

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

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NACCC NEWS

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2012

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FROM MY HEART TO YOURS

Dear Friends,

We read a number of books here at the office about the present and future needs of mainline Christian churches. We are particularly looking for Christian methods, systems, ideas, and programs that are adaptable to Congregational practice.

Lately, I've been suggesting to churches with which we are consulting that leadership groups engage in reading books together. Three recent ones keep coming up in conversations – Loren Mead and Billie Alban's "Creating the Future Together;" Mary Sellon and Daniel Smith's "Practicing Right Relationship;" and "Congregational Resources," edited by Richard Bass.

This last one is exactly what it says on the cover – a guide to resources for building congregational vitality. It is encyclopedic, covering ten major topics of importance to mainline Churches such as ours.

For example, in chapter 4, "Claiming The Light," Paul Chaffee delves into the benefits of using Appreciative Inquiry as a method of creating and celebrating relationships through inquiry. He states that AI is used in a growing number of churches to engage people in answering questions such as:

- ◆ *In what ways are congregational members engaged, committed and happy to participate?*
- ◆ *What do members most appreciate and value about their faith, the faith family, and their involvement in it?*
- ◆ *What opportunities do people have to share their stories and hear the stories of others?*
- ◆ *When people are treated really well in your congregation and its ministry, what is it like?"*

Imagine asking these questions in a church group! What a different environment you could create.

Your Association has a library of church renewal material to share with you and your congregation. We also have people who are involved in renewal efforts who can help you determine what method of renewal might best fit your church. All you and your congregation have to do is ask.

God's Grace and Peace to you in 2012,

Rev. Dr. Thomas Richard
Executive Secretary

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A **Congregational History & Polity Intensive** seminar will be held at Olivet College, February 12-15. Rev. Dr. Rick Hartley and Rev. Charles Packer will lead participants through the history and polity of the Congregational Way with special attention to how history and polity informs our Congregational practice today. This seminar is ideal for those who wish to deepen their understanding of the Congregational Way. There is still room for participants.

Plans are underway for the **43rd Annual Minister's Convocation**, April 16-19, 2012 at St. Mary's of the Lake Seminary in Mundelein, Illinois. This year's theme is Healthy Churches - Healthy Ministers. Lots of round table discussions are being planned. Watch the bulk mailing for registration information. The registration form will also be posted on our websites: www.centerforcongregationalleadership.org and www.naccc.org.

For more information about the Center and educational opportunities, contact Dr. Mauro at bmauro@naccc.org or (800) 262-1620 x 12.

Visit our website centerforcongregationalleadership.org for more resources on Congregationalism.

Blessings,

Betsy

CONGRATULATIONS!!

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE AND CHURCHES UPON ORDINATION:

REV. TERRY BOBZIEN, NOVEMBER 12, 2011
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, PITTSFORD, MI

REV. ALAN MORROW, NOVEMBER 13, 2011
DESERT CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, TWENTYNINE PALMS, CA

REV. RENO WRIGHT, DECEMBER 18, 2011
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF DETROIT, DETROIT, MI



2012 ANNUAL MEETING & CONFERENCE . . .

We are less than five months away from the 58th Annual Meeting and Conference of the NACCC. While the Leadership Team and staff are busily planning much of the event, the Host Committee here in Minnesota is hard at work on the details that will make this a unique and memorable experience for all.

As part of that effort to offer something different, we are going to provide opportunities for participants to engage in outreach to the broader community. In our Resource Room, you will find a booth set up by a local shop (owned, by the way, by a member of Plymouth Church in Minneapolis) that will be offering fairly traded goods for sale. "Fairly traded" means that local artists in foreign countries, often from places struggling with poverty, receive a fair amount for the artwork they create. This gives them a sustainable income and allows us to purchase finely crafted items at reasonable prices and to support artisans in developing countries. We hope you will check out the beautiful goods at the Regla De Oro table and make a purchase.

We are also going to provide a hands-on mission opportunity. On Sunday afternoon, during the workshop time, we will host a local organization that provides meals to feed the hungry around the world. Participants will help pack nutritious meals and learn a bit about the organization's goals. Space is somewhat limited, so we will ask folks to sign up at the Host Committee table upon arrival at the meeting.

These are just two of the special opportunities that await you at the upcoming Annual Meeting and Conference in June. For more information, please visit the conference web site at www.mn2012.org where we will be providing regular updates on meeting plans and offering information on exciting vacation opportunities in our great state. See you in June!

