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Introduction

Neerlandia CRC: Our Church Home

What is it?

This manual is a handbook for the way we do things and why at Neerlandia CRC.

- It provides an orientation to our vision, priorities, and goals.
- It provides an orientation to our organizational structure.
- It gives orientation and direction for officebearers, committee members and volunteers.
- It contains various policies that facilitate the healthy functioning of our church.

Why is it important?

- This ministry manual and its future revisions will help us stay on course as an organization even as new leaders and volunteers take over from those whose terms have ended. It will provide continuity so that tasks and projects that have been started by one council or committee may be continued or completed by the next.
- Having our goals and processes in writing will remind us that those two things are completely integrated. Being a church as part of the church is both a day to day process and a goal that we are working toward.
- A manual such as this is one way to apply the “ounce of prevention” that will help keep our relationships healthy – with God, with our brothers and sisters in this congregation, and with our neighbors in the community. This manual will help us in “establishing a context in which right relationships and fairness can grow, be maintained, and be restored among sinful people – especially those sinners who are attempting to live for Jesus Christ.” Christianity Today, April 28, 2007.

The 2013 Ministry Manual prepared by:

Jeannette Bosma

Updated by Richard DeVries, October 2013
Foundation: The Basics

*September, 2013*

**Purpose & Calling**

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. Love your neighbor as yourself.

**Vision**

*who we are as God in Christ calls us to be*

We are Christians, expressing our faith in the Reformed tradition, growing deeper in our knowledge and experience of God’s gracious steadfast love for us. Obediently and thankfully, we share his love with others.

**Core Values**

*the principles that shape congregational life and practice*

---

### Communion with God

**We Value:**
- Reading and reflecting on the Bible
- Developing our knowledge of the Bible
- Prayer and daily devotions

### Fellowship with One Another

**We value:**
- Our unique God given gifts
- Inclusion and integration of all members
- Unity and fellowship among us
- Development of leadership skills
- Teaching and learning as God’s covenant people

### Loving our Neighbours

**We Value:**
- Outreach as a lifestyle
- Generous stewardship
- Identifying with and working alongside our neighbours
- The promotion of justice
### Neerlandia CRC Ministry Structure

#### Roles

- **Ministries of Congregational Life**
  - **All Members**
    - Worship: Sunday Services
    - Evangelism: Missionary Support, Services at Seniors' Homes
    - Nurture & Education: Bible Study Groups
    - Fellowship: Prayer Chain
    - Congregational Care: Servant Suppers
    - Helping Our Neighbors: Refuge Family Support
  - **Adults**
    - Worship: Music Teams
    - Evangelism: Coffee Break, Welcome Package
    - Nurture & Education: Ladies Fellowship Circle, Ladies Evening Bible Study, Young Adults
    - Fellowship: Senior Birthday Visiting, Service Recordings
    - Congregational Care: Special Care Visiting
    - Helping Our Neighbors: Refuge Family Support
  - **Teens**
    - Worship: Youth Music Teams
    - Evangelism: Sr. High, Teen Club, Catechism, GEMS, Cadets
    - Nurture & Education: Service Trips
    - Fellowship: Catechism, GEMS
    - Congregational Care: Service Trips
    - Helping Our Neighbors: Service Trips
  - **Children**
    - Worship: Sunday School
    - Evangelism: Interactive Centres, Sunday Nursery
    - Nurture & Education: Sunday School Interactive Centres, Sunday Nursery
    - Fellowship: Sunday School Interactive Centres, Sunday Nursery
    - Congregational Care: Sunday School Interactive Centres, Sunday Nursery
    - Helping Our Neighbors: Sunday School Interactive Centres, Sunday Nursery
  - **Committees**
    - Worship Committee
    - Mission Committee
    - Education Committee
    - Youth Committee
    - Refugee Committee

#### Goals

- **Ministries of Pastoral Care and Leadership**
  - **Pastoral Staff**
    - Pastors
    - Youth Director
    - Parish Nurse
  - **General Council Officebearers**
    - Pastoral Council (Elders & Youth Elders)
    - Diaconate (Deacons)
    - Administrative Council
      - Chair, Vice Chair, Clerk, Treasurer, Deacon Chair, Pastoral Chair, Pastors

- **Ministries of Resources and Support**
  - **Support Staff**
    - Janitor
    - Executive Assistant
    - Bookkeeper
  - **Committees**
    - Building Committee
    - Finance Committee
Neerlandia CRC Accountability Structure

General Council

Pastoral Council
- Pastoral Elders
- Pastor
- Youth Elders

Administrative Council
- Chair: Pastor
- Vice Chair: Clerk
- Pastoral Chair: Deacon Chair
- Treasurer

Diaconal Council
- Deacons

Congregational Care
- Family Visiting
- Special Care Visiting
- Crisis Visiting

Worship Committee
- Service Planning
- Music Teams
- Interactive Centres
- Sunday Nursery
- Greeters
- Ushers
- Audio/Visual/Recordings
- Mic Runners
- Banners/Decorating

Mission Committee
- Missionary Support
- Services in Seniors’ Homes
- Welcome Packages
- Visitor Table

Education Committee
- Sunday School
- VBS
- Catechism
- Bible Study Groups

Youth Committee
- Young Adult Ministry
- Sr. High Ministry
- Jr. High Teen Club

Staff
- Pastors
- Parish Nurse
- Youth Director
- Executive Assistant
- Bookkeeper
- Janitor

Refugee Committee

Diaconal Care
- Local Needs
- Community Outreach
- Servant Suppers
- Seniors’ Birthday Visits

Building Committee
- Building & Property Maintenance
- Sunday Coffee Fellowship
- Audio Visual
- Auxiliary Committee

Finance Committee

General Ministries
- GEMS
- Cadets
- Ladies Fellowship Circle
- VBS
- Ladies Evening Bible Study
- Coffee Break
- 50+ Fellowship
- Prayer Chain

Line of Accountability

Direct Supervisor

Area of Responsibility
Pillars of Authority: Our Governing Structure

Church Governance

Revised June 2008
By Pastor Randy Blacketer

Introduction

Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church (NCRC) is a congregation of the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA), which regulates its ecclesiastical organization activities by the articles of the Church Order of the CRCNA, and in accordance with the Ecumenical Creeds and Reformed Confessions.

Governance at NCRC is based on the authority of Jesus Christ, which the Lord of the Church entrusts to those called to the offices of Minister of the Word, Elder and Deacon. The governing council of NCRC is made up of these officebearers who are called and ordained or installed according to the articles of the Church Order.

While the authority for making and carrying out final decisions remains with the council as the governing body of NCRC, various responsibilities are delegated to committees and individuals, and the congregation is also consulted about major issues.

The Christian Reformed Church is Reformed in its doctrine and Presbyterian in its church government (also called polity). We believe that our authority comes from Jesus Christ, who entrusted the keys of the kingdom to his church. In the CRCNA, church authority originates in the council, and is delegated to the higher assemblies of the classis and the synod. Neerlandia CRC is bound by the church order to abide by the decisions of its classis (Classis Alberta North) and the Synod of the CRCNA, unless it is proven that those decisions conflict with the word of God or the Church Order. The classis deals with matters of mutual concern for the Christian Reformed churches in northern Alberta; the Synod deals with matters of mutual concern for the whole denomination.

Leadership of the Church

Our church Council leads our congregation. The council, currently numbering 23 members, is composed of the elders, deacons, and pastor. Youth Elders have the same roles as elders, but their emphasis is on young people who are not actively involved in our present Senior High Small Groups and Young Adults Ministries. Youth elders visit, make contact, and pray for the youth assigned to them. The Consistory of the church consists of the 18 elders and pastor, while the Diaconate consists of the deacons. Their roles are discussed below in the officebearer guide. Elders and deacons are assigned districts with a number of families with who they are to maintain contact and visit throughout the year. Each member or family of the congregation is assigned to a district. Members are encouraged to consult their district elder or deacon at any time that they feel the need to do so. The Administrative Council meets on the third Wednesday each month in order to deal with administrative matters. Pastoral Council meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month. The General Council meets the first Wednesday of August, November, February and May. Congregational Meetings are held as needed. Annual meetings are held in November (focusing on proposed budgets) and February (focusing on reports of ministries and committees.)
What is Expected of All Officebearers

Servant Leadership
In the form for ordination of elders and deacons, we read: “In the officebearers of the church we see the love of Christ for his people. As the Lord of the church he appoints leaders and by his Spirit equips them, so that believers may grow in faith, develop disciplined Christian living, serve others in selfless love, and share with all the good news of salvation. He taught us the spirit of true leadership when he said, ‘Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many’ (Matt. 20:26-28).’ ”

Devotion to the Reformed Faith
As an officebearer, you are required to be personally and enthusiastically committed to the Reformed faith and to sign the Form of Subscription in good conscience.

Spiritual Giftedness for Office
Officebearers shall be nominated and approved on the basis of the biblical qualifications for office (I Timothy 3:1-13, Titus 1:5-9), the most important standard being a person’s giftedness for office. Officebearers must be discerning, persons of sound judgment, persons of moral character who can represent Christ’s church, and demonstrate the ability to manage their own lives and households well.

Mutual Support and Accountability
Notify your fellow officebearer when a matter of need or concern in their district becomes known to you. Keep each other informed about opportunities for ministry. Communicate with the pastor about needs in your district. Keep each other accountable with regard to your doctrine, your Christian life, and the duties of your office.

Continued Training
Take advantage of opportunities to hone your skills and spiritual gifts in events such as the Day of Encouragement and NADC training events, and by consulting this manual and other printed resources for officebearers.

Intentional Prayer
Pray for the pastors, staff, and your fellow officebearers. Pray for the members of your district by name. Pray that God’s Spirit would direct the vision and ministries of this congregation, and that we might discover new and creative ways to make disciples in this community.

Christlike Respect and Integrity
The officebearers of the church, representing Jesus Christ and his church, are expected to conduct themselves with gentleness and self-control, and to speak respectfully of the members of the church and its officebearers, also in matters of rebuke and discipline.
Effective Administration and Accountability

Officebearers should keep records of their visits and contacts with members of the congregation, while at the same time maintaining confidentiality in sensitive matters. The Executive, Elders and Diaconate normally report to the General Council in writing.

Council Structure

Branches of Council

There are four branches of the church’s council:

1. The (general) Council is composed of the ordained pastor(s), elders, and deacons of the congregation. The primary role of the council is to reflect and encourage. The council deals with matters of general concern to the congregation, and matters which do not exclusively fall under the responsibilities of the diaconate or consistory. The council also reflects on and evaluates the ministries of the congregation. It is also a forum for communication among all the officebearers, and for mutual encouragement and accountability (mutual censure/censura morum). The Diaconate, Consistory, and Administrative Council can also bring matters to the General Council for input.

2. The Administrative Council deals with administrative matters in the church. The members of Administrative Council include the president of council, vice-president of council, the chairman of the deacons, the clerk, Chair of Pastoral Council, the Treasurer, and the pastor. The Administrative Council meets monthly.

3. The Pastoral Council includes the ordained pastor(s) and elders. In this body (and only in this body) the elders deal with matters of church discipline, as well as the church’s preaching, worship and teaching, its outreach and evangelism in the community, doctrinal matters, the supervision of pastors, and the spiritual health and pastoral needs of the members.

4. The Diaconate is composed of the deacons. This body seeks to identify (mostly material) needs of persons, both within and outside the congregation, and to provide assistance to persons in need. It also seeks opportunities for our members to reach out in Christian compassion in our larger community. It encourages the congregation in its stewardship, and manages and organizes our offerings.

General Council

- All Administrative, Diaconate and Pastoral Council members on General Council.
- Chairperson of Administrative Council will chair General Council
- Meet four times per year (more often if deemed necessary).
- All members have three year terms.
Administrative Council

- Members include:
  - Diaconate Council chairperson
  - Pastoral Council chairperson
  - Four Administrative Elders elected from the congregation
  - Pastor (ex-officio)
- Elect Chairperson, Vice Chair, Clerk and Treasurer from within Council.
- Meet monthly.

Diaconate Council

- Five Deacons elected from the congregation.
- Elect chairperson and recording secretary from within Council.
- Count and meet monthly (possibly on same night).

Pastoral Council

- Members include:
  - Eleven Pastoral Elders elected from the congregation
  - Four Youth Elders elected from the congregation
  - Pastor
- Elect chairperson and recording secretary from within Council.
- Chairperson does not have a district but is available to help make visits.
- Things to consider when making districts:
  - May want to include “visit helpers” in each district. Non-elected (perhaps former elders) members that may help make some visits.
  - May want to include entire bible studies within districts.
- Meet monthly

Specific Tasks of these Branches of Council

April 2010

General Council

- Meet together before the church services to pray for a blessing for the worship as well as to organize elder/deacon participation in the service.
- Deal with committee matters that require attention from General Council.
- Process Classical agendas and appoint delegates to meetings of Classis.
- Conduct regular reviews of the effectiveness of the church’s ministry, including encouraging each other as well as correcting each other in gentleness and love (mutual censure/censura morum).
- Approve nominations for elders and deacons, based on spiritual gifts and biblical qualifications, and approve suggestions for committee appointments.
- Meet with the Classical Church Visitors as scheduled.
- Ensure that good order is maintained in the church.
- Strengthen, encourage, and provide helpful feedback to the pastor.
Administrative Council

- Report to and advise general council of all activities through the sharing of minutes.
- Initiate discussion for setting the direction and vision of Neerlandia CRC.
- Process all correspondence and delegate to the appropriate ministry.
- Responsible for all committees, initiating and approving committee mandates and processing all committee minutes.
- The Administrative Council will create within itself a personnel committee which will be responsible for evaluating all staff.
- Oversee the corporate responsibility of the church in regards to legal and financial and constitutional matters.
- Responsible for all staff and elder training including retreats.
- Signing officers for all legal documents will be the chair and clerk of the administrative committee.
- Receive and respond to persons who request to speak to Council.
- Process routine membership transfers, pass on more difficult cases to general council or pastoral elders.
- Call the congregation together for special meetings and set the agenda.
- Strengthen, encourage, and provide helpful feedback to the pastor.

Diaconal Council

- Report to and advise General Council of all activities through the sharing of minutes.
- Show mercy, minister to rich and poor, and encourage the needy.
- Supervise work of Refugee Committee.
- Inspire faithful stewardship and weigh needs and causes.
- Inform the congregation about causes that need support.
- Encourage and challenge the congregation to be involved in meeting needs.
- Cooperate with other diaconates in doing the work of Christian mercy.
- Explore and promote service projects in which the congregation may participate.
- Set offering schedule in conjunction with the finance committee and collect funds for various causes.
- Strengthen, encourage, and provide helpful feedback to the pastor.

Pastoral Council

- Report to and advise General Council of all activities through the sharing of minutes.
- Advise the Administrative Council as to the spiritual work of the ministry personnel.
- Deal with disputes, act as mediators when appropriate and facilitate reconciliation.
- Supervise worship, preaching, and the administration of the sacraments, as well as the work of the Worship Committee.
- Supervise the faith nurture of children, youth and adults, examine persons wishing to profess their faith, and watch over the work of the Education Committee.
- Watch over the doctrine and life of members and office bearers.
• Give pastoral care to the members by way of counsel, admonition, discipline, encouragement, instructing them to marry in the Lord, celebrating joys and carrying their pain and weaknesses with them.
• Promote hospitality, fellowship and the work of evangelism in the congregation.
• Strengthen, encourage, and provide helpful feedback to the pastor.

Resources for Elders
August 2007
By Len Batterink, Rocky Mountain House

Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. (Acts 20:28)

Contents
The Role of the Elder Learning to Listen
Visitation: Formal & Informal Selected Bible Passages
Hospital & Sick Visits

What Do Elders Do?
Elders have been leading the church since New Testament times. Christian Reformed elders today continue their work under the following job description from the Church Order:

“The elders, with the minister(s), shall oversee the doctrine and life of the members of the congregation and fellow office bearers, shall exercise admonition and discipline along with pastoral care in the congregation, shall participate in and promote evangelism, and shall defend the faith.” (Church Order, article 25b)

The form for the ordination/installation of elders says that:

“Elders serve by governing the church in Christ's name. They received this task when Christ entrusted the apostles and their successors with the keys of the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 16:19). Elders are thus responsible for the spiritual well-being of God's people. They must provide true preaching and teaching, regular celebration of the sacraments, and faithful counsel and discipline while keeping in confidence those matters entrusted to them. And they must promote fellowship and hospitality among believers, ensure good order in the church, and stimulate witness to all people…”

When they are ordained, elders are given this “charge”:

“I charge you, elders, to 'guard yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood' (Acts 20:28). Be a friend and Christ-like example to children. Give clear and cheerful guidance to young people. By word and example, bear up God's people in their pain and weakness, and celebrate their joys with them. Hold in trust all sensitive matters confided to you. Encourage the aged to persevere in God's promises. Be wise counselors who support and strengthen the pastor. Be compassionate, yet firm and consistent in rebuke and discipline. Know the Scriptures, which are 'useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness' (2 Tim. 3:16). Pray continually for the church. Remember at all times that if you would truly give spiritual leadership in the household of faith, you must be completely mastered by your Lord (1 Tim. 3:2-7).”
Making Visits
The annual home visit has a long history in the Christian Reformed Church, and routine visiting still has real value. If pastors and elders limit their work only to problem-solving and crisis counseling, their picture of the church will be limited as well. Visiting with each family and single member helps church leaders take the temperature of the church as a whole—its joy and sorrow, its strength and weakness.

But let’s be flexible. The way you visit will depend on your own style and on the family you are visiting. Some families and individuals feel free to talk about their spiritual journey without prompting. Others will speak from the heart if they are encouraged. Others are not ready, and you might feel that it’s unwise to probe too much. Generational differences are a factor. If people are new to Reformed practice, they will need a sensitive introduction. Here are two formats for visits. Let’s call the first format “Formal” and the second “Casual.”

**Formal Visit:** This format is based on material prepared by Rev. John Suk during his time as editor of The Banner.

**Casual Visit:** This format encourages an informal kind of conversation—but still with a purpose. It should come across as less invasive, more relaxed. This one may be the best for families and members who are new to the church.

**A comment:** A lot of pastoral care takes place without any “official” visit—in brief conversations around the coffee urn, in the parking lot, at the school BBQ, etc. and over the phone, or by email. Those quick contacts can really make a difference.

People’s lives are unfolding all through the year, and a scheduled meeting may not be the best time for them to share them with you. So be alert to the members of your district-ward-household-small group. Make it a point to greet them on Sunday. Ask how they’re doing. If they’ve shared a burden with you, ask them how they’re doing.

**Formal Visit**
Elder’s work is impossible without prayer. Before you visit with anyone, ask God to bless the time you spend together.

When you meet with the family or individual, ask how everyone is doing. School? Work? Special challenges—a special needs child, a recent marriage, divorce, singleness, financial challenges, etc. Don’t avoid difficult subjects. But if they’re obviously uneasy talking about it, respect their privacy.

Focus the meeting with questions like these:

- How has God blessed you? How have God’s blessings changed your life? Do you feel you can serve God and others with the good things he’s given to you?
- Tell me about the devotional life of your family when you were growing up. What do you remember? What changes have you made? Do you find family or personal devotions the most helpful to you?
- Tell me about your children and their spiritual lives. Have your children professed their faith? Do they ask about it? How are your grown children doing?
- What needs do you pray about on a regular basis?
• Do you feel confident about your relationship with God? Do you feel that you could trust him in a serious illness? Do you feel hopeful “in life and in death”?

• What does our church do well? What does it need to do better? Can you help us with that? Is there a way you can become involved?

• Does our Sunday worship really praise God? Do you have suggestions for worship that would make our praise more meaningful?

• What texts and topics do you wish the pastor would preach on?

• What can our church do in the community? Is there a way you can become involved?

Read an appropriate Scripture and close the meeting with prayer. Express your thanks for the visit.

**Casual Visit**

Thank the family or the member for meeting with you. After a bit of small talk, try questions like these. They ought to let people share their lives with you in a relaxed way.

• How has the past year been for you? What’s the best thing that happened? What’s been the toughest?

• What’s the next big thing in your life? Where can you see yourself in a year? Five years?

• Does prayer work for you? In hard times? When you have to make a decision? When you’ve messed up?

• Does the Bible help you?

• How has the church blessed/helped you? What do we do well? What can we do better?

Don’t hurry. Let them talk. Do lots of listening.

Informal visits might happen in coffee shops or other public places. If the place permits, offer a prayer. Pray especially for needs and concerns that have been expressed during the visit. Give thanks for the joys that your members have shared.

**Follow Up**

A single visit is a good start, but staying in touch afterward is very helpful. It’s especially important when people have shared their concerns or needs. By way of phone calls, emails or personal contact let the person know that you remember that he or she is still in your thoughts and prayers. You might not be able to resolve his or her issue, but your concern will be a great source of encouragement.

**Hospital & Sick Visits**

Pastoral care during times of illness is obviously one of the most significant ministries of the church. In Jesus’ parable of the sheep and the goats, the righteous ones are welcomed into the kingdom partly for their care of the ill: “I was sick and you looked after me” (Matthew 25:36).

For many people sickness is a crisis. It breaks into the usual rhythms of living, and sometimes, when it is severe, it brings them to a full stop. If the condition becomes chronic, life is changed permanently, and possibly the whole family dynamic.
A person who is ill becomes aware of our basic human frailty. Things that seemed so important before—status, money, possessions—suddenly seem relatively insignificant. The person who is ill discovers that we are ultimately defenseless, that we are prone to weakness and eventually to death.

**Some suggestions:**
Prepare for the visit. Pray for the Spirit’s presence with you, that you will bring a blessing. Know what you are called to do and rely on the help you are promised.

If you are calling at the hospital or rest home, familiarize yourself with the routine of the institution—visiting hours, organized activities, etc. If you come outside of visiting hours, you may be getting in the way of medical staff—washings, bedding changes, lab tests, etc.

Think about the members of the family. Are there children? At home? Out of town? What are their names? Are they in regular contact? How is the illness affecting the whole of the family? Is there food on the table?

Be prepared to listen. You won’t know the person’s emotional and spiritual needs without listening.

Listen for simple factual things: Is the illness new? Is there a diagnosis? Has the illness progressed? Is any treatment planned, or surgery? Is there pain?

Listen also for deeper things: What hopes and expectations does the person have? Does she expect the treatment to be effective? Is his illness a bump in the road of your life, or is it the first sign of a major life change?

In the case of a very serious or terminal illness, you may be asked to pray for healing, or hold a service of anointing. Or you may be expected to provide supportive pastoral care in the weeks and months leading to death. Careful listening will help you know what the person is expecting, so you can address his or her needs in a fitting way.

Use short selections of the Bible if and when you use it. A single verse will likely be more helpful than a whole chapter. You may find something to use in list of suggested passage at the end of this booklet.

Prayer is an important part of pastoral ministry. It does not have to be a prayer for all Christendom, for peace in the Mid-East, etc, etc. The visit and circumstances determine the content of the prayer. Before you begin, you might want to say something like, “I’d like to pray with you now, for healing and health. Is there anything else we should pray about?” It gives the person a chance to tell about an anxious husband, wife, children, or something else.

**Some Don’ts:**
- Don’t play doctor. If the person has an argument with the doctor or hospital, listen, but don’t aggravate a difficult situation. Be very careful with people who find alternate cures on the internet or in the National Inquirer.
- Don’t talk with others in the presence of a patient who is or seems to be comatose or asleep.
- Don’t overstay, especially if the person is in serious pain. On the other hand, don’t look at your watch through the whole visit.
Remember that you are a vehicle of Christ’s love, and a representative of his body. A person’s perception of the church and of Christianity generally, may be shaped by your visit in this difficult time.

**Learning to Listen**

It’s tempting to think that as an elder your first duty is to have many wise and thoughtful things to say. But listening is actually your first duty. “Everyone,” says James, “should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry” (James 1:19). The good Lord gave us two ears and one mouth, and as many wise people have pointed out, that’s a strong hint that we should do twice as much listening as talking.

Listening might seem easy, but good listening takes some effort, and practice. Listening is not the same as not talking. I can have my mouth shut but pay little attention to what you say. When you are listening well, you are:

- Visibly paying attention to the other person
- Encouraging the other person to continue
- Making sure—and making clear—that you understand

**Paying Attention**

When you pay attention, it should show. Your body language should say, "I am interested in what you have to say." The wrong body language will say, "I really don't care about what you have to say." Here's how to pay attention:

- Face the other person squarely. Try not to loom over him or her but communicate that you are “on the same level.” This will avoid feelings of threat or intimidation.
- Keep an open posture. A closed posture (i.e., crossed arms and or legs) can communicate coldness and defensiveness.
- Lean toward the speaker. This will communicate energy and attentiveness. Be careful, though, to respect the speaker’s "personal space." When you crowd too close, the other person will feel uncomfortable and be on the defensive.
- Effective eye contact makes the other person aware that she has your attention because your eyes are "on her". Good eye contact should seem natural. Do not "stare them down." This makes you seem anxious and sometimes critical of them.

**Encouraging the Conversation**

The listener has a specific responsibility in the conversation—to stay out of the speaker’s way and to try follow where he or she is leading. The goal of listening is not so much answering as understanding what the other person wants to say.

Good listeners use “door openers”—invitations to keep talking or start talking again after a pause. Door openers don’t have to be verbal cues. Good listeners also use body language to say, "You still have my attention, please tell me more."
Door openers might include:

- A description of the other person’s body language—“You look happy today” or, “You seem uncomfortable”
- An invitation to talk—“You look happy today. Did I miss something?” “You seem uncomfortable. Is something in your mind?” Etc.
- Attentive silence (to give the other person time to decide if they want to talk and what they are going to say)
- “Encouragers” that keep the conversation going: “Yes… Uh huh… Sure… Really? Hmmm…”
- Questions that spur the conversation on when it gets stuck.
- Silence. Don’t be afraid of it. Silence is an opportunity for the speaker to reflect on what he or she has said and to gather their thoughts before their next statement. What we say is not as important as giving the speaker the time he or she needs to clearly communicate their point.

**Checking & Reflecting**

Here you make sure that you’ve heard the other person right. And you make sure the other person knows it.

- Checking. Checking means that you restate the essence of the communication in your own words. You check the facts or ideas and not the emotions. In this respect it focuses the content of the speaker’s message. (“Do you mean that…? Are you saying that…? Did he really…?)
- Reflecting Feelings. You mirror back of the speaker’s emotions as they make their statements. If we, as listeners, miss the feeling content we have missed a major part of the speaker’s reaction and experience. Reflecting feelings also give the speaker an opportunity to evaluate how he or she is responding to a problem situation. (“That must have been very upsetting… You must have been happy to hear that…”)
- Reflecting Meanings. Content + feeling = meaning. Sounds simple, doesn’t it? But, if you get the facts wrong or the feelings wrong, you can’t understand the speaker. Reflecting meaning allows you to be sure you are “getting” what the speaker is saying. (“You feel ___ because ___” or some variation on this formula.) After a while the formula will disappear and a natural empathic responding style will develop.

**Selected Bible Passages**

The Bible is obviously the basic book for pastoral care, as it is for Christian belief and morals generally. It has passages that comfort, others that challenge, others that help us provide a sense of meaning and purpose. The following list may be helpful either in preparing for or providing pastoral care in your church.

