regions: two from New York, two from the Far West, and one from the Heartland. The facilitators are Lesley Mazzotta (lead facilitator), Marla Rotman, Susan Hetrick, Ock Kee Byun, and Karla Camacho.

The 42 participants are from seven regional synods: five from New York, two from Canada, four from Mid-America, three from the Mid-Atlantics, ten from the Far West, eleven from the Heartland, and seven from the Great Lakes (three participants are CRC-affiliated).

Mini leadership collaboratives have been launched and are offered seasonally. These two-month, six-session virtual small groups gather women from across the denomination around a focused leadership topic, such as whole-hearted leadership or leadership in beloved community. Our last mini leadership collaborative was held in fall 2017, and another is planned for 2018.

The 2017 women’s global experience to Italy has continued as a pilot leadership development process in which the travelers continue to meet and develop ways to bring what they learned about refugees and trafficked women back to their faith communities. One traveler, Patricia Johnson, was recently featured in RCA Today magazine explaining her experience with Nigerian women in Italy and how she is now fully engaged in her home church’s mission to help women in similar circumstances in the U.S.

For the year of celebration of women’s gifts and leadership in the RCA:

The We Are Speaking call to action to end harassment, abuse, and sexual violence against women and girls was created as a godly, gracious response to the #metoo and #churchtoo social movements. This statement was
created in partnership with Local Missional Engagement and has proven to be a truly unifying statement that more than 750 leaders from across the RCA and beyond have signed. Monthly webinars, web resources, and ongoing discussions with ministry groups are examples of the ways we are continuing to lead change and encourage all our assemblies to create safe space for stories and concrete action steps toward ending the culture of silence and shame that has pervaded our faith communities.

- In celebration of the great diversity of women’s God-given gifts and callings, the She Is Called campaign launched in 2017. This multi-faceted campaign includes videos, a Facebook page, the #sheiscalled hashtag, “biblical women & me” t-shirts, and ongoing stories of the many ways God calls women and girls to serve in the church and beyond.

- The Women’s Transformation and Leadership guiding coalition has worked diligently together since its convening in November 2016. They were asked to present at the Transformed & Transforming summit held at Camp Geneva in August 2017 as a model of how a cross-sector group can champion the initiative’s mission and opportunities in their regions. This guiding coalition has been integral in the development of culture-shifting projects such as She Is Called, We Are Speaking, and Building God’s Church Together.

Five-Year Goals (June 2013 to June 2018)

- More than 2,000 women across the denomination will have been positively impacted by connection events.
- Ten to fifteen RCA congregations will have engaged in learning communities to explore and discern women’s leadership and the culture shift necessary to support this process.
- Ten to fifteen RCA congregations will have participated in learning communities to develop intentional leadership training and mentoring processes for women.
- Eighty-five to one hundred women will have participated in women’s leadership collaboratives.
- Three to four global mission experiences will have equipped 50 to 60 women and their congregations for deeper missional engagement.

Progress

- Between June 2014 and June 2018, at least 2,000 women will have been positively impacted by a variety of customized connection events across North America.
- Our year-long “Doing a New Thing” pilot learning community in New York City was completed in January 2018. Five congregations discovered the new ministries God is calling them to develop and invest in.
- The “Building God’s Church Together” learning process, which includes connection events, mini leadership collaboratives, and learning communities, is being developed and will launch in northwest Iowa in July 2018, impacting a minimum of ten to fifteen congregations.
- Seventy-five women have participated in a variety of long and shorter-term women’s leadership collaboratives. The eighteen-month, three-language pilot women’s leadership collaborative made up of six cohorts (four English, one Korean, and one Spanish) will be completed in August 2018. A multiplier model (training local facilitators) in English and Spanish is being developed and will be piloted in fall 2018, launching in Mesa, Arizona. Seasonal two-month mini leadership collaboratives are held at least twice annually.
Since 2015, Women’s Transformation and Leadership has offered three annual global experiences visiting mission partners in Oman, Israel/Palestine, and Italy, impacting more than 35 female travelers and their faith communities. Future women’s global experiences are being explored for South Africa, Bahrain/India, and Scotland. Since our first women’s trip to Oman, the goal has been to support the women traveling in their leadership and passion for mission as well as to create a learning community-type process before, during, and after the trip. Lesley Mazzotta, who served as the co-leader of that inaugural experience, has gone on to create four subsequent women’s trips with the Al Amana Centre in Oman. We are grateful for the collaboration of Volunteer Engagement and Global Mission as we continue to research and develop women-focused, safe, transformational experiences that equip and empower leaders from many different contexts.

New Five-Year Goals (June 2018 to June 2023)

Women’s Transformation and Leadership has experienced Spirit-led innovation, growth, and culture shifts since June 2014 when our ministry initiative was launched. Our new goals are a continuation of this movement, and our delivery systems will be customized to meet the unique needs of each region.

