
POLICY WORDING

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 callings 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 produce 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 courage and competence to lead in the church and the world in a multiplicity of environments and with an openness to equipping and empowering 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

Four initiative teams work within the Equipping Emerging Leaders of Today and Tomorrow strategic priority: Leadership Development, 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; Women’s Transformation and Leadership, which focuses on full inclusion of the gifts and influence of women; and Next Generation Engagement, which empowers young adults, ministry teams, and congregations to create a culture of intergenerational ministry.
LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Who: The work of the Leadership Development initiative is guided by a coalition of pastors, regional executives, classis leaders, business entrepreneurs, and marketplace leaders, representing different areas of specialized expertise in leadership development. The initiative is led by staff member Sung Kim, who has been in this role (part-time) since November 2018.

What: The work of Leadership Development is to catalyze the multiplication of more and better leaders in ways that are smarter and faster than traditional methods of training both emerging and established leaders. Our goal is to develop leaders who demonstrate God-honoring character, emotionally healthy chemistry with others, and uniquely skilled competence where their “deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet” (Buechner).

Why: Great and godly leaders transform the world. They lead teams, departments, and organizations that are more faithful and fruitful in every way. They are “humble, hungry, and smart” (Lencioni). At the same time, they understand that to lead others, leaders must first lead themselves.

How: We aim to accomplish our goal by (1) centralizing the most effective, research-based tools and resources, and (2) decentralizing training and coaching at every level of the denomination—region, classis, and church.

Year Six Goals (June 2018 to June 2019)

- Launch 2 leadership collaborative cohorts.
- Launch 1 leadership development leadership community.

Progress

- 2 leadership collaboratives have launched: 1 in West Michigan, focused on leadership and preaching (launched in January 2018), and a second in the Classis of Queens, focused on developing elders and deacons (launched in May 2018).
- 6 RCA congregations are participating in a leadership community that is meeting in Grand Rapids, Michigan, 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.

Five-Year Goals (June 2018 to June 2023)

- Curate some of the world’s best leadership development resources to train 50 regional executives, classis leaders, and leadership coaches who will then train 5,000 leaders in 500 congregations in 4 major areas of leadership development:
  - Micro (personal leadership)
  - Meso (team leadership)
  - Macro (organizational leadership)
  - Multi (reproducing leadership)

These leaders and congregations will have a clear pathway to develop leaders that is unique to their local vision, calling, and context.
THRIVING LEADERS, THRIVING CHURCHES

Andy Bossardet has been leading this initiative 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.

Churches Learning Change

Churches Learning Change (formerly Ridder Church Renewal) is a partnership of Western Theological Seminary, the RCA, and the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA) that helps leaders develop the tools to confront unhealthy models that hinder personal and congregational growth. Churches Learning Change 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 Churches Learning Change supporting Modules 1 and 2 (Great Lakes, Mid-America, New York/New Jersey, Heartland, Eastern Canada, and Western Canada). With the end of the Lilly grant that funded the startup of Churches Learning Change, the process has morphed into more regionally contextual expressions. Each region has its own leadership team, faculty, and format. A central learning organization, supported by the Reformed Partnership for Church Renewal, collects learning from the regions and provides ongoing training and focus.

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 between congregations and pastors are drawn up in order 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). The Regional Synod of Albany has been an excellent partner, with the second round of their fellowship program cementing the relationship between these two programs.

Pastors and Congregations in Transition

The Thriving Leaders, Thriving Churches guiding coalition 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. This year, under the guidance of Molly Towne, the search team handbook is being updated, and there is an emerging partnership with Western Theological Seminary’s Formation for Ministry department. The first joint event was held on February 20, 2019, to help senior students navigate the call process.
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 has been formed.

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 through relationship tracking and feedback loops. This will also help as coaching is being decentralized. Initiative leaders will recruit coaches who are familiar with and passionate about their areas of expertise, while coaching excellence will still be centralized in a shared body of knowledge (the coaching catalog).

Congregational Vitality Pathways

Congregational Vitality Pathways (CVP) is a tool created by the Evangelical Covenant Church and utilized by the Synod of the Far West 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. The Ezra Project was co-led by Andy Bossardet and Tony Campbell. Following Tony Campbell’s passing, the Ezra Project is on hold.

Small Church Initiative

As a result of General Synod 2018, Thriving Leaders, Thriving Churches has begun to launch leadership collaboratives and learning communities around the unique contributions and challenges of small churches (fewer than 100 in worship). With the median worship attendance in North America hovering between 70 and 75 people, this is a crucial area of ministry, yet most leadership books focus on strategic planning and organization for congregations over 250 people. These leadership collaboratives and learning communities will be launched in concert with the Thriving Leaders, Thriving Churches guiding coalition.

Year Six Goals (June 2018 to June 2019)

- 150 churches will have engaged Churches Learning Change, either having completed both modules or actively engaging the process.
- A third first-call leadership collaborative will be launched.
- The first Specialized Transitional Minister leadership collaborative will be completed, and a second will be launched.
- An additional learning community focused on the Congregational Vitality Pathways will be launched (outside of the work being done in the Regional Synod of the Far West).
• The original Ezra Project pastors will launch a second leadership collaborative.
• The catalytic coaching network will be established and continue to provide support for ongoing learning communities.
• 20 congregations will have used the Transformational Church Assessment Tool as a connection event toward ongoing transformation.
• Added as a result of General Synod 2018: Launch leadership collaboratives around small church leadership in three regional synods.

Progress

• 140 congregations are engaging or have engaged Churches Learning Change.
• The first-call program now functions as a learning community, and the third round is now recruiting alongside the Albany Synod Fellowship Program.
• The first Specialized Transitional Minister leadership collaborative has been completed, and feedback from the first is being used to create an experience for a second.
• 1 learning community is launched in Lincoln, Nebraska, for Congregational Vitality Pathways, with recruitment happening in other regions.
• The Ezra Project is on hold, as per the previous summary of the program.
• The catalytic coaching network is being decentralized with training offered to coaches in a variety of initiatives.
• 13 congregations have used the Transformational Church Assessment Tool, and 2 more are in the queue.
• 1 leadership collaborative was launched in the Regional Synod of Mid-America by Thriving Leaders, Thriving Churches guiding coalition member Chad Schuitema, 1 is forming in the Regional Synod of New York, 1 is being promoted in the Regional Synod of Canada, and a full learning community will be launched in the Regional Synod of the Mid-Atlantics by General Synod 2019.

