

CTS Mission Statement

As a learning community in the Reformed Christian tradition that forms church leaders who cultivate communities of disciples of Jesus Christ, Calvin Theological Seminary exists to serve the Christian Reformed Church in North America and wider constituencies by preparing individuals for biblically faithful and contextually effective ministry of the Word and by offering Reformed theological scholarship and counsel.

Dear Members of Classis "Region 4" for Calvin Theological Seminary,

As your representatives serving on the Board of Trustees, we are delighted to provide you with the Fall 2024 update from Calvin Theological Seminary.

Please take a few moments to review this encouraging report. Among the highlights, you will note in a paragraph related to enrolment, there is an increase in the number of Canadian students choosing to pursue seminary training this fall.

As the seminary begins a new academic year, we ask that you remember the Students, Faculty and Staff in prayer. Thank you for your faithful support for the seminary. We remain very grateful for it!

Sincerely,

*Pastor Mark Verbruggen
Brian Verheul*

Fall 2024 Ministry Highlights

Since 1876, Calvin Theological Seminary (CTS) has worked on your behalf to faithfully prepare leaders who can nurture disciples and serve the church. For these nearly 150 years we have been a vital part of the learning community within the Reformed Christian tradition. As our context has changed around us, we've responded to the needs of our church, implementing programs that form leaders in various fields of ministry. We continue to refine and explore with you what it means to serve the church, looking forward to our anniversary and beyond. Here are a few highlights that are important building blocks for our ministry partnership with the church.

- **The Fall of 2024 brought us 76 entering students, totaling over 300 students in all programs. This includes 14 new international students who come from Brazil, China,**

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India, Indonesia, Kenya, Malaysia, and South Korea. Under the leadership of Dr. Gabriela Tijerina-Pike this includes 12 new Latino Ministry students enrolled in the Master of Arts in Leadership Formation for a total of 48 enrolled in that program. Additionally through the efforts of our Canadian Church Relations Liaison Shawn Brix, in collaboration with the Admissions Office, CTS has seen a record number of Canadian students enroll with the last six months alone recording an increase of 17 new Canadian students. One statistic we are watching is a higher than average deferment of new student enrollments.

- Dr. Gabriela Tijerina-Pike is our Director of Latino Ministries (DLM). Because of her education and training, she also serves as an Associate Professor of New Testament. **The Latino Ministry Program 2.0 is an online Spanish-language certificate program that can lead to a Master of Arts in Leadership Formation program while embodying values of hospitality, excellence and accessibility.** If you have a person or church that wants to know more, please contact Dr. Tijerina-Pike at gabriela@calvinseminary.edu.
- **In May, the Board approved the following Board Officer and Executive Committee positions** – Mr. Dave Morren (Board Chair), Rev. Scott Greenway (Board Vice Chair), Ms. Susan Keesen (Board Secretary), Rev. Mark Verbruggen (Chair of Academic Affairs Committee), Mr. Hessel Kielstra (Chair of Development and Finance), and Rev. Art Van Wolde (Chair of Student Affairs Committee).
- Calvin Theological Seminary has been blessed by a number of new people who have felt a call to serve our community. **Please pray for these new persons and please pray for the persons of God’s choosing to fill faculty openings in the areas of Systematic Theology and an upcoming posting in Old Testament.** You can check into all position postings by going to <http://calvinseminary.edu/employment> If you have persons you wish to nominate or recommend, please contact Ms. Karen DeYoung who serves as the CTS Director of Human Resources. She can be reached at kdyoung@calvinseminary.edu.
- **Mr. Phillip Palacios is our first ever full-time Director of Communications** as we recognize that we need to tell the CTS story in more and better ways. Phillip comes to CTS with a great deal of communications/marketing experience both in the non-profit and for-profit sectors. Trained in film and media at Compass College (now a part of Calvin University),

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Phillip comes with many years of experience in video and film production, leading integrated communication campaigns on multiple media platforms, and leading creative strategy and production for organizations like Our Daily Bread and IDEOLOGY Productions.