- Twenty-five to thirty connection events continue to provide an empowering space for thousands of women and girls to share stories, build relationships, and experience transformation.
- “Building God’s Church Together” congregational learning processes will create a deep culture shift as 75 faith communities gather to explore how to more fully welcome the ministry gifts of women and create space for those gifts to be developed as well as invest in developing healthy, thriving ministry partnerships between men and women.
- “Doing a New Thing” congregational learning communities will help 25 churches discover the “new thing” God is calling them to, in and through their women leaders.
- Multi-language, long- and short-term leadership collaboratives will strengthen and equip hundreds of diverse women leaders in all regions through virtual sessions and train-the-trainer events for local facilitators to be equipped to lead in their context.
- One to two annual women’s global experiences will have transformational, leadership, and missional components that ensure that the 75 individual female travelers and their faith communities experience lasting impact.
- Attention to Spirit-led opportunities for healing and unifying the body and participation in God’s reconciling work in the world will be actively sought through projects such as We Are Speaking and the She Is Called campaign.
RETired Ministers of Word and Sacrament

During 2017, 46 ministers of Word and sacrament retired from active service. Those who retired were recognized by General Synod through its endorsement of appreciation for their years of faithful and dedicated ministry in the church.

L 18-1
To adopt the following resolution:

These individuals 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.

Paul Akers
Whiting, New Jersey

Barbara Alexander
Laurelton, New York

Jhonny Alicea-Báez
Benton, Arkansas

David Bast
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Nancy Beardslee
New Brunswick, New Jersey

Abram Blaak
Brantford, Ontario

Dawn Boelkins
Holland, Michigan

Stephen Breen
Orange City, Iowa

Nancy Ann Callender
Hastings-on-Hudson, New York

Gerald Davelaar
Seal Beach, California

Marcia Elders
Grandville, Michigan
Kenneth Eriks  
Holland, Michigan

Newton Fairweather  
Tamarac, Florida

Victor Folkert  
Conroe, Texas

Robert Gram  
Rhinebeck, New York

Shirley Heeg  
Shelby, Michigan

Dennis Hietbrink  
Sheldon, Iowa

Suzanne Hodges  
Springville, New York

Hae Taik Kim  
Yaphank, New York

Larry Klaaren  
New Lenox, Illinois

Roger Krutz  
East Greenbush, New York

George (Chung Chih) Lai  
Fair Lawn, New Jersey

Thomas Larkin  
Pequannock, New Jersey

Nyla Lewis  
Lakeville, Minnesota

Sandra Masters  
Laredo, Texas

Nancy McClure-Long  
Muskogee, Oklahoma

Philip Noordmans  
Clovis, California

Michael Otte  
Little Falls, New Jersey

Richard Otterness  
Syracuse, New York
John Paarlberg
Loudonville, New York

Daniel Plasman
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Jack Ritsema
Dumont, Iowa

Carlos Rivera
Hempstead, New York

John Schmidt
Holland, Michigan

Peter Semeyn
Westmont, Illinois

Jacqueline Smallbones
Orange City, Iowa

David Su
Elmhurst, New York

Dean Ulmer
Emery, South Dakota

Patricia (Pacia) Vamvas
Savannah, Georgia

Steven Vander Molen
Holland, Michigan

Bruce Van Dusseldorp
Denver, Colorado

David Van Lant
Norwalk, California

Robert Vrooman
Alexandria Bay, New York

Charles Wiessner
Louisburg, North Carolina

Bruce Wilterdink
Beloit, Wisconsin

Mary Wisner
Holland, Michigan
(ADOPTED)
NECROLOGY

John David Page, Jr.

Paul Esbenshade Hostetter

Jack D. Cooper

William J. Bouwer

Arvin Wilfred Roos

Jan Walter van Arsdale

Earl L. Smith

Gerald Gordon Dykstra

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Robert “Bob” Wayne Barrowclough

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John Edwin Brouwer

Angeline Jennie Calsbeek

Anne L. Guild-Donovan

George Brown, Jr.

Ruth Adene Fries Robbins

Jarod Van Wagenen, IV

Fred Mold

Jacob Dykstra

Eric J. Schulze

David Smith

Antoine “Tony” L. Campbell

John “Jack” Edward Buteyn, Jr.

Leonard Jones

Gordon S. Cook

Stanley Eldon Perea

Julius Otto Brandt

Thomas Danney

Franklin Spoolstra

Gerard De Loof

James Stralow

John Itzen

Francis A. De Jong

Allan M. Koller

Lewis R. Scudder III

Philip Stephan Sickler

Clarence Liang

Tony Lopez

Peter Je Chul Ko

Roy Wagoner

Paul Alderink

Paul Colenbrander

John David Page, Jr.

John David Page, Jr. was born on November 7, 1933, in South Norfolk, Virginia. He studied at King College in Briston, Tennessee, from which he graduated in 1956. He received his theological education at Union Theological Seminary in Virginia, from which he graduated in 1960.
Mr. Page was licensed and ordained by the Presbytery of Norfolk in 1960. He pastored the following congregations: Broadmoor Presbyterian, Chesapeake, Virginia, from 1958 to 1961; Sunnyside Presbyterian, Winchester, Virginia, from 1961 to 1962; Burnt Presbyterian, Winchester, Virginia, from 1961 to 1965; Community, Feasterville, Pennsylvania, from 1965 to 1967; and First Reformed, Scotia, New York, from 1967 to 1992.

Mr. Page died on January 29, 2017, in Glenville, New York. He was 83 years old.

Paul Esbenshade Hostetter

Paul Esbenshade Hostetter was born on April 11, 1927, in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. He studied at Wheaton College, from which he graduated in 1950. He received his theological education at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1954. He received an M.A. from Fuller Theological Seminary in 1973 and also studied at the Hartford Seminary Foundation from 1959 to 1960, Michigan State University from 1967 to 1968, and Fuller Theological Seminary from 1985 to 1986.