*Rev. Casey vanderBent
Co-chair, Host Committee
2012 NACCC Annual Meeting and Conference*

2012 Annual Meeting & Conference

June 23-26

Hilton Minneapolis/St. Paul Airport Mall of America

Bloomington, MN

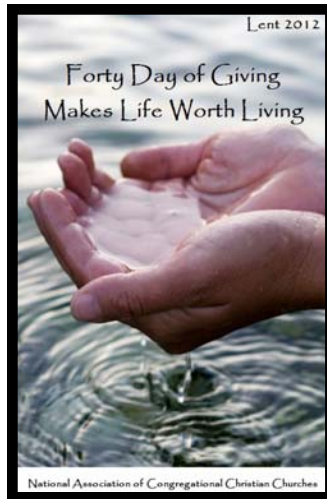
Call (952) 854-2100 to reserve your room

Room rates: \$109 plus tax

Or visit www.mspairport.hilton.com and use Group Code: NAC

2012 LENT DEVOTIONAL PLACE YOUR ORDER NOW

*Ash Wednesday
is February 22*



Please send _____ 2012 Lent Devotionals
Price: \$2.50 per copy – includes shipping & handling charges

Send Devotionals to: **(Please Print)**

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

Please send completed form to:

**NACCC
PO Box 288
Oak Creek, WI 53154-0288**

or

Email your request to: lmiller@naccc.org

Telephone: (800) 262-1620 ext. 13

Fax: (414) 764-0319

News From the Field

FCC, Clarkston, search committee busy looking for a settled minister; Will Lange is their Interim minister. Like many of our churches they are anticipating their annual meeting... **FCC, Rochester**, only \$22,000 left on their new church roof; they are anticipating some major electrical upgrades; they baptized two children during Advent... **Amelia, Clayton**, 2011 a good year for them, new member families joined, some won battles with cancer, successful Wednesday night church family dinners well attended, shepherding ministry going well, and ended year with a live nativity in front of the church; plans afoot to send eight members on a mission trip to Tennessee... **FCC, Clear Lake**, welcoming new pastor Brad Thornton; church was site of a First Lego League which promotes interest in science. The team of 9-14 year olds built a robot and then competed against other teams in a recent regional program... **FCC, Rockwood**, additional work being done on their columbarium; Rev. Packer working on his doctorate of ministry degree; area churches participating in a January unity service of prayer... **FCC, Mansfield**, Sunday morning parenting classes are being held at the church; along with bible study class of Luke's gospel, the book discussion group reads a book-a-month; every third Sunday they have family Sunday; music, inclusion of children and youth, interview a family to get to know them better, etc... **Grace, Columbiana**, donuts and coffee with youth is a time for Rev. Joy to answer questions youth have asked – "Who's acceptable?, demons and ghosts, death and dying, what's gonna happen;" church sent care packages to their college students during Christmas;...

FCC, Marshfield, both the heating system in parish hall and parsonage need to be replaced; eleven confirmation students are mid-way in their confirmation journey; Heavenly Bookworms group just read football star Tim Tebow's book... **University Church, Wichita**, fifteen-person search committee is seeking a new settled minister; have begun a congregational café – a planned topical discussion group created to keep members informed; raised almost \$2,000 in December for their college scholarship program... **FCC, Akron** BYOB (Bring your own bible) is a regular Thursday morning bible study time with minister Jay Groat; Groat also has a Monday *Coffee Talk With Jay* by appointment from 8am-4pm; church is starting a community garden in the lot next to the church...



2012 Dates

2012 Congregational History & Polity Seminar—Feb. 12-15,
Olivet, MI

2012 Minister's Convocation—April 16-19,
Mundelein, IL

2012 Annual Meeting & Conference, June 23-26,
Bloomington, MN

RECENT EXECUTIVE & FRATERNAL VISITS

American Congregational Association meeting
Cal-West Association meeting

Atkinson Congregational Church, Geneseo, IL
St. Luke's Christian Community Church, Morton Grove, IL
Rev. & Mrs. Richard Lindvall, Tinley Park, IL
First Congregational Church, Toulon, IL
Rev. David Nasgowitz, IL

First Congregational Church, Fall River, MA
First Congregational Church, Rochester, MA
First Congregational Church, Yarmouth Port, MA

First Congregational Church, Detroit, MI
First Congregational Church, Laingsburg, MI
First Congregational Church, Pittsford, MI
First Congregational Church, Wayne, MI

First Congregational Church, Oshkosh, WI
Fox River Congregational Church, Pewaukee, WI
First Congregational Church, Rochester, WI
First Congregational Church, Wauwatosa, WI

Representing the Association

Moderator Rev. Patti Haaheim represented the NACCC at the memorial service for Walt & Katie Boring.