Five-Year Goals (June 2018 to June 2023)

• Launch and sustain a second-generation coaching platform with an emphasis on online connection and collaboration; at least 20 coaches will be using this platform in an ongoing way.
• Complete 3 small church leadership collaboratives or learning communities.
• Launch and sustain the Reformed Partnership for Congregational Renewal with the CRCNA; the partnership will have served at least 40 congregations in discernment of their next step in vitality.
• Expand the first-call program into at least 1 other regional synod, serving at least 30 new pastors and their congregations.
• Expand the online capacities for the Office of Ministry Services.

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 Women’s Transformation and Leadership specialist, serving as an educational consultant and lead facilitator. A cross-sector group of RCA leaders serves as the guiding coalition and as regional facilitators for Women’s Transformation and Leadership, helping to champion the mission, create and lead new processes, and provide critical insights and advisement.
We are committed to ensuring that women and girls of all generations and all 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. We are better together.

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 welcoming and nurturing 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 people as individuals to the Holy Spirit’s movement in the lives and ministries of women and girls.

Women’s Transformation and Leadership lives out its vision by

- Ensuring all women have barrier-free access to RCA resources and opportunities.
- Celebrating the rich history of women in the RCA, past and present, through the “RCA Women: A Legacy of Leadership” booklet, women’s Sankofa journeys, and the She Is Called campaign.
- Being an innovation incubator for new ideas, such as 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.
- Equipping congregations and other contexts to welcome the gifts women bring and to nurture healthy, thriving ministry partnerships between men and women through our learning process, Building God’s Church Together.
- Supporting established and emerging female leaders through our She Is Called leadership collaboratives (currently available in English and Spanish), mentoring and clergy networks, and other opportunities to connect and collaborate.
- Offering an annual global experience for women. Trips to Oman, Israel/Palestine, Italy, and South Africa have been taken so far. She Is Called: Holy Land is scheduled for November 2019.
- Providing tuition assistance to female seminarians through the Beth E. Marcus Scholarship Fund.
- Connecting women virtually through Facebook groups and a quarterly enewsletter.
- Creating a dynamic web resource featuring blogs by women; historical, biblical, and theological support about women in ministry; and ways for congregations, classes, and synods to intentionally integrate women’s gifts, voices, and leadership and help congregations create healthy environments for men and women to thrive together in ministry.
- 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 Six Goals (June 2018 to June 2019)

1. Create 6 to 8 connection events in at least 2 new regions, encouraging, equipping, and empowering RCA women to honor their stories and explore their God-given gifts.

2. Pilot a 1-year congregational She Is Called (Ella Es Llamada) leadership collaborative process, equipping 30 English- and Spanish-speaking ministry leaders to facilitate in their faith communities in Arizona and Southern California, then expand to other regional hubs.

3. Continue to launch Building God’s Church Together, a congregational learning process for leaders and communities who seek to discover, embrace, and nurture women’s gifts for leadership and to create healthy environments where ministry partnerships between men and women can flourish.

4. Expand the reach and influence of the She Is Called campaign via social media, stories of past and present women’s callings in video and written form, “& Me” T-shirts, a new Patterns and Portraits–type book, General Synod, and collaborative regional and global opportunities.

5. Continue to expand the We Are Speaking call to action with educational and worship resources.

### Progress

1. Connection events (since March 2018)
   - Crossroads Women’s Retreat (Mid-Atlantics), April 13–14, 2018, in Harvey Cedars, New Jersey.
   - All-Canada Learning Event (Canada), April 21–22, 2018, in Toronto, Ontario.
   - Women’s Connection Gathering, June 4, 2018, at Colonial Church of Bayside in Bayside, New York.
   - Annual Women’s Connection Dinner at General Synod (RCA/CRC), June 8, 2018, at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan.
   - Honoring Our Stories Women’s Retreat (Classis of Ontario), September 22, 2018, at New Hope Reformed Church in Mississauga, Ontario.
   - Women’s Guild Connection Lunch, October 3, 2018, at Old Paramus Reformed Church in Ridgewood, New Jersey.
   - Honoring Our Stories Women’s Retreat, October 21, 2018, at Midland Reformed Church in Midland, Michigan.

2. One-year She Is Called/Ella Es Llamada leadership collaboratives
   - Arizona/Southern California: 7 Spanish or English/Spanish cohorts, rolling launches from September 2018 to March 2019 (35 women)
   - New York City: Train the Trainer cohort launched March 2019 (12 women)
   - Canada: Train the Trainer cohort launched March 2019 (12 women)
   - Michigan: Congregational cohort launched February 2019 (12 women)
   - Other regions are in the exploration phase
Current regional facilitators are trained “graduates” of our pilot 18-month leadership collaboratives: Karla Camacho, Marilyn Correa, Jennifer Lucking, and Cheryl Heal. Lesley Mazzotta is our lead facilitator.

3. Building God’s Church Together, launched July 2018
   • Resources for equipping leaders and congregations
     o Online resource list featuring articles, websites, videos, and books, curated by RCA minister April Fiet.
     o 4-session Bible study, available in hard copy or as an online PDF, written by April Fiet with input from the Women’s Transformation and Leadership guiding coalition.
     o A mini leadership collaborative in the form of a 6-week virtual small group launched in March 2019.
   • Learning events (more than 25 congregations represented)
     o A Building God’s Church Together event (East Sioux and West Sioux Classes, Regional Synod of the Heartland) took place on July 7, 2018, at First Reformed Church in Orange City, Iowa.
     o A distance-learning seminarians’ connection lunch took place October 23, 2018, at Western Theological Seminary.
     o A Building God’s Church Together event (Central Iowa and Pleasant Prairie Classes, Regional Synod of the Heartland) took place on February 16, 2019, at ReNew Community Church in Ames, Iowa.
     o A Building God’s Church Together event is in the exploration phase for the Regional Synod of Albany.

4. She Is Called campaign expansion
   Ella Es Llamada (She Is Called in Spanish) officially launched at the Hispanic Council’s Asamblea in August 2018. “&Yo” T-shirts were designed, and a Spanish language video was created.

   An ongoing video stories project has drawn in diverse women from all over the RCA. These stories are edited and published weekly as “stand alone” videos on the She Is Called Facebook page, and they are also part of our longer-form videos.