Mr. Hostetter was licensed and ordained by the Classis of Chicago in 1954. He served as a short-term missionary in Sudan from 1954 to 1958 and as the director of the Literacy Center in West Pakistan from 1960 to 1965. He also served as a missionary in Chiapas, Mexico, from 1973 to 1980. He pastored University Reformed in East Lansing, Michigan, from 1967 to 1968 and Midland Reformed in Michigan from 1968 to 1973. He then served as the minister of missions and evangelism at the Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove, California, from 1981 to 1985. Mr. Hostetter was a professor of missiology at Reformed Bible College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, from 1985 to 1997 and an editor and writer at Words of Hope in Grand Rapids, Michigan, from 1996 to 2003. He also served as the president of the Regional Synod of the Great Lakes in 1996.

Mr. Hostetter died on February 3, 2017. He was 89 years old.

Jack D. Cooper

Jack D. Cooper was born on December 10, 1929, in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He studied at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1963. He received his theological education at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1966.

Mr. Cooper was licensed by the Classis of South Grand Rapids in 1966 and ordained by the Classis of Schoharie the same year. He pastored the following congregations: First, Amsterdam, New York, from 1966 to 1969; Glenmont, New York, from 1969 to 1983; and Fifth, Grand Rapids, Michigan, from 1988 to 1994.

Mr. Cooper died on February 23, 2017, in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He was 87 years old.

William J. Bouwer

William J. Bouwer was born on May 27, 1934, in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He studied at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1956. He received his theological education at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1959.

Mr. Bouwer was licensed by the Classis of North Grand Rapids in 1959 and ordained by the Classis of Kalamazoo the same year. He pastored the following congregations: Lakeland, Kalamazoo, Michigan, from 1959 to 1965; West Side, Cicero, Illinois, from 1965 to 1973; First, Oostburg, Wisconsin, from 1973 to 1989; and First, Lansing, Illinois,
from 1989 to 1996. He also served as the stated clerk of the Particular Synod of Mid-America from 1966 to 1999.

Mr. Bouwer died on February 25, 2017. He was 82 years old.

**Arvin Wilfred Roos**

Arvin Wilfred Roos was born on September 25, 1921, in Rock Rapids, Iowa. He studied at Central College, from which he graduated in 1943. He received his theological education at New Brunswick Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1949.

Mr. Roos was licensed by the Classis of West Sioux in 1949 and ordained by the Classis of Montgomery the same year. He pastored the following congregations: Trinity, Amsterdam, New York, from 1949 to 1952; Princetown, Duanesburg, New York, from 1952 to 1958; First, Prairie City, Iowa, from 1958 to 1960; First, Irvington, New Jersey, from 1960 to 1964; and Perl-Mack, Denver, Colorado, from 1964 to 1969. He was dismissed to the Presbyterian church in 1971 and served Presbyterian congregations in Hazelton and Steele, North Dakota, from 1971 to 1977; Currie and Tracy, Minnesota, from 1977 to 1985; and Strasburg, North Dakota, from 1986 to 1993.

Mr. Roos died on February 26, 2017, in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He was 95 years old.

**Jan Walter van Arsdale**

Jan Walter van Arsdale was born on August 8, 1937, in Pottsville, Pennsylvania. He studied at Dickenson College and at Waynesburg College, from which he graduated in 1960. His theological education was received at New Brunswick Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1965.

He pastored the following congregations: Mamakating, Wurtsboro, and Cuddebackville, New York, from 1965 to 1966 and Trinity, Newark, New Jersey, from 1966 to 1971. He was dismissed to the Presbyterian church in 1971.

Mr. van Arsdale died on February 28, 2017, in Womelsdorf, Pennsylvania. He was 79 years old.

**Earl L. Smith**

Earl L. Smith was born on April 13, 1944, in Manitowoc, Wisconsin. He studied at Northwestern College, from which he graduated in 1976. He received his theological education at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1981.

Mr. Smith was licensed by the Classis of Minnesota in 1977 and ordained by the same classis in 1981. He pastored the following congregations: Bussing, McKee, Kentucky, from 1982 to 1985; Immanuel, London, Ontario, from 1985 to 1992; Maranatha, Wainfleet, Ontario, from 1992 to 1995; Umonhon, Macy, Nebraska from 1995 to 2007; and Oneida United Methodist Church, Oneida, Wisconsin, until his retirement in 2013.

Mr. Smith died on March 11, 2017. He was 72 years old.

**Gerald Gordon Dykstra**

Gerald Gordon Dykstra was born on September 14, 1921, in Ashkum, Illinois. He studied
at the University of Illinois, from which he graduated in 1943. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1949.

Mr. Dykstra was licensed by the Classis of Illiana in 1949 and ordained by the Classis of Rochester the same year. He pastored the following congregations: Clymer Hill, New York, from 1949 to 1954; Owasco, New York, from 1954 to 1960; Mount Pleasant, Schenectady, New York, from 1960 to 1968; American, Primghar, Iowa, from 1968 to 1981; and Comanche, Lawton, Oklahoma, from 1981 to 1985.

Mr. Dykstra died on March 14, 2017, in Primghar, Iowa. He was 95 years old.