**Birth and Baptism (of children)**

- Psalm 139:13-14 “...fearfully and wonderfully made…”
- Mark 10:13-16 “Let the little children come to me…”
- Psalm 78:1-8 “He commanded our forefathers to teach their children…”
**Profession of Faith (or Adult Baptism)**
Romans 6:1-11  “If we died with Christ, we...will also live with him…”
Ephesians 6:10-18  “Put on the full armour of God…”
1 Timothy 6:12  “…when you made your good confession…”
1 Peter 3:15-16  “In your hearts set apart Christ as Lord…”

**Marriage**
Genesis 2:18-24  “…and they will become one flesh…”
Matthew 19:1-9  “What God has joined together…”
Ephesians 5:21-33  “Submit to one another…”

**Anniversaries/Celebrations**
Psalm 100  “…his faithfulness continues through all generations…”
Psalm 111  “The works of his hands are faithful and just…”
Psalm 146  “I will praise the Lord all my life…”

**Hospital/Sick Visits**
1 Peter 5:6-11  “Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you…”
Philippians 4:6-7  “The peace of God…”

**For a Grave Illness**
Psalm 130  “Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord…”
2 Corinthians 4:16-5:10  “…the earthly tent… an eternal house…”
Romans 8:31-39  “Nothing can separate us from the love of God…”

**Death, Loss & Bereavement**
Psalm 23  “The Lord is my Shepherd…”
John 14:1-7  “Do not let your hearts be troubled…”
1 Peter 1:3-9  “…he has given us new birth into a living hope…”
1 Corinthians 15:51-58  “…the trumpet will sound, the death will be raised…”

**Songs of Lament**
Psalm 42/43  “Why are you downcast, O my soul?”
Psalm 73  (When the world doesn’t seem fair.)
Psalm 88  “Day and night I cry before you…”

**God’s Help in Trying Times**
Psalm 30:11-12  “You turned my mourning to into dancing…”
Psalm 145:8-21  “The Lord is near to all who call on him…”
Isaiah 40:28-31  “Those who hope in the Lord renew their strength…”
Lamentations 3:22-33  “His compassions…are new every morning…”
Matthew 5:1-12  “Blessed are the poor in spirit… those who mourn…”

**Confession and Forgiveness**
Psalm 51  “Have mercy on me, O God…Cleanse me… Wash me…”
Psalm 130  “If you kept a record of sins, who could stand…”
Isaiah 12  “Your anger has turned away and you comforted me.”
1 John 1:8-10  “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just…”

Conflict and Reconciliation
Matthew 18:15-20  “If someone sins against you…”
Colossians 3:13-14  “Forgive as God in Christ has forgiven you…”

Developing the Mind and Attitude of Christ
Philippians 2:1-11  “Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ”
Romans 12  “Be transformed by the renewing of your minds…”
Colossians 3:12-17  “Clothe yourself with compassion, kindness….”
1 Corinthians 13  “Love is patient, love is kind…”

Life Together in the Body of Christ
Romans 14:1-23  “Accept him whose faith is weak…”
1 Corinthians 12:1-30  “You are the body of Christ, and each of you is a part…”

Biblical Blessings
Numbers 6:24-26  “The Lord bless you and keep you…”
2 Corinthians 13:14  The Triune Blessing
Philippians 4:7  “The peace of God…”

Other Key Passages
Exodus 20  The Ten Commandments
Matthew 6:25-34  “Do not be anxious…”
Matthew 28:16-20  The Great Commission
John 17  Jesus’ Prayer for the Church
Acts 20:17-35  Paul & the Ephesian elders
Romans 12:1-17  “Be transformed…”
1 Corinthians 11:17-32  The Lord’s Supper
1 Peter 2:4-12  A Chosen People

The basic meaning of care is: to grieve, to experience sorrow, to cry out with. I am very much struck by this background of the word “care” because we tend to look at caring as an attitude of the strong towards the weak, of the powerful towards the powerless, of the “haves” toward the “have-nots.” And, in fact, we feel quite uncomfortable with an invitation to enter into someone’s pain before doing something about it.

Still, when we honestly ask ourselves which persons in our lives mean the most to us, we often find that it is those who, instead of giving much advice, solutions, or cures, have chosen rather to share our pain and touch our wounds with a gentle and tender hand. The friend who can be silent with us in an hour of grief or bereavement, who can tolerate not-knowing, not-curing, not-healing, and face with us the reality of our powerlessness, that is the friend who cares… (Henri Nouwen, The Dance of Life)
One of the most important parts of the elder’s ministry is to make contact with the members of the congregation on behalf of the church. These guidelines apply to youth elders as well.

- The elders are called by Jesus Christ to represent his ministering presence to the members of the congregation, and to assist the pastor(s) in providing pastoral care to the members. According to the Church Order, each family or single person in your district should receive at least one visit each year. While most elders find this goal difficult to meet, it is important for you to have personal contact with the members of your district. You represent the official face of the church to them.
- Family visiting need not be the stiff and stuffy ritual portrayed in the picture above. Be creative in the way you make contact with your district members. Note the descriptions of a formal and casual elder visit in this document.
- Avoid the extremes of excessive formality and excessive informality. A visit from an elder is not intended to be an interrogation. But neither is it a social call. If your visit is mostly a discussion of the recent Oilers-Flames matchup, you have not really made an elder’s visit.
- Remember that, while some initial visits and contacts may have the purpose of simply getting to know the people in your district, an elder visit is intentionally spiritual in nature. Your members will expect you to ask them about their spiritual lives, their blessings and struggles, their relationships with other members of the body, their contribution to the ministry of Christ’s church, and the effectiveness of the church’s ministry to them.
- Visit your members when they experience crises of health, surgeries, a death in the family, and other significant life events.
- Keep records of the persons you visit, and be prepared to report on visits to the consistory. At the same time, be careful to maintain your members’ confidentiality and privacy.

~Pastor Randy Blacketer
Resources for Youth Elders  
*Revised March, 2013*

The Youth Elder(s) will work specifically with persons (aged 18-25). Only one Youth Elder is required to report to and attend Youth Committee meetings. We would like it if the same Youth Elder attended the Youth Committee meetings.

Here is what the church order states regarding the role of an elder:

*Article 25*

*b. The elders, with the minister(s), shall oversee the doctrine and life of the members of the congregation and fellow office bearers, shall exercise admonition and discipline along with pastoral care in the congregation, shall participate in and promote evangelism, and shall defend the faith.*

A Youth Elder shall do the above with the youth of our congregation. Youth Elders shall fulfill their roles by doing the following:

- visiting and making contacts with the youth they have been assigned to,
- praying for the youth and young adults they have been assigned to,
- participate in four or more activities or outreach (get to know each other) events each year for the young adults of our congregation, and

The Youth Director shall help equip the Youth Elders by providing resources and coaching for one-on-one meetings and mentoring youth and young adults.

For general resources regarding the role of an elder, please see previous Resources for Elders in this manual.

Resources for Deacons  
*Revised February 2008*

**General**

- Deacons are called by God to the ministry of mercy and compassion as Christ’s representatives.
- Deacons work as a team. (Not every deacon has to be good at everything that deacons are called to do.)
- The deacon team has other partners in ministry.
  - Each deacon has gifts and experiences that can help the others.
  - The deacon's family can be a great source of support.
  - The elders and pastor are partners who can advise and assist the deacons.
  - Members of the congregation can be helpful in your work as deacons.
The Calling and Task of Deacons

- Promote faithful stewardship among the members of the congregation. Remind us that from everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded. (Luke 12:48)
- Encourage members to be merciful and to worship God with offerings of both money and various types of service in the church and the community.
- Minister to both rich and poor, both inside and outside of the church.
- Weigh causes carefully and use the church’s resources wisely.
- Always treat people with dignity and respect.
- Treat all sensitive personal matters with strict confidence.
- As Christ’s representatives, be prophetic critics of waste, injustice and selfishness in our society.
- Seek opportunities to co-operate with community agencies in caring for the needy.
- Co-operate with diaconates of neighboring churches, especially through the work of NADC.
- Set up a work plan that uses the strengths and abilities of each deacon appropriately.

Specifics of NCRC Diaconate

Organizational Structure

- The diaconate consists of 5 deacons.
- Each deacon serves for a three year term.
- The Executive consists of 3 people: a chairperson, a secretary, and a general adjunct.
- The chairperson ordinarily presides over meetings. If the chairperson is absent or unable to preside, the general adjunct presides.
- The secretary takes minutes of meetings. If he is absent or unable to take minutes, the general adjunct takes over his duties.
- One deacon (usually the chairperson) of the deacons is part of the Administrative Council, and one deacon a representative on the Finance Committee.

Visiting by Deacons

- Each deacon has birthday visits with the seniors in his district (people 70 years or older). Usually the deacon and his wife make these visits together.
- If a member of the congregation has ongoing health problems which prevent him/her from getting out, the district deacon will visit.
- When the deacons are made aware of financial or other needs, the district deacon will arrange to visit the person or family to determine the best course of action. Such visits are made by 2 deacons.
- The specifics of personal visits are confidential, except for sharing with other deacons if necessary.
- The degree of assistance (financial or otherwise) is decided by the deacons as a group and is recorded in the minutes.
- Servant Suppers, a ministry that provides meals, is another form of assistance which may be initiated by the deacons.
Offerings

- The offering schedule is prepared by the deacons in consultation with the Finance Committee before the beginning of each fiscal year.

- The first offering each Sunday is for Local Expenses. This includes many things such as staff salaries, pulpit supply, insurance, taxes, utilities, and supplies for education, worship and administration.

- Many of the causes for the second offering are determined by the CRC denomination, Classis Alberta North and committee budgets.

- Offerings may be taken for para-church organizations such as Wycliffe, the Bible League, FoodGrains Bank etc. Requests from these organizations as well as recommendations from the members of the congregation are carefully considered by the deacons as they prepare the offering schedule.

- Finally, the offering schedule has several (open) Sundays for causes which may come to the attention of the deacons during the year.

- Offerings are counted and recorded every four weeks. Each counting is done by three deacons and the bookkeeper. All the books are open to the scrutiny of the church Treasurer.

- It is the responsibility of the deacons to ensure that the congregation is supplied with adequate timely information regarding all causes for which offerings are taken.

Orientation of New Deacons

- New deacons or prospective deacons are asked to read the deacon section of the manual.

- All first time deacons are assigned a mentor (one of the experienced serving deacons.)

Human & Material Resources: Equipping for Ministry

Staff Roles and Responsibilities

Pastor Position Description
Revised July, 2008

Purpose
To assist Neerlandia CRC in fulfilling its purpose of glorifying God by ministering particularly in the areas of

- Worship
- Leadership and Administration
- Pastoral Care
- Education
- Community, Classical and Denominational

Qualifications of the Pastor

- Personal commitment to Jesus Christ and to His Church
- Appropriate Theological Degree
- Ordained minister in the Christian Reformed Church
· Excellence in preaching and teaching the Word of God from a Reformed perspective
· Proven administrative skills
· Ability to guide and mentor staff
· Good communicator

**Duties of the Pastor**

**Worship**

· Prepare and deliver sermons and lessons for Sundays and special days. The pastor has one Sunday per month of sermon relief, in addition to vacation time and any other study or education time that may be approved by the Consistory.
· Partner with the Worship Committee, music groups, and musicians in preparing well-crafted liturgies that are sensitive to all ages and to the rhythm of the church year. In this capacity the pastor shall prepare sermon schedules in advance and shall supervise and approve worship elements in the weekly orders of worship.

**Leadership and Administration**

· Champion the ministry vision and priorities established by the ordained leadership of Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church.
· Encourage church leadership toward continued improvement and greater effectiveness in ministry vision and priorities.
· Encourage and advise the staff by way of weekly staff meetings.
· Partner with Administrative Council to supervise the work of any intern or person seeking Licensure to Exhort.
· Partner with church leadership to encourage the members of the church in the discovery, development, and deployment of their spiritual gifts for the good of the church and its ministry.
· Participate as an ex-officio member of Council and Consistory.

**Pastoral Care**

· Conduct baptisms, professions of faith, weddings, and funerals and provide related pastoral care (including premarital counseling).
· Provide short-term pastoral counseling and refer others to suitable agencies when appropriate.
· Review regularly with staff members and elders the needs of people within their respective ministries.
· Conduct visits with members, including non-crisis visiting, in order to establish and maintain a fruitful pastoral relationship to the congregation.

**Education**

· Conduct the CrossTraining Services as scheduled.
· Teach the Grade 12 Catechism Class.
· Conduct classes or events for persons desiring to make profession of faith or for other new members.
· Be available to council and committees as an educational resource in the fulfillment of their duties.
Community, Denominational, and Classical Duties

- Participate in the activities of the Barrhead Ministerial Association, as time permits.
- Attend Classical/Synod meetings.
- Perform the duties of whatever classical functions the pastor is elected to (e.g., Regional Pastor, Church Visitor, Classical Home Missions Committee, etc.)
- Perform the duties of whatever synodical functions the Pastor is appointed to.

Accountability

- In all matters relating to doctrine and life, this person shall be directly accountable to the consistory.
- In all personnel matters, this person shall be accountable to the Administrative Council.
- In matters relating to lay ministries, this person shall meet with the appropriate committee as requested.
- This person shall attend Council meetings and attend and report to Consistory.
- The work of the pastor will be reviewed yearly.

Parish Nurse Position Description
February, 2011

Role Description
The Parish Nurse will promote health, healing and wholeness of individuals, families, the congregation and the wider community. She will encourage lifestyle practices in keeping with Biblical stewardship, and provide spiritual care and guidance surrounding health issues. She will utilize God-given strengths and abilities, and be aware of personal/professional weaknesses and struggles that might ensue. She will maintain confidentiality, accountability, and commitment to her role as a professional.

Vision Statement
For the well-being of Neerlandia CRC, the Parish Nurse will develop a compassionate and caring Faith & Health Ministry to empower our members to practice Biblical wholeness. She will do this in keeping with two of our core values: that we care lovingly for each other and by affirming that God’s Word directs us in all we do.

Youth Director Position Description
Revised 2013

Qualifications
The Youth Pastor/Director is involved (but not having to do everything) all the Youth programs (Junior High, Senior High and College and Careers) giving resources and guidance to all Youth Council members. This person will be instrumental in leadership development and making sure our youth/young adults are being visited or made connections with.

Responsibilities
The Youth Director oversees the youth programs for junior and senior high school students (grades 7-12) and young adults (ages 18-25).
Recruitment and Training
• Provide resources, recruit, train, encourage and support volunteers to serve as leaders and assistants in the Junior High (Teen club), Senior High and Young Adult ministries in our congregation.

Pastoral Care
• Provide regular pastoral care by forming and cultivating relationships with youth through regular meetings, lunch appointments and attendance at youth activities.
• In conjunction with the Youth Elders, provide crisis pastoral care to youth and young adults of our congregation. While this type of pastoral care cannot be scheduled, time must be reserved for this aspect of the Youth Director’s ministry.
• Follow Safe Church policies when pastoral care is provided in form of one-on-one meetings.

Youth Education
• Prepare and/or assist in finding biblical and relevant materials for group study as well as activities for fellowship during senior high small group meetings. Assist in the selection of materials for junior high and young adult meetings.
• Work with the Education Committee by providing information about quality resources for curriculum and catechism materials. Offer ideas and personal input about future goals for the church’s ministry with young people.

Accountability & Working Relationships
The Youth Director is accountable to the church council. He or she will attend all Pastoral council meetings.

The Youth Director work with the Youth Elders by assigning singles and couples with specific pastoral needs due to personal difficulty or upcoming events such as marriage. He or she will equip the Youth Elders by providing resources and coaching for one-on-one meetings and mentoring youth and young adults.

The Youth Director will participate and work with the Youth Committee. Activities are an important part of a youth ministry position. The director with the support of the Youth Committee is responsible for planning, organizing and participating in activities including: retreats, fun activities, fundraising efforts, service or mission projects and youth conventions. Use the resources of the committee as a forum for discussion of youth interests and for prayer support.

Be an integral part of the NCRC staff team and attend staff meetings.

The work of the Youth Director will be reviewed yearly.
Executive Assistant Position Description
January 2009

Accountability
The Executive Assistant is accountable to the Clerk of Council.
The position shall be subjected to a yearly performance review and a yearly position description review by the Administrative Council in consultation with the clerk or person(s) appointed by the Executive to conduct this review. It is the Executive Assistant’s responsibility, in consultation with the Clerk, to find a replacement when the Executive Assistant is on vacation. This replacement must be approved by clerk.

Remuneration
This position is a salaried position with salary to be determined by the Finance Committee in consultation with the Clerk, Treasurer and Executive Assistant.

Position Summary
- Secretarial, office and receptionist duties
- Prepare weekly bulletin and inserts, Basic Easy Worship
- Secretarial support for Pastor, Clerk and Youth Director
- Booking church facilities
- Maintain membership database

Secretarial Office and Receptionist Duties

Position Description
- Pick up and distribute mail
- Sort and distribute electronic mail
- Maintain mailboxes, display table and bulletin board in foyer
- Prepare church directory every two years with a yearly insert update
- Attend bi-monthly staff meetings
- Order office supplies and materials as needed.
- Insure that the photocopier and Executive Assistant computer are maintained and contact service technicians as stipulated or needed
- Receptionist in church office on Tuesdays and Thursdays from September through June, Thursday only during July and August
- Welcome and assist walk-in visitors
- Provide assistance to volunteers
- Be a liaison for study group materials

Weekly Bulletin and Inserts and Basic Easy Worship
- Receive bulletin announcements
- Type, edit, duplicate and distribute bulletins
- Coordinate liturgies
- Prepare liturgies for song groups, Visual Technician and Pastor
- Prepare Easy Worship Schedules
Secretarial Support for Pastor, Clerk and Youth Director (maximum of two hours/week)

- Type, duplicate, mail and file agendas and minutes for council
- Copy and distribute Classical and Denominational materials
- Maintain lists of committee members
- Prepare and distribute Elder/Deacon districts, special lists and correspondence

Church Facilities

- Book church facilities
- Maintain church calendar

Membership Database

- Maintain electronic church membership documents
- Maintain church membership archives
- Prepare yearbook statistics with clerk

Bookkeeper Position Description

January 2008

Purpose
The bookkeeper is responsible for church financial accounting work and will equip the council, staff, committees and members of NCRC with financial information for the benefit of NCRC ministries.

Accountability
The bookkeeper is supervised by and accountable to the Treasurer of council. The work of the bookkeeper will be reviewed yearly.

Description of Work

- work at church office one day per week, Wednesday, from September through June, and as scheduled during July and August

Weekly Tasks

- accounts payable: verify, record and pay bills
- accounts receivable: prepare and mail invoices for rental and catering, receive payments for invoices and miscellaneous items, prepare and make deposits
- prepare offerings & financial announcements for bulletin

Monthly Tasks

- reconcile bank and credit card accounts
- prepare pay cheques and pay payroll liabilities
- prepare and send statements for each budgeted ministry to committee/council Treasurers
- prepare and submit monthly electronic funds transfer files to bank for donations by automatic debit
- prepare and mail summary statement to council Treasurer

Scheduled Tasks

- count offerings with deacons and record contributions (typically every 3 weeks)
- prepare and make bank deposits following count
Quarterly Tasks
• prepare and send contribution reports to donors

Yearly Tasks
• bring financial documents at year end to chartered accountant for review engagement statement preparation
• prepare in-house financial statements and compile NCRC annual report
• prepare and send T-4 slips and T-4 summary
• prepare and mail tax receipts for charitable donations
• prepare and submit charity return
• prepare offering schedule in consultation with deacons
• prepare proposed budgets proposal in consultation with Finance Committee

Other Tasks
• manage petty cash system
• manage tokens system
• order supplies required for bookkeeping work
• assist pastor, youth director, executive assistant, janitor, council and committees with financial information and miscellaneous tasks when advisable
• assist visitors and members at the office when executive assistant is not present

Janitor Position Description
Revised June 2007

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men. (Col 3:23)

Daily Duties
• Unlock doors by 9:00 A.M. and leave the North door open all day and close up at 10:00 P.M.
• Do a check through the building.
• Check temperatures in each building.

Weekly Duties
• Wash the window panels in the foyer doors.
• Wash the kitchen floor, hall floor, and fellowship hall storage room when necessary.
• Vacuum carpets and floors in all areas.
• Dust the sanctuary.
• Water the piano when needed.
• Dust lower window sills, doors and door jambs.
• Clean study, office, nursery, and basement rooms.
• Keep the kitchen and hall tidy.
• Check if extra cleanup is needed after a church function, can include this with regular cleaning.
• Dust the benches.

Monthly Duties:
• Clean the baseboards and light switches.
- Dust the tops of doors, ledges, and heat registers (upstairs and downstairs.)
- Dust the mailboxes.
- Report to the Building Committee any repairs that are needed.
- Keep a log of hours worked.

**Other Duties:**
- Keep the Lord’s Supper tablecloth clean.
- Dust off plants.
- Polish pews with furniture oil (2 times per year)
- Shampoo carpets once per year, with exception of office carpets to be shampooed twice per year.
- With the help of the Building Committee, houseclean once per year and clean the sanctuary lights when necessary. All other lights clean once per year.
- Wash tables and chairs in hall and classrooms at least 2 times per year.
- Unlock building before and after functions.
- Clean stove, fridges, cooler, and freezer at least twice per year.
- Wash all windows and screens in spring and fall.
- Wash all windows inside and out as needed during the summer.
- Do all minor repairs or make a list for the maintenance personnel.
- Purchase cleaning supplies on sale or from a bulk dealer.
- Clean coffee urns and coffee makers twice per year.
- Clean kitchen cupboards inside and out.
- Put plastic on the windows in sanctuary in the fall.
- Keep balcony clean.
- Keep a log of seasonal jobs.
- Check to do list.

**Seasonal Outside:**
- Water flowers and fertilize as needed.
- Water trees when needed.
- Pick up garbage and empty ash trays.
- Shovel snow. Obtain assistance when needed.
- Apply ice melt on ice.
- Mow the lawns.

**Sunday Duties:**
- Open doors by 8:00 A.M.
- Fill baptismal font when necessary.
- Empty the baptismal font after baptism.
- Turn on sanctuary lights.
- Check that the elements are on the table on the pulpit.
- Turn temperature up and adjust ceiling fans.
The above descriptions are specific. All regular janitorial duties are considered part of the job. The work of the janitor will be reviewed yearly and this position description will be reviewed yearly. Amendments will be made as deemed necessary by the Building Committee.

**Maintenance Position Description**  
*Revised January, 2012*

The maintenance person is responsible for any minor repairs required for the church building, its contents, its grounds and the parsonage. Also look after the yearly Fire Alarm and Elevator inspections. Duties are subject to review and may be changed as per the Building Committee.

This position is based on a casual basis and will be up to a maximum average of 40 hours/month @ wage negotiated with the building committee.

The maintenance person will provide his/her own tools eg. drill, hammer, screw drivers, etc.

The church is not WCB responsible; however the church must provide a safe work place.

The church has liability insurance in place.

The Building Committee shall be responsible for inspecting the work done by the maintenance person.

**Monthly Duties**
- give a written or oral report for monthly meetings either in person or to the chairman prior to the meeting.
- inspect the fire extinguishers for pressure
- inspect elevator operation and oil levels
- check emergency lighting
- submit a monthly statement to the designated representative of the Building Committee for the repairs that were needed, the date they were done and the hours worked. This person will then review the statement, the repairs and then submit the signed statement to the bookkeeper.

*Parts or repair items above $200.00 must first be approved by the Building Committee. Any electrical or plumbing repairs must first be approved by the building committee.*

**Vacation and Vacation Pay**  
*September 2012*

Except for employees who work in specified industries and professions, most employees are entitled to vacations and vacation pay. The requirement for vacations and vacation pay entitlement is intended to ensure that employees have rest from work without loss of income each year.

The basic entitlement to annual vacations is as follows:

- Two weeks after each of the first four years of employment with pay, and
- Three weeks after five consecutive years of employment with pay.

If an employee receives a monthly salary, each week of vacation pay is arrived at by dividing their monthly pay by 4 1/3. In the case of employees who are paid other than monthly and who are entitled
to two or three weeks’ vacation pay based on their length of service, they receive four per cent or six per cent of the wages that they have earned respectively.

Because of the nature of employment in the construction industry, there is no requirement for construction employers to provide their employees with vacation time. However, they are entitled to vacation pay in an amount that is at least six per cent of the employee’s wages.

Vacations must be taken sometime in the 12 months after the employee becomes entitled to the vacation. Vacation must be given in one unbroken period unless the employee requests to take their vacations in shorter periods. This is permissible as long as those periods are at least one day long.

If a mutually acceptable time for the employee’s vacation cannot be found, the employer can decide on the time. However, the employee must receive at least two week’s notice in writing of the start date of their vacation. The employee must take their vacation at that time.

Our Material Resources: Committee Mandates

Building Committee Mandate

September 2007

Purpose

The purpose of the Building Committee is to assist the Council of the NCRC in their responsibilities as trustees of the NCRC land and buildings for the enhancement of our ministries. The NCRC Building Committee will times be committed to keeping the NCRC council informed with respect to the following responsibilities.

Responsibilities

- Maintain the church and parsonage facilities in good repair.
- Supervise the janitorial and maintenance personnel.
- Make and administer user fee policy with regard to use of church building and furnishings.2
- Supply catering services as required through the work of the Auxiliary Committee (see mandate following.)
- Oversee refreshments during fellowship time between Sunday services.
- Supervise any new construction projects. Make recommendations for improvements of existing building and property. Set goals for the new year.3
- Prepare a written report for the annual congregational meeting held in February. Include the summary of achievements, unfinished business, and future objectives and proposed budget of the committee. Provide a list of nominees to replace the retiring members. Supervise and guide the audio visual committee and the décor committee.

1 Changes to this document will be made upon approval of NCRC council only.
2 User fee policy is subject to approval of NCRC council.
3 Construction projects in excess of $10,000 may be done upon approval of NCRC council only.
**Structure**
The NCRC Building Committee shall consist of up to 13 members voted in by the congregation for a three year term.

Meetings will be held once a month.

The committee will elect or appoint members to these roles and responsibilities:

- Executive: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and General Adjunct
- Maintenance
  - Building Maintenance Coordinator: plumbing issues, electrical issues, general maintenance
  - Grounds Maintenance Coordinator: yard upkeep
  - New Projects Coordinator: cost estimates for building projects, oversee the work site
  - Church and Parsonage Décor Coordinator: painting, home improvement, repair and replacement of floors and carpets.
  - Insurance Coordinator: review policy yearly, check on insurance of contents in church and parsonage
  - Coordinator of Audio/Visual Equipment: maintain an inventory of audio/visual equipment, keep equipment well maintained, keep an inventory of spare parts.
  - Catering: Auxiliary Committee Representative

**Auxiliary Committee Mandate**
*Revised June 2009*

**Purpose**
The committee will provide catering service for functions held at Neerlandia CRC Fellowship Hall and through catering raise funds for kitchen improvements and renovations.

**Members**
The committee will consist of four volunteers from the congregation and one representative from the building committee. Members will serve for staggered three year terms ending in March. New members will be approved at the annual February congregation meeting.

**Responsibilities**

**Catering**
- Plan sample menus and set meal prices.
- Consult with host of each function and plan menu.
- Purchase, prepare and serve food.
- Recruit volunteers for cooks’ helpers and clean-up.

**Kitchen Management**
- Equip kitchen with tools and supplies.
- Recommend projects to be funded from the catering profits (kitchen fund.)
Kitchen Fund General Information

- Auxiliary expenses and income will be channeled through the Building Fund.
- Profit from Auxiliary Committee catering will be allocated to the Kitchen Fund.
- The Kitchen Fund may accumulate over more than one year.
- The primary use of the Kitchen Fund is for kitchen improvements and renovations. However, at the discretion of the Building Committee in consultation with the Auxiliary Committee, the Kitchen Fund may be designated for other projects if extra money is available.
- The Kitchen Fund belongs to the church.

Audio-Visual Committee Mandate
Revised January 2008

Purpose
The Audio-Visual (AV) Committee will function as a support advisory group to the rest of the church in determining and carrying out the audio-visual-computer needs for the church. The AV committee is a committee, working under the umbrella of the Building and Worship Committees.

