

**A HANDBOOK FOR CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES**

**IN MEMBERSHIP WITH THE**

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN**  
**CHURCHES**

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

Produced by the Center for Congregational Leadership, NACCC  
Rev. Dr. D. Elizabeth Mauro, Dean

*Serving the Churches that Serve Christ*

# INTRODUCTION TO THE HANDBOOK

## Purpose

The purpose of this handbook is to put at your fingertips practical information useful to your congregation as a member of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches.

## Use

This handbook is divided into sections, as indexed below. It is designed this way to make updating easy as information changes. We recommend that you put these pages in a three ring binder and keep it accessible to your church leaders and staff.

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# 1. CONGREGATIONALISM IN PARTNERSHIP

## Section 1.1: CHURCHES IN PARTNERSHIP

### Association of Churches

The National Association of Congregational Christian Churches is as its title says: a voluntary *association* of churches who claim a heritage and practice in the Congregational Way. As an Association, we do not create hierarchies that oversee local churches. It is from one another that we gain mutual encouragement and support. Ours is a tradition that has deep convictions based upon the Word of God as each person interprets that Word according to the dictates of conscience, under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit.

### Diversity of Congregations

Since every Congregationalist possesses full liberty of conscience in interpreting the Gospel, we are a diverse group of people united under Christ. Our fellowship of churches embraces a diversity of theological viewpoints.

### Primacy of the Local Church

Every member church is fully self-governing and spiritually complete. There is no authority over the local church except for Christ. There is no outside ecclesiastical authority over the local church, including the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches. Because of this, the Association *does not*:

- Require member churches to adhere to a shared creed or statement of faith as a condition of membership
- Speak for all the member churches on issues of theology, politics or social concerns
- Credential clergy to ministerial service

### NACCC Websites

Learn more about us at our websites:

[www.naccc.org](http://www.naccc.org)

[www.centerforcongregationalleadership.org](http://www.centerforcongregationalleadership.org)

[www.congregationalist.org](http://www.congregationalist.org)

***If you have questions about anything in this handbook, please do not hesitate to contact your NACCC staff. We are here to assist you in your ministries!***

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Churches in Partnership

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# 1. CONGREGATIONALISM IN PARTNERSHIP

## SECTION 1.2: COMMUNICATING WITH THE NACCC

### Communication is Key

The lifeblood of our voluntary association is *communication* between the local church and the NACCC. Communication is a two-way street: We need to hear from you, and you need to hear from us. We believe that communication is not simply a process of transferring information, but most fundamentally is a relationship between *people*—personal and important.

There are three main groups of people who handle communication within our association throughout the year: ***Year Round Delegates, Ambassadors, and NACCC Staff Members.***

### Year Round Delegate

Each member church is entitled and ***strongly encouraged*** to designate a Year Round Delegate as the main communication link between your church and the NACCC. While others—pastor, church administrator, moderator, etc.—also communicate with the NACCC in important ways, it is the *primary job* of the Year Round Delegate to keep the lines of communication open and free-flowing to support our partnership.

The Year Round Delegate should be willing to:

- Be the primary conduit for sharing information from the NACCC to the congregation.
- Be the person to convey the views and ideas of the congregation to the NACCC.
- Be, or become, computer literate, and participate effectively in online exchanges.

To designate or change your Year Round Delegate, send the following form to the NACCC office.

<u>Please Complete this Form to Name Your Church's Year Round Delegate</u>		
NAME:	_____	
EMAIL :	_____	
MAILING ADDRESS:	_____ CITY _____	STATE _____
PRIMARY, ALTERNATE PHONE NUMBERS:	_____	
CHURCH MEMBERSHIP	_____ CITY _____	STATE _____
CERTIFIED BY (PRINTED NAME):	_____	
SIGNED, OFFICE HELD	_____	
<p>For questions, please contact Carrie Dahm, <a href="mailto:cdahm@naccc.org">cdahm@naccc.org</a> or call 800.262.1620, Ext. 1612. Scan and email completed form to Carrie, or return by mail to: NACCC, PO Box 288, Oak Creek, WI 53154, or FAX to 414.764.0319</p>		

## **Ambassadors**

NACCC Ambassadors are trained volunteers located around the country who attend church ordinations, installations and anniversary celebrations, bringing greetings from the NACCC. They help churches with the sometimes challenging process of searching for its next pastor and respond to churches considering membership in the NACCC. If you would like an ambassador to attend your church event or to help your church with a pastoral transition or with the process of joining our National Association, contact the Executive Secretary at the NACCC office.