Leonard James DeBeer

Leonard James DeBeer was born on November 25, 1933, in Le Mars, Iowa. He studied at Central College, from which he graduated in 1955. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1958. He received an S.T.M. from New York Theological Seminary in 1974.

Mr. DeBeer was licensed by the Classis of West Sioux in 1958 and ordained by the Classis of West Central the same year. He pastored Perl-Mack Community Church in Denver, Colorado, from 1958 to 1964 and Faith Community in Detroit, Michigan, from 1964 to 1966. He served the RCA's General Program Council as the secretary for professional development from 1968 to 1973. He did specialized ministry in pastoral counseling in New York City, New York, from 1973 to 1987 and in Rutland, Vermont, from 1987 to 1995.

Mr. DeBeer died on March 14, 2017, in Bend, Oregon. He was 83 years old.

Rodney James Koopmans

Rodney James Koopmans was born on October 22, 1945, in Beaver Dam, Wisconsin. He studied at Central College, from which he graduated in 1967. He began his theological education at Western Theological Seminary in 1967, later studied at New York Theological Seminary, and completed his education at New Brunswick Theological Seminary in 1971.

Mr. Koopmans was licensed and ordained by the Classis of Wisconsin in 1971. He pastored the following congregations: Gardiner, New York, from 1971 to 1977; Fishkill, New York, from 1982 to 1997; and St. Croix, Virgin Islands, from 1997 until his death. He also served the church in Oman from 1977 to 1982. In St. Croix, he was the director of My Brother’s Table, a soup kitchen in Frederiksted that served the homeless a noon meal.

Mr. Koopmans died on March 15, 2017, in St. Croix, Virgin Islands. He was 71 years old.

Robert “Bob” Wayne Barrowclough

Robert “Bob” Wayne Barrowclough was born on December 29, 1939, in Hawthorne, New Jersey. He studied at Princeton University, from which he graduated in 1961. His theological education was received at New Brunswick Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1965.

Mr. Barrowclough was licensed by the Classis of Paramus in 1965 and ordained by the Classis of Newark the same year. He completed a mission with the Jicarilla Apache tribe in New Mexico before pastoring North Reformed Church in Newark, New Jersey, as
associate pastor from 1965 to 1972 and as senior pastor from 1973 to 2005. He also ran
Bessie Green Community, Inc. which provided food, shelter, and clothing to the poor. In
retirement, he served as pastor at Cedar Crest Chapel, Pompton Plains, New Jersey, from
2007 to 2015.

Mr. Barrowclough died on March 19, 2017, in Wyckoff, New Jersey. He was 77 years old.

John David Muyskens

John David Muyskens was born on April 19, 1934, in Sheldon, Iowa. He studied at
Northwestern Junior College and at Central College, from which he graduated in 1956.
His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he
graduated in 1959. He earned a Th.M. in 1962 as well as a D.Min. in 1978 from Princeton
Theological Seminary.

Mr. Muyskens was licensed by the Classis of Minnesota in 1959 and ordained by the
Classis of Raritan the same year. He pastored the following congregations: Pottersville,
New Jersey, from 1959 to 1967; First, Union City, New Jersey, from 1967 to 1975; and
First, New Brunswick, New Jersey, from 1975 to 1999.

Mr. Muyskens died on April 1, 2017. He was 82 years old.

John Edwin Brouwer

John Edwin Brouwer was born on September 7, 1934, in Inwood, Iowa. He studied at
Hope 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 Germania the same year. He pastored the following congregations: Logan, Dell Rapids,
South Dakota, from 1962 to 1969; Grace, Corsica, South Dakota, from 1969 to 1977; and
First, Randolph, Wisconsin, from 1977 to 1987. He was dismissed to the United Methodist
Church in 1987.

Mr. Brouwer died on April 3, 2017, in St. Paul, Minnesota. He was 82 years old.

Angeline Jennie Calsbeek (née Smit)

Angeline Jennie Calsbeek was born on September 13, 1928, in Davis, South Dakota. She
studied at Northwestern Junior College and at Hope College, from which she graduated
in 1953. She served as an elementary school teacher in Inwood, Iowa, and in Holland,
Michigan, before becoming a missionary for the RCA.

Ms. Calsbeek served in the mission field with her husband, Harvey, in Mescalero, New
Mexico, from 1954 to 1962 and in Dulce, New Mexico, from 1962 to 1966.

Ms. Calsbeek died on April 21, 2017, in Balaton, Minnesota. She was 88 years old.

Anne L. Guild-Donovan

Anne L. Guild-Donovan was born on April 27, 1932, in Oradell, New Jersey. She studied
at Rockland Community College and at Ramapo College, from which she graduated in
1976. Her theological education was received at Union Theological Seminary, New York.
City, from which she graduated in 1979. She earned a D.Min. from Colgate Rochester Divinity School in 1987.

Ms. Guild-Donovan was licensed by the Classis of Rockland-Westchester in 1978 and ordained in 1979 by the same classis. She began her ministry as an administrative assistant at Spring Valley, New York, from 1970 to 1975 and as assistant pastor at the Presbyterian church in Palisades, New York. She then continued her ministry in a variety of chaplaincy positions: Central Islip Psychiatric Center, Central Islip, New York, from 1979 to 1980; interim, United Methodist Church, Islip, New York, 1980; administrative assistant, Christianity/Crisis, New York, New York, 1981; and Rochester Psychiatric Center, Rochester, New York, from 1982 to 1994.