   General Synod 2018 activities, correlating with the 40th anniversary celebration of women’s gifts and ordination as ministers of Word and sacrament
   • Leadership lounge with #sheiscalled selfie booth and T-shirts.
   • She Is Called videos premiered during plenary and at the Women’s Connection dinner for RCA and CRC leaders (200 registrants).
   • RCA/CRC workshop led by CRC minister Denise Posie and RCA minister Liz Testa.
   • “RCA Women: A Legacy of Leadership” booklets updated and given out. Also available online as a PDF.
   • Teal “&Me” T-shirts debuted with new biblical names in adult and child sizes.

Connection and Equipping Events
• The She Is Called/Ella Es Llamada retreat and leadership communities training gathered 50 women from churches in Arizona and Southern California, September 7–9 at the Spirit in the Desert retreat center in Carefree, Arizona.
• The First Women of the RCA Women’s Stories Day gathered 60 attendees
on May 11 at New Brunswick Theological Seminary in New Jersey.

- **100 Women in White: She Is Called** event took place on June 24 at Dewitt Reformed Church in New York City, New York.
- **Taking a Stand Women’s Stories Day** took place on February 2 at New Brunswick Theological Seminary in New Jersey.

**Two Global Mission Experiences**

- **She Is Called: South Africa** took place in August 2018 and piloted a new shared-leadership model with Women’s Transformation and Leadership trip planner Lesley Mazzotta, guiding coalition member Denise Kingdom Grier, and mission liaison Lois Wanyoike. Agenda included staff retreats, a parenting workshop, an art camp for children, and a She Is Called event celebrating South Africa’s national women’s day. The team included women and men of different races, generations, and callings from across the denomination.
- **She Is Called: Holy Land** is scheduled for November 6–17, 2019. This biblical and current women’s stories trip, in partnership with Sally and Josh Vis, is a “multiplier” experience for women and men, building on an initial 2016 trip with RCA ministers Dustyn Keepers and Megan Hodgin. It is a deeper dive to increase biblical and missional literacy, equipping travelers to bring their experiences back to enrich their own teaching and preaching.

An **RCA women’s history book** is in the exploration phase. Information-gathering meetings were held with Women’s Transformation and Leadership guiding coalition members, the Reformed Church Center at New Brunswick Theological Seminary, and members of various commissions (Women, History, and Race and Ethnicity) during the October 2018 meetings.

5. **We Are Speaking educational and worship resources**

- A **Lunch and Learn Event**, with speakers from across the RCA, took place at General Synod 2018 on June 11.
- A webinar titled **Preventing Sexual Abuse in the Church** (24 registrants) was facilitated by Rob Dixon and Lesley Mazzotta on December 12.
- A web-based worship resource, gathered from RCA pastors and leaders, curated by RCA pastor April Fiet, will be launching in spring 2019.
- A gender equity equipping event for pastors and ministry leaders is being proposed as a workshop for General Synod 2019 and beyond.

**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.

- **25 to 30 connection events** will 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, create space for those gifts to be developed, and to 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.

• 1 to 2 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.

NEXT GENERATION ENGAGEMENT

The purpose of Next Generation Engagement is to empower young adults, ministry teams, and congregations to create a culture of intergenerational ministry—that is, all people of all ages serving in leadership positions at the church, classis, and denominational levels. The goal of intergenerational ministry is to reframe the mental model of young people in the church—we are no longer seeking to “keep” these young people in our congregations. Instead, this ministry seeks to empower young leaders and congregations to serve one another into future ministry endeavors. Anna Radcliffe is the coordinator of Next Generation Engagement. She has served in this role for just under a year.

Year Six Goals (June 2018 to June 2019)

• Host a pilot relational gathering of “35 and under” ministry leaders geared toward naming their belonging and identity within the RCA.

• Successfully recruit 20 congregations to participate in the Fuller Youth Institute (FYI) Grand Rapids cohort, ensuring these congregations have a multigenerational discipleship pathway at the conclusion of the cohort.

• Develop or identify a discipleship training process for youth pastors that includes missional focus and best discipleship practices.

• Create an online presence that resources, equips, and creates institutional trust for leaders 35 and under.

Progress

• The pilot gathering took place on October 25, 2018, at the RCA’s Michigan Regional Center in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Three additional gatherings have been scheduled for the spring, one each in Michigan, New York, and Iowa.

• In January 2019, 19 churches and more than 100 ministry leaders gathered in the DeWitt Ministry Center in Grand Rapids, Michigan, for the first in-person summit of the Growing Young Cohort. This is a year-long process that will conclude in December 2019.

• In partnership with Global Mission, Next Generation Engagement will send a pilot group of three churches to Cuba in summer 2019 to develop a student leadership model for their youth groups.

• In March 2019, Next Generation Engagement launched Next Wave, an online resource for youth pastors, leaders, and volunteers to hear about upcoming opportunities, to resource one another, and to stay connected to other happenings within the denomination.
Five-Year Goals (June 2018 to June 2023)

- Over the next 5 years, Next Generation Engagement will work to establish a joint denominational leadership team with the Christian Reformed Church in North America to create a regional, classis, and church-wide advocacy campaign around intergenerational ministry for the purpose of turning over leadership to future generations.
- Next Generation Engagement will establish a binational network of at least 1,000 leaders under 35 who are invested and championing the vitality of the RCA through generous support by giving financially, starting new churches, and fostering vocational ministry.
- Next Generation Engagement will raise up leaders who are diverse, thriving, and competent. This work will be accomplished through a network of collaboration between youth group development, camp ministry, college, and seminary education.
- Next Generation Engagement will mobilize youth pastors, leaders, volunteers, and those who work with children through an online learning platform. This platform will offer new discipleship strategies, leadership development guides, and other necessary resources by demand.
RETIRE MINISTERS OF WORD AND SACRAMENT
During 2018, 49 ministers of Word and sacrament retired from active service. Those who retired are being recognized by General Synod through its endorsement of appreciation for their years of faithful and dedicated ministry in the church.

L 19-1
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.