Members
The AV committee will be made up of three members; one from the Worship Committee, one from the Building Committee and one from the congregation. Each member will serve a three year term on the AV committee with an elective option to stay on the committee for an additional three year term. All members should either possess an interest or a technical expertise in the church’s audio-visual (including computer) needs.

Responsibilities

- Maintain an inventory of all Neerlandia CRC audio-visual-equipment.
- Be responsible for maintenance of all Neerlandia CRC audio-visual equipment.
- Train and support operators for all audio-visual equipment.
- Record cross training and worship services.
- Be a contact for any special requirements for audio-visual needs within or outside of regular services, e.g. funerals and weddings.
- Make recommendations on additional equipment needs to the Building committee to better the Neerlandia CRC program plans. Recommendations must consider both the annual operating costs as well as purchase cost.
- Report to the Building and Worship Committees.
- Process any costs associated with the committee through the Building Committee for approval and payment.
- Prepare a report for the annual meeting which includes summary of achievements, unfinished business, and future objectives. When possible, include budget projections.
- Be responsible for the administration for the church’s website; www.neerlandiacrc.org.
Finance Committee Mandate
Revised May 2012

Purpose
The finance committee will develop recommendations, which will enable the financial resources of the Neerlandia CRC to be used effectively and efficiently for the purpose of carrying out the church's ministry.

Membership
The committee shall consist of 5 members, the council Treasurer, one deacon chosen by the diaconate, one building committee representative and two members from the congregation.

Terms of Members
The two members chosen by the congregation will serve for three-year terms, with the possibility of reappointment for another 3 year term. The length of the treasurer, deacon, and building committee representative terms will be according to the wishes of the council, diaconate and building committee.

Accountability
The committee will operate within the boundaries set by the council and the congregational annual meeting. The committee will report to the council and to the annual congregational meeting.

Duties
- There will be 3 scheduled meeting per year with other meetings called as required. The 3 meetings will be held in February, before the annual meeting, after the installation of new officebearers, and in mid-October when the committee’s budgets and the Administrative Council’s written recommendations are received.
- Review the financial work of the bookkeeper through the Treasurer.
- Review the offering schedule for each fiscal year once it is prepared by the deacons.
- Review financial statements as presented by the Treasurer.
- Review the annual financial statement as presented by the Treasurer and facilitate the auditing process as necessary before presentation at the annual congregational meeting.
- Collect and review annual proposed budgets from the Building, Refugee, Mission, Youth Committees and Deacons for presentation at the annual congregational meeting.
- Prepare annual proposed General operating budget for council review and approval.
- Review the salaries of each church employee. Written recommendations, based on the Administrative Council’s employee performance and review interviews, done for each church employee, should be received by the Finance Committee by mid-October each year. Based on these recommendations and research done for employees with similar jobs and/or churches of similar size, the Finance Committee will make salary recommendation to Church Council for each church employee.
- Investigate and evaluate matters regarding the financial affairs of the church.
Nomination Committee Mandate
April 2012

Purpose
The purpose of the Nominations Committee is to use a process of prayerful discernment, collaboration, and congregational input to create a slate of gifted and capable church members who could effectively lead and serve the congregation, and to present this slate of names to the council for approval. The goal of this process is the selection of Deacons and Elders (Administrative, Pastoral, and Youth) based solely on persons’ spiritual gifts and abilities and reflecting the diversity of our congregation.

Structure
• The committee will consist of seven members: four members of the congregation at large, chosen by the Administrative Council to reflect a diverse cross-section of our congregation, in addition to one representative each from the Administrative Council (typically the General Adjunct, who ordinarily serves as chair), the Pastoral Council, and the Diaconate.
• A reporter will be chosen from the committee who will record minutes of the process, particularly the consideration of candidates’ gifts. A record will be kept of all nominations. The minutes will not record the details of the committee’s discussions but of the results of these discussions and the grounds for those results. These minutes are only to be shared with the Administrative Council, since they may contain confidential information. As with all committees, confidentiality is to be vigilantly maintained. The Administrative Council will act as auditor to oversee proper process.
• The term of service on this committee will be the winter and spring months previous to the selection of officebearers in June of each year.
• The nominating committee will meet a number of times to evaluate potential candidates, in order to present names to the May meeting of the General Council.

The Process of Collection and Discernment
• All professing members in good standing are eligible for office in this congregation.
• Nominations may be made by any professing member in good standing.
• The nominating committee will receive nominations that are made on the basis of the Nominations for Office Bearers, information and instructions found in the ministry manual. In order to be accepted and considered, nominations, including those made by council members and members of the Nominations Committee must follow these guidelines:
  ° Nominations will be in writing and signed.
  ° Nominations will provide grounds for the person’s nomination.
  ° The person being nominated will be informed of the nomination prior to it being made.
  ° Nominations will be received through March 31. If more nominations are required, nominations will open again for a short period to be announced to the congregation by the committee.
• Every potential candidate will be contacted by a committee member and informed that their name may or may not appear on the final list.
• The nominations committee will consult the ministry manual regarding qualifications for office bearers, and will take into consideration the congregation’s need for persons with administrative
abilities (running meetings, taking minutes, communicating effectively, proactive and principled leadership), good interpersonal skills (for visiting, encouraging, correcting, and empathizing with members), and a vision and a passion for what our congregation can be and do in this community by God’s grace.

**The Final Product**

- The committee will seek to finalize more candidates than the minimum number needed to replace outgoing officebearers. Ordinarily the number of candidates presented should be at least twice the number to be affirmed.
- The process of soliciting names is to begin in January. The nominating committee should have its first meeting in early February. The final list of names, along with their qualifications for service, is to be received at least one week in advance of the General Council meeting in May, that is, by the last Wednesday in April.
- The General Council will approve the list of names, removing a name only if there is a substantial ground known to the council that would disqualify the person from office.
- The congregation will vote to affirm the final list of candidates.
- Assuming that there are more candidates than required to replace outgoing officebearers, the choice of candidates will be by lot.

**Home Base for our Ministries: This is What We Do**

**We Worship Together**

**Worship Committee Mandate**

*September, 2010*

**Purpose**

The purpose of the Worship Committee is to facilitate corporate worship that glorifies God and encourages and challenges the congregation in their lives of discipleship. We strive for worship that is:

- Reverent and Celebratory
- Reformed and Ecumenical
- God-Centered and Biblically-Based

**Structure**

- The committee will consist of at least seven members, including at least one musician and in addition to the pastor and/or a council representative. One member of the committee will be the Worship Committee representative on the Audio-Visual Committee.
- Prior to the congregational meeting that deals with ministry reports, the committee will recruit new members to replace our retiring committee members. Terms begin in March. New members will be recruited on the basis of their interest, spiritual gifts, and skills.
- Members serve terms of three years. Terms may be extended up to a maximum of six years.
The Worship Committee meets according to need, generally once a month and at least one week prior to the next scheduled council meeting.

The Worship Committee reports to Council through the Pastor or Council representative and minutes.

**Functions**

- To plan selected worship services that are theologically sound and spiritually uplifting, and to plan liturgies for special celebrations.
- To study liturgical materials in order to be wisely informed about Reformed concepts of worship.
- To educate members of the congregation about worship and enable them to participate more fully in all aspects of worship.
- To regularly evaluate the quality of worship services.
- To include the gifts of all members of the congregation—young and old, male and female—in the worshiping life of the congregation.
- To enhance our worship space with liturgically appropriate colors, banners, and symbols, and to do so in a way that respects the simplicity and dignity of the sanctuary and allows the worship space to speak without words.
- To co-ordinate Lord's Supper preparations and prepare the schedule.
- To create schedules for musicians, greeters, ushers, mic runners and AV technicians and recruit volunteers for these ministries as needed.
- To supervise the nursery committee and give assistance if needed.
- To record and report song statistics for the purpose of copyright licensing.
- To coordinate involvement in worship services by guests: speakers, musicians, or other participants. Be responsible for these visiting groups or individuals if they are not being hosted by another group or member of the congregation.

**We Share the Gospel**

**Mission Committee Mandate**

*April 2012*

"Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20 NIV)

**Purpose**

Develop and seek to promote a global vision for evangelism and personal evangelism for our Lord Jesus Christ in such ways as:

**Functions**

- Seek ways to acquaint and encourage our youth with the importance of being a Christian witness in our world.
• Care for and provide prayer and financial support for part-time as well as full-time denominational missionaries.
• Help and pray for any local persons or families who will be willing to serve in a mission outreach program.
• Encourage such programs such as Coffee Break, GEMS and Cadets.
• Plan and organize a Mission Emphasis Sunday or weekend to promote the work of missions and witnessing.
• Literature Display: Provide brochures and literature for distribution related to our mission in this world, church and family life.
• Welcome Package: Review and update the Neerlandia Christian Reformed "Welcome Package" every six months. Prepare packages and give to council members who will pass them on to new church members, new professing members, frequent visitors and any person expressing an interest in our congregation.
• Lead Sunday evening services at Barrhead Senior Citizens’ and Nursing Homes when Neerlandia CRC is scheduled to do so by Barrhead Ministerial. Encourage participation by members of the congregation.
• Direct members of the congregation to resources relating to missions.
• Promote, support and encourage participation in para-church organizations such as Bible League, Gideons, and Wycliffe Bible Translators.

Structure
The Mission Committee shall consist of five members chosen from the congregation. Term of service is three years.

The Mission Committee shall review its budget annually and present a proposed budget for Council and congregational approval.

Mission Committee shall keep a record of all meetings held and of its financial affairs.

Coffee Break Ladies’ Bible Study
Revised May 2007

Purpose
Coffee Break is a small group inductive Bible study program with the purpose of leading women into a personal relationship with Jesus.

The primary goal is to reach women who are spiritually lost.

The secondary goal is to provide an opportunity for women who already know Christ as their Savior to grow and mature in that relationship.

Principles
Leaders and assistants for Coffee Break and Story Hour are be women who profess Jesus Christ as their Savior. Sensitivity is number one when leading and being involved in a Coffee Break program. Coffee Break leadership will consist of: Director, Group Leaders, Assistant Leaders, Story Hour Leader, and
Nursery Coordinator. Leaders will be expected to take a Leadership Training Seminar before leading a Coffee Break group.

Groups should not be any larger than 10 women including leaders. This creates an intimate and non-intimidating atmosphere. When necessary there will be a newcomers group.

Nursery attendants are usually volunteers from the congregation or Moms from the program.

**How We Do Things at Neerlandia Coffee Break**

We gather at 10:00 on Tuesday mornings in a large group for coffee and where news and any announcements pertaining to Coffee Break are relayed. We sing a few songs and have a ‘thought for the day’ and/or ‘the question’. At 10:30 we disperse into our individual groups for Bible study till 11:30.

We are strict about these times.

Coffee Break meets from Thanksgiving until Easter. Opening morning is an informal gathering where we introduce Coffee Break and the book we will be studying. We have a special Christmas morning, a Valentines morning, and a Spring Market or spring wind-up morning.

We are thankful for the many volunteers who set trays for the groups, bring goodies downstairs, arrange the room for the large group meeting, help with special mornings and much more.

**We Nurture Our Children and Learn Together**

**Youth Committee Mandate**

*Revised 2013*

**Members**

*The Youth Committee will be made of persons working specifically with the following age groups.*

- Junior High students (grades 7-9)
- Senior High students (grades 8-12)
- College and Careers (Emerging Adults 18-25)

**Qualifications**

*A member of the Youth Committee:*

- Must have a genuine heart and love for Jesus Christ,
- Has a genuine heart and love for youth,
- Must have a willingness to serve
- Must have a desire to help youth programs succeed
- May share an excitement about the possibilities within youth ministry
- May have a sense of adventure and creativity
- Should be aware of and willing to learn about youth culture
- Must be a member of the NCRC and in good standing

**General Responsibilities**

- Be a Youth Ministry advocate within the congregation
- Listen to the needs of the young people, pastors, and other church members as it relates to Youth Ministry
- Assist in determining Youth Ministry policies (i.e. travel rules, medical release forms, etc)
- Accept written requests for financial assistance from youth going on mission projects
- Acts as a sounding board for problems and disagreements within the youth program or in relation to the rest of the congregation
- Be aware of and encourage opportunities for young people to involve themselves in other areas of church life
- Attend Youth Committee meetings as scheduled or as required based on issues that may arise. A meeting schedule shall be drawn up at the beginning of the ministry season.
- Serve to fulfill the goals of the Youth Committee as defined annually by the Youth Committee.
- Listen to the needs of the Youth Programs
- Go through proper church channels to implement new procedures, policies or programs
- Help evaluate the success of specific youth programming and suggest changes when needed
- Normally serve on the council for a term of 3 years. Members should stagger their terms and should find their own replacement if possible. There should be no fewer than 8 members.
- Annually determine Youth ministry budget.
- Be subject to Safe Church policies and procedures.

**Specific Responsibilities of Youth Committee members**

- The Senior High Activity Director will help plan, organize and execute fun and extra curricular activities. The goal of this person is to develop community in keeping with the Youth Ministry visions. Good records must be kept and shared in a central accessible location.
- The Senior High Fundraising Coordinator will help plan, organize and execute fundraisers with the help of volunteers from the congregation. Good records must be kept and shared in a central accessible location.
- The Youth Committee Secretary will take minutes at Youth Committee meetings.
- The Senior High Food Coordinator will organize food for the Senior High small groups.
- The Junior High Director(s) will coordinate bi-monthly activities and/or Bible studies with the help from volunteers from the congregation.
- Youth Committee Chairperson is an elected by the Youth Committee and is normal served for ____ year(s). This person must demonstrate humble and strong leadership. This person will prepare the agenda for and lead the Youth Ministry Committee meetings. This person will act as a conduit of information for the Committee members. This person must not be the Youth Director and is always a parent.
- The Treasurer will obtain and print the financial status report from the bookkeeper and take to the Youth Committee meetings. This person will be aware of budget issues and help make decisions related to youth ministries. This person collects funds and records these transactions.
- The Young Adults Rep will coordinate Young adult related things (Bible studies, activities etc) that happen within the local community. This person, with the help of the entire Youth Ministry
Committee, will key in on potential Young Adult leaders for the purpose of discipleship and mentoring.

- Small Group Leaders lead small groups and teaches curriculum. They will facilitate conversations in order to continue building relationships that will last.

**Education Committee Mandate**  
*Revised November 2012*

**Purpose**
The purpose of the Education Committee is to lead our members to know more about God, the ministries of the Christian Reformed Church, the Reformed world and life view, and to create opportunities to serve our neighbours in the name of Christ.

**Structure**
- The committee will consist of six members, including the Youth Director or if we do not have a Youth Director, one Elder from Council, the Sunday School Coordinator, the Small Group Coordinator, and three members from the congregation at large.
- The Executive shall consist of the Chair, the Secretary, and a General Adjunct.
- All members except the Youth Director serve terms of three years. Terms may be extended up to a maximum of six years.
- The committee generally meets once a month, preferably a minimum of one week prior to the regularly-scheduled Council meeting.
- The committee reports to Council by way of its minutes.
- Prior to the February congregational meeting, the committee will recruit, as necessary, new members, based on their interests and gifts. Terms begin in March.

**Functions**
- to supervise the following education activities of the Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church:
  - Sunday school classes--Age 3 to Grade 6 (More information about Sunday School below.)
  - Catechism classes--Grade 7 to 12
  - Daily Vacation Bible School
  - Small Bible Study/Fellowship Groups
  - Gems and Cadet Clubs
- to appoint, support, and monitor the work of church school teachers
- to review and evaluate church education programs regularly
- to select and organize educational materials and equipment
- to encourage, promote, and facilitate small group Bible study and fellowship
- to arrange and advertise for lectures, seminars, and workshops as necessary or desirable
- to keep in contact with other organizations of the church involved in education e.g. Youth Committee
- to work together with the Safe Church Committee to insure a safe environment for our youth
- to assure that all financial accounting and reporting be adhered to by all those involved in the educational programs of the church
• to be open to new opportunities to educate our members in the Reformed faith and to bring them to a living faith in Jesus Christ
• Gems and Cadets Coordinators submit written reports to the Education Committee but do not have to attend committee meetings
• to review this mandate at the May meeting each year

Sunday School
Revised January 2007

The purpose of Sunday School is to disciple children so that in their daily lives they understand and apply Bible truths, pray and understand what prayer is, and witness to their friends and neighbors.

Children (3 yrs through grade 6) will meet in classes with teachers and helpers to participate in learning Bible stories and songs, memorize and apply Bible verses.

Responsibilities
• Oversee the regular Sunday School program.
• Select teachers, substitutes, and support staff - pianists and song leaders, etc.
• Plan for "special Sunday" programs, such as Kick-off Sunday, Mission Emphasis (check with Mission Committee for their special weekends), etc. [Christmas program is approved by Worship Committee and Education Committee (and through them to Council).]
• Plan appropriate classroom facilities and determine class locations in cooperation with the teachers and Janitor. (Avoid the necessity of moving tables and chairs each week with proper assignment of rooms in the fall.)
• Supervise Sunday School activities each Sunday morning, assuring that all classrooms and singing areas have appropriate furniture and arrangements.
• Supervise the ordering and distribution of study materials.
• As Sunday School Coordinator, serve on the Education Committee for a three year term.
• Select the Assistant Sunday School Coordinator after recommendation by the Education Committee and Council approval.
• Hold planning meetings and in-services with the Sunday School teachers as necessary.
• Select a cause for the Sunday School offering, be in charge of collecting all money, and plan a way to inform teachers, students, and parents of that cause.
• Plan periodic incorporation of Church School activities into the regular church service (e.g., singing) with the Worship Committee & Musicians.
• Inform teachers in advance about "special" activities - special speakers that will take up "lesson" time, Christmas program practices that will cut the class time (partially or wholly), singing or study in another spot when the room is needed for different group on a particular Sunday, etc. Other details concerning amount of money allowed from church budget for student Christmas gifts, etc., should also be conveyed to the teachers.
Ladies Fellowship Circle Constitution
Revised Spring 2009

This society will be known as the “Ladies Fellowship Circle.”

Basis
The society is based upon the Bible as the infallible Word of God which it acknowledges as a guide for all her work as expressed in the true standards of the Reformed Churches: The Heidelberg Catechism, The Belgic Confession and the Canons of Dort.

Purpose
• to study God’s Holy Word in accordance with our Reformed faith.
• to raise money for kingdom causes.

Terms of Office
• Board shall consist of the following offices: President, Secretary, Treasurer and General Adjunct.
• All members of the Executive shall be professing members of the church.
• The term of office is for two years.
• All members are eligible for re-election. This can be done up to three times. This means that a member can stay in the Board up to six years.
• It is preferable if the President and Treasurer go out of office one year and the Secretary and General Adjunct go out another year.

Duties of the Officers
• President shall preside at all meetings and perform such duties as the office demands.
• Secretary shall record all minutes at the meetings and take care of correspondence.
• Treasurer shall take care of all the funds.
• General Adjunct will take over any duties of an absent officer.

Tasks
• The Ladies Fellowship Circle organizes the singing groups for the Barrhead Continuing Care and the Shepherd’s Care.
• We sing at each place once a month from September – June.
• The Secretary is responsible for putting notices on the bulletin.

General Info
• The fiscal year begins each year at the 1st of November and continues to the 31st of October.
• There shall be no dues. If we find this to be necessary, we will add a by-law.
• The Ladies Fellowship Circle will meet every two weeks beginning in October and ending in April.
• Our meetings consist of Bible Study and necessary business.
• Committees shall be formed when necessary.
• The articles of this constitution, with the exception of article 2, can be revised and amended by a two-thirds affirmation vote by the members of the Ladies Fellowship Circle.
• Constitution to be reviewed every five years.
GEMS Girls’ Club Mandate

May 2012

GEMS stands for Girls Everywhere Meeting the Savior and is an international Christian club for young girls with headquarters in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Formed in 1958 GEMS Girls’ Clubs is a non-denominational ministry which works in partnership with the Christian Reformed Church. Their mission is: “to bring girls everywhere into a living, dynamic relationship with Jesus Christ”. GEMS Girls’ Clubs seeks to build relationships between women and girls and teach them how to live out their faith in God’s world. For more information please visit their website: www.gemsgc.org.

The Neerlandia GEMS club participates in the Discovery level of the GEMS Girls’ Clubs program, designed for girls in grade 4-6. We meet every other Thursday from 7:00-9:00p.m. from September to April. We seek out Christian women to act as counselors for each grade level and as small groups participate in Bible study and badge work. We also have additional help from our Counselors in Training (CIT) who are high school age girls who have graduated from the GEMS program and want to model and share their faith with the younger girls. The club meets as a large group together for devotions and singing and then moves into smaller grade level groups known as: Adventurers - grade 4, Seekers - grade 5, and Explorers - grade 6. Some nights we also meet altogether to do crafts or other activities.

A club fee is requested to support the purchasing of the resources for the year. Upon entering the GEMS program each girl receives a GEMS bag, a scarf to put their badges on, t-shirt, a subscription to the clubs’ Shine Brightly magazine, and a Discovery Place Badge Book. The badge book contains scrapbook style lessons for 100 different merit badges that the girls can earn upon their completion of the badge work. To earn a badge you must research scripture, do some written activities, and complete a practicing or serving option for each badge. Some badges are worked upon in class time, and the girls are also welcome to work on badges at home. The badge book is divided into five different themes:

1. My Commitment to Club
2. Knowing God
3. Understanding God’s Word
4. Caring for God’s World and His People
5. Exploring and Using God’s Gifts and Talents

All of the curriculum for the GEMS program is written from a Reformed perspective. Each year the overseeing GEMS Girls’ Clubs chooses a new scriptural theme, and designs materials for all of the individual clubs to use during the year. There are training sessions for counselors at the beginning of the new year, as well there is an annual leadership conference that is held in the summer months.

Neerlandia GEMS Club follows a yearly schedule of activities beginning with an opening night for mothers and GEMS which introduces the year’s theme. In October we begin to gather information & artwork for our calendar which includes the birth dates and anniversaries of local church members & GEMS families, and are then sold in December. We have a night with the girls’ grandparents and seniors in our congregation in December. Our annual Father/Daughter night occurs in the month of February with food, activities, & games. In April we participate in a Sunday worship service, and attend a rally with other GEMS clubs from northern Alberta.
We are thankful for the support of our local congregation. Their prayers, assistance with crafts and special events, and financial gifts make our ministry possible. Our club is financed by a yearly offering which is shared with the GEMS Girls’ Clubs headquarters, birthday calendar sales, a club fee per GEM, and the “Cash for Trash” bottle refund drive.

Neerlandia GEMS Club works to develop relationships between women and girls and further their relationship with Jesus Christ. The GEMS Girls’ Club aim is from Micah 6:8: “To act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God”. We pray that we can continue to help girls to know Jesus in a personal way and live out their faith at home, at school, and within the church.

**Cadets**

*Revised November 2010*

Cadets is a denomination-wide organization for boys aged nine through eleven. At Neerlandia CRC that includes boys in grades four through six. The goals of our Cadet program are:

- Bring Christian men to boys - Working with boys in small groups to provide for each boy's needs and provide a model of Christian males.
- Bring the Bible to boys - Through Bible studies and informal discussions while doing projects and participating in activities, boys discover who God is and how He is at work in their lives.
- Bring meaningful growth experiences to boys - The boys are encouraged to explore and develop their God-given talents and interests.
- Bring the church to boys - Leadership and discipleship skills are developed with an eye toward future service in the home, church and community.
- Bring the community to boys - Community outreach is a natural as boys seek to share their Cadet experiences with other boys.

These goals of spiritual growth, personal growth, skill development and service are pursued by way of activities including earning merit badges, race car races, sports activities, serve project, and a campout. The campout is an annual event where the boys participate in fire building, axemanship, hiking, camp cooking and devotional times.

The objectives of the program are to help the Cadets form friendships in a Christian atmosphere, learn Scripture verses and passages for badge work, learn the Cadet theme song and pledge, make crafts and gain practical knowledge of God's creation.

The Cadets meet on alternate Thursday evenings, from October to late April, from 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. They begin their meetings with prayer, theme song and Cadet pledges. Then the boys separate into Cadres to meet with their Counselors for a lesson from the Cadet magazine, followed with work on crafts or merit badges. The Cadets are encouraged to take a turn opening the meeting with prayer.

There are five groups of boys: Two Builders - grade six; Two Pathfinders - grade five; Recruits – grade four.

The finances for the Cadet program come from annual dues of $50.00 collected from each boy. These funds are used for the Quest magazine, craft supplies and badges. An annual offering is taken on Cadet Sunday with a quarter of the offerings sent to the Cadet headquarters in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

The Cadets host a pancake breakfast for the entire congregation as a Serve Project.
We Care for Each Other and Help our Neighbors

Refugee Committee Mandate
Revised April 2008

Purpose:
To answer Christ’s mandate to reach out to the poor and suffering in the world through sponsorship and assisting of world refugees. Refugees could be made known to us by the CRWRC of Canada, Canada Immigration, JAS (Joint Assistance Sponsorship Program), or other approved sources.

Structure
• The committee shall consist of 9 members, an even mix of men and women. Prior to the yearly congregational meeting, the committee will recruit 3 new members to replace the members retiring, effective March of every year. The committee will ask for volunteers via the bulletin or recruit on a one to one basis. New members will be accepted on a first come first served basis.
• Members are to serve a three year term and may agree to serve a second term, but may serve no more than 2 consecutive terms (6 years total).
• The committee will have a president and secretary. The active duties of the committee will be shared by all members.
• The Refugee Committee will meet according to need, generally once a month.

Functions
• The Refugee Committee will maintain a dwelling for the purpose of sponsoring and relocating a refugee family.4 The committee will strive to keep the “Refugee trailer” occupied by refugees at all times.
• Since the process of applying for and acquiring a new refugee family can take a long time (a number of years), the committee should initiate the application process for a new family once the family living in the trailer has somewhat settled in and our commitment of a year or two is coming to an end.
• All members shall share in the responsibilities of relocating and orientating the refugee family once they arrive. Activities included, though not necessarily exclusively, are: seeing to stocking the home prior to the family’s arrival, shopping, finances, interpreters, transportation, clothing, language training, health, education/job training, employment, spiritual welfare, and maintenance of the home. Refer to “Sponsoring Group Handbook” Chapter 3 – Settlement Preparation in Detail; pg. 20 (also available on line at www.cic.gc.ca).
• The committee, on behalf of the congregation, shall provide housing and remain financially responsible for the family for one year, encouraging gradual independence as they become sufficiently financially secure to begin covering expenses themselves. In the case of the JAS

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4 Definition: “Family” will mean members of one unit, which could include siblings, married or single, with or without children.
program, it is the committee's responsibility to provide housing and care for 2 years, while the government provides the finances.

- Once the official commitment period is completed, the committee, with the help of the deacons, will assess the ongoing needs of the family and provide assistance where needed.
- The committee will submit a yearly budget to council.

Servant Suppers
Revised December 2007

This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ and your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. II Cor. 9:12 & 13

The purpose of this ministry is to show, as a church, Christ's love to those around us. We do this through providing meals to those who may have a need at the time. Some examples of those in need would be anyone who requires medical care, is dealing with the hospitalization or death of a close family member, or is experiencing any other situation of similar physical or emotional stress. If you know of anyone that we could serve in this manner please call your District Deacon.

Prayer Chain
A phone chain has been set up with a central person in order to pass along prayer requests to other members on the prayer chain. Requests are made confidentially. Contact listed on last page of bulletin.

We Fellowship Together in All of Our Ministries Including...

50+ Fellowship
Revised April 2008
For adults over 50 years old this group provides a time to meet for fellowship and food. Coffee is ready at 10:00 a.m. The morning begins with a devotion and includes some combination of a speaker, video, or game followed by a potluck lunch. 50+ Fellowship meets 10:00 a.m. – after lunch the second Thursday of every month from October to April.