Ms. Guild-Donovan died on April 26, 2017. She was 84 years old.

George Brown, Jr.

George Brown, Jr. was born on December 19, 1942, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He studied at Central College, from which he graduated in 1969. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1969. He earned a Th.M. from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1971 and a Ph.D. from Michigan State University in 1989.

Mr. Brown was licensed and ordained by the Classis of Philadelphia in 1969. He pastored an RCA church in Pottersville, New Jersey, from 1969 to 1973 and also served as minister of education at Peapack, Gladstone, New Jersey, from 1971 to 1973 and at Central, Grand Rapids, Michigan, from 1973 to 1988. He began his teaching career as an adjunct professor at Western Theological Seminary from 1975 to 1976 and from 1983 to 1988. He served as the dean of faculty at Western from 1988 to 1997 and as the G.W. & Eddie Haworth professor of Christian education and associate dean from 1997 to 2012. He was also a General Synod professor from 1997 to 2013.

Mr. Brown died on April 30, 2017, in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He was 74 years old.

Ruth Adene Fries Robbins (née Workman)

Ruth Fries Robbins was born on October 9, 1935, in Muskegon, Michigan. She studied at Rutgers University, from which she graduated in 1976. Her theological education was received at McCormick Theological Seminary, from which she graduated in 1983. She also earned a Th.M. from New Brunswick Theological Seminary in 1986.

Ms. Robbins was licensed and ordained by the Classis of Raritan in 1983. She pastored the following congregations: First, Rocky Hill, New Jersey, from 1983 to 1993; Rocky Hill, New Jersey, from 1994 to 1996; interim, Harlingen, Belle Mead, New Jersey, from 1997 to 1999; and Staten Island, New York, in 1999.

Ms. Robbins died on May 5, 2017, in Rocky Hill, New Jersey. She was 81 years old.

Jared Van Wagenen IV

Jared Van Wagenen IV was born on November 16, 1936, in Cooperstown, New York. He studied at Middlebury College, from which he graduated in 1960. His theological education was received at New Brunswick Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1962.

Mr. Van Wagenen was licensed by the Classis of Schoharie in 1962 and ordained by the

Mr. Van Wagenen died on May 13, 2017, in Lawyersville, New York. He was 80 years old.

Frederick Mold Jr.

Frederick Mold Jr. was born on June 17, 1926, in Jersey City, New Jersey. He studied at Muhlenberg College, from which he graduated in 1950. His theological education was received at New Brunswick Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1955. He received a certificate in pastoral counseling from the Presbyterian Synod of New Jersey in 1974.

Mr. Mold was licensed by the Classis of South Bergen in 1955 and ordained by the Classis of New Brunswick the same year. He pastored the following congregations: Middletown, New Jersey, from 1955 to 1958; Freehold, New Jersey, from 1958 to 1979; and Tinton Falls, New Jersey, from 1986 to 1991. Mr. Mold served at New Brunswick Theological Seminary as vice president from 1979 to 1985 and as an adjunct professor in 1986 and from 2002 to 2009. He served as the stated clerk of the Classis of New Brunswick from 1957 to 1992 and as treasurer from 1957 to 2009. He also served as the stated clerk of the Synod of the Mid-Atlantics from 1990 to 2010.

Mr. Mold died on June 16, 2017, in Hamilton, New Jersey. He was 90 years old.

Jacob Dykstra

Jacob Dykstra was born on September 26, 1929, in Los Angeles, California. He studied at George Pepperdine College, from which he graduated in 1951. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1954.

Mr. Dykstra was licensed by the Classis of California in 1954 and ordained by the Classis of Rochester the same year. He pastored the following congregations: Emmanuel, Whitby, Ontario, from 1954 to 1957; First, Decatur, Michigan, from 1957 to 1959; First, Chatham, Ontario, from 1959 to 1964; Immanuel, London, Ontario, from 1964 to 1968; Steen, Minnesota, from 1968 to 1972; South Blendon, Hudsonville, Michigan, from 1972 to 1977; Mount Greenwood, Chicago, Illinois, from 1977 to 1984; and Unity, Muskegon, Michigan, from 1984 to 1994.

Mr. Dykstra died on June 29, 2017, in Dyer, Indiana. He was 87 years old.

Eric John Schulze

Eric John Schulze was born on June 17, 1927, in Edmonton, Alberta. He studied at Moravian College, from which he graduated in 1950. His theological education was received at Moravian Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1953. He also studied at St. Stephens College from 1950 to 1951, Vancouver School of Theology in 1969, and Fuller Theological Seminary from 1980 to 1981.

Mr. Schulze was ordained a deacon by the Moravian church in 1953 and a presbyter in 1961. He was received by the Classis of Cascades in 1972. He pastored the following congregations: Moravian, New Sarepta, Alberta, from 1953 to 1959; Heimtel Moravian, Edmonton, Alberta, from 1955 to 1959; Moravian, Calgary, Alberta, from 1959 to 1962;
Moravian, Bruderheim, Alberta, from 1962 to 1967; Spring Gardens Moravian, Antigua, West Indies, 1967; Fredericksted Moravian, St. Croix, Virgin Islands, from 1967 to 1968; Moravian, Vancouver, British Columbia, from 1968 to 1972; Calgary, Alberta, from 1972 to 1978; and Lincoln Ave, Pomona, California, from 1978 to 1982. He served as a chaplain at Marquardt Manor from 1982 to 1994 and as a contract pastor at First, Lynden, Washington, from 1994 to 2010. He was also a visiting pastor for the Board of Pensions from 1994 to 2005.