David Alexander
Holland, Michigan

Roberta Arden
New York, New York

Leroy Ausema
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Donald Baker
Kissimmee, Florida

Edward Baker
Hemet, California

Steven Bakker
Waldo, Wisconsin

Douglas Banks
Columbia, Maryland

George Beukema
Chicago, Illinois

Charles Blom
Taylorsville, California

Thomas Boogaart
Holland, Michigan

DeWayne Breen
Urbandale, Iowa
David Brower  
Amherst, New Hampshire

Michael Brown  
Winston-Salem, North Carolina

Stanley Craig  
Schenectady, New York

Dwayne Decker  
Jacksonville, Florida

Thomas Dekker  
Hamilton, Michigan

Philip Doeschot  
St. Louis, Missouri

Carl Gearhart  
Pipestone, Minnesota

James Goldschmeding  
Otsego, Michigan

Lynn Hanousek  
Astoria, New York

Daniel Herrick  
Chatham, New York

William Hill-Alto  
Roswell, Georgia

Klaire Jameson  
Yorktown, Virginia

Thomas Katsma  
Boise, Idaho

John Koedyker  
Grand Haven, Michigan

Larry LePoire  
Hamilton, Michigan

Jonathan Mays  
Charlevoix, Michigan

Gloria McCanna  
Poughkeepsie, New York

Paul Bongwoo Nam  
Ridgefield, New Jersey
Mark Poppen
Holland, Michigan

David Powers
Waverly, Iowa

Brian Randazzo
Rock Tavern, New York

Harlan Ratmeyer
Slingerlands, New York

Clyde Rensink
St. Peters, Missouri

Paul Ruter
New Paltz, New York

Douglas Scholten
La Palma, California

Sandra Sheppard
Wanaque, New Jersey

Patricia Singletary
Springfield Gardens, New York

Earl Slotman
Hudsonville, Michigan

E. Jay Sowers Jr.
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Kenneth Tenckinck
Warwick, New York

Mark Tjekema
Homer, Georgia

Ciela Tonge
Dayton, Ohio

Michael Van Buren
West Olive, Michigan

James VanderMeiden
Jenison, Michigan

Donald Van Slyke
Hudsonville, Michigan

Robert Van Voorst
Holland, Michigan
GENERAL SYNOD/JUNE 2019

Brian Vriesman
Twin Falls, Idaho

Arthur Wiers Jr.
Mishawaka, Indiana
(ADOPTED)

NECROLOGY

Harold Cupery
January 19, 2018  87
Paul A. Benes
January 30, 2018  80
Harvey Thomas Hoekstra
February 10, 2018  97
Arnold Slausen Kress
March 19, 2018  83
Frank Boerema
March 25, 2018  70
William Kroon
March 27, 2018  94
Robert Arthur Otto
April 3, 2018  87
Harris John Verkaik
April 5, 2018  84
R. James Bos
April 22, 2018  92
Frank Vernon Love
April 27, 2018  84
Edwin George Mulder
May 1, 2018  89
Andrew John Topp
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Ronald George Korver
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Adrian Clarence Gray
May 16, 2018  93
Harold Reginald Oppermann
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Raymond Ernest Weiss
June 23, 2018  90
Thomas Arthur Kendall
July 13, 2018  94
LaVerne Sikkema
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Alan J. Schreuder
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John Edward De Jong
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Evert H. Fikse
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David Murel Hensley
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Donald Boss
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Bob J. Myers
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Sonny Lai
September 10, 2018  84
Grover Jerome Davis
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Howard “Howie” Gordon Vande Guchte
September 16, 2018  86
Daniel Lawrence Ogden
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Charles Edward Doornbos
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Robert A. Nykamp
October 13, 2018  85
Ira John Hesselink Jr.
October 28, 2018  90
Solomon J. Tivade
October 31, 2018  84
Cornelius A. Van Heest
November 23, 2018  86
Sandra J. Elfring
December 2, 2018  77
Samuel Noordhoff
December 3, 2018  91
Mark Henry Vander Meer
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Harold Cupery

Howard Cupery was born on July 8, 1930, in Randolph, Wisconsin. He studied at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1952. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1955.

Mr. Cupery was licensed by the Classis of Wisconsin in 1955 and ordained by the Classis
of Pella the same year. He pastored the following congregations: First, Eddyville, Iowa, from 1955 to 1957; East Side Community, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, from 1958 to 1964; and Bethel, Kalamazoo, Michigan, from 1964 to 1992. He also served as the contract pastor at the latter from 1993 to 1999.

Mr. Cupery died on January 19, 2018, in Kalamazoo, Michigan. He was 87 years old.

Paul A. Benes
Paul A. Benes was born on April 15, 1937, in Grand Rapids, Michigan. 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. Benes was licensed by the Classis of South Grand Rapids in 1952 and ordained by the Classis of Passaic in 1962. He pastored the following congregations: Wanaque, New Jersey, from 1962 to 1968; Lisha’s Kill, Schenectady, New York, from 1968 to 1978; and First, Kingston, New York, from 1978 to 1998.

Mr. Benes died on January 30, 2018, in High Falls, New York. He was 80 years old.

Harvey Thomas Hoekstra
Harvey Thomas Hoekstra was born on November 20, 1920, in Maple Lake, Minnesota. He studied at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1944. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1947. He also studied at Peabody & Scarritt College in 1948, the summer institute of linguistics at the University of Oklahoma in 1984, Princeton Seminary in 1951, Hartford Theological Seminary in 1958, and Fuller Theological Seminary from 1974 to 1977.

Mr. Hoekstra was licensed and ordained by the Classis of West Sioux in 1948. His first parish experience was as the student pastor in a chapel during his seminary years. Following graduation and some additional study, he was sent by the RCA to serve in Africa, in the Sudan from 1948 to 1962, and then in Ethiopia from 1963 to 1977. He returned to the United States and served as a missionary for Portable Recording Ministries in Holland, Michigan, from 1977 to 1989 and then became the founder and president of Audio Scriptures International in Rancho Bernardo, California, in 1989. Mr. Hoekstra also served as the president of General Synod from 1978 to 1979.

Mr. Hoekstra died on February 10, 2018, in Escondido, California. He was ninety-seven years old.

Arnold Slausen Kress
Arnold Slausen Kress was born in Albany, New York, in 1934. His theological education was received at Westminster Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1958. He participated in a special program for ministerial candidacy at Calvin Theological Seminary in 1978.

Mr. Kress was ordained in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in 1959, serving congregations there and in the Christian Reformed Church. He also served as a missionary in Japan from 1966 to 1975 and 1978 to 1992. He served as stated supply at Hope, Clifton, New Jersey, from 1974 to 1978, and then returned to the mission field for the CRC. He was received by the Classis of Schenectady and pastored the Reformed Church in Buskirk, New York, from 1994 to 1996 as a contract minister.
Mr. Kress died on March 19, 2018, in Media, Pennsylvania. He was 83 years old.