House Rules: Guidelines for Healthy Congregational Life

Governance Guidelines

How to Become a Member at Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church
Revised April 2009
Membership in Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church involves both baptism and the public profession of one's faith in Jesus Christ. Young people who have attended catechism classes are not required to take a profession of faith class, but sometimes choose to do so to review the meaning of the
Christian life and the teachings of the Reformed faith. Profession of faith classes are provided as needed, and are particularly helpful for those who have not had a faith background or who come from another Christian tradition.

The pastor or an elder can guide you in the process of professing your faith. If you have never been baptized, you will receive Christian baptism at the time you make your profession. Profession of faith takes place in a regular worship service.

**FAQ**

*How do I transfer my membership from another CRC church to Neerlandia CRC?*

If you are currently a member of another Christian Reformed Church, you can become a member of Neerlandia CRC by asking the clerk of your former church to transfer your membership (and that of your family) to Neerlandia CRC. This should be done by a letter addressed to the Consistory or Council of that church. They will then send a record of your membership to us, and the clerk or an elder will notify you when it is received. At this time council will arrange a date for you to be welcomed here during a morning worship service.

*How do I transfer my membership from another denomination to Neerlandia CRC?*

If you are coming to Neerlandia CRC from a church of another denomination, please notify your former church of your intention. Also, notify the pastor or an elder of Neerlandia CRC to meet with you. They will talk to you about your faith in Jesus Christ and your commitment to serve Him. They will also discuss with you some very basic teachings of Scripture. At a future worship service, you will be welcomed officially into our fellowship.

**Profession of Faith Procedure**

*Revised January 2012*

- NCRC will hold regularly scheduled Pre-Confession classes.
- After taking the classes, candidates for Public Profession of Faith should approach the Pastor or any elder, who then informs the Pastoral Council.
- The Pastoral Council will appoint two elders to interview the prospective candidates.
  - The interview should be a minimum of one-half hour.
  - Sample questions are available. Ask Pastor or Pastoral Council Secretary
  - Topics covered could/should include:
    - Bible/Creed Knowledge
    - Reformed Doctrine
    - Personal Faith & Life
    - Love for the CRC & its Ministries
    - Privileges & Responsibilities of Professing Membership in the Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church & in the Christian Reformed Denomination in North America
    - Review the four Profession of Faith questions the Pastor will ask you during the public service (PH 964/5).
- The Interviewing Elders will
  - Tell the candidate whether or not they believe the interview was successful.
• Go back to the next Pastoral Council meeting with their recommendation to have that body affirm (or deny) the request.
• Relay the decision of the Pastoral Council to the candidate, and if successful, have him/her set up a date for the Public Profession of Faith that is mutually acceptable to the parents, the pastor, and any other candidate & his/her family.
• Encourage the candidate to go to the Church Office to choose a devotional or inspirational book from the library on the wall, one that will help the candidate in his/her walk with the Lord and His people, and then to give it to the Executive Assistant temporarily.
• Be prepared to present the candidate with a few appropriate words of encouragement, as well as the book chosen, in the church service.
• The Executive Assistant will
  • Have the book inscribed and contact the interviewing elder when ready.
  • Receive announcement from the Administrative Clerk and put in the church bulletin for two consecutive weeks prior to the Public Profession of Faith date.
• The Pastor will
  • Contact the families to finalize an agreed-upon date for the Public Profession(s).
  • Remind the candidate(s) at the end of the service to form a congratulatory receiving line in the upper or lower lobby.

**Censura Morum – Mutual Censure**

*Church Order art. 36b*

The council, at least four times per year, shall exercise mutual censure, which concerns the performance of the official duties of the officebearers.

Mutual censure must be exercised *at least* four times per year. It ought to be apparent that there may be many more than four times a year when the council will want to discuss the work of its membership and ways and means by which they may be more effective in representing the Lord Jesus Christ in the leadership of the church.

The practice of mutual censure used to be connected with the quarterly celebration of the Lord’s Supper, but this is by no means required by article 36b, and may, in fact, detract from the true purpose of mutual censure.

The purpose of mutual censure is to encourage councils to discuss together the work which the Lord has committed to the church and its officebearers. In some councils mutual censure has become a mere form or an occasion to find fault with each other. This easily occurs when a chairman asks, “Does anyone have anything for mutual censure?” and officebearers respond with “no.” Mutual censure demands a positive rather than a negative approach.

Mutual censure should be a time for fruitful discussion about the work of the Lord, the program of the congregation, ways and means to encourage the members of the congregation in their ministries, and the development of dynamic spiritual leadership by the officebearers. With such discussions, prayers, and efforts we may expect development in our congregations of the ideals which Paul sets forth in Ephesians 4:11-16, namely “the equipment of the saints, for the work of ministry.”
Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church – Nomination for Office Bearers

We are engaging in an annual process for selecting new elders and deacons to serve in our church body beginning in March 2009 (3 year term). Our nomination process incorporates both council leadership and meaningful congregational input. The council of our church invites and encourages all members to prayerfully consider our congregations’ leadership needs to make nominations for new executive elders, pastoral elders, youth elders, and deacons. We encourage you to pray about possible candidates, talk to people about their potential passions and gifts and submit names to the council.

Please consider your nominations in light of Biblical guidelines and local membership involvement:

Through the grace of God, office bearers demonstrate Christian character, expressed in Biblical guidelines in Acts 6, 1Timothy 3, Titus 1, and 1 Peter 5, including:

Committed believer
Good reputation with community
Respectable
Hospitalable
Not quarrelsome
Not addicted to wine
Not self willed
Not quick tempered
Just
Free from love of money
Able to manage own household
Loving what is good

Visionary or Member-leadership qualifications include:

Relational: does this person complement the current council, pastoral elder or deacon teams in terms of gifts, passion and personality? (See other side for list of current and retiring members)

Mission and values: does this person support our purpose and values and is he able to pursue ministry according to the direction set by our church body?

Engaged: does this person participate by wholeheartedly giving time, talent and treasure to our church’s ministry?

Make a nomination:

On the other side of this sheet there is a form for submitting your nominations. When you make a nomination please:

In light of the considerations above, try to highlight your sense of the person’s qualifications on the nomination form.

Pray as you consider this person, seeking to discern what position they might best serve in, true to their gifts, interests and personality. Indicate which position you are nominating them to.
Talk to the person about your intention to nominate. Your contact may encourage them to consider what God may be calling them to.

A husband and wife cannot serve on Council at the same time.

Form for Nominations to Council, Executive Elder, Pastoral Elders, Youth Elders, and Deacons

Your Name: ________________________________________________________________

Nominees:
1. _______________ For (Please circle): Executive Elder  Pastoral Elder  Youth Elder  Deacon Elder

Qualifications:

2. _______________ For (Please circle): Executive Elder  Pastoral Elder  Youth Elder  Deacon Elder

Qualifications:

3. _______________ For (Please circle): Executive Elder  Pastoral Elder  Youth Elder  Deacon Elder

Qualifications:

Please submit this form to the church office or consistory by ____________.

A Look at our needs:

**Executive Elders** provide direction - setting leadership true to the church’s purpose and values, and is responsible for spiritual oversight and ministry accountability. Executive elders also serve as pastoral elders and on additional ministry teams, including membership, personnel, stewardship, and ministry oversight team.

New executive elders needed:

Continuing executive elders:

Retiring elders are:

**Pastoral Elders** guide the congregation in their walk with Christ by fostering a loving community and encouraging prayerful support for one another through small groups. They will be visitors of elder
districts, as well as being available to the individual members of the district. This is done through open communication, availability, approachability, and prayer.

New pastoral elders needed:
Continuing pastoral elder:
Retiring elders are:

**Youth Elders** oversee the doctrine and life of the youth of this congregation. Through programs and visiting they will give leadership in this area. They are to be active in the activities of the youth.

New youth elders needed:
Continuing youth elders:
Retiring elders are:

**Deacons** serve by showing mercy to the church and to all people. In Christ’s name the deacons relieve victims of injustice, demonstrating the care of the Lord in word as well as deed.

New deacons needed:
Continuing deacons:
Retiring deacons are:

**Covenant for Officebearers in the Christian Reformed Church**
*Adopted by Synod 2012*

We, [the undersigned], believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the inspired Word of God, which proclaims the good news of God's creation and redemption through Jesus Christ. Acknowledging the authority of God's Word, we submit to it in all matters of life and faith.

We affirm three creeds—the Apostles’ Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed—as ecumenical expressions of the Christian faith. In doing so, we confess our faith in unity with followers of Jesus Christ throughout all ages and among all nations.

We also affirm three confessions—the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dort—as historic Reformed expressions of the Christian faith, whose doctrines fully agree with the Word of God. These confessions continue to define the way we understand Scripture, direct the way we live in response to the gospel, and locate us within the larger body of Christ. Grateful for these expressions of faith, we promise to be formed and governed by them. We heartily believe and will promote and defend their doctrines faithfully, conforming our preaching, teaching, writing, serving, and living to them.

Along with these historic creeds and confessions, we also recognize the witness of *Our World Belongs to God: A Contemporary Testimony* as a current Reformed expression of the Christian faith that forms and guides us in our present context. We also promise to present or receive confessional difficulties in a spirit of love and fellowship with our brothers and sisters as together we seek a fuller understanding of the gospel. Should we come to believe that a teaching in the confessional documents is not the teaching
of God’s Word, we will communicate our views to the church, according to the procedures prescribed by the Church Order and its supplements. If the church asks, we will give a full explanation of our views. Further, we promise to submit to the church’s judgment and authority.

We honor this covenant for the well-being of the church to the glory of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

*To be signed by professors, ministers, commissioned pastors, elders, and deacons when ordained and/or installed in office.

Exclusion (Erasure), Lapsing, and the Other Thing
September, 2007
Pastor Randy Blacketer

The following is a summary of my understanding of the procedures prescribed by the Church Order and various synodical statements, along with information on the “other thing,” as explained to me by Prof. Henry DeMoor.

I. Exclusion from Membership (Erasure).

Exclusion of baptized members, formerly referred to as “erasure,” is a disciplinary act, covered under art. 81 of the Church Order. As such, it requires formal announcements during a worship service. Synod has come up with a form for such announcements; the form is appended to this document. As with all acts of discipline, the ultimate goal is the restoration and readmission of the excluded member.

a. Members by baptism who willfully neglect to make public profession of faith, or are delinquent in doctrine or life, being unfaithful covenant members, become the objects of ecclesiastical discipline, and when they persist in their sin, should be excluded from the church (as revised in the Acts of Synod 1965, p. 91).

b. When such unfaithful covenant members move elsewhere, they should not be given a certificate, but at best a testimony of baptism with a notation as to their conduct;

c. Before a consistory proceeds to exclude unfaithful covenant members,

1) An announcement, ordinarily without mentioning names, shall be made to the congregation with a request for prayer on behalf of them.

2) Thereupon the advice of classis shall be asked.

3) After the advice of classis has been received and before the final announcement of exclusion from the church is made, another request for the prayers of the congregation be made, this time mentioning their names (as amended, Acts of Synod 1974, p. 110).

d. The exclusion of unfaithful covenant members is to take place by officially informing the congregation, notifying the parties involved that they, due to their persistent unfaithfulness as covenant members, notwithstanding all ecclesiastical admonitions, will henceforth not be regarded as belonging to the church.

e. Excluded unfaithful covenant members who return with sorrow and repentance cannot be received back into the church except through profession of faith, while the consistory judges concerning every
individual case whether or not a separate confession of sin shall be required (Acts of Synod 1918, pp. 180-181). There can be no determined age for erasure of baptized members because circumstances vary greatly (Acts of Synod 1910, p. 59). If upon being censured the disciplined member becomes insane, the case remains in status quo as long as the insanity lasts (Acts of Synod 1898, p. 67).

II. Lapsing

Lapsing of membership, covered by Church Order art. 67, does not require the advice of classis or the series of announcements in a worship service, as is the case with exclusion or excommunication, although an announcement of some kind (e.g. in the bulletin) is in fact required. Lapsing of a person’s membership does have a disciplinary aspect to it, but falls short of formal discipline. There are two conditions under which lapsing of membership can take place.

A. Persons Who Move to an Area without a CRC Congregation. These persons have two options.

1. They may request that their membership be retained by the church of their former residence.
2. They may request that their membership certificates be sent to the nearest CRC.

— “If they fail to make such a request and do not transfer to a church near them, the consistory, having made serious attempts to rectify the situation, may declare their membership lapsed after a period of two years from the date of their departure. The member concerned shall be notified by the consistory of its action if at all possible.”


B. Persons Who Fail to Attend and Support their Church. This refers to persons, either baptized or confessing, who, for a period of at least two years, have not moved but fail to attend and support the congregation that holds their membership. The consistory may declare that the memberships of such persons have lapsed. But this can only be done when the following three conditions are present:

1. He/she claims to still be committed to the Christian faith.
2. He/she claims to be worshipping elsewhere.
3. The consistory is not aware of any public sin requiring discipline.

Grounds:

a) Since membership involves both rights and obligations, the right of membership maybe forfeited when the obligations of membership in a local congregation are refused.

b) After an adequate period during which the elders instruct the member in his responsibilities as a member of the congregation, his membership has become meaningless, and the action of declaring the membership lapsed is simply an acknowledgment of an already existing rupture between the member and the congregation.

c) This provision has become necessary because of the increasing trend on the part of many churches and fellowships to ignore or reject the significance of membership in the visible church.
d) This is consistent with the decision of synod that one who has separated himself from the fellowship of the congregation by moving way and takes no action to become a member of another church may also lose his membership by consistorial action.

e) This will assist consistories, who at present face the alternative of taking no effective action with such a member or proceeding to erase or excommunicate him from the body of Christ, by providing a way of removing his name from the membership rolls without being required to pass judgment on his relationship to the church universal (Acts of Synod 1976, p. 25).

Appropriate announcements must be made by the consistory to the congregation regarding such lapsed memberships and the person involved must be notified (Acts of Synod 1976, p. 25). A proposed form for announcement was presented to the Synod of 1976 by the study committee as follows:

After appropriate admonitions the consistory should have the right to make an announcement to the congregation to this effect: For over two years Mr. ______ has separated himself from the life and fellowship of the congregation. He claims to be a Christian and asserts that he is attending another church, but he will not request that his membership be sent to this church. The consistory has sought to point out the significance of membership in the visible church to him but finds itself unable to minister effectively to him under these conditions. By his own action he has forfeited his rights of membership and has made his relationship to the congregation meaningless. For that reason the consistory now declares that his membership has lapsed.

To say this would be to withhold judgment as to his place in the kingdom of God, while at the same time it would declare to him and to the congregation that he had forfeited the rights and privileges of belonging to the visible body of Christ as it came to expression in that local congregation. Such a declaration must ultimately be made if we are to maintain the purity of the church and fulfill our responsibility as officebearers who will one day be called to account for the members entrusted to our care.

Acts of Synod 1976 p. 598

III. The “Other Thing”

A. The “other thing” refers to the practice of CRC churches in cases that fall between these two areas. This practice is not covered in the church order; and when it occurs, it usually indicates that the consistory has “dropped the ball,” so to speak, with regard to dealing with erring or absentee members in a timely fashion. This third category is to be avoided, and need not be implemented if the consistory properly carries out its pastoral duties.

B. This third, unofficial category comes into play when there has been a long period in which there has been no significant contact between the person in question and the congregation, and in which the process of church discipline would, in the judgment of the consistory, no longer be meaningful or productive.

C. In such cases, after the consistory has attempted to make contact with the person, the consistory may issue a letter indicating that the person, by his or her actions, has in effect indicated that he or she has resigned his or her membership in the congregation.
Ministry Volunteer Standards  
*Created November 17, 2011*

Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church values its ministry volunteers. As a Christian church that seeks to glorify God, to be obedient to his Word in Scripture, and to witness to the Christian faith, we also have certain lifestyle and conduct expectations of those who volunteer to lead and serve in the ministries of our congregation. Leaders and volunteers are expected to aspire to lead a Christian lifestyle, to witness to their faith, to maintain healthy spiritual practices, and to cultivate respectful standards of communication. Ministry leaders and volunteers agree to adhere to these standards, and agree that when these standards are violated they submit to correction and, if warranted, removal from leadership or service in that ministry.

These standards apply to leaders and volunteers in all of our ministries, including Sunday school and catechism; Gems and Cadets; Teen Club and Youth Ministry; Coffee Break; music groups; and members of church committees. Where required, volunteers undergo background checks in order to comply with our Safe Church policy. Chairs of committees and leaders of ministries are entrusted with ensuring these standards are maintained, and are encouraged to seek advice from the pastors and council when necessary.

**Lifestyle Standards**

Leaders and volunteers are called to live a life worthy of the calling they have received from Jesus Christ (Ephesians 4:1) and to witness to the good news of salvation by the way they live their lives (Matthew 5:16). Activities that would constitute violations of this standard include but are not limited to behaviors such as habitual drunkenness and drug abuse, marital unfaithfulness or premarital sex or cohabitation, use of pornography, criminal conduct, and physical or verbal abuse. The council may, at its discretion, ask persons who are undergoing a separation or divorce to step back from their ministry for a time in order to focus on their own spiritual and emotional healing.

**Church Commitment**

Leaders and volunteers are expected to be professing members in good standing of Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church, with the exception of baptized members who may not have yet made profession of faith. Any exceptions to this requirement must be approved by council. Leaders and volunteers are expected to regularly attend worship services. It is particularly important that catechism teachers and mentors understand and affirm the Reformed perspective on the Christian faith.

**Communication Standards**

Ministry leaders and volunteers commit to supporting the leadership and staff of Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church. They also commit to maintaining Christian standards of grace and respect in their words and communication (Colossians 4:6). Leaders and volunteers commit to avoiding malicious gossip and slander, destructive criticism of other volunteers or the church leadership, and spreading rumors. Ministry leaders commit to maintaining appropriate confidentiality when people speak to them in confidence.
Worship Services Guidelines

Worship Planning Timeline
January, 2008

Regular Worship Services
- 1 month in advance Pastor emails Preaching Schedule to Executive Assistant
- 2 weeks before date of service Executive Assistant will email texts to Musician
- Tuesday 12:00 noon Musician will:
  - email chosen songs to Executive Assistant (with CCLI song number/One License words)
- Wednesday noon before date of service Pastor will email to Executive Assistant:
  - Cross Training Scripture and Lesson title
  - Call to Worship
  - God’s Greeting
  - Confession, Assurance of Pardon
  - Sermon title
  - Response Song (if suitable one known, or if Musician could not find song)
  - Call to Discipleship
  - Doxology
  - Communion or installation liturgy, baptism information
- Wednesday Executive Assistant will:
  - merge songs with Pastor information
  - get final approval from Pastor
- Thursday Executive Assistant will email completed liturgy to Musician

Special Services
(Lent, Good Friday, Easter, Thanksgiving, Advent, Christmas, New Year’s Eve)
- 3 weeks in advance Worship Committee member planning special service emails draft copy of service to Pastor, Executive Assistant and Musician
- 2 weeks before date of service Musician will email song lyrics with licensing information to Executive Assistant
- 1 week before date of service Pastor will email to Executive Assistant liturgy with all elements included.

Liturgy planning for Guest Pastor
- 3 weeks before date of service Executive Assistant contacts the Visiting Pastor
- 2 weeks before date of service Visiting Pastor will email to Executive Assistant:
  - Theme, Scripture passages, Sermon title
  - Response Song (if suitable one known, or if Musician could not find song)
- 2 weeks before date of service Executive Assistant emails all known liturgy information to Musician
- Theme, Scripture passages, Sermon title
**Basic Liturgy**

Gathering Songs  
Welcome  
*Call to Worship  
*God's Greeting  
*Song of Praise  
Confession  
Assurance of Pardon  
Children's Song: Children age 3 – 5 dismissed for interactive centers  

Scripture:  
Sermon:  
*Song of Response:  
Congregational Prayer  
Offering:  
Song During Offering  
*Call to Discipleship  
*Parting Blessing  
*Parting Song

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**Guidelines for Groups Leading Church Singing**

*Revised October, 2007*

We are very grateful for all the hard work that each of you do to prepare for leading our worship services in music throughout the year. Your selfless giving of time and talents greatly enhances our worship services. Thank you for your attention to the following guidelines:

When your group is scheduled to supply music for the whole worship service, please play approximately 5 minutes of organized music before the services begin, both the 10am and 11:15am services. If an organist is in charge of the whole service, he/she will supply the pre-service music. The purpose of this is to promote an atmosphere of preparation for worship.

When choosing songs for congregational singing, choose songs that are singable by a large group. Some songs are just not suitable for congregational singing.

When it is possible, choose songs that match the theme of the service. There should be only one “less familiar” song per service.

When teaching a new song, introduce it during an offertory or during pre-service music time. Words must be put on the overhead, so that learning will be enhanced.

Communicate with the power point operator so that everyone knows what is going on. Ask the power point operator to attend the pre-service practice time so he/she can familiarize themselves with the songs and how you plan to sing them. The operator should check the words of the songs so they match with what the group will be singing.

Let the church Executive Assistant know which songs you will sing as soon as possible so she can get on with her work of putting the service together.

Make sure the songs you use are covered by one of the two licenses for using music held by our church, CCLI or One License. If the song is covered by One License, please forward the song title, author and composer of that song to the church Executive Assistant.

Each group is responsible for setting up and taking down the sound equipment they use.

Any questions, comments or suggestions can be directed to the Worship Committee. We welcome your feedback.
An Introduction to CrossTraining for Visiting Pastors

January, 2008
By Pastor Randy Blacketer

At Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church we have our second service first. That is, at 10:00 a.m. we have a teaching service that replaces the traditional second service. It is different from that traditional second service, however, in a number of ways. First, it is explicitly and intentionally a teaching service, and not so much a worship service, though it includes a song, a blessing on the children, and two brief prayers. Secondly, it is only 45 minutes long. And lastly, it includes a time of discussion and questions from the congregation.

Anyone who can lead a Bible study or conduct a catechism class can conduct our CrossTraining service. It’s really not that difficult. There is a standard format that we follow, which is included below. Basically, all you have to provide is a 20-25 minute lesson, which can be followed with 10-15 minutes of discussion and questions.

Topics for the teaching service could include Lord’s Days from the Heidelberg Catechism or other selections from the Reformed confessions or the Contemporary Testimony. But your lesson could also focus on any aspect of Christian life and discipleship, or any topic of current interest to the life of the church. We have had lessons on everything from Reformed eschatology to The Da Vinci Code. In that respect it is wide open. The purpose is to provide God’s people with solid instruction in Christian faith and discipleship from a Reformed perspective. It is a new way to provide what the traditional second service was originally intended to provide.

One thing to keep in mind as you choose and prepare your lesson is that the audience for CrossTraining includes nearly the whole congregation, from grade seven and older. Thus it is helpful to try to make the language and concepts as clear and accessible as possible. The teenagers and young people are listening, even though they may be reticent to ask questions. Also, the more practical and down-to-earth the lesson is, the more the congregation will find it edifying and capture their interest and engage their thinking caps.

I end my lessons with three questions for discussion, in an attempt to kick start the discussion time. After the lesson itself, in which I lay out the basic issues and arguments, I open it up for questions and comments from the congregation, and I step down from the pulpit to field these questions. It is traditional in Neerlandia to have a moment of awkward silence while people try to work up the nerve to ask a question. Once the questions start coming, I repeat the question or comment for the benefit of the congregation, and then I try to offer some intelligent reply.

It is fairly important to end on time, because we have a thirty minute time of coffee and fellowship scheduled from 10:45-11:15. This time is also an important part of connecting, enjoying fellowship, and participating in the communion of the saints.
An Outline of the Cross Training Service at Neerlandia CRC

1. Opening
We begin on time, at 10:00 a.m. and announce and sing the opening song. Neerlandia is sometimes challenged in the beginning-on-time department. You may receive a brief introduction from a council representative, who also may announce this first song.

2. Prayer
After the song, the pastor leads in a brief and simple prayer of invocation. The model that I use follows:

   Dear God,
   we come to learn about you today, and also to worship you.
   We come to sing, pray, and listen.
   You always hear us.
   Help us to hear you.
   In Jesus' Name. Amen.

3. Blessing of the Children
Ask the children who will be leaving for their Sunday School classes to rise, and then give them this or a similar blessing:

   Pastor: As you go to hear the stories of God’s love, may the peace of God go with you, and the love of Jesus surround you. (And now you say…)
   Children: Amen. (The children now leave for Sunday School)

4. Scripture Reading and Lesson
After reading a passage of Scripture and, optionally, a selection from the confessions, you go directly into your lesson. The closer you can keep it to twenty minutes, the better, especially if you hope to have some fruitful discussion time afterward. I conclude my lessons with some questions for the congregation to contemplate. These questions are more effective when they are simple and practical. In fact, the more profound the questions are, the more they produce silence, rather than discussion. They can even be factual questions to see how many people were listening carefully to the lesson.

5. Discussion Period
As mentioned before, the congregation needs a few moments of silence to think about questions and to get up the nerve to talk. But we usually end up having some stimulating, thought-provoking questions and comments. Also, try to remember to repeat the questions for the benefit of the rest of the congregation. I step down from the pulpit to field these questions from the congregation.

6. Closing Prayer
A minute or two before 10:45 you will want to wrap up the discussion and offer a brief prayer (equivalent to a prayer of application after the sermon.) The people are then dismissed for a time of coffee and fellowship.
Guidelines for Preparing Special Services
Revised April, 2007
By Pastor Randy Blacketer

There are a tremendous amount of things to think about when planning a worship service. There are the principles of Reformed worship, the particular season of the Church Year, the particular repertoire and rhythms of the congregation. It is quite a task to bring all these things together, and so I have prepared some guidelines that I hope will help with the planning of services.

Some Basic Guidelines
1. Reformed worship is both joyful and reverent. Our worship is God-centered, but it also takes account of our needs as followers of Jesus Christ. The liturgy of Reformed churches thus follows a kind of dialogue format: God calls us to worship and greets us; we respond in praise. God calls us to confess our sins; we respond with a prayer of confession, after which we hear God’s word of forgiveness.
2. The more that a worship service has a single, unified theme, the more effective that service is. Thus it helps when songs, litanies, scripture readings, and other components of the service reflect that theme.
3. The music we select for special services should reflect the healthy balance of classic hymns and Psalms along with more contemporary music that is biblically-based and theologically sound.
4. The special services that the worship committee plans are mostly services from the more important seasons of the liturgical year, namely, Advent and Christmas, Lent (including Palm or Passion Sunday and Good Friday), Easter, and Pentecost. The Worship Sourcebook, available in the church office and in electronic form, contains numerous resources for worship planning for these days and seasons, and for other special services such as Thanksgiving. The pastor also has resources for the Christian Year and the Revised Common Lectionary, which I use when I feel like it.
5. Certain special days and seasons have certain moods. Good Friday is usually a more somber worship service. Songs and litanies emphasizing Christ’s suffering on the cross are appropriate for Good Friday, although it is wise to avoid too triumphant a tone. The triumph comes on Easter Sunday. The songs on Easter Sunday should not focus on the cross, but on the resurrection and the new life that Christ brings by his victory over death. If there is a confession of sin on Easter, it should not be a lament. There is no lamenting on Easter. In Advent, we look back to Jesus’ first coming to earth, and we look forward to his second coming to redeem his world and his people. Anticipation and expectation mark the mood of the Advent season.

Elements of the Service
There are certain basic components that go into making a well-balanced worship service.