Mr. Schulze died on July 1, 2017. He was 90 years old.

David Smith

David Smith was born on June 25, 1968, in Morrison, Illinois. He studied at Saulk Valley Community College and at Trinity Christian College, from which he graduated in 1990. His theological education was started at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, where he studied from 1992 to 1996, and completed at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1998.

Mr. Smith was ordained by the Classis of Illinois in 1998. He began his ministry as associate pastor at First, Pella, Iowa, from 1998 to 2001 and at Faith, Dyer, Indiana, from 2001 to 2009. He then served as pastor at Crete, Illinois, from 2010 to 2015 when he transferred to the Presbyterian Church in America.

Mr. Smith died on July 2, 2017, in Crete, Illinois. He was 49 years old.

Antoine “Tony” L. Campbell

Antoine “Tony” L. Campbell was born on December 24, 1954, in Indianapolis, Indiana. He earned his bachelor’s degree at the United States Naval Academy. His theological education was received at Yale School of Divinity.

At the time of his death, Mr. Campbell was serving as the associate general secretary and director of missional engagement for the General Synod Council.

Mr. Campbell died on July 18, 2017, in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He was 62 years old.

John “Jack” Edward Buteyn Jr.

John “Jack” Edward Buteyn Jr. was born on July 18, 1944, in Harvey, Illinois. He studied at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1966. His theological education started at Princeton Theological Seminary and was completed at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1970.

Mr. Buteyn was licensed and ordained by the Classis of Bergen in 1970. He pastored the following congregations: Immanuel Community, Lansing, Michigan, from 1970 to 1975; Abbe, Clymer, New York, from 1975 to 1978; and Plano, Texas, from 1978 to 2009. He also served the Protestant Church in Oman after his retirement.

Mr. Buteyn died on July 20, 2017, in Plano, Texas. He was 73 years old.

Leonard Jones

Leonard Jones was born on June 13, 1926, in Stafford Springs, Connecticut. He studied
at Rutgers University, from which he graduated in 1950. His theological education was received at New Brunswick Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1953.

Mr. Jones was licensed by the Classis of Paramus in 1953 and ordained by the Classis of New Brunswick the same year. He pastored the following congregations: Six Mile Run, Franklin Park, New Jersey, from 1953 to 1963 and Franklin, Nutley, New Jersey, from 1963 to 1981.

Mr. Jones died on July 25, 2017. He was 91 years old.

Gordon S. Cook

Gordon S. Cook was born on December 23, 1931, in Flushing, Queens, New York. He studied at Yale University, from which he graduated in 1953. His theological education was received at New Brunswick Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1960. He also earned a Th.M. from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1968 and a D.Min. from Andover Newton Theological Seminary in 1977.

Mr. Cook was licensed and ordained by the Classis of North Long Island in 1960. He began his ministry as a chaplain in the United States Navy and served from 1960 to 1981. He was director of education at the Marine Corps base at Camp Butler in Okinawa from 1987 to 1991. He then served as a lecturer in English at the university in Ryukyus and at Okinawa Christian Junior College from 1993 to 1999. He was also an instructor at Caldwell Community College in North Carolina following his retirement.

Mr. Cook died on July 27, 2017. He was 85 years old.

Stanley Eldon Perea

Stanley Eldon Perea was born on February 19, 1949, in Antonito, Colorado.

Mr. Perea was ordained by the Classis of Rocky Mountains in 1992. He served as pastor of the Church of the Rockies, Denver, Colorado, from 1991 to 1998 and as the coordinator of urban ministries in the RCA from 1998 to 2001. He also served as the director of HIS Ministries and the Asociación para la Educación Teológica Hispana (AETH: Hispanic Theological Education Association).

Mr. Perea died on July 29, 2017, in Bloomfield, Colorado. He was 68 years old.

Julius Otto Brandt

Julius Otto Brandt was born on June 30, 1922, in Holland, Michigan. He studied at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1954. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1975.

Mr. Brandt was licensed by the Classis of Holland in 1957 and ordained by the Classis of Pleasant Prairie the same year. He pastored Immanuel Reformed Church in Belmond, Iowa, from 1957 to 1961 and Faith Reformed Church in Lynden, Washington, from 1961 to 1977. He then served as a missionary in the RCA's mission at the National Evangelical Church in Kuwait from 1977 to 1987.

Mr. Brandt died on August 4, 2017, in Lynden, Washington. He was 95 years old.
Thomas Danney

Thomas Danney was born on March 25, 1944, in Buffalo, New York. He studied at the Buffalo Bible Institute from 1965 to 1966 and at Houghton College, from which he graduated in 1967. His theological education was received at New Brunswick Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1981. He also earned an M.S.W. at Fordham University in 1973.

Mr. Danney was ordained by the Classis of Palisades in 1981. He pastored the following congregations: Bergen Point Community, Bergen, New Jersey, from 1981 to 1989 and First, Nyack, New York, from 1989 to 2011.

Mr. Danney died on August 5, 2017. He was 73 years old.

Franklin Spoolstra

Franklin Spoolstra was born on August 2, 1932, in Chicago, Illinois. He studied at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1963. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1966. He also earned an M.A. from Governors State University in 1976 and an Ed.D. from the University of Sarasota in 1977.