## **NACCC Staff Members (*Phone 1-800-262-1620*)**

**Staff contact information: <http://www.naccc.org/staff.html>**

## Information Exchange

Communication involves an exchange of information—the *content* of communication—among NACCC churches, as well as between local churches and the National Association:

### Your Yearbook Information

The NACCC maintains an online Yearbook at [www.naccc.org](http://www.naccc.org), with information about our member churches. This Yearbook allows Association members, leaders, and staff to know key facts about your church. *You have control over your Yearbook information: An individual you designate* will be given a password to access and update your church's yearbook information. This individual may be the church's administrative assistant, the minister, the Year Round Delegate or anyone else charged with this administrative task. Keeping your information up-to-date is easy and done online. ***Please update your Yearbook information when a change occurs.***

***If your designated individual does not have an NACCC log-in (User name & Password), or is unsure if he or she has one, please call the NACCC office at 1-800-262-1620 for assistance.***

***If you have an NACCC account with a user name and password:***

- Go to [www.naccc.org](http://www.naccc.org).
- Click "Login" in the upper right hand corner.
- Fill in your user name and password.
- Click on "Church Info" tab on top.
- Click on the green cross next to your church name.
- Fill out your church information.

If you do not see "Church Info" or the correct church when you log in, call the NACCC office for assistance.

### Information from the NACCC

There are a variety of ways the NACCC puts information in your hands:

- ***YRD Links:*** These are regular e-newsletters from the NACCC to each church's Year Round Delegate, containing important information to be shared with the local church, or questions for the local church's consideration, or necessary information about the Year Round Delegate communication process.
- ***NA News:*** Published only online, six times a year. This contains updates on current NACCC events, Missions and Outreach needs, ordination anniversaries, and other vital information. An e-mail is sent to Year Round Delegates, Ministers, Moderators and current NACCC leadership to announce the posting of the newest issue.

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Communicating with the NACCC

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- *The Congregationalist*: A glossy full-color magazine, published in March, June, September and December, it is also available online at [www.congregationalist.org](http://www.congregationalist.org) and on Facebook. *The Congregationalist* contains articles on a variety of topics and events related to Congregationalism, church life and the NACCC. It is available for free to all member households of NACCC churches (though donations are welcome and encouraged). For more information, see Section 2.2.
- NACCC Website, [www.naccc.org](http://www.naccc.org): A treasure trove of information on NACCC programs, opportunities, publications, membership, church support and many other things.
- Center for Congregational Leadership Website, [www.centerforcongregationalleadership.org](http://www.centerforcongregationalleadership.org): An educational ministry of the NACCC, the Center website contains links to useful information and posts sponsored events and opportunities. You can also find the Center on Facebook.
- All Church Mailings: Sent to all member churches, by e-mail or postal mail, five times per year. These mailings contain information on events, worship aids, opportunities for giving, among other things.
- NACCC facebook page: you can follow us!

## **Celebrating and Praying with and for You.**

The NACCC staff celebrates with you significant events in the life of your church. We also pray for you, especially in times of challenge and difficulty. Please inform us if you have an ordination or installation of a pastor at your church, or if you are celebrating a significant church anniversary or other event. We will make every effort to have an NACCC representative present. If that is not possible, we would like to be able to send a letter of greeting and congratulations. Also, if you are facing a particular hardship, challenge or concern, please let us know so that we can pray for your strength, guidance and comfort. Did you know that one of our NACCC ministers regularly posts to Facebook three churches and a mission to pray for that day? We join him in those prayer requests.

Also, every year at the NACCC Annual Meeting and Conference, we remember Congregational leaders from our member churches who have passed on. These leaders might be ministers or lay people active at the state and national levels. Please notify us when such luminaries in your church have died. Submit that person's name to the Meeting Planner in the NACCC office, with a brief description of his or her contribution to your church and the Congregational Way. That person will be included in the necrology ceremony at the meeting.

# 1. CONGREGATIONALISM IN PARTNERSHIP

## SECTION 1.3: NACCC MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

### Active and Inactive Churches

A voluntary association is only as strong as its members are active and contributing. To be considered an active member of the NACCC a church must make a yearly financial contribution to the Shared Ministries Fund of the Association. This is the fund that supports the Administrative expenses of the NACCC. Active churches are also strongly encouraged to submit an annual statistical report for the Yearbook and select a Year Round Delegate (see section 1.2).

A member church which does not make a yearly financial contribution to the Shared Ministries Fund of the Association is in breach of fellowship and is considered to be an inactive member Church. A Church which breaches fellowship shall be notified by the Secretary of the Association that it has been placed on the list of inactive member Churches. An inactive Church shall be automatically restored to active status by making a contribution to the Shared Ministries Fund of the Association.