1. God Calls Us to Worship. Worship begins with a word from the Lord, calling his people to worship him. Calls to worship are often taken from the Psalms, and I often use the Psalm from the Revised Common Lectionary for that Sunday as the basis for the Call to Worship. Often it is in a responsive format. Sometimes a prayer asking for God’s presence is used to begin a service (called an Invocation). A service can have either a call to worship or an invocation, but not both.
2. **God Greets His Worshipping People.** Our greeting is preceded by the words of Psalm 124:8: “Our help is in the Name of the LORD, who made the heavens and the earth.” This element, sometimes called a Votum, is followed by the Greeting proper, which can be customized to reflect the special day. The standard one we use is: “Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, through the power and presence of his Holy Spirit.” This is followed by the congregation receiving that greeting by saying, “Amen.” It is legitimate to separate these by a song of praise; but our regular practice is to have such a song immediately following the greeting.

3. **We are Reconciled to God.** In the Reformed worship tradition, it is important to receive the assurance of God’s forgiveness before we get too far into the service. It reminds us of the holiness of our God, the reason why we praise him, and reassures us of God’s forgiveness in Jesus Christ. This part of the service can include a more or less elaborate Call to Confession, where God’s people are invited to confess their sins. This is followed by a Prayer of Confession, which the pastor or liturgist leads, and which may or may not be in litany (responsive reading) form and may or may not include a time of silence for individual confession of sin (this is the only circumstance in which I use silent prayer in public worship). This is followed by the Assurance of Pardon, a scriptural declaration that God forgives those who confess and repent of their sins and trust in Jesus Christ for their forgiveness. The service of reconciliation should be in every service, the only possible exception being Easter Sunday. The Law of God can also be incorporated here, as a teacher of sin, before the prayer of confession, or as a guide for the life of thankful discipleship, in which case it would follow the assurance of pardon. Typically we include the Law or other exhortations to holiness at the end of the service, as we go out into the world to witness to our faith.

4. **As a response to God’s forgiveness,** we have been using a Confession of Faith, usually the Apostles’ Creed, but on occasion it can also be the Nicene Creed or a selection from our Reformed Confessions (The Heidelberg Catechism, The Belgic Confession, The Canons of Dort). We include the Apostles Creed in morning worship because we no longer have two worship services on Sunday, and it is an essential part of worship, and one that followers of Jesus should know by heart. It can be omitted on occasion for reasons of time, but it absolutely may not be omitted when we celebrate baptism or the Lord’s Supper. During special seasons, it might be replaced by a special litany for Advent, Lent, etc.

5. **At this point in our service we have a Children's Song,** which should be particularly suited for the children, and, if possible, related to the text or theme of the service. If there is a Children’s Sermon, it should precede the children’s Song. And if there is a children’s sermon, it should be short, sweet, simple, biblically-based, and to the point. After the children’s song, children age 3 to 5 are dismissed for interactive centers.

6. **The Scripture Reading and the Sermon** are the center of Reformed worship. Sometimes a Prayer of Illumination is used before or after the reading of Scripture. Some churches have three or more readings of Scripture, which they take from the Revised Common Lectionary. These would include an Old Testament reading, a Psalm, a Gospel reading, and a reading from the Epistles. I often choose texts from the lectionary, especially during the seasons of Advent through Pentecost. Sometimes the Advent or Lent series in Reformed Worship take little or no account of the
lectionary, which I find frustrating, and so I will sometimes stick with the lectionary. I usually follow the sermon with a brief prayer of application. At some point I would like to introduce the following habit: When the pastor or lector finishes reading the scripture he/she says, “This is God’s Holy Word,” and the congregation responds: “Thanks be to God!”

7. A **Song of Response** follows the sermon. If you’re lucky, there will be a song that incorporates part of the sermon text. Most of the time I pick this song, because I have some slight inkling of what I’m most likely going to preach about. But if there is a song that really goes with the theme of the service, feel free to suggest it.

8. The **Congregational Prayer** follows. On special days, and especially worship services that occur on a weekday, a special prayer for the day replaces the congregational prayer. For example, on Ascension Day we would have a prayer praising God for exalting Jesus to rule by his side, etc.

9. The **Offering** is not just housekeeping; it is an integral part of our worship. It is never referred to as a “collection.” Sometimes the offering is included in the Lord’s Supper as our response to the Lord feeding us by his body and blood.

10. The **Lord’s Supper** is scheduled nine times per year, and always on Good Friday and New Year’s Eve. In the past few years we have also been celebrating communion in the joint Ascension Day service that rotates among our congregation, the Barrhead CRC, and St. Mary Abbot’s Anglican. I use variations on the Great Thanksgiving Eucharist, which goes back to the early church. Certain parts of the Lord’s Supper litany, such as the pastor saying, “The Lord be with you,” and the response: “And also with you,” are an integral part of the communion liturgy and should not be separated from that liturgy.

11. **Baptism** is something that you probably should not have to worry about when planning special services. The only thing to be aware of is that sometimes we end up with a time crunch when we have sacraments, professions of faith, or the installation of officebearers. Easter Sunday is a particularly appropriate day for baptism, as it was the main day for baptisms in the early church.

12. Usually, near the end of the service, we have some kind of **Call to Discipleship**, sometimes called “Rule for Our Lives,” which is perhaps less satisfying a term. This can be a reading of Scripture, particularly the Law, but also other appropriate passages, or it can be in litany (responsive reading) format.

13. The congregation can respond to this call with a **Doxology**, which is a brief song (no more than two stanzas) of praise to God. Sometimes it is sung after the Benediction, or split up so that a stanza or two is sung before the benediction, and a final stanza afterwards.

14. The **Benediction** is God’s parting blessing. I usually preface it with the words: “People of God, go in peace,” followed by a biblical or biblically-based blessing. Like God’s Greeting, some benedictions are particularly appropriate for special days and seasons.
Welcome to our fellowship! Today we are celebrating the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper (Holy Communion). As a Christian community that recognizes one universal Christian church that transcends denominational boundaries, we invite you to consider joining with us in the celebration of this sacrament, after prayerful and sincere reflection on the biblical requirements for participating in the Holy Supper of our Lord.

The Lord’s Supper is exclusively intended for Christian believers who are truly sorry for their sins, who trust in Jesus Christ alone for their forgiveness, and who believe that his death on the cross makes believers right again with God. It is for believers who seek to grow in their faith and to be strengthened for a life of service to Christ and his church in the world.

The sacrament celebrates our unity and fellowship as Christians. For this reason it is intended for those who have made a public profession or confirmation of their Christian faith. By this faith we mean the historic, orthodox Christian teachings that are embodied in the ancient universal creeds, such as the Nicene Creed and the Apostles Creed.

The Reformed understanding of the Lord’s Supper is that in the eating and drinking of the bread and wine the Holy Spirit makes Christ present to us in a spiritual way. The Reformed liturgy of the Lord’s Supper calls believers to “lift up their hearts to the Lord,” signifying that in a mysterious way the Holy Spirit enables us to enjoy true fellowship or communion with the real flesh and blood of Jesus Christ. By our faith in Christ we truly receive the power of his broken body and shed blood as we eat the bread and drink the wine of the Lord’s Supper.

The Bible warns those who willfully continue in their sins not to participate in the Lord’s Supper, otherwise, they would eat and drink judgment on themselves. But this warning is not intended to discourage sinners from participating in the sacrament, because God promises forgiveness for those who confess their sins to him. The sin that remains in our lives against our will is no obstacle to participating in the body and blood of our Savior Jesus.

Participating in the Lord’s Supper requires some preparation and self-examination. It you have questions about whether you should participate, we invite you to talk with the pastor or an elder of the church. Otherwise, if time permits before the service, please speak to one of our elders, who are greeting people as they arrive for worship. If you feel that you have not had enough time to reflect on what the Lord’s Supper means for you, or whether you should participate in the sacrament with us, we invite you to share in our worship of God even if you do not take part in the Lord’s Supper this Sunday.
Communication Guidelines

Bulletin Policy

The purpose of the bulletin is to communicate information to the congregation that will assist members to be connected with the body of Christ locally and denominationally.

1. The deadline for bulletin announcements (unless otherwise communicated) is Thursday at 12:00 noon.

2. The deadline for liturgy changes:
   a. Regular Worship: Tuesday at 12:00 noon.
   b. Special Services: Information for special services needs to be submitted 1 week before regular services. Eg. Lent, Good Friday, Easter, Thanksgiving, Advent, Christmas

3. Announcements communicated through the bulletin are:
   a. worship information
   b. expressions of congratulations, sympathy, gratitude eg. Births, deaths, profession of faith, congregational meetings, officebearer changes (submitted by clerk)
   c. congregational prayer requests, wedding, family updates (submitted by family)
   d. announcements for children and youth, adult, and general church ministries
   e. financial/offering information (submitted by committee delegate and bookkeeper)
   f. volunteer schedules
   g. weekly calendar of church ministries

4. Brief announcements are preferred by email and can be:
   a. e-mailed to church at neercrc@xplornet.com
   b. left in the north door mailslot before Thursday morning (marked “church office” mailbox)
   c. short composed announcements may be faxed to church (674-4810)
   d. short composed announcements may be phoned to the executive assistant at (674-8492)

5. Community announcements may be placed in the bulletin if space permits:
   a. Specific causes that are approved by the Clerk of Council and/or Pastor
   b. Neerlandia Public Christian School announcements
   c. King’s University College announcements
   d. Causes supported by the NCRC
   e. Classical announcements
   f. Denominational announcements
   g. Announcements from other congregations inserted at the discretion of Executive

6. Announcements to be avoided:
   a. Endorsements of Political parties
   b. Employment opportunities (these are placed on the Bulletin Board in foyer)
   c. Boarding and Rental opportunities (these are placed on the Bulletin Board in foyer)

7. Maximum time that the same bulletin announcement can be run consecutively is 3 weeks.
   (Exceptions are to be cleared by Clerk of Council and/or Pastor)
8. Bulletins are copied and collated in the church office on Thursday. Bulletins are mailed to all congregation members through the mailboxes before Sunday. Extra copies are prepared for ushers to distribute.

9. Uncertainty concerning an announcement may be approved by the Clerk of Council.

10. Anonymous announcements will not be printed

11. Bulletin Mailings:
   a. Weekly bulletins may be sent (free of charge) to shut-ins who request them.
   b. Bulletins may be emails to those gone for a period of time by providing email address to Executive Assistant in the church office.

**Mailbox Usage Policy**  
*Revised March, 2008*

The purpose of the church mailboxes is to provide a convenient and low cost means for the distribution of church-related materials and to improve the flow of information among our members.

1. The congregation should feel free to use the mailboxes for the distribution of personal non-business-related materials.

2. Distribution of mail by non-profit organizations, which are supported by Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church, is permitted.

3. Distribution of business-related materials by members, while permitted, is not encouraged.

4. The Council reserves the right to disallow distribution of materials if they believe the number, frequency, or nature of the mail to be inappropriate.

5. Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church Staff will not copy, distribute, handle, mail, or return materials which are not related to the work of the church.

6. Materials which are not picked up will be disposed of periodically.

**Wedding Guidelines**

**Policy Regarding Wedding Ceremonies**  
*Revised June 2008*

Your wedding day and ceremony are very special and memorable occasions for you, and we at Neerlandia CRC want to do everything we can to help you enhance its meaning and significance. We are pleased to be able to share in your joy and be part of your memories.

In order to help us get started on the right foot, we have prepared this list of wedding policies. Mutual agreement to these policies will begin the process leading to a joyful and meaningful wedding ceremony.

All marriages performed at Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church will be done in Christ. Since this is a Christian church, we wish to assure that all weddings performed here are specifically Christian in nature, acknowledging Christ as the Lord of all areas of life, adhering to the Biblical teaching regarding marriage, and glorifying to God. Thus, the marriage ceremony must be thoroughly Christian in all its
parts, reverent and orderly, and respectful of the Christian teachings and traditions concerning marriage. The following policies have been instated to ensure the practice of these principles. Any exceptions or modifications to this policy must be approved by the consistory.

1. Only marriages where both the groom and the bride are committed and practicing Christians will be performed at Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church.

2. While Neerlandia CRC firmly opposes cohabitation and does not permit cohabitating couples to marry in the church, such couples should not automatically assume that they cannot be married in Neerlandia church if they have lived together. The pastor will work with such a couple to bring them to a point where they can remedy their situation in advance of the wedding date. Neerlandia CRC, in keeping with biblical teaching, believes that cohabitation (living together before marriage) is detrimental to the success of the marriage, degrades the holy covenant of marriage, trivializes the sexual union of man and woman, and demonstrates disregard for God’s commandments regarding marriage and sexuality. The purpose of this policy is to help such a couple to start their marriage off right, from a spiritual perspective; to preserve the sanctity of the marriage covenant in the face of ever-increasing attack and degradation; and, in accordance with Reformed church discipline, to maintain the holiness of the church of Jesus Christ.

3. All couples will meet at least twice with the pastor to discuss the meaning of Christian marriage, and in order to plan the wedding ceremony. In addition, the pastor is available for premarital counseling. The pastor uses the FOCCUS Marriage Preparation Inventory, which requires that the prospective bride and groom take a kind of test that identifies areas of strength as well as potential challenges.

4. All couples are encouraged to make use of additional marriage preparation resources, such as the Marriage Preparation course at Cornerstone Counseling Centre, the Marriage Preparation Seminar sponsored by the Christian Reformed Ministerial Association of Greater Edmonton, and Engaged Encounter.

5. The pastor will attend and direct the wedding rehearsal. The ceremony should be completely planned by the time of the rehearsal; major changes should not be introduced at the rehearsal.

6. All music selected for the ceremony must be appropriate to the occasion and non-offensive to Christian teaching. Purely secular music is discouraged.

7. The vows selected or written by the couple must be specifically Christian. They must be in the form of a solemn promise made to each other and to God and must indicate a life-long mutual and exclusive commitment to each other and to God. They will be reviewed and approved by the pastor.

8. In some circumstances, the couple may wish to have a pastor other than the pastor of Neerlandia CRC perform the wedding ceremony. This is permissible as long as we are given assurances from the pastor performing the ceremony that all Neerlandia CRC policies will be honored. A copy of these policies will be sent to the pastor, and a Neerlandia CRC representative will contact the pastor to ensure agreement.

9. All marriage parties must agree to abide by the building use policies that will be provided when you reserve the building.
10. If the pastor of Neerlandia CRC agrees to participate in a wedding that takes place off the premises, all the above policies will apply except #8 and #9. (If the wedding is done in another church, their policies must be coordinated with ours.)

We, the undersigned, agree to abide by this marriage policy.

____________________________________       ____________
Groom                                              Date

____________________________________       ____________
Bride                                              Date

____________________________________       ____________
Guest Pastor (If applicable)                      Date

**Disability Concerns Policy**

In keeping with biblical teachings, with our doctrinal standards, and with various decisions of the synods of the Christian Reformed Church in North America regarding people with disabilities we, the council of Neerlandia, adopt the following policy.

1. In this congregation we value people with disabilities, as created in the image of God, partners in the covenant, and as co-laborers in the kingdom of God.

2. We consider all people with disabilities and without, to have gifts from the Holy Spirit, and we encourage everyone to enrich congregational life by practicing their faith and using their gifts in ministry of discipleship, leadership and mission.

3. We will endeavor to integrate people with disabilities into all ministries and activities of the church. This includes worship, education, small groups, outreach, activities, etc.

4. We will seek to name, understand, and attend to the special, spiritual, physical and psychological needs of those of us affected by disabilities, including caregivers, and will offer training to respond appropriately to disability issues and to raise awareness in our congregation.

5. We will modify any policy, practice, procedure or architecture that tends to exclude those of us with disabilities from any aspect of congregational life.

**Medical Emergency Response Plan**

“My health may fail and my spirit may grow weak, but God remains the strength of my heart; he is mine forever.” Our bodies are amazingly resilient yet terminally fragile. And in spite of taking good care of our bodies, in spite of practicing healthy living, they sometimes fail and they do not last.

Psalm 73:26

In a congregation as large as ours, situations will arise that require medical assessment and attention. As the body of Christ we are responsible to care for one another as best we can with the knowledge and
skills we have. A number of our congregational members are trained in the professional health care field and obviously, in an urgent situation, they are the ones we rely on. However, there might be times when no medical personnel are around. Non-medical persons are able to assist when emergencies arise by remaining calm and by following an approved and understood plan.

The goal of our medical emergency response is two-fold:

1. To care for the individual and family and
2. To relay information and provide reassurance to others regarding the situation. This will also assist in deciding whether to continue the service/function.

Emergency response plans will depend on whether they are non-life threatening (NLT) which requires attention and monitoring, or life threatening (LT) which require immediate response. NLT examples are: fainting, shortness of breath, vomiting, nosebleed. LT examples are: anaphylactic shock, heart attack, loss of consciousness, choking, stroke, head/neck injury.

**First aid equipment** will be available in duffel bags:

- in the Medical Supply cupboard in the cloakroom
- in the parish nurse office, Room 5 in the basement.

A wheelchair for transporting will be kept in the cloakroom cupboard.

Two AEDs are located:

- under the stairs by the post office
- the front office of the Home & Farm Center during regular hours.

The **main foyer/west entrance** has been chosen as most appropriate place to assess an individual and allow EMS easy access to the building as well as providing a central meeting point for all involved in the situation.

When giving information to either family members or EMS personnel, stay calm by giving information only known with certainty: that the person is vomiting, lying on the floor, etc.

The entire congregation will be aware of/know the following important information:

**NCRC Street address:** 4913 – 50 St.        **NCRC legal land location:** SW 34-61-3-5.

This information will be posted beside each phone in the building.

The following phones in the church building are most suitable in an emergency:

- **Main Office:** 780-674-4232, **Kitchen:** 780-674-2664, **Room 5:** 780-674-9700.

However, each phone in the building will be labeled with its specific number and the call-out procedure (either 911 direct or 9-911).

Emergency response plans will depend on where and when the emergency occurs:

- a. The sanctuary during Sunday worship or other gatherings.
- b. The fellowship hall at coffee time or other gatherings.
- c. The nursery & classrooms during worship services.
- d. The office & classrooms & nursery during the week.
A. Sanctuary, during Sunday worship and other gatherings i.e. funerals, weddings

Non-Life Threatening

Step 1. Family/bystanders aware of situation and take person to the main foyer if possible; usher or designate in attendance to assist, get equipment if needed, and go with family to main foyer if needed.

Step 2. Family/bystanders assess the situation and if more help required have usher/designate find other medical personnel.

Step 3. Medical personnel evaluate situation; assess need for further intervention and continue to monitor situation.

Step 4. If appropriate and possible, usher/designate to relay to pastor/congregation that the situation is under control.

Life Threatening

Step 1. Family/bystanders aware of situation and call for help; nearby medical personnel respond and assess. Use a wave of arm/hand to indicate need for more assistance from other medical personnel.

Step 2. When usher/designate made aware of a medical emergency, they are to come forward to assist with duties as requested by medical personnel. Usher #1/designate to call EMS-911, give appropriate information, stay on line until dispatcher ready to disconnect and report back to medical personnel. Usher #2/designate to get AED from the post office and take back to scene. Usher #1/designate proceeds to outside the west front entrance to escort EMS to correct location inside building.

Step 3. After assessment, if appropriate, remove individual from area and continue care in main foyer. If not appropriate to move individual, continue care where they are, and relay to pastor/congregation what is happening if necessary.

Step 4. If situation requires CPR, evacuate sanctuary as necessary via appropriate exit(s) using all available ushers. Ushers or capable designates will ensure clear access to building and individual for EMS and ensure road to church not blocked, ensure west parking area available for ambulance, escort EMS to correct location inside building.

B. Fellowship hall, during coffee time or other gatherings

Non-Life Threatening

Step 1. Family/bystanders aware of situation and take the person to the main foyer if possible; usher/designate in attendance to assist as needed and go with family to main foyer.

Step 2. Family/bystanders assess the situation; if required have usher/designate find medical personnel.

Step 3. Medical personnel evaluate situation; assess need for further intervention and continue to monitor situation.

Step 4. If appropriate and possible, usher/designate to relay to gathering that situation under control.
**Life Threatening**

**Step 1.** Family/bystanders aware of situation and call for help; nearby medical personnel respond and assess. Use a wave of arm/hand to indicate need for more assistance from other medical personnel.

**Step 2.** When usher/designate made aware of a medical emergency, they are to come forward to assist with duties as requested by medical personnel. Usher #1/designate to call EMS-911, give appropriate information, stay on line until dispatcher ready to disconnect and report back to medical personnel. Usher #/designate to get AED from the post office and take back to scene. Usher #1/designate to go outside the west front entrance to escort EMS to correct location inside building.

**Step 3.** After assessment, if appropriate, remove individual from area and continue care in main foyer. If not appropriate to move individual, continue care where they are, and relay to gathering what is happening if necessary.

**Step 4.** If situation requires CPR, evacuate hall/area as necessary using all available ushers/designates. Ushers or capable designates will ensure clear access to building/individual for EMS, ensure road to church not blocked, ensure west parking area available for ambulance, escort EMS to correct location inside building.

C. **Nursery & classrooms during worship services**

**Non-Life Threatening**

**Step 1.** Volunteers calmly call for help if needed from others in nursery or classrooms.

**Step 2.** Volunteers assess and attend to situation as required, accessing medical supplies if needed from parish nurse office, Room 5.

**Step 3.** Volunteers ask usher/designate to calmly notify family member and escort to location.

**Step 4.** Volunteers/family monitor situation until resolved or if needing further intervention, ask usher/designate to call for medical personnel.

**Life Threatening**

**Step 1.** Volunteers call for help immediately. Notify usher/designate in attendance to call for medical personnel; also, calmly notify family member and take to location.

**Step 2.** Usher#1/designate to assist medical personnel with duties as required: call EMS-911, give appropriate information and stay on the line until dispatcher ready to disconnect, report back to medical personnel. Usher#1/designate to proceed to outside the west front entrance to escort EMS to correct location inside building.

**Step 3.** Usher#2/designate to get AED from post office and take back to scene.

**Step 4.** If situation requires CPR, continue care at site and evacuate room/basement as necessary using all available ushers/designates. Ushers or capable designates will ensure clear access to building/individual for EMS and ensure road to church not blocked, ensure west parking area available for ambulance, escort EMS to correct location inside building.
D. **Offices & Classrooms & Nursery, during the week**

**Non-Life Threatening**

**Step 1.** Volunteers calmly call for help if needed and attend to situation accessing medical supplies if needed from parish nurse office, Room 5.

**Step 2.** Volunteers calmly notify family member, if necessary.

**Step 3.** Volunteers stay with person until situation is resolved or family arrives.

**Step 4.** If situation deteriorates, call for medical personnel if possible or proceed to step 2 below.

**Life Threatening**

**Step 1.** Volunteers call for help immediately, preferably medical personnel if possible.

**Step 2.** Designate #1 to call EMS-911 from closest phone, give appropriate information and stay on line until dispatcher ready to disconnect and report back to medical personnel. Designate #1 to proceed to outside the west front entrance to escort EMS to correct location inside building.

**Step 3.** Designate #2 to get AED from post office and take back to scene. Calmly notify family member and escort to location upon arrival.

**Step 4.** If situation requires CPR, continue care at site and evacuate room/basement as necessary using available designates. Designates will ensure clear access to building/individual for EMS and ensure road to church not blocked, ensure west parking area available for ambulance, escort EMS to correct location inside building.

**Duties of Ushers or Capable Designates**

The reason we are asking for your help in implementing this plan is that your ability to locate people/equipment during our worship services and other large gatherings is vital in the first step to accessing medical help if needed.

1. Assist family to front foyer, and find other medical personnel to assist if requested.

2. Usher #1/designate to call EMS-911 from the nearest phone and stay on the line until the dispatcher is satisfied with information and ready to disconnect. Ushers/designates to know the kind of emergency: fire/police/medical, location and address of NCRC and phone number from which they are calling, and brief description of situation.

3. Usher #1/designate to confirm with medical personnel that 911 has been called before proceeding to outside the west entrance to direct EMS to correct location inside building.

4. Usher #2/designate to get AED from post office and bring back to scene.

5. If necessary, notify family members elsewhere in building or at home, stay calm and give only the information known with certainty and offer to escort them to correct location.
Safe Church Policy

Introduction

He will defend the afflicted among the people and save the children of the needy. (Ps. 72:4)

The purpose of the Safe Church Policy of the Neerlandia CRC is to ensure that our church and its programs remain a haven of safety for all who attend. Through education and awareness, we are mandated to enhance the safety of all who attend our church from any form of abuse and from false accusations of abuse, and prudently to guard the reputation of our congregation. This document contains policies and guidelines intended to foster this purpose.

What is Abuse?
The spiritual root of all forms of abuse is the misuse of power and authority. Abuse results in a breach of trust.

Abuse takes many forms, some more obvious than others. Abusers place their own needs and desires over and above the needs of others, using power to continue the abuse. In most situations, this behavior is continued until the abuser is caught and made accountable for his/her actions.

Types of abuse include the following:

- **Physical**: unacceptable or excessive means of physical discipline; or deliberate use of physical force
- **Sexual**: any sexual activity between an adult and a child, or unwanted sexual touching or advances between two people, including fondling, sexual harassment, exposure to pornography, and exhibitionism
- **Medical**: when a caregiver (intentionally or unintentionally) does not seek medical attention for an injury, disability, or illness that is life threatening, will cause serious impairment, or will pose a threat to public health and safety.
- **Emotional**: bullying, repeated threats, coercion, belittlement, humiliation, name calling, intimidation, excessive teasing, verbal harassment
- **Neglect**: intentionally expose a child to dangerous material, to leave a child without proper supervision for long periods of time, or leave a child with a caregiver who is a known abuser

Victims of abuse are varied in appearance: they may be young or old, rich or poor, male or female. But all victims share feelings of helplessness, blame, fear, pain, shame, worthlessness, and secrecy.

Definitions

**Candidate**: Any person who has expressed a desire to serve as an employee of Neerlandia CRC or in any volunteer capacity at Neerlandia CRC (including Council) and, subject to compliance with this policy, has been accepted by Council and/or the congregation to serve in that capacity.

**C.A.R.T.** The Classis Abuse Response Team of Classis Alberta North that has been created to deal with issues of abuse allegation and prevention among the member churches of Classis Alberta North. It is comprised of two major components.
**Advisory Panels** (also called Listening Panels) will, upon the request of Council of Neerlandia CRC convene when allegations are made by an adult against a past or present church leader in Neerlandia CRC. These panels consist of synodically-trained members and will not contain any members who may be in a conflict situation as regards the accuser or the accused. The use of an advisory panel is an ecclesiastical procedure intended to give the accuser and the accused a non-adversarial environment within which to discuss the allegations. The use of the advisory panel does not prevent the accuser from taking criminal or civil action if deemed necessary.

The **Education Group** consists of members of C.A.R.T who will provide training, education, resources or workshops about various topics related to abuse and its prevention as needed or requested.

**Child, Youth, or Minor:** Individual who is under the age of 18.

**Church Leader:** Any employee or volunteer of Neerlandia CRC who, as a result of that role, possesses a position of trust and responsibility amongst the members and/or visitors of Neerlandia CRC.

**Consistory:** The elected elders of Neerlandia CRC.

**General Council:** The governing body of Neerlandia CRC, consisting of the elected members of the Deaconate and the Consistory.

**Administrative Council:** The Administrative Council of Neerlandia CRC’s Council, which provides assistance in preparing matters for Council.

**Program Leaders:** Those volunteers or employees who are in charge of a particular church program.

**Safe Church Committee:** The committee of Neerlandia CRC whose mandate it is to ensure the efficient administration of the Safe Church Policy of Neerlandia CRC, the annual review thereof, and the compliance thereto by the applicable members and policies of Neerlandia CRC.

**Staff:** Any employee of Neerlandia CRC. Also, for the purposes of this policy, this will include any contractor employed by Neerlandia CRC on a regular basis whose duties include meeting with members of the congregation and/or visitors on behalf of Neerlandia CRC.