200th ANNIVERSARY OF FIRST COMMISSIONING OF FOREIGN MISSIONARIES

The first Congregational church organized in America was gathered in Salem, Massachusetts in 1629. On February 6, 1812 the Tabernacle Church (UCC) of Salem ordained and commissioned missionaries to serve in foreign countries. Our Executive Secretary has been invited to bring greetings from the Association to the celebration service at the church on February 5th. Rev Liz Walker, former anchorperson for Channel 4 TV in Boston, will bring the message. For more information about this historical moment in Congregational history, log on to www.tabernaclechurch.org

Church Bell For Sale

The First Congregational Church of Beardstown, IL is selling their church bell (1500 lbs) and their handbells.

After a storm in 1939 the bell was removed from the tower and placed in the church foyer.

For more information contact

Mr. George Bell

georgebell6746@att.net

5 Circle Drive, Beardstown, IL 62618

(217) 323-2056

Pilgrim Hymnals Available

The Pilgrim Congregational Church, Bloomfield Hills, MI has about 150 copies of the Pilgrim Hymnal available. They are in a wide range of conditions.

Please contact:

Kerry Price, Music Director

(248) 642-2290 or

catchkerrybug@sbcglobal.net

ORDINATION ANNIVERSARIES

FEBRUARY

Larry Wentzel Feb. 1, 1974
 Craig Crossman Feb. 1, 1992
 Erik Nordgren Feb. 8, 2004
 Howard Owen Feb. 8, 2004
 Lawrence Cameron Feb. 10, 1991
 Richard L. Vinson Feb. 14, 1965
 G. Alden Taylor Feb. 15, 1974
 Gail Mills Feb. 15, 1981
 Steve DeGangi Feb. 17, 2008
 Joseph French Feb. 19, 2011
 Allan Palmer Feb. 22, 1987
 Mark Long Feb. 22, 2004
 Jack Noble Feb. 26, 1967



Harry Clark March 6, 1955
 James Schibsted March 7, 1982
 Carl Mesnig March 9, 1997
 Dawn Carlson March 11, 2007
 James Jupin March 12, 2005
 Wilson Gene Parks March 13, 1966
 Robert Stainback March 15, 1986
 Israel Young March 15, 2006
 Mark Dieter March 16, 1997
 Steve Whitworth March 16, 2002
 Tony Rambo March 20, 2011
 Terry Bascom March 22, 1992
 Robert Sullivan March 24, 1996
 Ronald Lake March 25, 1990
 Joan Laska March 25, 2001
 Jeffrey Potter March 27, 2011
 Michael Person March 31, 1974

MARCH

Fred Dole March 2, 1968
 Wayne Jacobson March 4, 1973
 Herbert Bowers March 4, 1979

PIEDMONT COLLEGE PRESENTS

Well With My Soul

Faith & Health in the 21st Century
 February 24-25, 2012

At the Classic Center & Piedmont College in Athens, GA

Featuring addresses by:

Barbara Brown Taylor

Gary Gunderson

and music by

Christopher Grundy

For more information or to register

www.piedmont.edu/RC

NAPF – HOPE
South Dakota
2012



BadLands Good Hands

For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. Ephesians 2:10

June 24 – 30, 2012

Arrive SUNDAY afternoon – Depart Saturday morning

\$695.00

Registration deadline – March 1, 2012

After March 1, 2012, registration fee will be \$795.00

NO registrations will be accepted after May 21, 2011

Scholarship information is now available on the NACCC website at NACCC.org

Partnering with Mission Discovery in Rapid City, South Dakota, NAPF and HOPE will also include aspects of worship, speakers, small group time, service, leadership and FUN! Rapid City is home to thousands of Lakota Indians who have moved from the Pine Ridge Reservation in search of a better life. You will serve forgotten and overlooked residents by repairing and painting run-down homes, hosting children's bible school, and sharing God's love with children and adults who need to experience hope. You will also have the opportunity to do some touring in the incredible area of the Black Hills, the Badlands and Mt. Rushmore.

A MOMENT IN HISTORY . . .

The World's Second Greatest Sermon

Previously, I brought Jonathon Edward's "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" to your attention as "the world's greatest sermon". "Sinners" was emblematic of America's First Great Awakening (mid 1700's). Our Second Great Awakening, (mid 1800's) was also led by a Congregationalist, Charles Grandison Finney (1792-1875). With revivals beginning in western New York, he quickly became a national and international phenomenon and lightning rod for hot-button religious and social issues of the day.



Finney sought out what we would call "seekers", the "anxious" in his terms, people deeply troubled about the state of their souls. Apparently it was an anxious time as many thousands, including the educated and business classes from the frontier to the big cities of the East, flocked to his meetings. He, then a young lawyer, had been one of those anxious souls himself, despairing of his salvation until intense personal mystical experiences revealed to him truths he believed had been distorted by orthodox Calvinism.