Frank Boerema

Frank Boerema was born on March 3, 1948, in Sheldon, Iowa. He studied at Northwestern College, from which he graduated in 1970. His theological education was received at Dubuque Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1972.

Mr. Boerema was licensed and ordained by the Classis of East Sioux in 1973. He began his ministry as the stated supply for First, Litchville, North Dakota, and North Marion, Marion, North Dakota, in 1972, and then he pastored the following congregations: North Marion, Marion, North Dakota, from 1973 to 1976; First, Slayton, Minnesota, from 1976 to 1981; Faith, Brookings, South Dakota, from 1981 to 1988; First, Wilmar, Minnesota, from 1988 to 1994; and Dell Rapids, South Dakota, from 1994 to 2013.

Mr. Boerema died on March 25, 2018, in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. He was 70 years old.

William Kroon

William Kroon was born on June 25, 1923, in Sioux Center, Iowa. He began his undergraduate studies at Northwestern Junior College and completed them at Central College, from which he graduated in 1945. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1949.

Mr. Kroon was licensed by the Classis of West Sioux in 1949 and ordained by the Classis of Grand Rapids the same year. He pastored the following congregations: Casnovia, Michigan, from 1949 to 1951; Bethel, Lester, Iowa, from 1951 to 1956; Ramsey, Titonka, Iowa, from 1956 to 1961; First, Aplington, Iowa, from 1961 to 1969; First, Edgerton, Minnesota, from 1969 to 1978; and Immanuel, Belmond, Iowa, from 1978 to 1988.

Mr. Kroon died on March 27, 2018, in Mason City, Iowa. He was 94 years old.

Robert Arthur Otto

Robert Arthur Otto was born on May 20, 1930, in Chicago, Illinois. He began his undergraduate studies at the University of Denver and completed them at Wheaton College, from which he graduated in 1953. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1956.

Mr. Otto was licensed by the Classis of Chicago in 1956 and ordained by the Classis of Kalamazoo the same year. He pastored the following congregations: Hopkins, Michigan, from 1956 to 1960; Westwood Heights, Omaha, Nebraska, from 1960 to 1966; Ada, Michigan, from 1966 to 1968; Christ Community, Phoenix, Arizona, from 1968 to 1972; Miraloma, San Francisco, California, from 1972 to 1976; Bethany, Lynwood, Illinois, from 1976 to 1986; and Alto, Wisconsin, from 1986 to 1995.

Mr. Otto died on April 3, 2018, in Fort Wayne, Indiana. He was 87 years old.

Harris John Verkaik

Harris John Verkaik was born on October 10, 1933, in South Holland, Illinois. He studied at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1955. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1958. He also earned a
D.Min. from Fuller Theological Seminary in 1983.

Mr. Verkaik was licensed by the Classis of California in 1958 and ordained by the Classis of North Grand Rapids the same year. He pastored the following congregations: Oakview, Grand Rapids, Michigan, from 1958 to 1961; Mount Greenwood, Chicago, Illinois, from 1961 to 1967; First, Sheldon, Iowa, from 1967 to 1974; Zion, Grandville, Michigan, from 1974 to 1987; Calvary, South Holland, Illinois, from 1987 to 1990; and Fellowship, Hudsonville, Michigan, from 1990 to 1997.

Mr. Verkaik died on April 5, 2018, in Hudsonville, Michigan. He was 84 years old.

R. James Bos

R. James Bos was born on April 26, 1925, in Muskegon, Michigan. He began his undergraduate studies at Dartmouth College and completed them at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1946. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1949.

Mr. Bos was licensed by the Classis of Muskegon in 1949 and ordained by the Classis of Kalamazoo the same year. He pastored the following congregations: Three Oaks, Michigan, from 1949 to 1956; Modesto, California, from 1956 to 1959; First, Hoppers, Iowa, from 1959 to 1963; Lucas, Michigan, from 1963 to 1974; Ebenezer, Morrison, Illinois, from 1974 to 1979; and Three Oaks, Michigan, from 1979 to 1987. In his retirement, he served at Unity, Muskegon, Michigan, and Words of Hope, Fruitport, Michigan.

Mr. Bos died on April 22, 2018, in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He was 92 years old.

Frank Vernon Love

Frank Vernon Love (Sau Su) was born on December 14, 1933, in Arkansas City, Kansas, a member of the Omaha tribe of Macy, Nebraska. He began his studies at Cook Christian Training School and completed them at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1961. He earned an M.A. at Western Theological Seminary in 1965.

Mr. Love was licensed and ordained by the Classis of California in 1965. He began his ministry as an assistant pastor at Mescalero, New Mexico and then served in the following positions: pastor, Mescalero, New Mexico, from 1968 to 1969, and Macy, Nebraska, from 1969 to 1971; executive director, Indian Center, Omaha, Nebraska, from 1971 to 1972, and American Indian Ministry, 1972; director, Omaha Tribal Agency, from 1972 to 1973, and Nebraska Indian Economic Development Foundation, 1974; chaplain, Father Flanigan’s Boys Town, from 1974 to 1975; director, Indian Center of Topeka, Kansas, from 1978 to 1979; Heart of American Indian Center, Alcoholism Program; chaplain, Navajo United Methodist Mission School, from 1981 to 1984; representative, National Indian Youth Council, 1985; counselor, Shiprock Reservation Dormitory, from 1987 to 1991; and president, Motivational Service.

Mr. Love died on April 27, 2018 in Cheney, Washington. He was 84 years old.

Edwin George Mulder

Edwin George Mulder was born on March 25, 1929, in Raymond, Minnesota. He studied at Central College, from which he graduated in 1951. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1954. Mr. Mulder also received a D.Div. from Central College in 1979.
Mr. Mulder was licensed by the Classis of Pella in 1954 and ordained by the Classis of Bergen the same year. He pastored the following congregations: English Neighborhood, Ridgefield, New Jersey, from 1954 to 1957; Christ Memorial, Holland, Michigan, from 1957 to 1963; Marble Collegiate, New York City, New York, from 1968 to 1970; Second, Hackensack, New Jersey, from 1970 to 1979; and Christ Memorial, Holland, Michigan, from 1979 to 1983. He also served the RCA as minister of evangelism for the Board of North American Missions from 1964 to 1968, and as general secretary from 1983 to 1994. In his retirement, he served as an associate pastor at Marble Collegiate, New York City, New York, and as interim president at New Brunswick Theological Seminary. He was the president of the General Synod from 1979 to 1980.