**Volunteer:** Any person who assists in the programs of Neerlandia CRC wherever such programs may occur. This includes church leaders, teachers, supervisors, helpers, ushers, committee members (where such a committee is involved with meeting and assisting members of the congregations and/or visitors), Council members, etc.

**How Do We Create a Safe Church?**

This policy, which is reviewed yearly, sets general guidelines for building up the safety for those people involved in Neerlandia CRC. Questions about this policy should be directed to the Safe Church Committee.

**Physical Building**

Any windows that allow unobtrusive observance into a room must not be covered with curtains, posters, furniture, or any other objects. A clear sightline into the room must be maintained.

When people are using the facility, adequate illumination must be maintained.
Screening Workers

Neerlandia CRC relies on volunteers to carry out many of its programs and activities. All volunteers and paid staff who will be working with children or youth must go through a screening process. A screening is a way to reduce the risk of abuse and protect our children and volunteers. It raises the importance of safety and indicates that Neerlandia CRC takes the safety of its members and visitors very seriously. The screening process for paid staff and volunteers is similar to the screening process that most businesses take when hiring employees: application, reference check, records check and personal interview. If a volunteer refuses to go through the screening process, he or she will be refused the right to volunteer with children or youth.

1. **Application:** All staff and volunteers must fill out and sign a written application. The application will ask for names and phone numbers of two people for background reference checks and have a release allowing the ministry leader to contact those people. The application will also contain a confidentiality agreement. Finally, the application will include an understanding of the goals of the ministry program and the expected duties of the applicant.

2. **Background Reference Checks:** Once an application is filed, the ministry leader will conduct two background reference checks, using the names the volunteers/staff provided on the application. The ministry leader will take written notes of these checks. These checks will provide “character testimonies” of the applicant.

3. **Record Checks:** At the time of application, the volunteer/staff will also receive instructions on how to obtain a Police Information Check (PIC) through the RCMP and Intervention Record Check (IRC) through Child and Family Services. PIC’s must be current within 3 years. IRCs are encouraged, but not mandatory. A volunteer who has difficulty obtaining clearance letters for either check can contact the Safe Church Committee for assistance.

4. **Personal Interview:** Once background checks are completed, the volunteer/staff must meet with the ministry leader (and any other people the ministry leader determines are necessary) for a personal interview. The ministry leader must take written notes during this process.

5. **Training:** All staff and volunteers must be trained in their position by the ministry leader. The training, which may be done individually or with an entire group, must cover pertinent aspects of the Safe Church Policy.

6. **Timelines for Screening Process:** The application process can be expected to take a couple of months, so it is important to begin the process BEFORE the applicant/staff engages in ministry. In all cases, however, a person who is new to Neerlandia CRC must wait a minimum of 6 months.

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5 Volunteers who are not working with children and youth do not need to go through this screening process. These volunteers may include volunteers leading adult Bible studies, serving coffee, leading worship services, enhancing the physical building (maintaining, decorating, etc), developing materials for church programs, and so on. Ministry leaders for these programs may, however, decide to adopt any or all parts of the screening process for that program. Because ushers work as hall monitors during children’s activities, they must go through the screening process.

6 Volunteers already working in programs when this policy takes effect must get a Police Info Check as soon as possible.
before volunteering in a position that requires working with children/youth. (This allows the person some time to adjust to the church, meet people, settle in, etc.) Both the Police Information Check and IRC must be performed every three years by all volunteers/staff, unless the Council Executive determines more frequent checks are necessary. The written application, background reference checks, and personal interviews are only necessary at the beginning of the volunteer/staff terms of ministry in that position.

A volunteer/staff member who has passed the screening process for one area of ministry can switch to another similar area of ministry without going through the entire screening process. However, every time a volunteer/staff member begins a new area of ministry, the volunteer/staff must complete a new written application and receive instruction for the new area of ministry. At that point, the ministry leader for the new area of ministry can conduct any parts of the personal interview process that may be applicable to the new position.

7. **Recordkeeping**: The volunteer application, notes from background checks, and notes from personal interviews must be maintained on file indefinitely in a confidential manner. The master list of people who have presented both Police Information Check and IRCs must also be kept in a confidential manner. (Note: this list will be reviewed once a year and those people whose Police Info Check and IRCs are over three years old will be asked to get new ones in a reasonable period of time.

**Supervision Guidelines**

1. **General Behavioral Guidelines When Dealing with Children/Youth**
   a. **Appropriate Behavior**: In evaluating your own behavior, you must ask not “What can I get away with doing?” but rather “How can I be trustworthy?” Love and caring can be shown by these and other appropriate ways:
      i. Bending down to a child’s eye level and speaking kindly to him/her.
      ii. Using appropriate touch. Touch can be supportive, but also can be misconstrued. Appropriate touch is also age-sensitive—it may be acceptable to hold a preschool child who is crying, but not a teenager. In the end, appropriate touch is difficult to legislate—be aware and cautious, so that your touch does not hurt someone and does not put you in an awkward or potential liable position. The recipient’s right to refuse displays of affection must be respected.
   b. **Inappropriate Behavior**: The following are examples of inappropriate behavior
      i. Kissing a child, coaxing a child to kiss you, extended hugging and tickling
      ii. Touching a child in any area that would be covered by a bathing suit (except when assisting a child in the washroom, in the presence of another adult)
      iii. Carrying older children or having older children sit on your lap
      iv. Being alone with a child
      v. Any physical discipline, restraint, threat of harm, humiliation, or yelling as a form of discipline for any child under the supervision of a person representing Neerlandia CRC

2. **General Policy Guidelines**
   a. All those involved in programs at Neerlandia CRC should always conduct themselves in a godly manner, being an example of obedience, respect, and honesty to those in their care. Staff (both
volunteer and paid) should avoid activities that could easily lead to allegations of abuse or harassment.

b. All the volunteers in one room should not be members from the same immediate family. This is for their own protection. Families may work together when other volunteers are present.

c. Volunteers or staff should not meet alone with a child/youth without another adult or leader nearby to observe.

d. If a child requires medical attention, the parents should be notified as soon as physically possible.

3. Nursery/Children’s Church Washroom Supervision Guidelines
   a. Whenever possible, parents/caregivers should take their children to the washroom prior to each class or service.
   b. **Nursery**
      i. Diaper changing should always take place in such a way that another nursery attendant can easily see the child that is being changed.
      ii. Nursery staff and helpers should not be alone with a child in a closed room without windows. If a child needs help in the nursery bathroom, the door of the bathroom should remain ajar.
   c. **Preschool Children** (Nursery, Interactive Centers or Children’s Church)
      i. If preschool children need assistance in the washroom, an adult may enter the washroom to assist, only under the following guidelines:
         ii. Whenever possible, women should assist girls and men should assist boys.
         iii. The washroom door must be propped open. The adult must stand in the doorway.

4. Nursery and Children’s Church Staffing and Supervision: Our desire is to provide a safe and loving atmosphere where the child feels comfortable and positive learning can take place. All activities must be conducted according to the following guidelines:
   a. **Attendance:** During the activity, children may only leave for illness, bathroom assistance, or for compelling reasons. Supervisors must be aware of any children leaving the activity.
   b. **Check out:** Children must be picked up by appropriate parent/guardian/designate. Children cannot leave the program unsupervised.
   c. **Ushers:** During Sunday worship services, the ushers have the role of monitoring hallways. Ushers, nursery supervisors, and children’s church leaders can “trade off” with each other if necessary (for example, if a female children’s church leader has a male child that needs supervision in the bathroom, a male usher can assist; if a female child needs assistance, a male usher could supervise the class while the female children’s church leader assists the child in the bathroom).
   d. **Supervisory Staff:** The program directors will make regular visits to the classrooms to make sure they are properly supervised.

5. Non Sunday Service Children/Youth Programs (Gems, Cadets, Catechism, Teen Club, youth, etc.)
   a. If groups are divided into classrooms, the program directors must make regular visits to the classrooms to make sure they are properly supervised.
b. All one-on-one outings involving a volunteer and child require notification to the program supervisor and parents with name, date, time and purpose.

c. Permission slips detailing the type and length of activity should be signed by the parents prior to outings and/or out-of-town activities. Permission slips should also identify consequences of misbehavior (so parents, leaders, and children know what the standards are and what the logical consequences are—even it means a child is brought home in the middle of the event). Church volunteers or staff transporting a child in a vehicle must have parental permission to do so.

d. Regardless of their relative ages, it is never appropriate for a youth group leader and a youth group member to date each other.

e. Adult supervision by a designated ministry leader must be provided at all times participants are at church and/or at an event (i.e., before and after)

6. Supervision Between Services

Four people, two males and two females will be assigned to be supervisors for one-half hour following any service when coffee is served. These people will walk through the sanctuary, foyer, basement and the church grounds. They should check the nursery, Sunday school rooms, bathrooms and any other unlocked rooms. This can be done individually or in pairs. That way there will be supervision and a watchful eye over our younger members.

Since we all enjoy our coffee break and no one wants to be a full-time monitor, we are asking you to contribute to our effort to maintain a Safe Church. Parents will receive a note in their mailbox for dates for supervision and a reminder will be put on the back page of the bulletin. If you are unable to take your turn, you are obliged to find your own replacement. Please remember that many hands make light work.

7. If A Sexual Offender Wishes To Worship With Us

In the case of a convicted sexual offender who wants to attend worship services, the council may engage that person in a process of making a covenant of conduct between the individual and the council, and the congregation will be appropriately informed. This covenant of conduct will impose certain restrictions on the individual at worship, and may provide for congregation members to be appointed to a “circle of accountability and support” for the individual. Each of these cases will be evaluated and the terms of the covenant and congregational disclosure will be adapted to suit the situation. The dual goal in such a covenant will be protecting children while inviting sinners to find forgiveness and healing through the presence of the Christian community.

Our Response

Reporting Procedures

It is critical that all members treat situations of abuse with utmost care and confidentiality. Any allegations of abuse, even if later proved to be unfounded, can haunt a person for life. Allowing abuse to continue by not responding appropriately to the situation can emotionally and possibly physically harm the victim.
**Reporting Critical Incidents**

Critical incidents are situations in which a person is injured while attending a church sponsored event. Critical incidents include medical injuries and accidents. (e.g. a youth sprains her ankle or a toddler bangs her head in the nursery) They also include cases of suspected abuse. If it is the former, follow the following guidelines:

Once necessary medical attention is provided, a witness of the event must fill out a Critical Incident Report, indicating the person involved, the supervisor’s name, the details of the incident, and so on. The ministry leader must be notified of the Critical incident. The ministry leader will make sure copies of the reports are given to the appropriate people and will file the original report in a confidential manner. Leaders of Neerlandia CRC programs should have Critical Incident Reports forms with them at all times; extra copies of forms will also be available in the church office.

As well as filling out the report, the witness must notify the parents (if the situation involves a child under 18) and the ministry supervisor. The ministry supervisor, at his/her discretion, will notify the Council Executive. Every two months, the Safe Church Committee will review all Critical Incident Reports. (If necessary, the committee will bring any concerns to the Council Executive)

**Reporting Suspected Abuse**

Alberta law states: “Any person who has reasonable and probable grounds to believe that a child is in need of protective services shall forthwith report the matter.” Abuse does not need to be proven--if the possibility exists, the situation must be reported.

Any member of Neerlandia CRC who suspects abuse or neglect involving children must report it to the Administrative Council. Any concerns relating to this abuse or neglect must be reported within 24 hours of learning about the situation. The member should not investigate the situation further; the member should just bring it to the Administrative Council. If the situation involves a person on the Administrative Council, the situation must not be reported to that person but to a different member of the Administrative Council. The person who brings forward the issue must also complete a Critical Incident Report, which must be kept on file in a confidential manner. The person filing the Critical Incident Report and the member of the Administrative Council must keep the situation confidential--the situation is not to be discussed with people other than the member(s) of Administrative Council who are aware of the situation.

The Administrative Council has the responsibility to do the following within 24 hours of learning about the situation:

- Contact the Classis Abuse Response Team (CART)
- Report to the authorities
- Obtain legal advice
- Report to the insurance company (See Appendix A, Reporting Flowchart, for phone numbers.)

If the alleged abuse involves a leader or representative of any program or activity sponsored by Neerlandia CRC, that person must be suspended immediately until the situation is resolved.
In all cases of alleged abuse, the members and Council of Neerlandia CRC must co-operate with civic authorities. In addition, no one may admit to any legal liability or make public statements regarding the situation unless advised to do so by legal and insurance counsel.

During the investigation of alleged abuse, it is critical that the alleged victim, alleged perpetrator, and their families receive compassionate support from Neerlandia CRC. This support must be provided by Council and congregational members in a way that also ensures that confidentiality is maintained.

Suggested Ways to Respond to Allegations of Abuse
Every time an allegation of abuse is made, the situation is unique. No policy can set forth the exact actions that must be followed in every case. In every case, advice must be obtained from abuse response teams (e.g. the Classis Abuse Response Team), legal professionals, counseling professionals, government agencies (e.g., Child and Family Services) and/or criminal justice workers (e.g., police officers). Nonetheless, the ideas following give suggestions that may be helpful in a situation where abuse is alleged.

1. General Comments
   a. Due process must be followed in the assessment of complaints.
   b. If an allegation is invalid, the accused’s credibility must be restored.
   c. If an allegation is valid, our response has the following goals:
      i. to protect and restore victim(s)
      ii. to restore the congregation
      iii. to restore the offending person
   d. If the offender is a leader in the church, to restore the integrity of the profession and restore the individual to professional health, if possible.
   e. In all cases of abuse, we must be prepared for a long, complex, wearying process. However, we must also remember that truth telling, justice making, support, and God’s gracious love hold the key for healing.

2. Response to the Victim
   a. Believe the victim’s story. Support the victim in “breaking the silence” and doing whatever is necessary to stop the abuse.
   b. Provide caring, sensitive support--appoint a support person.
   c. Offer support to the victim’s family. Do not withdraw. Treat this as you would other crises, offering practical as well as emotional support.
   d. Refer to therapy, as desired.
   c. Form special support groups around the victim(s); in the case of multiple victims, give the victims opportunities to meet together.

3. Response to the Offender
   a. Know that the offender will require therapy to overcome his/her tendency to abuse. Insist on professional treatment.
   b. Offer the offender a place to sort out spiritual issues of sin, guilt, repentance and forgiveness.
   c. Form support groups around the offender and around the non-offending spouse/family.
   d. If the offender is a leader in the church, undertake disciplinary action, such as handling of credentialing.
e. Immediately suspend the alleged offender, pending the result of investigation.

4. **Response to the Congregation**
   a. As a congregation, we must be firmly opposed to abuse of all kinds. Council and ministry leaders must be familiar with Neerlandia CRC’s Safe Church Policy and review it yearly.
   b. CART can provide resources and guidance for dealing with the situation.
   c. We must guard premature reconciliation or easy forgiveness. Justice making requires a remorseful recognition of wrongdoing by the offender, a genuine desire to make amends, and a commitment to change behavior.

5. **Response to the Wider Community**
   a. Have mechanisms in place for handling legal/insurance issues.
   b. Have mechanisms in place to ensure appropriate information regarding the abusers standing follows his/her relocation to other congregations.

**General Congregational Education on Abuse**

For the congregation to be prepared to deal effectively with situations of abuse when they occur, we need ongoing education. The denominational and community resources will be very helpful in this process. Here are some possibilities:

- Plan a sermon or a series of sermons on the topic
- Offer a Christian Education Elective on abuse
- Design a special event utilizing the expertise of an outside professional.
- Publicize community resources such as women’s shelters, rape crisis centers, and counseling services.
- Educate pastors and lay leaders to take note of warning signs of abuse and to follow their concerns with caring, open interest.
- Review the CRC NA Abuse Prevention Website, with materials from Beth Swagman.
Appendix A: Reporting Flowchart

**CART will assist in determining how to proceed from here. If a member of CART is not available in 24 hours, continue with the flow chart as applicable.**
Appendix B: How to Obtain Record Checks

Obtaining a Police Information Check through RCMP

All volunteers over 18 who work with youth or children must pass a Police Information Check (PIC) every three years. The volunteer must show the cleared PIC to the ministry supervisor and/or the church Executive Assistant. PICs that have been done for other reasons (e.g. work or other volunteer positions) may be used for this purpose.

A PIC indicates whether or not the person has been convicted of any criminal offences. The records check will either indicate that the person does not have any criminal offences or will indicate that the person may have criminal offences. The records check does not identify of which offences a person has been convicted.

To obtain a PIC from the Barrhead RCMP detachment, volunteers and staff who are residents of the County or Town of Barrhead, must present one piece of photo ID (e.g., Drivers License) during business hours (8:00am to 5:00pm) to the Barrhead RCMP office. You will get a form to fill out and once the check is done the office will phone the person making the request and they can then pick up the PIC using their photo ID. There is no charge for this service.

If the PIC is not cleared, the person must obtain their Police Information Check and prove to Administrative Council that they are suitable for the position for which they have applied.

Obtaining an Intervention Records Check through the Barrhead Area Office of Children’s Services

All volunteers over 18 who work with youth or children are encouraged to pass an Intervention Record Check (IRC) every three years. The volunteer will show the cleared check to the ministry supervisor and/or the churches Executive Assistant. IRC’s done for other reasons (e.g., work, other volunteer positions) may be used for this purpose.

An IRC indicates whether or not a person has ever been involved in a child welfare case. (If a person has been involved in a child welfare case but has been cleared, then the record will identify that the problem was unfounded)

To obtain an IRC, the volunteer must take two pieces of ID to the Barrhead Area Office for Children’s Services located in the Provincial Building in Barrhead. There is no charge for this service. The resulting check result will then be sent to the applicant directly.
Appendix C: Signs and Symptoms of Child Abuse

Abused children rarely exhibit just one sign that they are the victims of abuse. Some symptoms may also represent typical developmental changes or the after-effect of traumas in their lives other than abuse. Conversely, it is possible for abuse to be taking place without the appearance of noticeable symptoms because of the child’s ability to mask or deny what would otherwise be very confusing and painful to acknowledge. Generally, several signs observed over a period of time suggest that a child may be suffering from abuse.

**Infants and Pre-school Children**

1. Regression to an earlier stage of development such as baby talk. Thumb sucking, or bedwetting.
2. Change in social behavior – excessive crying or clinging, or becoming aggressive or withdrawn – that is not associated with normal developmental stages.
3. Physical manifestations such as loss of bowel control, bedwetting, frequent urination, headaches, stomach aches, breathing difficulties, sore throats accompanied by gagging, stains in the child’s underclothes.
4. Exhibiting signs of fear around a family member/familiar person, or fear of a familiar place/object.
5. Fear of being touched, shying away from physical contact. Resistance to being diapered or assisted to the bathroom.
6. Use of explicit language or sexual behavior that is beyond the child’s comprehension or life experience.
7. Unexplained injuries and/or bruises, repeated injuries blamed on the child’s carelessness, multiple bruises sustained in one event, or bruises to child’s midsection, back, head, or back of thighs; signs of scalding, burning, or distinctive bruising, such as the shape of a belt buckle; multiple bruises in various stages of healing.
8. Name-calling toward children, bullying behavior, sulking/brooding.
9. Fascination with fires: i.e. playing with matches, lighter.

**School-age Children**

1. Physical manifestations as above with addition of complaints of pain, irritation, soreness, redness on the child’s bottom, smearing feces on walls or objects.
2. Pattern of injuries, multiple injuries, injuries about the face or neck, failure to complain about or explain an obvious physical discomfort.
3. Unusual fears: a familiar person, a particular room, a particular object, or fear of new experiences.
4. Poor concentration in classroom.
5. Exhibiting adult-pleasing behaviors, striving for perfection, acting miserable if failing.
7. Acting enraged and out of control; expressing anger through destruction.
8. Shyness about physical touch.
9. Exhibiting sexual behavior beyond comprehension or maturity level; behaving in a sexual manner with other children or adults.
10. Exhibiting signs of needing to be in control of others or situations, bullying others.
11. Hostility and distrust of adults, mood swings and irritability, violent disruptions.
12. Acting out, including hoarding food and toys, lying, stealing, assaulting.
13. Frequent absences from school or other scheduled events either because of being punished or to hide bruises.
14. Low self-esteem, particular sensitivity to criticism.
15. Hyper-vigilance – excessive and suspicious watching of other people; is easily startled.
16. Preoccupation with fire and setting fires.

**Adolescents**
1. Eating disorders, use of laxatives, unexplained and dramatic changes in weight,
2. Change in sleep patterns, including excessive sleeping, sleeping during the day, and insomnia.
3. Performance in school plunges, truancy increases.
4. Perfectionist behavior, excessive self-criticism, attempting to please adults, overreacting to any form of criticism or complaint.
5. Sexually provocative or asexual behavior, denial of body changes and sexual development. For females this may include seeking affection from older adult males.
6. Experimentation with drugs and alcohol.
7. Self-abusive behavior including cutting self, preoccupation with danger and weapons, suicide attempts, experimentation with drugs and/or alcohol.
9. Emotional numbness, inability to be emotionally supportive to others.
10. Having few friends, changing friends often.
11. Depression and others signs of withdrawal and avoidance.
12. Refusing to attend to basic hygiene.
13. Hyper-vigilance – excessive and suspicious watching of other people; is easily startled.

**Neglect (All Ages)**
1. Appearing to be underfed, constantly hungry, underweight for size and age.
2. Begging for food, stealing food, hoarding food.
3. Lack of supervision, underage child supervising another child or children.
4. Chronic absenteeism from school, unattended educational needs.
5. Unattended medical, dental needs.
6. Consistent or frequent lack of hygiene, poor hygiene, or lack of cleanliness resulting in odors.
7. For infants, failure to thrive.

**Parental Behaviors and Home Life (All Ages)**
1. Not attending meetings about the child, lack of interest in the child, critical of the child.
2. Constantly putting the child down, using harsh words to describe the child, using threats.
3. Describing their child as underachiever, complaining that he/she lets people down, is unmotivated, achieves less than brothers and sisters.
4. Speaking of child in a way that sounds romantic, too grown-up, too sugary, and too perfect.
8. Hostile, closed-minded, overprotective, does not let others in the house, will not participate in activities with other parents, makes excuses about failure to do tasks, talks about things not being good at home.
9. Reports of past past/other suspicious behavior, reports that an older brother or sister may have been mistreated.
5. Chemical dependency on one or both parents.
6. Sudden and dramatic changes in family’s financial security.
Date:

Dear Ministry Leader:

You have the joy and responsibility of seeing others develop their talents and leadership ability under your guidance. Thank you for serving Neerlandia CRC with your time and gifts to further not only your area of ministry but also the leaders involved in it.

As of September 1, 2008, all volunteers and paid staff who will be working with children and youth under the age of 18 must go through a screening process. A screening process is a way to reduce the risk of abuse and protect our children and volunteers. The screening process for paid staff and volunteers is similar to the screening process that most businesses take when hiring employees: application, background reference check, records check and personal interview.

As you conduct the screening process, then, you will be assessing a number of things to help make this ministry stronger and more effective. First, you will be assessing this person’s heart towards God and this ministry. Second, you will be assessing this person’s abilities, not as requirements but for training. You need to know this person’s abilities and experiences so that you can prepare him/her for the ministry tasks he/she is taking on. Finally, you need to assess for abuse factors. Simply having a screening process will prevent some would-be abusers from attempting to enter our ministries. In addition, certain aspects of our screening process have been developed to help us identify potential abuse concerns.

To focus our ministry efforts and to create a standard entry to all ministry, the Safe Church Team has developed a number of documents for your use. Refer to the “Recommended Screening Steps” chart to determine which of the following documents you need for your volunteers:

- Application Form
- Explanation of how to obtain PICs and IRCs
- Background Reference Checks form (although you will complete this form, the volunteer is welcome to see the questions you will be asking)
- Ministry position information (written job description if there is one)
- Ministry Commitment Form

We have provided you with some guidelines for conducting interviews.

Make sure that you explain the screening process to volunteers at the beginning of their application, so that they are aware of all parts of the process. Remind them that some steps will take time to process, so they need to start work on them right away. Finally, if a volunteer refuses to go through any parts of the screening process, they do not have to explain why, but they will not be able to volunteer with children or youth under age 18.

If you have any questions, please contact a member of the Safe Church Team.

Neerlandia Safe Church Team
Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church

Ministry Position Application Form

Personal Data
Name: ________________________________________
Address: ________________________________________
City: ___________________ Postal Code: ____________
Home Phone: _____________ Work Phone: ____________

Position Details
Which type of work with children/youth do you prefer?
___________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________

Why are you interested in this position? ________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

Date you are available? ______________________________
What is the minimum length of commitment you can make? ________________________________

Church History and Prior Youth Work
Are you a member of Neerlandia CRC? ____________
If no, when do you plan to become a member? (or why don’t you plan to become a member)
__________________________________________________________________________________

List other churches you have attended regularly during the past three years.
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

Please list all previous work (both paid and volunteer) involving children/youth.
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

Do you have special skills or interests that you are willing to use in this position?
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
Personal References

Please provide at least two people who can provide us with character references for you. You may include non-relatives, employers, supervisors, or church co-workers but not immediate family members.

Name:__________________________________________________
Phone Number (other means of contact): _____________________

Name:__________________________________________________
Phone Number (other means of contact): _____________________

Name:__________________________________________________
Phone Number (other means of contact): _____________________

Details You Should Know

The ministry leader will discuss the position and your expected commitment with you.

Before you are accepted into a position, you will have to undergo certain screening steps, which may include the following: providing background references, getting a Police Information check, and undergoing a personal interview. If you have fees to pay for the screening process, Neerlandia CRC will reimburse you for your costs.

You may withdraw from the application process at any time. You do not have to explain why.

The ministry leader of the position for which you are applying will be involved in the screening process. The ministry leader may choose to have other people involved as well.

The position will be filled at the discretion of the ministry leader and other church officials. The ministry leader will inform you if you have been selected for the position.

All information you provide will be kept in confidence.

Authorization

The information contained in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge. I authorize the listed references to give you any information (including opinions) they have regarding my character and fitness for work with children/youth. I waive any right I may have to inspect any information provided about me by any person identified in this application.

Signature:______________________________________________ Date:___________________
Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church

Ministry Position Background (Character) Reference Form

Name of Reference: ___________________________ Date: ________________

Phone (or other means of contact): ______________________________________

Person being referenced: ________________________________________________

1. How long have you known the person?

2. In what capacity do you know the person?

3. Have you ever observed this person interact with children? Please describe.

4. How do you describe this person’s ability to follow through on his/her commitments?

5. Do you have any concerns about this person’s prior work with children or his/her relationship with children?

6. Is there any additional information that you think is important for our church to know about this person?

Thank-you for your time and effort in providing this information.

Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church

Ministry Position Interview Guidelines

Goals

- Get to know this person with whom you’ll be working.
- Assess this person’s suitability for this ministry and strengths/weaknesses so that you can be an effective leader to him/her.
- Identify concerns related to abuse.

The interview is NOT an intense “grilling” of an applicant. It should be a chance to chat about the person, the children/youth you serve, and both of your opportunities to serve God in this experience.

Interview Steps

1. Go through the application.

Follow up on questions—particularly why the person is interested in the position. Ask about skills and experience so that you know what kind of training/support this person will need.
A person who has switched churches frequently should have a good reason. (Otherwise, from what are they running? Or how strong is their commitment to staying in a volunteer position or being part of a church community)

Write down your thoughts on the space provided on the left side of the application form—use more paper if needed.

Some sample questions:

- How do you communicate your authority to children/youth?
- What methods of discipline might you use in your position with children/youth?
- What training have you received in the nurture of children/youth.
- What gifts, education, or other factors have prepared you for this position?
- Describe how you like to be supervised.

2. Go over the commitment form.

Explain the time commitment involved in this area of ministry. The applicant must sign the form.

