

Calvin Theological Seminary – Winter 2023 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. Calvin Seminary is a vital and hospitable learning community in the Reformed Christian tradition. Our desire is not just to train pastors but also to form church leaders who can cultivate communities of disciples for Jesus Christ.

- Dr. Gabriela Tijerina-Pike has been hired as the new Director of Latino Ministries (DLM). She came to us following an extensive search process which led to the faculty recommending her to the CTS Board of Trustees for the position of Director of Latino Ministries (DLM) and Associate Professor of New Testament. The Executive Committee of the Board authorized her to begin in February, knowing that she still has to sustain the CTS Board interview in May and a Synod of the Christian Reformed Church interview in June for her tenure track teaching appointment. We look forward to her joining CTS!
- Calvin Seminary received a grant from the Grace & Mercy Foundation and from Resonate Global Ministries to begin a Public Reading of Scripture (PRS) series for students, faculty and staff. The Academic Office opened a half-hour in the schedule on Tuesdays at noon. From noon-12:30pm on Tuesdays the Seminary community gathers to listen to readings from Genesis, Matthew, and the Psalms, then enjoy a meal together. This has been well attended (35-50 each time) and well received. These events (and others for students such as Town Halls and Chapels) are live streamed so that distance students and others can participate. The goal of this spiritual practice is to:
 - Build community among students, faculty, and staff,
 - Create space for spiritual formation of students, staff, and faculty,
 - Provide experience with PRS for students who can then implement PRS in congregations, ministries, and non-profit organizations, and
 - Provide experience, training, and coaching for student leaders on the leadership team
- The Center for Excellence in Preaching (CEP), led by Director Scott Hoezee, received two grants from Lilly Endowment Inc. totalling close to \$1 million. The Lilly Endowment Compelling Preaching Initiative grant will provide CEP with resources to explore how to “tune-up tried and true and to build the new skills sets” in preaching and to develop resources for pastors to help them surmount communication challenges that have arisen as a result of the pandemic.
- CTS has set up a new way for M.A. and M.Div. students to fulfill a significant part of their contextual learning requirements. From early on in their program, students are placed in a church or ministry organization where they serve for two years, concurrent with their course work, through internship hours coordinated with churches during the ministry year. The Vocational Formation Office (VFO), led by Geoff Vandermolen, administrative coordinator Chris Wright and administrative assistant Jennifer Manders, continues to develop partnerships to help bridge the classroom and the church. Because internship hours may now occur during concurrent internships throughout the academic year, we have opened a new way of connecting students to churches for summer service. We appreciate the number of churches that have served as “additional” places of formation, including these cross-cultural and international sites: A Christian Ministry in the National Parks (Yellowstone), Mel Trotter Missions, Grand Rapids, MI, Sunrise Homeless Navigation Center, Austin, TX, Mepkin

Abbey Monastic Guest Program, Moncks Corner, SC, The Refuge, Oshawa, ON, Lethbridge Correctional Center, Lethbridge, AB, Resonate Ministries, India, Al Amana Center, Muscat 100, Sultanate of Oman. The VFO also continues to welcome the opportunity to connect our students with churches in need of summer ministry leadership – be that as a result of pastoral vacancy, sabbaticals, or new ministry initiatives.

- CBTE – During the Fall 2023 semester, CTS launched a competency based education (CBTE) program called Empower. The Empower program offers students the opportunity to earn a certificate or Master of Arts in Christian Leadership degree by demonstrating competence in program outcomes. This approach is designed to make ministry training more collaborative, flexible, accessible, and integrated. During our pilot phase, enrollment is initially limited to students participating through contextualized partnerships with Grand Valley State University Campus Ministry (Grand Rapids, MI) and Sunlight Community Church (Port St. Lucie, FL). Students work with a CTS faculty mentor and two partner mentors to complete learning experiences that develop competence - head, hands, and heart - for ministry. Our partners provide contextualized learning experiences, localized mentoring, and regular and substantive student support.
- We are piloting courses in Worship & Preaching (taught in Spanish) that have led to an additional 51 students in the first course (Fall 2022) as well as another 20 students in Competency Based Theological Education (CBTE).
- The Admissions and Alumni team had the opportunity to travel to southern California at the end of January. Their time out there included: connecting with current students, recent alumni and pastors; visiting Azusa Pacific University; hosting an alumni dinner for Classic Greater LA & California South; and attending the ECO Presbyterian Dwell Conference that hosted over 1200 pastors, ministry leaders and lay leaders. Overall it was a successful trip for CTS!

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!

Personal highlight from Trustee, Louise Boutin:

- The Oct 2022 Board meeting was a great opportunity to meet CTS Board members, faculty, staff and students in person as well as tour the Seminary after their recent renovations. The spaces are bright, open and inviting, and the technology permits hybrid classes. The new [competency based program](#), [new concentrations in the Doctor of Ministry program](#), and upcoming [MA in Clinical Mental Health Counseling](#) are very promising, as is the [Canadian Tuition Parity initiative](#). I look forward to participating in the May Board meeting and Commencement ceremony. As a representative for classes Eastern Canada, Quinte and Toronto, I welcome your questions and comments directly at louisecboutin@gmail.com.

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