Mr. Mulder died on May 1, 2018, in Holland, Michigan. He was 89 years old.

Andrew John Topp

Andrew John Topp was born in 1959. He studied at Rutgers University, from which he graduated in 1981. His theological education was received at New Brunswick Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1984.

Mr. Topp was ordained by the Classis of Paramus in 1984. He began his ministry as associate pastor at Old Paramus, Ridgewood, New Jersey, from 1984 to 1988, and then served as the minister of Christian education at Ponds, Oakland, New Jersey, from 1989 to 1993. He was youth pastor at West Side Presbyterian, Ridgewood, New Jersey, from 1994 to 1995, and then served as the contract pastor at First, Boonton, New Jersey, from 1996 until his death. He also ran a nonprofit, International Humanitarian Aid Foundation Inc., which he founded in 2007, and did extensive missionary and aid work in Haiti.

Mr. Topp, of North Haledon, New Jersey, died on May 2, 2018. He was 58 years old.

Ronald George Korver

Ronald George Korver was born on April 17, 1926, in Orange City, Iowa. He began his studies at Northwestern Junior College and completed them at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1948. He also earned an M.A. from New York University in 1960 and studied at Dubuque Theological Seminary from 1968 to 1969.

Mr. Korver served the RCA as a missionary in Japan from 1948 to 1992.

Mr. Korver died on May 8, 2018, in Green Bay, Wisconsin. He was 92 years old.

Adrian Clarence Gray

Adrian Clarence Gray was born on June 5, 1924, in Fort Plain, New York. He studied at Purdue University from 1942 to 1943 and received his B.M. from St. Louis Institute of Music in 1950. He undertook additional study at Rutgers University from 1955 to 1956. His theological education was received at New Brunswick Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1960.

Mr. Gray died on May 16, 2018. He was 93 years old.

Harold Reginald Oppermann

Harold Reginald Oppermann was born on March 20, 1930, in Chicago, Illinois. 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 1957.

Mr. Oppermann was licensed by the Classis of Muskegon in 1957 and ordained by the Classis of Cascades the same year. He pastored the following congregations: Monarch, Alberta, Canada, from 1957 to 1962; Nooksack, Washington, from 1962 to 1969; and First, Meservey, Iowa, from 1969 to 1976.

Mr. Oppermann died on June 22, 2018, in Mason City, Iowa. He was 88 years old.

Raymond Ernest Weiss

Raymond Ernest Weiss was born on January 7, 1928, in Santa Monica, California. He began his studies at George Pepperdine College and completed them at Central College, from which he graduated in 1950. His theological education began at Fuller Theological Seminary and was completed at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1954. He also earned an M.A. from the University of Michigan in 1957 and a Ph.D. from Fuller Theological Seminary in 1992.

Mr. Weiss was licensed and ordained by the Classis of California in 1954. He began his ministry as the field secretary for Christian Endeavor in Michigan from 1954 to 1956 and then served the RCA as a short-term missionary in Iraq from 1957 to 1959. He pastored University Reformed Church in Ann Arbor, Michigan, from 1959 to 1960, and then returned to the mission field to serve in Beirut, Lebanon, from 1960 to 1963, and at the National Evangelical Church in Bahrain from 1963 to 1970. He returned to the U.S. and served as a professor at Northwestern College, Orange City, Iowa, from 1970 to 1998, and then as vice president for academic affairs from 1999 to 2000.

Mr. Weiss died on June 23, 2018, in Orange City, Iowa. He was 90 years old.

Thomas Arthur Kendall

Thomas Arthur Kendall was born on August 13, 1923, in Syracuse, New York. He studied at Rutgers University, from which he graduated in 1963. His theological education was received at New Brunswick Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1966.

Mr. Kendall was licensed by the Classis of Montgomery in 1966 and ordained by the Classis of Albany the same year. He pastored the following congregations: New Salem, New York, and Unionville, New York, from 1966 to 1969; Claverack, New York, from 1969 to 1976; First, Athens, New York, from 1979 to 1983; Second, Rotterdam, New York, from 1983 to 1991; and Unionville, Delmar, New York, from 1991 to 2018. He served as a chaplain at the Rescue Mission (un-denominational) in Syracuse, New York, from 1976 to 1979, and was vice president of the Particular Synod of Albany in 1980 and president in 1981.

Mr. Kendall died on July 13, 2018, in Delmar, New York. He was 94 years old.
LaVerne Sikkema

LaVerne Sikkema was born on April 7, 1927, in Morrison, Illinois. He studied at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1951. He also received a B.S. from Cornell University in 1952.

Mr. Sikkema served the RCA as a missionary in Sudan and Ethiopia from 1952 to 1984 and in Kenya from 1984 to 1992.

Mr. Sikkema died on July 13, 2018, in Holland, Michigan. He was 91 years old.

Alan J. Schreuder

Alan J. Schreuder was born on September 13, 1948, in Kalamazoo, Michigan. He studied at Northern Michigan University, from which he graduated in 1971. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1978.

Mr. Schreuder was licensed and ordained by the Classis of Kalamazoo in 1978. He served as a missionary intern in Ethiopia from 1975 to 1977, during his student years at Western. He began his ministry as pastor of the Otley, Iowa, church from 1978 to 1980. He then served on the mission field in Chiapas, Mexico, from 1980 to 2015.

Mr. Schreuder died on July 31, 2018, in Pella, Iowa. He was 69 years old.

John Edward De Jong

John Edward De Jong was born on October 22, 1931, in Springfield, South Dakota. He studied at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1955. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1958.

Mr. De Jong was licensed by the Classis of California in 1958 and ordained by the Classis of West Central the same year. He pastored the following congregations: Prairie View, Kansas, from 1958 to 1962; Second, Lennox, South Dakota, from 1962 to 1966; Corona, California, from 1966 to 1972; Mayfair Community, Lakewood, California, from 1972 to 1982; Park Hills, Los Angeles, California, from 1980 to 1982; and Bethel, Bellflower, California, from 1982 to 2000.

Mr. De Jong died on August 25, 2018, in Bellflower, California. He was 86 years old.

Evert H. Fikse

Evert H. Fikse was born on December 21, 1937, in Hudsonville, Michigan. He studied at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1960. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1963.