If a member Church is in breach of fellowship for three successive years, its name shall automatically be removed from the roll of member Churches and the name of its minister removed from the list of ministers in the Yearbook. This also terminates that minister's access to continued MMBB benefit services through the NACCC. Upon notification by the Secretary of the Association, a church removed from the membership rolls for this reason may reactivate its membership in the NACCC (and reinstate its pastor's name to the list of ministers and MMBB services) by fulfilling all of the following: 1) take a vote to reactivate membership and, should that vote be in the affirmative, 2) send to the NACCC a record of the vote, information to update the church's yearbook entry, name and contact information for the church's Year Round Delegate, and a financial contribution to the Shared Ministries Fund.

### Required Contribution to the Shared Ministries Fund

As stated above, a member church is considered active by its contribution to the Shared Ministries Fund. This contribution is recorded in the NACCC fiscal year in which it was received. The NACCC fiscal year runs April 1 – March 31.

While the amount of this contribution is decided by the member church, a target contribution of "Fair Share" or more is desirable. The "Fair Share" designation is a per member amount that represents the contribution it would take to meet the NACCC budget (a budget approved by the member churches at the Annual Meeting) if every member contributed their "fair share." **The**

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**current “fair share” designation is \$13.00 per member.** A church is considered to be “fair share plus” when it donates \$15.00 or more per member. You do not need to contribute at the Fair Share or greater level to remain an active church, but you must contribute something to the Shared Ministry Fund.

## **Striving to be a Fair Share church**

Many churches strive to be a Fair Share church in creative ways. Some make the Fair Share contribution part of their annual budgets. Some consider it to be part of their Mission giving. Other churches ask each member to contribute their fair share directly in a special offering taken up by the church and forwarded to the NACCC. Still others hold special fund raising events (suppers, car washes, fairs, etc.) to raise money for their fair share. Some churches even contribute more than their fair share, to make it possible for some of our struggling member churches to still receive the benefits of NACCC membership.

## **The Blessing of Giving**

Your contribution to the Shared Ministries Fund supports the administration of a wide variety of programs and services to member churches. In this way, your church tangibly expresses its support for and encouragement of every other member church. We are stronger and more vibrant together than we are alone.

Contributions may be made on line by going to [www.naccc.org](http://www.naccc.org) and clicking on the “Donate Now” button. They may also be made by check, payable to NACCC Shared Ministries Fund and mailed to:

NACCC  
P.O. Box 288  
Oak Creek, WI 53154

# 1. CONGREGATIONALISM IN PARTNERSHIP

## SECTION 1.4: CLERGY STANDING

### The NACCC does not Confer Standing

As an association of churches (see section 1.1) the NACCC *does not* confer standing on ministers serving NACCC member churches. Such recognition is conferred by the local church upon its call to that person to be their minister. A minister who is serving an active member church or who is retired from a member church is listed in the NACCC Yearbook. Such listing only reflects your information given to us. It does not signify NACCC “standing.” There are several ecclesiastical designations conferred to individuals by the church, as follows.

### In Care Designation

The “in care” designation is given to members of the church who are entering seminary preparing to enter Congregational ministry. The student informs the minister and the Board of Deacons of his or her plans. If the Deacons see in this person the gifts for ministry, they recommend to the membership that the church vote to place the student in care, supporting the student with prayers and leadership opportunities. Some churches support the student financially as well, but this is optional.

### Licensure

Licensure represents the next level of recognition for the seminarian. It is conferred in the same way as in care status after the church has seen obvious growth and skill in the training for and practice of ministry. It confirms that preparation is proceeding satisfactorily. Moving from In Care to Licensure is also done by vote of the church. This allows both the church and the seminarian to acknowledge and rejoice in the growing wisdom and skill of the seminarian. With Licensure, the church now grants the seminarian the privilege of conducting weddings, funerals and sacraments on behalf of the church.

Licensure may also be extended to lay ministers in the congregation or to clergy who may be members of the church but not employed by the church. Licensure grants permission to perform all ministerial functions on behalf of the church and is extended by vote of the congregation. Steps usually include:

- A recommendation from the Deacons to the congregation to license a person
- The recommendation is brought before the congregation at a congregational meeting, including the reasons why the Deacons feel this is an appropriate step
- A vote is taken by the congregation.

Licensure should be reviewed and renewed annually, through the process noted above.

## Ordination

- Local
  - A local ordination occurs when a single church recognizes the gifts for ministry in a person they wish to call as their settled minister or to some other ministerial position in the church. It is called “local” because no other churches are asked for advice and guidance in the process. The ordination is valid as long as that person remains the settled minister of that particular church. When that person leaves, the status of his or her ordination is void. The process followed for local ordination is similar to that of licensure (see above). It is then followed by a service that includes ordination vows and an ordination prayer with the laying on of hands.
  