Mr. Spoolstra was licensed by the Classis of Chicago in 1966 and ordained by the Classis of Kalamazoo the same year. He pastored the following congregations: Three Oaks, Michigan, from 1966 to 1969; Calvin, Cutlerville, Michigan, from 1969 to 1973; Mount Greenwood, Chicago, Illinois, from 1973 to 1977; Riverside Park, Hammond, Indiana, from 1977 to 1981; St. Stephens ELCA, Rockford, Michigan, from 1989 to 1990; Hope Community, Rockford, Michigan, from 1990 to 1992; St. Stephens, Rockford, Michigan, from 1992 to 1998; and Rockford Springs Orthodox Presbyterian in 1998. He also had a private practice in psychology from 1981 to 1986 and served as program director for the Salvation Army from 1989 to 1991; as clinical director for Tri County Hospital from 1991 to 1994; and as a director for Forest View Psychiatric Hospital.

Mr. Spoolstra died on August 21, 2017, in Rockford, Michigan. He was 85 years old.

Gerard De Loof

Gerard De Loof was born on December 6, 1921, in Kalamazoo, Michigan. He studied at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1949. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1952.

Mr. De Loof was licensed by the Classis of Kalamazoo in 1952 and ordained by the Classis of North Grand Rapids the same year. He pastored the following congregations: Casnovia, Michigan, from 1952 to 1956; Bethany, St. Petersburg, Florida, from 1956 to 1961; Southridge, Kalamazoo, Michigan, from 1961 to 1968; Chancellor, South Dakota, from 1968 to 1979; and Bethel, Ellsworth, Minnesota, from 1979 to 1986. He served as a senior pastor for the Board of Pensions from 1988 to 1993 and as contract pastor at First, Monroe, South Dakota, from 1992 to 1999.

Mr. De Loof died on September 19, 2017, in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. He was 95 years old.
James Stralow

James Stralow was born on July 7, 1943, in Morrison, Illinois. He studied at Central College, from which he graduated in 1965. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1968.

Mr. Stralow was licensed by the Classis of Illinois in 1968 and ordained by the Classis of Muskegon the same year. He pastored the following congregations: Ravenna, Michigan, from 1968 to 1975; Rehoboth, McBain, Michigan, from 1976 to 1982; and Forreston, Illinois, from 1982 to 2009.

Mr. Stralow died on September 21, 2017, in Freeport, Illinois. He was 74 years old.

John Itzen

John Itzen was born on November 19, 1924, in Herman, Minnesota. He studied at Central College, from which he graduated in 1950. His theological education was received at New Brunswick Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1953.

Mr. Itzen was licensed by the Classis of Germania in 1953 and ordained by the Classis of South Long Island the same year. He pastored the following congregations: Merillon Neighborhood, Garden City Park, Long Island, New York, from 1953 to 1957; Readington, New Jersey, from 1957 to 1966; Faith, Levittown, Pennsylvania, from 1966 to 1988.

Mr. Itzen died on September 29, 2017, in Levittown, Pennsylvania. He was 92 years old.

Francis A. De Jong

Francis A. De Jong was born on January 15, 1935, in Leighton, Iowa. She studied at Central College, from which she graduated in 1957. She received an M.A. from McCormick Theological Seminary in 1960.

Ms. De Jong was licensed by the Classis of Queens in 1979 and ordained by the same classis in 1980. She served as the director of Christian education at Spring Valley, New York, from 1960 to 1962 and at Wyckoff, New Jersey, from 1962 to 1970. She worked in campus ministry for United Ministry in Higher Education at Morehead State University from 1970 to 1973 and at the State University of New York at Fredonia, New York, from 1973 to 1977. She then served as the chaplain for Central College from 1977 to 1997.

Ms. De Jong died on October 11, 2017, in Pella, Iowa. She was 82 years old.

Allan M. Koller

Allan M. Koller was born on February 12, 1945, in London, England. He studied at the City College of New York, from which he graduated in 1965. His theological education was received at New Brunswick Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1973. He also earned a Ph.D. from Fordham University in 1977, an M.S. from Long Island University in 1984, and an M.S. in 1988, an M.Phil. in 1989, and an Ed.D. from Columbia University in 1990.

Mr. Koller was licensed and ordained by the Classis of Brooklyn in 1973. He pastored the following congregations: Crescent Place, Yonkers, New York, from 1973 to 1988; Williamsbridge Road, Bronx, New York, from 1981 to 1988; the Methodist church in

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Walker Valley, New York, from 1989 to 1999; and the Presbyterian church in Florida, New York, after that. Mr. Koller also served as the director of pastoral care at City College of New York from 1985 to 1987; as assistant professor at Dominican College, Orangeburg, New York, from 1987 to 1992; as academic administrator at Chapel Field Christian High School, Pine Bush, New York, from 1992 to 1998; and as a math instructor at Orange County Community College, Middletown, New York. He was also a staff chaplain for the 77th Regiment at Fort Totten, New York.

Mr. Koller died on October 28, 2017, in Washingtonville, New York. He was 72 years old.

Lewis Rousseau Scudder III

Lewis Rousseau Scudder III was born on April 12, 1942, in Kuwait. He studied at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1963. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1966. He also received an M.A. from American University in Beirut, Lebanon, and did doctoral studies at McGill University Institute for Islamic Studies in Montreal, Quebec.