3. Discuss the position.

Go over the job description if there is one. Make sure the applicant knows what they are expected to do, answer any questions they have, identify areas of strengths and weaknesses.

4. Develop some scenarios to discuss.

Think of some situations (real or imaginary) that are pertinent to this particular area of ministry. Have the applicant discuss how he/she would handle this. Choose difficult situations so that you know how this person will react under pressure, when angry, and when called upon to make quick decisions. The answers will help you assess this person's skills and how you can be an effective leader.

2. Keep confidentiality. Store the written documentation (application, interview notes, etc.) in a confidential place. Do not discuss the applicant or interview with others, unless necessary.

Interview Concerns

If you (the ministry leader) have concerns about this person serving in this position…

1. Because you think this person may abuse the children/youth in their care:

Schedule a second meeting where a member of Council and a member of the Safe Church Committee are present. At this meeting, the applicant needs to hear your concerns and have a chance to make his/her appeal. At this time, the applicant may be asked to get a more recent Police Information check and/or IRC. Tell the applicant that you may wait 6 months, and then re-assess the situation. We hope that we never have to go through this process, but remember all the parents who have entrusted their children into your care!

2. Because you think this person does not have the ability/interest necessary for the position:

Schedule a second meeting with the Education Director. At this meeting, the applicant needs to hear your concerns and have the chance to make his/her appeal. You also need to affirm the
ability/interest that the applicant does have, and suggest positions that might be better suited (e.g., a different area of ministry, working as an assistant to develop skills further, having another volunteer as a mentor)

3. Because you feel that there are personality issues between yourself and this person:

Schedule a second meeting with the Education Director. The applicant is welcome to enter the position, but both the applicant and you, the ministry supervisor, need to acknowledge the potential for personality conflicts and commit yourselves to the ministry so that problems between you do not affect the children/youth in your care. The Education Director will hold you both accountable to this commitment.

Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church

Ministry Commitment Form

General Commitment

After spending time in prayer and discussing with family and friends the commitment involved with this ministry, I commit to the following:

1. I acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus Christ in my life and I have a personal relationship with Him.
2. I am committed toward growing and maturing in my relationship with God through personal devotions, active attendance at church, and involvement in accountability.
3. I am committed to choices and a lifestyle that are both godly and “above reproach,” knowing that my lifestyle is an example for the people to whom I minister.
4. I understand the time requirements for this ministry and commit to being involved for the full season. I also commit to attending training seminars when scheduled.
5. Because I am making a significant commitment and my presence is important, I agree to be consistent and timely in our ministry.
6. I will contact my supervisor about problems I may encounter.
7. I am committed to praying for the children/students and staff in my area of ministry.
8. I understand and agree with the vision and strategies of our ministry.
9. I have read and am willing to commit myself to the above requirements.

Agreement

I, ________________________, have read the Ministry Commitment Profile and understand clearly the expectations of the desired results. I also understand the lines of accountability and the consequences to those under my care should there be shortcomings in following through on my commitment. I enthusiastically accept this opportunity to serve God with my gifts and abilities in the role of ____________________________ at Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church.

Signature ______________________ Date _____________________
### Ministry Position Recommended Screening Steps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person/Position</th>
<th>Application</th>
<th>Background References</th>
<th>PIC Check</th>
<th>IRC</th>
<th>Interview</th>
<th>6 month attendance*</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pastor</td>
<td>X**</td>
<td>X**</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<td>X**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Youth Director</td>
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<tr>
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<td>X**</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janitor</td>
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<td>recommended</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council Members</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>recommended</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry Leaders (Gems/Cadets Head Counselors, Sunday School Coordinator, Nursery Coordinator, Chair of Youth Council, Coffee Break Coordinator, VBS Coordinator, Chair of Education Committee, Head Usher, Chair of Council.)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>recommended</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Positions (Children’s Church Leaders, Catechism Teachers, Story Hour Teachers, Youth Leaders, Gems/Cadet Counselors, Children’s Choir Director, Nursery Supervisors, VBS Teachers)</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>recommended</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistants over 18 (Nursery Attendants, Children’s Church Aides, VBS Aides)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>recommended</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistants under 18 (Nursery Attendants, Children’s Church Aides, VBS Aides)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ushers/Hall Monitors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parent Volunteers</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>recommended</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* This person has been attending Neerlandia CRC regularly for at least 6 months.

** Application, background reference check, and interview process for paid staff will follow specific procedures for each position. Volunteers will use “Neerlandia CRC Ministry Position” material.
Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church

Critical Incident Report

Please check all that apply:

- Allegation of Abuse/neglect
- Medical Incident (Emergency)
- Alleged Physical Assault
- Injury
- Alleged Sexual Assault
- Vehicle Accident
- Disclosure of Incident (abuse)
- Physical Aggression

1. Give a brief explanation of the events leading up to the incident.

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

2. Give a detailed description of the incident.

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

3. What was done to alleviate the situation?

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

4. Who participated in the situation?

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

5. Who was notified of the incident?

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

6. What happened following the incident?

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

Signatures:

Child/Youth (if able) ___________________ Parent: ________________________________

Attendant on Duty ___________________ Ministry Leader: _________________________

(Signature indicates receipt of copy and knowledge that this report is kept on file)
Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church

Discipline Policy

All discipline is carried out in love, not anger.
The goal of discipline is changed behavior, not vengeance.

Purpose:
The purpose of the Discipline Policy is to:

- define the standard of acceptable discipline within Neerlandia CRC;
- provide clear guidelines about how and when to administer discipline in child and youth programs sponsored by Neerlandia CRC;
- reduce the risk and incidence of minors being subjected to abusive discipline;
- reduce the risk of volunteers or staff persons being accused of using abusive discipline.

General Provisions:

1. Appropriate forms of discipline are to be reviewed with volunteers or staff before the church program begins a new season. Periodic reminders are to be given as needed.
2. Corporal punishment (i.e. slapping, hitting, pushing) and abusive verbal discipline (i.e. yelling or demeaning, humiliating comments, bribery, threats, or refusing to speak to a child) are strictly prohibited.
3. Whenever possible, Volunteers should try to avoid having to discipline a child/youth by choosing one or more of the following options:
   a. distract the child/youth with another activity.
   b. help the child/youth focus on another more acceptable behavior.
   c. isolate the child/youth if another volunteer or staff member is available to assist.
4. Children are to be reminded of the kind of behavior that is acceptable for the setting. Expectations for behavior – and therefore discipline – should reflect the appropriate age and level of comprehension of each child.
5. When children are unresponsive to limit setting and frustration is occurring, the Volunteer should get help from other available staff, volunteers or leaders. If misbehavior continues and all available options have not had positive results, the parents of the child involved should be notified to come and remove the child from the program.
6. If a Volunteer has concerns about a child's behaviour and/or about the appropriate response to a child's behaviour, they should be discussed with the Ministry Leader who may then discuss the matter with the parents.
7. Parent(s) are to be informed and involved whenever a child or youth misbehaves beyond minor correction or if a pattern of misbehavior continues.
8. Whenever possible, necessary incidents of major discipline should be logged by the Ministry Leader and discussed with the parents.
9. When misbehavior is an ongoing problem, the child who is misbehaving must be removed from the particular program until he/she is able to control his/her behavior unless the parent is willing to accompany the child to the program.
10. When nothing seems to be working, Volunteers should get help before "losing their cool".

11. All programs will keep a record book of injuries. Any other suspicious marks or bruises should be recorded in the same book. The Ministry Leader will keep the book. Each Volunteer should have access to critical incident report sheets to record these incidents. They must be given as soon as possible to the Ministry Leader.

12. It is required by law to report any suspected abusive discipline to your immediate supervisor, or if such supervisor is suspected as the abuser, to a member of Administrative Council. Please refer to the Safe Church Policy for further guidance in such instances.

Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church

Code Of Ethics

For Volunteers, Staff, and Leaders in Child and Youth Programs

Believing that God is calling me to serve children or youth in this congregation…

1. My first priority in teaching/supervising/leading the children and/or youth of Neerlandia CRC will be to seek the welfare of the children/youth spiritually, educationally, socially, and physically.

2. I will also try to understand and respect the cultural background of my charges. I will give the parent(s) full detailed information about the program I am teaching/supervising/leading (i.e. goals, times, locations).

3. I will not do anything that will damage a child’s or youth’s trust. I will try to protect my charges from all forms of abuse while are in my care.

4. If I suspect that a child/youth may be hurt by the abusive actions or attitudes of any another person, I will report that suspicion to my Program Leader so that if can be investigated properly in accordance with the Safe Church Policy.

5. If I need to talk to the child/youth alone, it will be within the sight and/or sound of other people.

6. I will work with the children/youth to set some agreed upon guidelines for acceptable behavior within the group. I will expect the children/youth to act on the basis of those guidelines and if a child/youth consistently breaks them, I will seek help from parents and others to assist me in responding to the child/youth.

7. If a child is distressed, I will try to offer comfort and help. I will encourage them to find the appropriate help for their needs.

8. I will pray for each child/youth regularly and let them know that I care about them.

9. I have read and I understand the Safe Church Policy of Neerlandia CRC and the Discipline Policy and will act in accordance with these policies. I understand that my failure to do so may result in termination of my duties.

Signature of Volunteer/Staff/Leader: ________________________________

(Please print your name): __________________________________________

Date: __________________________________________________________

Position in Child/Youth Program: ________________________________

Program Leader: ________________________________________________
Privacy Policy

What personal information is collected?

It is our policy to collect information that is relevant to the operation of our local church, our denomination, and information as is required by law (especially with regard to our charitable donation status). In so doing, we collect information regarding:

- Significant dates, such as: birth, baptism, marriage, profession of faith, death, Elder visitation, marital status, etc.
- Information as required by the Christian Reformed denomination as to membership status: professing (active/inactive, under 18), baptized (active/inactive).
- Contact information provided by you: address, phone (home and/or work), e-mail, occupation, etc.
- Financial donations made through the church.
- Summaries of family visit reports.
- Volunteer Security materials.
- Banking information provided for auto deposits or withdrawals use.
- Personal gifts and activities such as participation in various church areas – past or present.

What do we do with this information; with whom is it shared?

Information is gathered and retained to provide the church and its leaders with information to assist in pastoral care of its membership; to facilitate enlightening its membership about items of interest. In so doing, we:

- Provide information to the church Council to assist in pastoral care.
- Provide records of our Council and Consistory minutes to our denomination, to be archived in the Historical Archives in Grand Rapids, Michigan.
- Provide names and contact information to our Reformed Colleges (Redeemer, TKUC, Trinity Christian, Dordt, Calvin, and Reformed Bible). These institutions in turn safe-guard this information for strict use in promoting the options for a Christian education.
- Provide birth dates and anniversaries for publication in a GEMS birthday calendar and on weekly bulletins.
- Provide quarterly and year-end tax receipts

How do we protect your information?

We enable safeguards to protect your information. Sensitive materials are:

- securely stored in safe areas
- locked rooms with restricted access
- locked safes
- locked filing cabinets
- shredded when no longer needed
- distributed via sealed envelopes
- donations counted with deacons and bookkeeper
What privacy rights do you have?

You have the right to request access to your personal information that we hold. You may also question or challenge the accuracy and completeness of that information.

Consent to share your information is implied. You may opt out or withdraw your consent which allows us to share your personal information, in the following circumstances: sharing of information for the Gems calendar, publication of birthdays in our local birthday calendar and bulletin, information sent to local Christian schools and/or Reformed colleges. To withdraw your consent, contact the Privacy Officer by any of the means published on the back of this brochure.

We are committed to caring for your personal information and to use it only as it is necessary in the running of the local church, the denomination and its greater community.

Who do you contact about Neerlandia CRC privacy concerns?

Our Privacy Officer is our Church Executive Assistant. Contact can be made using the following methods:

Mail: Box 68, 4913 50th St., Neerlandia, AB T0G 1R0
Phone: 780.674.8492
Fax: 780.674.4810
e-mail: neercrc@xplornet.com

The church office mail box is located at the north door entrance.
Complete policy guidelines for the Privacy Officer are available upon request.

Building & Related Policies

Nursery Policy
Revised January 2008

All attendants and helpers (age 18 and up) are asked to turn in a Police Information Check to the Executive Assistant.

ALL attendants and helpers Must sign in on the top of the sign in sheet as well, for our records.

The main door to the nursery will now be locked with a dead bolt. No One other than the attendants will use the nursery doors. All access to the children by the parents or anyone else will be through the window.

Parents must Sign In their child/ren when they drop them off, fill in all necessary information on the clipboard that will be at the window, and receive their child’s security number tag.

Child/ren will receive a three part security tag: A YELLOW tag is pinned to the child’s bag, A RED tag is given to the parent. The corresponding number is written on the tape name tag on the child’s back. A security number will be assigned to each child/ren. The Red Tag must be presented in order to pick up the children. All tags must be collected and returned to bins before each child leaves the nursery.
If nursery attendants need a parent to attend to their child, the child’s security number must be brought to the power point operator at the back of the sanctuary and the number will then be displayed on the screen. If your child’s security number is displayed on the screen upstairs, please proceed to the nursery to assist the volunteers with any concerns your child may have.

**Adult Attendants:**

Please make sure that the helpers understand the check in and check out process.

When you are scheduled to be in the nursery, you are **needed** there to meet requirements. If you need to switch, adults must switch with adults and helpers with helpers. The ratio of adults to children is very important!

As you can see, it is absolutely crucial that all attendants be prompt for their turns in the nursery so that the sign in process can run smoothly. (9:45am & 11:00am)

*Questions or concerns please call nursery coordinators.*

**Nursery Coordinators Job Description**

*Revised May 2007*

1. Set up a list of nursery attendants to be published and distributed regularly (e.g. Sept-Jan, Feb-June, & July-Aug.)
   a. Attendants will be volunteers who have indicated willingness to serve in this capacity. Younger helpers must be entering grade 6. There must always be at least two adults attendant present.
   b. Number of attendants needed will vary with season and the number of babies and children in the church during a particular year. Care giver to Child ratios:
      i. 0-13 months 1:3
      ii. 13-19 months 1:4
      iii. 19-36 months 1:6
   c. Volunteer lists should be updated when a new schedule is made by putting an announcement in the bulletin.
2. Check from time to time to see if attendants show up when assigned.
3. Obtain dates of special services (i.e. Good Friday, Easter, Thanksgiving, Ecumenical Service, Christmas) from the executive assistant and/or worship committee before making a new schedule. Try to avoid scheduling the same person more than once a year in a special service. During special services, only schedule attendants who have children using the nursery, not other adult volunteers.
4. Summer nursery scheduling is done by having each couple with children using the nursery, sign up for one service during July or August.
5. Update rules for the nursery use and post them on the nursery walls/doors.
6. Give the toys a thorough cleaning with bleach water from time to time. The Janitor does a quick clean-up each week. Discard broken or “dangerous” toys.
7. Arrange for purchase of new toys when needed.
8. Make sure that the Kleenex, baby wipes, rubber gloves, crackers, water, small paper cups, and plastic bags for disposing diapers are stocked regularly.
Rental Policies
Summary of Rates for the Use of Neerlandia CRC

January 2009 – 2010

(Check with Executive Assistant for Current Rates: 780.674.8492)

(for information only – not be sent out)

FELLOWSHIP HALL:

Seating Capacity:

- 512 with chairs only
- 300 with tables and chairs

Please note we have only 300 chairs available.

- One day rental
- Business meetings (no meal)
- Funerals (Members No Charge)

$_____deposit required at time of booking for one day rentals.

SANCTUARY:

- Funerals (Members No Charge)
- Weddings and Non-Profit Functions (Members No Charge)
- Profit Functions*

*A function that charges admission that is not used for charitable causes.

BASEMENT ROOMS: (including nursery)

- One day rentals (per room)

FELLOWSHIP HALL CONDITIONS:

Extra charges:

1. An additional $_____ will be charged for booking the Hall and Sanctuary, the previous day for set-up and decorating – if they are available.

Other:

2. All tablecloths, large cooler, standard white dishes, and urns are included in this rental fee.
3. Kitchen dishes, utensils and other kitchen tools must remain in the hall and kitchen area.
4. Alcoholic beverages: Wine only for a toast or with a meal. No alcohol allowed outside on the church property. Renter will purchase an alcohol license.
5. No caterers other than the NCRC Building Committee unless authorized by the same.
6. Chairs, tables, etc. cannot be removed for family functions.
7. If assistance is needed like food service, set-up, serving, or clean-up please contact the catering coordinator. (For example non-member funeral)

8. No food in hallways or foyer.

Exceptions:

1. No charge for the Neerlandia Co op for their annual meeting, and use of the tables and coffee urns for July 1st. They in turn allow us the use of some of their equipment for maintenance. In 2002, the Neerlandia Coop has agreed to replace 1 table per year to cover damages to tables.

2. The Neerlandia Public Christian School will have free use of the Sanctuary and Hall for the following functions:
   - Christmas Practices
   - 1 or 2 plays per year
   - Band performance once a year
   - Neerlandia Christian Education Society
   - Emergency use if a fire is at the school
   - Lock Down
   - Grade 9 grads use of tables and chairs for their grad.

   In return Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church will have free access to the Neerlandia Public Christian School Building for the following:
   - 1 room for Sunday School
   - Youth Retreat
   - Gems Rally
   - Gems Father Daughter night
   - Teen Club
   - Cadets
   - Emergency use—if there is a fire at the church

   Otherwise leave each premise as the user found it or janitorial fees could be applied.

3. No rental charge for the facility for organizations that are supported financially (on the offering schedule) or sponsored directly by the NCRC e.g. GEMS, Cadets, Young Peoples, Study Groups, Wycliffe, Gideon’s, etc. for any use from meals to meetings.

4. No charge for Community Showers (not private) organized by a member of the NCRC.

5. Sunday church pianists and organists may use the church sanctuary and hall for 1 recital per year for their students, at no cost. They must return and clean the facility back to its’ original state.

Other Conditions For Rental:

1. Booking of rooms is on a first come first served basis. Deposit ensures booking.

2. Rates are based on the premise that the Church Hall, Sanctuary and Basement rooms are brought back to their original state. Extra billing will be incurred if this is not done.

3. User will be charged for any damage to equipment, furniture, or facility. This will be determined by the Building Committee.
4. When setting up and decorating, please take along your own supplies such as a ladder, tape, string, pins, stapler, etc. If putting anything on the walls use masking tape, “Fun-Tak”, stick pins or push pins. Please do not use scotch tape. Please do not attach anything to the sound panels.

5. Set up and clean up is available at $_____/hr by either the Janitor or the Building Committee.

6. Recommended fees for Weddings and Funerals for the following services, in appreciation:
   - Organist/pianist $_____/person
   - Audio/visual Technician* $_____/person
   - Pastor $______
   - Fees for Following Services (billed by same)
     - Executive Assistant $______ + Photocopying and paper
     - Janitor $______ hour

*Audio/Visual Tech must be one of the NCRC sound/visual system people.

7. Non-member Funerals
   - Please contact the catering coordinator if you are in need of food services.
   - If food services are not needed, we require a minimum of 2 committee members (or an appointed representative like a family member) to be present during the entire function to help the family familiarize them with the facility. They will be available to help with set up, serving, and clean up.
   - The kitchen will be available for the purpose of reheating a soup or meal.

8. Member Funerals
   - Contact Catering Coordinator (call Executive Assistant for contact)

9. Family Functions (members only)
   - Under no circumstances can a meal be cooked but you may bring potluck and use the stove to keep things warm.

**EXPLANATION FOR WHO IS A MEMBER:**

- For Funerals a member is: the deceased being a baptized or professing member of the NCRC
- For Weddings a member is: One person of the couple is a baptized or professing member of the NCRC.
- Exceptions can be made when a non-member attends church on a regular basis, but will need the approval of the Building Committee.

**RENTERS’ RESPONSIBILITIES FOR CLEAN UP:**

- Please treat the facility as your own and return to original state.
- Tablecloths and laundry should be put in basket provided in kitchen.
- Empty garbage in the kitchen and bathrooms, if needed, and should be put in tied garbage bags and put in the garbage shed outside.
- When using any equipment please put back in place.
• Vacuum the Hall.
• Remove any decorations or props from the Sanctuary after a wedding.

Please Note: If there are any controversies or unanswered questions you will be referred to the Building Committee for answers and approval.

FOR RESERVATIONS CONTACT:
Executive Assistant - Jeannette Bosma at 780.674.4232 (Ext. 1).

MAKE CHEQUES PAYABLE TO: Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church

Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church

Business Functions
(NO MEAL, NO FAMILY FUNCTIONS)

January 2009 - 2010

(Check with Executive Assistant for Current Rates: 780.674.8492)

Fellowship Hall $______
(Seats 300 with tables and chairs)
Basement rooms $______

TOTAL $______

I wish to book the above, mentioned rooms for (date) ________________.
I have read the conditions and agree to pay the Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church a total of $______ for the rental of the facilities and items as noted above.

Renters’ Name (print) ________________________________
Renters’ Signature ________________________________
Date: ________________
Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church

Member Funeral Rentals
January 2009 - 2010

(Check with Executive Assistant for Current Rates: 780.674.8492)

Sanctuary $______
Fellowship Hall $______
(Seats 300 with tables and chairs)
Basement rooms (including nursery) $______

TOTAL

I wish to book the above, mentioned rooms for (date) ___________________. I have read the conditions and agree to pay the Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church a total of $__________ for the rental of the facilities and items as noted above.

Renters’ Name (print) _________________________________________
Renters’ Signature ____________________________________________
Date: ______________________

For Lunch and Fellowship after the Funeral:

• The Auxiliary Committee is available to serve coffee and squares and will look after kitchen cleanup. Set-up and final cleanup is the user’s responsibility.
• Should you wish to have a family meal catered please contact the Building Committee.
• Set-up and clean-up is available at $______hr by either the janitor or the Building Committee.
• If the janitor or setup is required call Shelley VanBeek 780 674 2568.
• User will be charged for any damage to equipment, furniture or facility.
• Children must be supervised at all times.

Recommended fees for Funerals for the following services, in appreciation:

• Organist/Pianist $______ person
• Audio/Visual Technician* $______ person
• Pastor $______

Fees for the Following Services (billed by the same)

• Executive Assistant $______/hour + Photocopying and paper
• Janitor $______/hour

*Audio/Visual Tech must be one of the NCRC sound system people.

Please Note: It is the family’s responsibility to find the above needed people.
Family’s Responsibilities

- Kitchen must be cleaned and everything returned to its’ original place.
  - Tablecloths and laundry should be put in the hamper provided.
  - Garbage in Bathrooms and kitchen should be emptied and put into a garbage bag tied and put into garbage shed outside.
  - Vacuum hall.

Please Note: If there are any problems or unanswered questions you will be referred to the Building Committee for answers and approval.

For Reservations Contact: Executive Assistant – Jeannette Bosma at 780.674.4232 (Ext. 1).

Make Cheques Payable To: Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church

Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church

Non-Member Funeral Rentals
January 2009 - 2010

(Check with Executive Assistant for Current Rates: 780.674.8492)

Sanctuary $______ __________ Includes nursery

Fellowship Hall $______ __________ (Seats 300 with tables and chairs)

TOTAL __________

I wish to book the above, mentioned rooms for (date) _______________________. I have read the conditions and agree to pay the Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church a total of $____________ for the rental of the facilities and items as noted above.

Renters’ Name (print) __________________________

Renters’ Signature ____________________________

Date: ___________________

- Please contact the catering coordinator if you are in need of food services.
- If food services are not needed, we require a minimum of 2 building committee members (or an appointed representative to be present during the entire function to help familiarize the family with the facility. They will be available to help with set up, serving, and cleanup.
- No caterers other than the NCRC Building Committee unless authorized by the same.
• Set up and clean-up is the renter’s responsibility or is available at $______/hr. Please call the janitor, Shelley VanBeck 780.674.2568.

• Kitchen must be cleaned up and everything returned to its’ original place.
  o Tablecloths and laundry should be put in the hamper provided in the kitchen.
  o Empty garbage in kitchen and bathrooms if needed and should be put in tied garbage bags and put in the garbage shed outside.
  o Vacuum the hall.

• User will be charged for any damage to equipment, furniture or facility.

• Please note that renting the sanctuary, hall or basement rooms does not include church equipment other than the basic equipment located in the room. Please make arrangements with the Executive Assistant (Jeannette Bosma) for any extras.

• When renting the Fellowship Hall or the sanctuary, which includes the pulpit area, auditorium, gathering area, and staircase, any other rooms are not included. Please inform your guests.

• Children must be supervised at all times.

**Suggested Fees for Needed Services:**

• Organist/pianist $____/person
• Audio/Visual Technician* $____/person
• Pastor $____

**Fees for following services: (billed by same)**

• Executive Assistant $____/hour + Photocopying and paper
• Janitor $____/hour

*Audio/Visual Tech must be one of the NCRC sound system people.

Please Note: If there are any controversies or unanswered questions you will be referred to the Building Committee for answers and approval.

**For Reservations Contact:** The Executive Assistant – Jeannette Bosma at 780.674.4232 (Ext 1).

**Make Cheques Payable To:** Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church
Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church

One Day Rentals
January 2009 - 2010

(Check with Executive Assistant for Current Rates: 780.674.8492)

Sanctuary $____  __________
Profit Function $____  __________
Fellowship Hall $____  __________
(Seats 300 with tables and chairs)

Kitchen Use Only $____  __________
Basement rooms (including nursery) $____  __________
Previous day for decorating $____  __________
TOTAL __________

Booking deposit $____  __________
- to be paid at time of booking

Balance Owing __________

I wish to book the above, mentioned rooms for (date) __________________. I also wish to book the rooms on (date) __________________ for decorating and set up. I have read the conditions and agree to pay the Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church a total of $________ for the rental of the facilities and items as noted above.

Renters’ Name (print) ________________________________
Renters’ Signature ________________________________
Date: ____________________
Conditions:

Weddings:
- If janitorial services are required call Shelley VanBeek 780.674.2568
- If food services are not needed we require a minimum of 2 committee members (or appointed representative like a family member) to be present during the entire function to help familiarize the family with the facility. They will be available for set-up, serving, and clean-up.
- No caterers other than the NCRC building Committee unless authorized by the same.

Kitchen:
- Please contact the catering coordinator if you are in need of food services. Call 780.674.4232 (Ext. 1) to be directed to the right person.

Hall and remainder of building:
- Alcoholic beverages: Wine only for a toast or with a meal. No alcohol allowed outside on the church property.
- Please leave the premise as you found it or janitorial fees could be incurred. Setup is the renters’ responsibility. If the rooms are not in good condition please call, JoAnn 780.674.4549.
- Tablecloths and laundry should be put in basket provided in kitchen.
- Empty garbage from kitchen and bathrooms if needed and put garbage in tied garbage bags and put in the garbage shed outside.
- User will be charged for any damage to equipment, furniture or facility.
- When renting the Fellowship Hall or the sanctuary, (which includes the pulpit area, auditorium, gathering area, and staircase), other rooms are not included. Please inform your guests.

Recommended fees for the following services, in appreciation, for Weddings or Funerals:
- Organist/pianist $_____/person
- Audio /Visual Technician* $_____/person
- Pastor $_____
- Fees for following services: (billed by the same)
- Executive Assistant $_____/hr. + Photocopying and paper
- Janitor $_____/hr
  *Audio/Visual Tech must be one of the NCRC sound/visual system people.

For Reservations Contact: Executive Assistant – Jeannette Bosma 780.674.4232 Ext 1

Make Cheques Payable to: Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church
Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church

Profit Function Rentals

January 2009 - 2010

(Check with Executive Assistant for Current Rates: 780.674.8492)

Sanctuary

$______

Sub-total

Booking deposit

$______

TOTAL OWING

I wish to book the above, mentioned rooms for (date) ___________________. I have read the conditions and agree to pay the Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church a total of $_______ for the rental of the facilities and items as noted above.