Mr. Fikse was licensed by the Classis of Zeeland in 1963 and ordained by the Classis of Kalamazoo the same year. He pastored the following congregations: First, Allegan, Michigan, from 1963 to 1967; Ivanhoe, Chicago, Illinois, from 1967 to 1974; and Covenant, Downers Grove, Illinois, from 1974 to 1988. He also served as the minister for mission for the Regional Synod of Mid-America from 1988 to 1999.

Mr. Fikse died on August 28, 2018, in Jenison, Michigan. He was 80 years old.
David Murel Hensley

David Murel Hensley was born on March 10, 1944, in North Bend, Nebraska. He studied at Nebraska Wesleyan University and the University of Nebraska and graduated from Peru State College in 1966. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1971.

Mr. Hensley was licensed and ordained by the Classis of West Central in 1971. He pastored the following congregations: Prairie View, Kansas, from 1971 to 1974; Faith, Brookings, South Dakota, from 1975 to 1981; Community, Clinton, Iowa, from 1981 to 1986; First, Lynden, Washington, from 1986 to 1991; Otley, Iowa, from 1991 to 2001; and Chandler, Minnesota, from 2001 to 2003.

Mr. Hensley died on September 1, 2018, in Chandler, Minnesota. He was 74 years old.

Donald Boss

Donald Boss was born on August 6, 1926, in Charlevoix, Michigan. He 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. Boss was licensed and ordained by the Classis of Muskegon in 1953. He pastored the following congregations: Rehoboth, Lucas, Michigan, from 1953 to 1956; Immanuel, Lansing, Michigan, from 1956 to 1960; Bethany, Canton, South Dakota, from 1960 to 1964; Trinity, Fulton, Illinois, from 1964 to 1969; First, South Holland, Illinois, from 1969 to 1971; First, Waupun, Wisconsin, from 1971 to 1980; and American, De Motte, Indiana, from 1980 to 1987. He served as interim at First, Randolph, Wisconsin, from 1988 to 1989.

Mr. Boss died on September 7, 2018, in Waupun, Wisconsin. He was 92 years old.

Bob J. Myers

Bob J. Myers was born on January 27, 1940, in Brawley, California. He started his undergraduate studies at Imperial Valley College in 1960 and completed them at California State College, San Diego, from which he graduated in 1963. His theological education was received at Fuller Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1988. He also received an M.A. from California State University in Sacramento in 1969.


Mr. Myers died on September 7, 2018. He was 78 years old.

Sonny Lai

Sonny Lai was born on February 11, 1934.

Mr. Lai completed his theological education at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia. He completed additional study in the RCA and was installed as the pastor for Taiwanese Community Church in Lombard, Illinois, from 2001 until his retirement in 2009.
Mr. Lai died on September 10, 2018, in Park Ridge, Illinois. He was 84 years old.

**Grover Jerome Davis**

Grover Jerome Davis was born on February 17, 1933, in Pine Knot, Kentucky. He studied at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1956. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1961. He received an S.T.M. from McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago, Illinois, in 1972, and a D.Min. from McCormick in 1988.

Mr. Davis was licensed by the Classis of Zeeland in 1961 and ordained by the Classis of Illinois the same year. He pastored the Raritan, Illinois, church from 1961 to 1966 and Faith Community Church, Berwyn, Illinois, from 1966 to 1975. In 1976, he founded the Christian Counseling Center in Chicago, Illinois, and remained there from 1976 to 1990 and then at the center in Palos Heights, Illinois, from 1990 until retirement.

Mr. Davis died on September 14, 2018, in Orland Park, Illinois. He was 85 years old.

**Howard “Howie” Gordon Vande Guchte**

Howard “Howie” Gordon Vande Guchte was born on May 15, 1932, in Sheboygan, Wisconsin. He studied at Wheaton College, from which he graduated in 1955. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1958.

Mr. Vande Guchte was licensed by the Classis of Wisconsin in 1958 and ordained by the Classis of Dakota the same year. He pastored Sandham Memorial Church in Monroe, South Dakota, from 1958 to 1961, and Grace Reformed Church in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, from 1961 to 1998.

Mr. Vande Guchte died on September 16, 2018, in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. He was 86 years old.

**Daniel Lawrence Ogden**

Daniel Lawrence Ogden was born on January 23, 1942, in Dumont, New Jersey. He studied at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1964. His theological education was received at New Brunswick Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1967. He also earned an S.T.M. in 1973 and a D.Min. in 1976, both from New York Theological Seminary.

Mr. Ogden was licensed by the Classis of Bergen in 1967 and ordained by the Classis of Mid-Hudson the same year. He pastored the following congregations: Port Ewen, New York, from 1967 to 1973; Massapequa, New York, from 1973 to 1980; Church-on-the-Green, Hackensack, New Jersey, from 1980 to 1981; Allwood Community, Clifton, New Jersey, from 1981 to 1988; Margate Community UCC, Margate, New Jersey, from 1989 to 1993; United UCC, Toms River, New Jersey, from 1994 to 1996; United, Plainfield, New Jersey, from 1997 to 1998; United, Somerville, New Jersey, in 1998; and Oradell, New Jersey, from 2001 to 2009.

Mr. Ogden died on September 17, 2018, in Phoenixville, Pennsylvania. He was 76 years old.
Charles Edward Doornbos

Charles Edward Doornbos was born on April 28, 1937, in Kalamazoo, Michigan. He began his undergraduate studies at Hope College and graduated from Western Michigan University in 1959. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1964.

Mr. Doornbos was licensed by the Classis of Holland in 1964 and ordained by the Classis of North Central the same year. He pastored the following congregations: First, Monroe, South Dakota, from 1964 to 1967; Community, Newton, Iowa, from 1967 to 1971; Olivet, Grandville, Michigan, from 1971 to 1978; Peace, Middleville, Michigan, from 1979 to 1983; Hudson, Florida, from 1983 to 1989; Ross, Gary, Indiana, from 1989 to 1996; and Coopersville, Michigan, from 1996 to 2000.

Mr. Doornbos died on September 29, 2018, in Douglas, Michigan. He was 81 years old.

Robert A. Nykamp

Robert A. Nykamp was born on January 15, 1933, in Hamilton, Michigan. He studied at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1955. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1958. He also earned an M.S. from the University of Pennsylvania in 1969.