Mr. Scudder was licensed and ordained by the Classis of Holland in 1966. He served as a missionary for the RCA in the Middle East from 1966 to 1990. He pastored the Union Church of Istanbul, Turkey, from 1990 to 1994 and served with the Middle East Council of Churches on Cyprus from 1994 to 2008.

Mr. Scudder died on November 1, 2017, in Limassol, Cyprus. He was 76 years old.

Philip Stephan Sickler

Philip Stephan Sickler was born on June 5, 1947, in Kingston, New York. He studied at the University of Buffalo, from which he earned a B.A. and an M.Ed. His theological education was received at Westminster Theological Seminary.

Mr. Sickler taught social studies and English in the Buffalo public schools. He served as director of the Ontario Street Youth Center and organized “His Place,” a Christian coffee house ministry in Buffalo. He pastored the following congregations: Hope, Clifton, New Jersey, from 1978 to 1984 and Arlington, Poughkeepsie, New York, from 1998 to 2009.

Mr. Sickler died on November 4, 2017. He was 70 years old.

Clarence Liang

Clarence Liang was born on February 27, 1935, in Nong An, Jilin, China. He studied at King College, Bristol, Tennessee, from which he graduated in 1962. His theological education was received at Louisville Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1966.

Mr. Liang was licensed by the Presbytery of Louisville in 1963 and ordained by the Presbytery of Iron Mountain in 1966. He was received by the Classis of California in 1989. He began his ministry as student pastor at Patterson Memorial Presbyterian in Guston, Kentucky, First Presbyterian, Irvington, Kentucky, and First Presbyterian, Cloverport, Kentucky, from 1965 to 1966. He then pastored the following congregations: Presbyterian, Patton, Missouri, and Whitewater Presbyterian, Sedgwickville, Missouri, from 1966 to 1970; Presbyterian, Ashmore, Illinois, from 1970 to 1975; First Presbyterian, Edwardsburg, Michigan, from 1975 to 1980; Presbyterian, Maple Plain, Minnesota, from 1980 to 1988;

Mr. Liang died on November 7, 2017, in Holland, Michigan. He was 82 years old.

**Antonio R. Lopez**

Antonio R. Lopez was born on September 13, 1938, in the Bronx, New York.

Mr. Lopez planted Iglesia de Cristo La Roca in Queens Village, New York, where he served as senior pastor and later merged the congregation with the Reformed Church in America under the care of the Hispanic Ministries Council.

Mr. Lopez died on November 7, 2017. He was 79 years old.

**Peter Je Chul Ko**

Peter Je Chul Ko was born on August 10, 1933, in Yeoju-si Gyeonggi-do, South Korea. His theological education was received at Chongshin Theological Seminary.

Mr. Ko was ordained by the Presbyterian Church in Korea (Hapdong) in 1968. He planted the Han Sung Reformed Church in Cresskill, New Jersey, in 1992 and served until his retirement in 2013.

Mr. Ko died on November 15, 2017. He was 84 years old.

**Roy Wagoner**

Roy Wagoner was born on November 3, 1928, in Rochelle Park, New Jersey. He studied at Central College, from which he graduated in 1953. His theological education was received at New Brunswick Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1956. He also earned an M.A. at Columbia University in 1967.

Mr. Wagoner was licensed by the Classis of Bergen in 1956 and ordained by the Classis of Poughkeepsie the same year. He pastored the following congregations: First, Poughkeepsie, New York, from 1956 to 1958; Fair Lawn, New Jersey, from 1958 to 1964; and Trinity, West New York, New Jersey, from 1964 to 1971. He served as the administrator of the Reformed Church Home in Irvington, New Jersey, from 1971 to 1985 and as executive director of Reformed Church Ministries to the Aging in Highland Park, New Jersey, from 1985 to 1989.

Mr. Wagoner died on December 2, 2017. He was 89 years old.

**Paul J. Alderink**

Paul J. Alderink was born on November 5, 1926, in Holland, Michigan. He began his undergraduate education at Grand Rapids Junior College and completed it at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1950. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1955.

Mr. Alderink was licensed by the Classis of North Grand Rapids in 1955 and ordained by the Classis of Zeeland the same year. He pastored the following congregations: Jamestown, Michigan, from 1955 to 1960; First, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, from 1960 to
1963; Annville, Kentucky, from 1963 to 1971; and First, Platte, South Dakota, from 1975 to 1986. He also served as the director for Annville Institute, Annville, Kentucky, from 1972 to 1975 and as the executive coordinator for Jackson County Ministries, Annville, Kentucky, from 1986 to 1990.

Mr. Alderink died on December 9, 2017, in Holland, Michigan. He was 91 years old.

**Paul Colenbrander**

Paul Colenbrander was born on March 25, 1924, in Rock Valley, Iowa. He began his undergraduate studies at Northwestern College and completed them at Westmar College, from which he graduated in 1948. He received an M.A. from Colorado State University in 1953. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1966.

Mr. Colenbrander was licensed by the Classis of East Sioux in 1966 and ordained by the Classis of Holland the same year. He pastored Maplewood Reformed Church in Holland, Michigan, from 1966 to 1977 and then served as a representative of the World Home Bible League until his retirement.

Mr. Colenbrander died on December 18, 2017, in Holland, Michigan. He was 93 years old.