Congregational/Presbyterian Calvinism taught that one was predestined either to love or hate God. "I must say . . . that the greatest difficulty I met with in promoting revivals of religions was the false instruction given to the people. . . ." "[Inquirers] have been perplexed and confounded by abstract doctrines, metaphysical subtleties, absurd exhibitions of the sovereignty of God, inability, physical regeneration, and constitutional depravity, until the agonized mind, discouraged and mad from contradiction from the pulpit, and absurdity in conversation, dismissed the subject as altogether incomprehensible, and postponed the performance of duty as impossible."

Finney's revolution (which some called heresy for minimizing the role of grace) was to affirm that people are indeed capable of doing what God commands. "All holiness, in God, angels, or men, must be voluntary or it is not holiness. . . . [Every human being] has understanding to perceive and weigh; he has conscience to decide upon the nature of moral opposites; he has the power and liberty of choice. . . . Sinner! instead of waiting and praying for God to change your heart, you should at once summon up your powers, put forth the effort, and change the governing preference of your mind."

In what did conversion consist? To Finney, accepting Christ meant replacing a dominant motive of *selfishness* with one of *benevolence* (which he saw as God's character). Such a conversion had radical practical implications. The Second Awakening was remarkable for its blending of revivalism and progressive social reform. Finney and Oberlin College where he taught and served as president were nationally recognized leaders most famously in Abolition but also in such other reforms as temperance, higher education, and the Graham diet.

No single sermon of Finney's achieved the fame of Edwards "Sinners", but the entire body of preaching, much of it extemporaneous, did. His marriage of evangelicalism and social reform was a singular achievement and a reminder that they do not have to be divorced.

Rev. Arlin Larson, Historian, NACCC,
First Congregational Church, Searsport, ME

References: Charles G. Finney, "Sinners bound to change their own hearts".
Garth Fosell & Richard Dupuis, editors, *The Memoirs of Charles G. Finney*.

ANNOUNCING!

The 2012 Joseph Jones Russell Award

NACCC clergy are encouraged to submit a sermon for consideration for the 2012 J.J. Russell Sermon Award using the following guidelines:



- The sermon shall deal with the relationship of traditional Congregationalism to contemporary American life in some aspect, and shall point out the continuing viability and the relevance of the Congregational Way.
- The sermon must be preached between June 30, 2011 and April 30, 2012.
- Submissions may be in manuscript or DVD format. We also encourage podcasts and YouTube submissions.
- A bulletin from the service must accompany the submission. In the case of a virtual submission, the bulletin may be sent via email or USPS.
- The deadline for submissions is April 30, 2012.

Manuscripts and DVDs may be sent to:

Jodee Lord
377 Mason Ave
Staten Island, NY 10305

Links to virtual submissions may be emailed to Jodee Lord at:

jodee_teach@yahoo.com

Questions? Please contact Jodee Lord.

The
CONGREGATIONALIST
 Magazine of the Congregational Way

is going PROSPECTING!

We hope you've noticed improvements we've made in *The Congregationalist*. Frankly, we think we are now "Ready for Prime Time." And that's good, because to keep our magazine going, we need to gain more **commercial advertisers**.

Please help us compile an effective prospect list of companies who actually do business with local churches. Would you please take a few moments, right now, to send us names and contact information of several companies that your church buys things from? For example—

- Worship supplies, chancel furniture and equipment
- Linens, banners, paraments, clergy vestments, choir robes
- Sunday School and VBS curriculum, books, hymnals
- Sunday bulletins, printing services
- Employee benefit plans, financial services, insurance
- *Anything your church buys a lot of*

Companies that already supply things to *your* church would welcome the opportunity to get their message in front of Congregational church leaders around the country through the pages of our exciting publication. We will approach them in the most gracious and professional way.

E-mail Karen Skinner at karenskinner77@hotmail.com, leave a message for her at First Congregational Church of Maywood, (708) 344-6150, or mail to:

First Congregational Church of Maywood
Attn: Karen Skinner
 400 N. 5th Avenue
 Maywood IL 60153

EXAMPLE:

John Jones Company—John Jones, Jr., route salesman
 123 Helpfulness Drive, Benevolence MI 99999
jjonesjr@johnjonesco.com (999) 999-9999
www.johnjonesco.com

Referred by Increase Mather XIII, Congregational Church of Benevolence, Mich.
im13@revsmilez.com (111) 111-1111

**SEND ME YOUR NEWS**

Submissions for the April/May edition are due by March 15, 2012.

Marie Steele, Editor

msteele@nacc.org

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Bringing together Congregational Christian Churches for mutual care and outreach to our world in the name of Jesus Christ.

WE'RE ON THE WEB!

www.nacc.org

**The Congregational Foundation**

Want to create something of lasting value? You can be confident your legacy gift will make the difference you're seeking to create. Contact the Congregational Foundation at: (800) 262-1620 or foundation@nacc.org