Renters’ Name (print) ______________________

Renters’ Signature ______________________

Date: ______________________
Common Characteristics of Healthy Churches
(From the Board of Trustees Ministries Priorities Committee Report, Phase III)

In view of Synod 2004’s endorsement of this committee’s goals, and in harmony with our Denominational Ministries Plan, we offer the following reflections on the characteristics of healthy local congregations. Healthy congregations are not unreachable ideals. They are communities of Christ’s people who are surrounded by the complexities of a sinful culture and know its invasive power in their hearts. Yet, the Holy Spirit brings order to the disorderly lives of individual members and communities. Their influence reaches outward to season their local communities, and minister worldwide through denominational mission agencies.

As Jesus’ disciples gather around him in the moments prior to his ascension to heaven, they heard Jesus' final command to “make disciples” (Matt. 28:18-20). Since that day, the church has been about making disciples, baptizing them into the body of Christ and teaching them to follow his teaching. Not only is every Christian called to be a disciple maker, but every church, every local congregation, is called to obey this Great Commission. While what follows are common characteristics of healthy churches, it must be understood that at the heart of every healthy congregation is the desire to make disciples.

Briefly, a healthy congregation is a Holy Spirit filled gathering of people called by Jesus Christ to be salt and light in the world. Acts 2 describes the freshly born Pentecost church as a growing gathering of baptized believers committed to following Christ. Central to that commitment was a devotion to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship of believers. They spent their time in prayer and the breaking of bread (Lord’s Supper), while freely sharing their money and possessions. The church’s leaders and members lived as responsible citizens of the Roman Empire, but also challenged the authorities with the Lordship of Christ. The apostles were also concerned with justice for suffering widows and fairness for the poor, calling deacons to this service. Their lives filled with awe and wonder as the Holy Spirit transformed them and those around them with great joy and praise, even in the face of opposition. God blessed the church and added many people to it, as the thrilling conclusion in Acts 2:47 to the newly born church emphasizes.

This church soon faced new challenges and opportunities. When difficulties and disobedience arose within the body, church discipline promoted moral accountability and engendered respect for God and others. As the church began to grow, it experienced persecution; yet God used such adversity to scatter its members, thereby spreading the gospel throughout the world. Later God spoke directly to Peter and Paul, commanding them to reach out to the world. Even through the temptation of spiritual elitism witnessed in Acts 15, the church took seriously Christ’s command to make disciples. Soon the gospel message permeated the Roman Empire. Within their struggles, these early churches exemplified healthy communities of Christ’s disciples.

Twenty-first century churches and Christians can use reports and examples of God’s people from all of Scriptures as benchmarks to dream, plan, and live their own lives as God’s imperfect—yet redeemed and striving—people. No matter what their current situation, thousands of years removed from earlier
members of God’s family, contemporary Christians know God has been there before, having worked before and working still in our confusing yet exhilarating circumstances.

Such vital and healthy Christian communities still live today. Authors such as Christian Swartz (Natural Church Development), Waldo Werning (12 Pillars of a Healthy Church), and Peter Steinke (Healthy Congregations) have provided language to identify such communities. The Christian Reformed Church recognizes the value of the work these and others have provided for us. We gratefully use it as we explore the picture of the early church painted by God in the Bible.

On-going study of the early church has led to the awareness that healthy congregations share certain common characteristics that are not utopian, but visible and powerful testaments to God’s work among his people. To that end, we offer the following brief list of characteristics seen among healthy gatherings of God’s people to which the Bible gives witness in different times and places of history. We recognize that this list is not exhaustive. Yet it is representative, comprehensible, and thus useful for God’s people today. Furthermore, it is also encouraging to recognize that agencies of the Christian Reformed Church with mandates to spread God’s good news have often incorporated such characteristics in their own work and histories. Thus, it will come as no surprise that the work of The Back to God Hour, CRC Publications, Christian Reformed Home Missions, Christian Reformed World Missions, and Christian Reformed World Relief Committee has contributed to many of the themes, insights, and suggestions offered in the following pages for local CRCs to keep developing their own spiritual health.

We offer the following characteristics of healthy churches that are seen in the biblical history of God’s people. Healthy churches:

- Proclaim God’s Word with power and integrity.
- Assemble for worship in joyful awe.
- Receive the gospel promises in the sacraments.
- Nurture and teach members for discipleship
- Center congregational life in prayer.
- Commit to evangelistic growth and church planting both locally and globally
- Promote genuine loving fellowship.
- Advocate justice for the poor and powerless.
- Encourage servant leadership.
- Practice mutual accountability

A. Proclaim God’s Word with power and integrity

Biblically-based teaching and preaching is clearly central to being a healthy congregation. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 identifies scripture as “God breathed and is useful for teaching, correcting, and training in righteousness so the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” While there are many ways to present these biblical truths to the world, preaching and teaching are still at the forefront. The salvation of the world depends on Holy Spirit-filled, life-changing preaching. “How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?” (Rom. 10:14 NIV).
Preaching and teaching are primary modes of communication throughout both the Old and New Testaments. Matthew records Jesus teaching in Matthew 5 in what has become known as the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus ability to preach and teach amazed his audiences. At one point in his ministry, the crowds responded to his teaching by noting, “he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law” (Matt. 7:29). When Jesus preached, he did so in the tradition of the Old Testament prophets. Isaiah brought both a message of repentance and a message of hope to Israel, promising that despite their constant rebellion and disobedience God would send a redeemer. Jesus echoed Ezekiel (Ezek. 34:5-6) in his condemnation of religious leaders who do not lead and guide God’s flock in the truth of His word. “When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd” (Matt. 9:36).

The apostles continued proclaiming the gospel of the risen and ascended Lord. The book of Acts contains several examples of apostolic preaching, and the epistles further deepen its message. The first four centuries of the church’s history give us many examples of biblically and theologically sound preaching from Athanasius to Clement, from Chrysostom to Augustine. In the following centuries, however, preaching seemed to lose its prominent position and ordinary people often never had an opportunity to hear it.

The Reformers of the 16th century led the church back to its earlier emphasis on preaching God’s word. The authors of the Belgic Confession remind us that the true church “engages in the pure preaching of the gospel” (Art. 29). At the same time, the invention of the printing press made the Bible available to more people, making it possible for God’s Word to regain prominence in the life of local churches.

The church in 21st Century North American culture must be careful to “test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1). Healthy churches stay focused on God’s word and teach the truth of God’s grace and judgment to an idolatrous, self-centered culture. The kingdom of God can only be understood in the light of the Bible. When churches fail to focus on the truths of scripture, decline and decay eat away at their effectiveness to be salt and light. As citizens of the kingdom, God calls us to be counter-cultural. Jesus constantly reminds us that we are different from the world. When the church fails to teach and preach these differences, it fails to bring people to repentance and conversion. Hope for the future of the church profoundly depends on her depth of understanding and willingness to proclaim the Word of God.

B. Assemble before the Lord for worship in joyful awe

The New Testament word for church (ecclesia) is the word used in the Greek version of the Old Testament for Israel’s great assemblies before the Lord such as described in Exodus 19 and Ezra 9, 10. Worship describes the event of covenant renewal as God’s people meet before his face. It is dialogical in character in that the congregation engages in a holy conversation with God by listening to God’s Word and responding with praise and dedication. It often leads to an experience of joy or lament, depending on the circumstances of the encounter.

In an age when worship has sometimes become a commodity used to market the church the true worship of God can get lost in the desire to meet the felt needs of the worshippers—to merely inspire rather than encounter the living God. The focus can easily slip away from God-centered worship to audience-pleasing activities. We are engaged in a conversation that begins with God rather than us. The
issue is not whether a church worships in a more traditional mode or uses more contemporary instruments and media. Either can run the danger of being human-centered rather than God-centered.

Christian worship is also profoundly Trinitarian in character. We can say that our worship is offered to the Father, through the Son in the Holy Spirit. It is through Christ that we have access to the Father by the one Spirit (Eph. 2:18). Paul speaks of Christ as the one who prays for us at the right hand of the Father (Rom. 8:34). Only the Holy Spirit enables us to know God as Father (Gal. 4:6), and confess Jesus Christ as Lord (1 Cor. 12:3).

Since it is the Holy Spirit in our midst who unites us to the Father and the Son, is also the Holy Spirit who inspires and directs our worship. The active presence of the Holy Spirit determines the life and vitality of worship, not human choices of songs, instruments, or other media. When people only attend out of a sense of Christian duty, rather than out of a desire to stand in the presence of God, true worship cannot result. Healthy congregations are inspired and inspire others to worship God in Spirit and in truth.

Spirit-filled worship points the church toward the true destiny of all creation as envisioned in the Revelation of John to gather before the throne of God and of the Lamb and be “lost in wonder, love, and praise.”

C. Receive the gospel promises in the sacraments

In Acts, baptism and the “breaking of bread” were always powerfully present as the church proclaimed the gospel and worshipped. The worship of the church is sacramental. That is, certain elements from the stuff of creation make God and his saving work present to us in worship in ways that go beyond the spoken or written word. Calvin emphasized that, in sacramental worship, God stoops to human weakness. When Christians eat and drink at the Lord’s Table, and when they pour the baptismal water, God bends to human senses in order to make his salvation present and real, and to confirm the promises of his word.

Our confessions (Heidelberg Catechism Lord’s Days 25-30 and Belgic Confession Articles 33-35) clearly call us to an understanding of the sacraments as both sign and seal.

For they are visible signs and seals of something internal and invisible, by means of which God works in us through the power of the Holy Spirit. So they are not empty and hollow signs to deceive us. For their truth is Jesus Christ, without whom they would be nothing. (Belgic Confession. Article 33)

What is enacted and sealed in the sacraments is union with Christ in his dying and rising, and all the benefits of union with Christ. Christians receive these benefits by faith and through the Holy Spirit. In the Reformed tradition, sacraments are not mere ordinances—something Christ told his people to do—but the powerful means through which God works his grace in human hearts through faith. In other words, worshipers do not give meaning to the sacraments by their thoughtful faith; rather, God works directly through the sacraments and faith receives what God has to give in them.

Reformed Christians must always view the sacraments as powerful material ways in which God affirms and deepens our faith. Joyfully celebrated and properly understood, they will ground and revitalize Christian worship in our churches.
D. Nurture and teach members for discipleship

Jesus commands the church to make disciples by “baptizing . . . and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matt. 28:19). In dependence on the Holy Spirit, healthy churches seek to form disciples of Jesus Christ by teaching and training them to serve him in every area of life in God’s world and God’s Kingdom. In ways that address minds, hearts, and hands, they endeavor to tell the great drama of God and his salvation, from creation to new creation, from fall to redemption in Jesus Christ.

This teaching is anchored in the wonderful gift of divine revelation, the holy Scriptures, and utilizes the riches of the whole Christian tradition, especially its creeds and confessions. The goal of the church’s teaching is not mere knowledge, but an obedient life in which members of Christ’s body eagerly seek to live by the shape of God’s kingdom, and develop and exercise the manifold gifts of the Spirit in the church and in the world.

Teaching and learning begins as soon as the baptismal waters draw people into union with Christ and continue till we see Christ in his glory and beyond. Healthy churches, in concert with the home and Christian day schools, take great care to provide for the Christian education of their youth whom God has claimed in the covenant of baptism and the church has promised to nurture in faith so that the light of Christ may shine from generation to generation. But they must also enable and encourage all their members, from new converts to third term elders, to grow in into the likeness of Christ so that they may love God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love their neighbors as themselves.

E. Center congregational life in prayer

It is clear from the early chapters of Acts that the early church was devoted to prayer, and that Luke wants us to see that prayer was a key to its growth and vitality. Healthy churches are praying churches. The prayer life of these churches is not limited to corporate prayer, as important as that is for the church. In addition to organized group prayer, members of healthy churches are passionate about prayer, both within the church and in their personal lives. These people characterize prayer as central to their life in Christ. Such enthusiasm about prayer has been demonstrated to raise the level of passionate spirituality within a local congregation. Christian Swartz identifies this passionate spirituality as one of the eight essential qualities of healthy churches.

Healthy churches teach and practice prayer. A vital prayer life does not just happen, it is modeled and taught. When people gifted in prayer lead prayer in worship, congregations learn the shape of true prayer. When members tell the stories of prayers answered in direct and powerful ways, the congregation is encouraged to be faithful in prayer. When people gifted in prayer teach the wide scope of the practice of prayer people are enabled to find their own distinctive style and method. When congregations bathe every ministry, meeting, and activity in prayer, its people learn that results of the Spirit’s work in the church depends on prayerfulness.

What the Heidelberg Catechism says about prayer is true for individuals and congregations alike: "[P]rayer is the most important part of the thankfulness God requires of us. And also God gives his grace and Holy Spirit only to those who pray continually and groan inwardly, asking God for these gifts and thanking him for them” (H.C. Q. and A. 116).
F. Promote genuine loving fellowship

In the hours before his death, Jesus offered a prayer in which he expressed his desire for a unified body of believers. He asked his Father, “I am in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that they you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me” (John 17:23). Evidence of such unity is most clearly demonstrated in genuine loving fellowship within the body of Christ, his church. “If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose” (Phil. 2:1).

Healthy churches work hard to “maintain the unity of the faith in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:3). While they are places where discussion and even debates can sharpen and build up, they do so without bitterness or rancor. Members lead lives of service and concern for others. Their primary desire is for the well-being of the body, not for their own needs. These churches spend less time talking about love and more time loving. People desire to share in the life of a community of Christians who live in a world of grace and forgiveness where loving fellowship is not merely an emotion experienced for the moment but is a way of life, a fruit of the Spirit. It is exemplified in churches where the full fruit of the Spirit is clearly evident in the practices of the members. Laughter and excitement fill the air. Small groups study and pray together, sharing their joys and sorrows. People show care in genuine acts of kindness, support, and sharing. In providing such care, the church must be sensitive to the social, psychological, and spiritual distress that impairments, limited health, and abuse often bring, and be willing to walk with those so affected, relieving needs, recognizing gifts, and sharing pain.

Loving fellowship also demands a steady commitment to be inclusive of others, across barriers of race, gender, social status, and level of knowledge of and commitment to the faith. Those seeking entrance into the fellowship quickly pick up on the subtle signals of exclusivity (cliques, dress “codes,” language, and “in jokes”). Genuine openness to those different from ourselves involves constant watchfulness and a readiness to critique the barriers that may subtly form.

G. Commit to evangelistic growth and church planting both locally and globally

No church can ignore Christ’s final command, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matt. 28:19). A healthy church gives the highest priority to proclaiming the good news to the unchurched, gathers them into its fellowship, and disciples them the truth of God’s Word.

By God’s grace, a healthy church can expect to grow in numbers as well as spiritual vitality. The Christian church is fruit producing organism. The Bible is clear that Christ is the vine and we are the branches; our purpose and task are to produce fruit. In one parable, Jesus spoke of the crop returning 30, 60, and even 100 fold (Matt. 13:23). When the master gave his servants talents, he expected his money would grow and he condemned the servant who failed to make that happen.

In recording the story of the apostle's first proclamation Luke tells us, “and about three thousand were added to their number that day” (Acts 2:41). Later in Acts 2:47, he writes, “And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.” Numerical growth was not an occasional event; it was a
daily occurrence in the early church. All of Acts is the story of how the gospel of Jesus Christ spread throughout the world. Even in times of great persecution, the church grew.

Yet, church growth is not a triumphal march. It requires slogging through tough human hearts, burrowing into stubborn anti-God cultures, applauding obedience to God, showing gratitude for goodness developed in the face of opposition, mourning sadness, and rejoicing in beauty, grace, and mercy.

When people come to know Christ in the context of local congregations, the whole community sees more clearly the transforming power of Christ in people’s lives. New Christians, in turn, bring them into contact with others among their friends and relatives who need salvation, and often become the most passionate advocates for evangelism in the congregation.

Evangelistic growth often happens even more rapidly when congregations eagerly plant new churches in their communities or areas. Healthy congregations may choose to send some of their most valuable and vital members to participate in planting another church.

Healthy local congregations look beyond themselves by sharing in God’s desire to gather his people from every tribe and nation. God’s covenant has always had the whole world in its embrace. God promised Abraham, “in you shall all the families of the earth be blessed” (Gen. 12:3). In Acts, Jesus sends his disciples to be his witnesses “in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Paul and the other apostles responded to that promise by traveling from city to city throughout the Roman Empire proclaiming the gospel and planting churches.

When congregations share in this global perspective, they realize that they participate in what God is doing in the whole world. By sending missionaries, whether through denominational agencies or as local churches through short-term mission projects, they regularly hear stories of God’s power to save, and participate in life of the Kingdom of God that knows no boundaries of race or nation.

H. Advocate justice for the poor and powerless

From the laws given by God, to the trumpet call of the prophets, to the Jubilee announcement of Jesus at Nazareth (Luke 4:16–21), the Bible clearly sets forth God’s passion for justice and his concern for the poor. While it is often difficult in our politically polarized culture, one of the signs of congregational health is its commitment to proclaim the message of justice and live it out in its ministry to the poor, the disenfranchised, the homeless, refugees, and those living with disabilities.

In Acts, the newborn church enacted the God’s call for justice by voluntarily sharing their goods to provide fairly for all (Acts 3:32). When needs became apparent, as in Acts 6, the apostles called on deacons to make sure that the poor in their midst were cared for. Throughout its history the church has shone its true biblical grounding wherever it advocated for justice. In the battle against slavery here and in England, and in the struggle for civil rights, the church has been at the forefront.

Healthy congregations will regularly hear God’s call for justice from their pulpits. They will seek to care for the poor among them, in their communities, and, through denominational agencies such as CRWRC, in the world. They unite with other congregations to advocate their local and national governments to enact policies that promote social justice, the fair distribution of goods, and care for the
They will also seek to reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of God’s Kingdom in the face of their congregations.

I. Encourage Christ-like leadership

Healthy churches are led by leaders who exemplify in their own lives the characteristics of the Good Shepherd. The very language of the church reflects awareness that leaders are shepherds first. Other expectations are secondary to leading and caring for the “flock.” Speaking of himself, Jesus said, “I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep” (John 10:14-15 NIV). Churches can be healthy only when men and women who follow this biblical pattern of leadership lead them. Servant leaders know their congregations intimately and their congregations know and trust them. A true shepherd leader must love the people and be prepared to give their life for those people.

A good local church leader is one who walks among the people, providing for their spiritual health and wellbeing. But leaders also help to develop a congregational vision and keep it before the community. Shepherd leaders neither drive their flock from behind, nor run so far ahead that the sheep can no longer follow. Rather, good servant leaders walk with and among their congregations through both good and bad times. They know their congregations and love them. These leaders provide green pastures, assuring that their congregations are well fed and healthy. In times of struggle and pain, these leaders provide the comfort and care necessary for healing. In times of comfort and ease they know how to prophetically inspire the congregation with a fuller vision.

At the heart of a servant leader is a desire to have the attitude of Christ as explained by Paul to the church of Philippi. Paul reminds leaders that they must have an attitude of humility making themselves nothing, taking the very nature of a servant. True servant leaders do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but rather consider others better than themselves (Phil. 2:3-6). At the same time, the Bible calls congregation members to respect and honor those who serve them in leadership (1 Tim. 5:17), and to “obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls and will give an account” (Heb. 13:17).

Healthy congregations intentionally identify, raise up, and train new leaders. They continue to disciple existing leaders and hold them accountable for their spiritual walk with their Lord. Only those who themselves are continually shepherded and served can sustain their important calling to shepherd and serve others.

J. Practice mutual accountability

The reformers recognized church discipline as one of the defining marks of the true church. It is too often misunderstood as a top down action rather than a normal characteristic of the life of a healthy church community. Rightly understood, church discipline is the mutual accountability of the members of the Body of Christ (see Church Order Articles 78 and 79). The primary texts (Matt. 18:15-20 and Gal. 6:1-5) begin with one-to-one relationships in which members of the body honestly, humbly, and lovingly speak and listen to each other about perceived faults and sins. Healthy churches foster the kind of atmosphere in which “speaking the truth in love” (Eph. 4:15) becomes the normal way in which Christians help one another when in danger of wandering from the path of true discipleship. “Church discipline” therefore must be woven into the very fabric of the life of a healthy church community.
There may come times when, as Jesus and Paul affirm, the matter needs to be taken to the next level of accountability, that is, to another trusted person, and finally to the “church,” which we take to mean its official leadership. Nevertheless, the goal is always to keep the matter “covered” as much as possible, for “love covers a multitude of sins. . . .” (1 Peter 4:8), and to restore the one who errs with humility and patience on the part of all (Gal. 6:1-5).

It will take patience and practice for church to attain and retain a healthy atmosphere of mutual accountability in a world that loves gossip on the one hand and says “it’s none of your business” on the other. Practices of honesty in prayer and open confession of sin and forbearance among leaders, as well as strong, well-led small groups will foster greater health in this vital area. When the whole church community sees itself as a hospital for sinners, there is less and less need to hide from each other. When we all admit our absolute dependence on the grace of God in Jesus Christ, then mutual accountability will permeate the life of the body promoting healing and health.

Conclusion

It should be understood that while the foregoing exploration of health for congregations is not exhaustive, it follows biblical standards by which we can examine our churches and measure their health and well-being. Such biblical examples can serve as a benchmark for congregations eager to follow Jesus. Appropriate balance among these traits will assure that churches are focused on Christ-likeness. While different churches possess different visions, all must share the common vision of Christ: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matt. 28:19-20).
Incorporation Documents

JUN. 21, 1920

THE REGISTRAR OF
JOINT STOCK COMPANIES

DECLARATION OF INCORPORATION

Pursuant to Chapter 22 of the Acts of the Legislature assembly of the Province of Alberta for the year 1907, amending Ordinance No. 38 of the Consolidated Ordinances of the North-West Territories, entitled "An Ordinance respecting the Holding of Lands in Trust for Religious Societies and Congregations."

The congregation of the Christian Reformed church of Neerlandia, in the province of Alberta, desires incorporation pursuant to the said Act, upon the terms following; that is to say:

1. The said congregation belongs to The Christian Reformed Churches of America. We recognize as the fundamental principles of our Church, in doctrine and Government, the Bible as the infallible Word of God, and the formulas of Unity of the Christian Reformed Churches of America and the Canons of the Synod of Dordt in so far as adopted by the synod of the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church of America in the year of our Lord, 1912 and expressed in its constitution. The said formulas of Unity being lit. The thirty-seven articles of the confession of Faith of the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands.
   2nd The Heidelberg Catechism.
   3rd The Five articles against the Remonstrants.

2. The persons who according to the rules of the Congregation are entitled to vote in respect to Church business are the confessing Male Members of the congregation.

3. The proposed corporate name is: The Christian Reformed Church of Neerlandia.

4. The officers who shall exercise the powers of the body corporate in any dealing with the property thereof are the Minister (if any), Elders, and Deacons who shall elect a President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer.

5. The rules to be complied with before any of the property of the congregation shall be dealt with by the officers thereof are as follows: A meeting of the members shall be called by notice of not less than two weeks (including two Sundays) next before the date of the Meeting, which notice shall state time, place, and particular object for which the meeting is called, and shall be posted at the Church or Meeting-house of the Congregation and be read at all intervening services held in the Church or Meeting-house.

6. 55% of the members shall constitute a quorum of the congregation, a majority of whom may deal with the matters coming before the meeting.

7. We irrevocably appropriate to the maintenance of our Confession and Government forever such real and personal estate as this Church now has or may hereafter acquire and we declare that to
these objects alone it shall be applied. And in case of any departure from the above established standards of Doctrine and Government by any portion of this Church or Congregation such estate shall be held and enjoyed exclusively by those who adhere to the said Standards, hereby declared and established as the basis of our Church and Congregation.

In Witness Whereof We have hereunto set out hands on this 11th day of March A.D. 1920.

H. Kipper President

K. Tuininga Secretary

I, M Nanninga of Neerlandia in the Province of Alberta make oath and say:

1st That I hold the office of Elder in the congregation of the Christian Reformed Church of Neerlandia and have a personal Knowledge of the facts in question herein.

2nd That the foregoing declaration of incorporation was passed at a duly constituted meeting of the said congregation held in the Church of the said congregation at Neerlandia on the 15th day of January A.D. 1920,

3rd The said meeting was held upon due notice of the time, place, and object thereof, and the transaction in and about the incorporation was and is bona fide.

M. Nanninga

Sworn before me at Neerlandia in the Province of Alberta, this 11th day of March A.D. 1920

L. H. Holwerda J.P.
We, the congregation of the CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH of Neerlandia, Alberta, duly assembled and duly notified of a meeting in accordance with our Declaration of Incorporation and by decision of the synod of 1970, amend the Declaration of Incorporation which was duly registered June 21, 1920, by resolution of the Consistory and seconded by LAMBERT TUININGA and carried by 2/3 majority vote which said vote was unanimous, said amendment being as follows:

Delete clause 6, and replace it with the following: The said trustees may at any time hereafter, by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the trustees, amend this Declaration of Incorporation and the Articles of Association in any manner not inconsistent with the provisions of Articles four, five, six and seven thereof Provided that before such amendments shall become operative, a vote in favor thereof of at least two-thirds of the members of this church, present and entitled to vote, shall be obtained by the said trustees at a meeting of the members of this church, especially called for that purpose and of which notice has first been given as is also provided for and required in Article Ten thereof, and the requirements of the statutes of this Province shall be fully complied with.

Add the following clauses:

8. The ownership of all the property, both real and personal, of the said Church, is in the congregation of said Church and title may be held in any form, corporate or otherwise, consistent with the provisions of the Laws of the Province of Alberta. The congregation, with respect to such property, may properly exercise the ownership possessed by property owners in such jurisdiction and without any right of revision whatsoever by a classis or synod of the Christian Reformed Church and that classis or synod of the Christian Reformed Church will not undertake to attempt to secure possession of the property of any congregation against its will, whether or not such a congregation remains within or chooses to withdraw from the denomination.

9. In the event of a schism within a local congregation which requires a settlement of property, such settlement shall be made according to scriptural injunction of I Corinthians 6. Every effort shall be made to achieve a just and fair division of property. If help is needed with such negotiations such help shall be sought first of all from classis and/or synod. If those methods do not succeed, help may be sought from non-ecclesiastical advisors. (see Act 1970, Page 106 for definition as to what constitutes a schism.)

10. The said Trustees may have a common seal and alter the same at pleasure, and shall take into possession and custody all the temporalities of the church, and shall make the rules and regulations for the management thereof, whether the same shall consist of real or personal estate, and whether the same have been given, granted, bequeathed, or devised directly or indirectly to said church or to any person for its use.
11. The said trustees shall have the power and authority to bargain, sell, convey, mortgage, lease, or release any real estate belonging to the said church, or held by them as such trustees, and to erect churches, parsonages, schoolhouses and other buildings, for the direct and legitimate use of the said church, and to alter and repair the same, and to fix the salary of its minister or ministers or anyone in its employ; provided that no such purchases, sale or conveyance, mortgage, lease or fixing of salaries shall be made unless the affirmative vote of a majority of the members of this church organization, of which said trustees are officers, shall be first obtained at a meeting of such members of this church or congregation present and entitled to vote, duly and especially called for that purpose by notice given for two successive Sundays at the usual place of meeting next preceding such meeting; provided further, that no sale, mortgaging, or conveyance shall be made of any gift, grant, or donation, conveyance, device or bequest which would be inconsistent with the express terms of plain intent of the grant, donation, gift, conveyance, device, or bequest.

DATED AT NEERLANDIA, IN THE PROVINCE OF ALBERTA

THIS 28 DAY OF NOVEMBER A.D. 1972

CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH OF NEERLANDIA

Per,
Chairman
Peter Van Drunen

Clerk
John Piers

Approved
Peter Van Drunen
Pastor