Mr. Nykamp was licensed by the Classis of Holland in 1958 and ordained by the Classis of Illiana the same year. He pastored the following congregations: Ross, Gary, Indiana, from 1958 to 1963; Hope, Chicago, Illinois, from 1963 to 1964; and Bayshore Gardens, Bradenton, Florida, from 1977 to 1981. He also served as a professor at Western Theological Seminary from 1965 to 1977 and as chaplain at Pine Rest Christian Hospital in Grand Rapids, Michigan, from 1981 to 1996. Mr. Nykamp served as the vice president of the General Synod from 1990 to 1991.

Mr. Nykamp died on October 13, 2018, in Holland, Michigan. He was 85 years old.

Ira John Hesselink Jr.

Ira John Hesselink Jr. was born on March 21, 1928, in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He studied at Central College, from which he graduated in 1950. His theological education began at New Brunswick Theological Seminary and was completed at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1953. He earned his D.Theol. from the University of Basel, Switzerland, in 1961, and also studied at the University of Chicago Divinity School, the Free University of Amsterdam, and Oxford University.

Mr. Hesselink was licensed and ordained by the Classis of West Central in 1953. He entered the mission field and served in Japan from 1953 to 1973, during which time he taught at Tokyo Union Theological Seminary from 1961 to 1973 and Meiji Gakuin University from 1962 to 1966; he was also visiting professor at Western Theological Seminary from 1966 to 1967. He returned to the U.S. to serve as the president of Western Theological Seminary from 1973 to 1985. He returned to Japan to teach for a year as a visiting professor at Tokyo Union Seminary and then served as the A.C. Van Raalte Professor of Systematic Theology at Western from 1986 to 1992. Mr. Hesselink served as the president of General Synod from 1995 to 1996.

Mr. Hesselink died on October 28, 2018, in Holland, Michigan. He was 90 years old.
Solomon J. Tivade

Solomon J. Tivade was born on August 20, 1934, in Kothali, India. He studied at Ahmednager Christian College and then at the University of Poona and Karnatak University where he received a bachelor’s degree in education. His theological education started at Princeton Theological Seminary, where he received an M.C.E., and then an M.Div. and S.T.M. from Drew University. Mr. Tivade also received a Th.D. from Temple Baptist College.

Before coming to the United States, Mr. Tivade taught social studies and English in Belgaum, India, for 12 years and created a literary magazine designed to foster dialogue between Christian and Hindu intellectuals. Thereafter, he held the position of director of Christian education at a Christian high school for ten years. After settling in the United States, he began working at Market Street Mission in 1974 as a counselor and from 1978 until the early 1990s was chaplain and director of counseling. In 1991, Mr. Tivade founded National Association of Asian Indian Christians in the USA, a nonprofit organization.

Mr. Tivade was received by the Classis of Greater Palisades from the Church of North India in 1997. He pastored United Reformed Church in Jersey City, New Jersey, from 1997 to 2004.

Mr. Tivade died on October 31, 2018, in Chatham, New Jersey. He was 84 years old.

Cornelius A. Van Heest

Cornelius A. Van Heest was born on September 22, 1931, in Catskill, New York. He studied at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1952. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1955. He also earned an M.C.E. from Western in 1972.

Mr. Van Heest was licensed by the Classis of Lake Erie in 1955 and ordained by the Classis of Montgomery the same year. He pastored the following congregations: Randall Community, Fultonville, New York, and Fultonville, New York, from 1955 to 1958; Lisha’s Kill, Schenectady, New York, from 1958 to 1968; Faith, Portage, Michigan, from 1968 to 1971; Central Park, Holland, Michigan, from 1971 to 1977; Hope, Sheboygan, Wisconsin, from 1977 to 1978; and Aberdeen, Grand Rapids, Michigan, from 1982 to 1990. He served as interim pastor at: Rockford, Michigan, from 1990 to 1991; Peapack, Gladstone, New Jersey, from 1991 to 1992; Forest Grove, Hudsonville, from 1992 to 1994; and Southbridge, Portage, Michigan, from 1994 to 1995. He also served in specialized interim ministry and was a turn-around church consultant for Central Park, Holland, Michigan, from 1995 to 1997. In his retirement, he served at Fellowship, Muskegon, Michigan; Remembrance, Grand Rapids, Michigan; and Central Park, Holland, Michigan.

Mr. Van Heest died on November 23, 2018, in Holland, Michigan. He was 86 years old.

Sandra J. Elfring

Sandra J. Elfring was born on January 15, 1941, in Holland, Michigan. She studied at Western Michigan University, from which she graduated in 1966. Her theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which she graduated in 1980. She also earned an M.A. from Western Michigan University in 1971 and her C.P.E. at Bronson Methodist Hospital in 1979.

Ms. Elfring was licensed and ordained by the Classis of Southwest Michigan in 1980.
She served as a chaplain at Bronson Methodist Hospital in Kalamazoo, Michigan, from 1980 to 1995 and 1997 to 1998. She served as the pastor for adult ministries at the United Methodist church in Kalamazoo, Michigan, from 1995 to 1997. She continued her ministry in United Methodist congregations.

Ms. Elfring died on December 2, 2018, in Kalamazoo, Michigan. She was 77 years old.

Samuel Noordhoff

Samuel Noordhoff was born on June 29, 1927, in Orange City, Iowa. He began his undergraduate studies at Northwestern Junior College and completed them at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1947. He received his M.D. from the University in Iowa in 1954 with certification in general surgery. He received his certification in plastic surgery in 1968.

Mr. Noordhoff served the RCA on the mission field in Taiwan from 1959 until his retirement from RCA mission work in 1992. He continued to work at Chang Gung Memorial Hospital (Taipei, Taiwan) until 1999, when he returned to the United States. Mr. Noordhoff was the founder of the Noordhoff Craniofacial Foundation in 1989. Among the awards he received were lifetime achievement awards from the American Society of Plastic Surgeons in 1994 and from the British Association of Plastic Reconstructive and Aesthetic Surgeons in 2012.

Mr. Noordhoff died on December 3, 2018, in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He was 91 years old.

Mark Henry Vander Meer

Mark Henry Vander Meer was born on May 25, 1953, in Kalamazoo, Michigan. He began his undergraduate studies at Hope College and completed them at Northwestern College, from which he graduated in 1977. His theological education was received at New Brunswick Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1980.

Mr. Vander Meer was licensed and ordained by the Classis of Bergen in 1980. He pastored the following congregations: Ocean, Manahawkin, New Jersey, from 1980 to 1990, and Monocacy Valley, Frederick, Maryland, from 1990 to 2015.

Mr. Vander Meer died on December 22, 2018, in Mount Airy, Maryland. He was 65 years old.