- Calvin Theological Seminary has been blessed with faithful registrars for nearly fifty years – first by Mr. John Vander Lugt and then by Ms. Joan Beelen, who has recently retired. We are glad **that Mr. Scott DeYoung is our new Director of Academic Services and Registrar.** Scott earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in English at Cornerstone University, his Masters in English from Grand Valley State University, and has taken courses at Calvin Seminary as well. Scott has served in the field of education for over 20 years, first as an English teacher at Calvin Christian High School and then as the Director of Outdoor Education at Camp Roger. He brings skills and experience in leadership, curriculum development, scheduling, database management and strategic planning.
- **We have added to our Admissions Team to supplement the leadership of Director of Admissions Justin Den Ouden.** We are glad to announce two new staff members that began their ministry on Tuesday, September 3. **Ruan Bessa**, a current PhD student, serves as **the Associate Director of Admissions.** His ministry experience includes being a church planter and youth ministry administrative Coordinator in his home country, Brazil. We also added **Isabelle Mooney** as an **Admissions Counselor.** She is a graduate of Grand Valley State University with a major in Psychology and a minor in Sociology, and has experience as a K-12 tutor, a university peer mentor and also a Team 21 Group Leader in the Godfrey-Lee Public School system. Thank you for encouraging those you know to consider working at Calvin Theological Seminary.
- **Calvin Theological Seminary’s new Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling (MCMHC) was launched last fall (2023).** The professional and theologically grounded degree offers coursework in religious and theological foundations, clinical counseling, and clinical practice. Graduates from the program might consider using their knowledge and gifts serving as a clinical mental health therapist, a clinical mental health counselor, an addiction counselor, a behavior counselor, or in other mental health roles. The program director for this program is Dr. Danjuma Gibson. He provided the following summary of this program - The goal is “to train students who will be competent and skilled in the ethical integration of Christian faith, spirituality, and counseling in a way that promotes healing and

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shalom in the lives of individuals and communities.” If you would like to know more about this program, you can contact Dr. Gibson at dgg085@calvinseminary.edu.

- **For the upcoming academic year, Dr. Yudha Thianto (Professor of the History of Christianity) will continue to serve in the position of Chief Academic Officer.** He will serve in a distributed leadership structure for the Academic Office that seeks to help students make even better connections with professors and their program directors.
- **One of our key projects in progress this year is the building of our new 46 apartment student housing that is designed with our current and future students in mind.** We are seeing more second-career students and students with children enroll at CTS. As a result, we are planning to have 20 three-bedroom, 19, two-bedroom and 7 one-bedroom apartments. We are grateful for fund support of over 50% for the estimated cost completion of this project. The location of this new housing is right next to campus at 3300 Burton Street SE.
- **Finally, the CTS Board of Trustees in May 2024 approved our strategic plan and set our goals to help guide us into the next 150 years of service to the church.** We distill this plan into four major themes:

Compelling Invitation – We focus intentionally on our Reformed heritage and identity not only through scholarship, but also in student formation and societal engagement. We want to share our distinctiveness in bold, create and clear ways that are compellingly invitational and winsome.

Holistic Learning Journeys – We focus on serving students, ensuring the best learning experiences and mentorship by not only equipping staff and faculty appropriately and adequately, but also meeting student expectations for contextual curriculum and multifaceted learning opportunities.

Organizational Excellence – We foster an ethos of organizational excellence where trust, accountability, respect and mutuality around a shared vision are embodied, where individual and collective contributions are valued and celebrated, and where everyone who

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comes into contact with CTS will experience purpose, fulfillment, care and ultimately a communal experience of our unity in Christ.

Cultivating Abundance – With gratitude to God for His providence, we are encouraged by and appreciate a community of generous supporters through whom our student body will continue to grow and expand, and through whom the mission of CTS is realized. We will promote this missional invitation to ensure a solid fiscal base for the ongoing work of Reformed theological education, formation and scholarship.

- Please join us as we look forward to celebrating God’s faithfulness from 1876 to today and anticipate His continued blessing on our community. **We invite your prayers for the Board, faculty, staff and students and thank you for your ministry of prayer, support and encouragement! We are glad that we are C.T.S. – Called To Serve!**