- Vicinage
  - Often, a church wishing to ordain an individual to the ministry seeks the counsel and advice of area churches as to the wisdom of their desire to ordain. A gathering of area churches for such a purpose is called an Ecclesiastical Council of the Vicinage (“Vicinage Council”). Ordination that occurs after a Vicinage Council recommends that the local church proceed to ordination is a more widely accepted and recognized ministerial status. While the ordination often takes place in conjunction with a call to a church, contemporary practice has also been for a person’s home church to ordain if preceded by a Vicinage Council. In seeking the guidance of a vicinage council, a church is looking for confirmation that they have discerned well the gifts of ministry that make the candidate fit for ordination. The local church is free to act upon the advice given by the Vicinage Council or not. If a Vicinage Council recommends that the church not ordain, this does not prevent the ordination if the church chooses to ignore the council’s advice. It does, however, mean that the ordination is a local one. Ordinations that proceed upon positive recognition of a Vicinage Council are recognized by other churches even when the minister has left the church that ordained.

## Lay Ministers

Increasingly, individuals are entering ministry without a seminary education. While a seminary education (M.Div.) is the “gold standard” for professional ministry, many churches are simply no longer able to afford the professional salary of a seminary-educated minister. Additionally, many people who feel called to ministry are “second career” and cannot enter into the traditional educational path which may require relinquishing a job, creating family hardship. Many in these circumstances enter a course of study with a mentor to be lay ministers. (The

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NACCC has a lay ministry program available.) Upon completion of the course of study, many churches recognize that person with a certificate of completion and invite them to serve as a minister in their midst. The church may also license the lay minister to perform ministerial duties (see above process). In rare cases, the church locally ordains that person.

## Resources

The Congregational Foundation for Theological Studies is a ministry of the NACCC that provides Congregational education and scholarship help to seminarians studying for ministry in Congregational churches. If you have a person in your church who is considering enrolling in seminary, or already is enrolled, encourage that person to be in touch with the NACCC for support and aid. You may contact the NACCC or go to [www.centerforcongregationalleadership.org](http://www.centerforcongregationalleadership.org) for more information.

The Lay Ministry Training Program is a program of the NACCC to equip people for ministry in their local churches. You may contact the NACCC or go to [www.centerforcongregationalleadership.org](http://www.centerforcongregationalleadership.org) for more information.

More can be learned about ecclesiastical standing in these resources:

- *From Call To Settlement*, Lloyd Hall
- *The Congregational Worship Book*, Henry David Gray
- *How to Gather and Order A Congregational Church*, A. Vaughn Abercrombie

All may be found online at the Center's website, [www.centerforcongregationalleaderhip.org](http://www.centerforcongregationalleaderhip.org).

NACCC advisors can help you through the process of conferring ecclesiastical standing.

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## SECTION 1.5: CLERGY AND LAITY OPPORTUNITIES

### Convocation

Every year, the NACCC hosts a gathering for clergy designed to provide continuing education, spiritual reflection and rest. This convocation in the central Midwest and usually begins on the second Monday after Easter, a perfect time for clergy to renew themselves. Many churches set aside money to send their pastor to this event, knowing that the spiritual rest their pastor gains benefits the church. Providing a way for your pastor to attend the convocation is not only a show of support, but also reminds the clergy person that the church wants and needs a pastor who is mindful of his or her health and well-being. Ultimately, it is the church that benefits from their clergy's experiences.

### Regional Retreats

Many State and Regional Associations also host local retreats for clergy. These gatherings help area clergy stay connected to each other, sustaining vital collegial relationships. Supporting your minister to attend regional retreats will also bless the church with a happier, healthier pastor.

### Congregational History and Polity Seminars – In Person and Online

This is an especially important seminar if the minister serving your church has come to you from a tradition that is not Congregational. Many times, a pastor from another tradition unknowingly misunderstands the Congregational Way because they do not have adequate knowledge or experience. When this happens, the result can be significant conflict in the church. Many churches **require** that their new pastor attend one of the History and Polity seminars in the first year he or she assumes the pastorate, writing the requirement directly into the terms of call. Other churches encourage their pastor to attend by granting paid time off to participate and providing a stipend to cover or offset expenses. If your pastor is from a tradition other than Congregational, the investment you make in sending her or him to this seminar could save you heartache down the road.

History and Polity seminars are not just for clergy who have come to your church from other traditions. Many laity attend to further their knowledge of and appreciation for their Congregational Heritage. Church leaders find the seminar helps them become more confident leaders. Seminars are held periodically at the Center for Congregational Leadership in Olivet, Michigan or a hosting church anywhere in the country. Information about upcoming seminars are posted on the Center's website, and advertised in other places and ways.

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There is also the opportunity to take the History and Polity course online. Launched in 2013, this course designed in two levels, Level I is suitable for clergy, laity, new member classes and confirmation. It is an introduction to Congregationalism. Level II is an advanced level for those who wish to learn more and is particularly aimed at clergy who have come to Congregationalism from other traditions. Upon completion of Level II, participants receive a certificate of completion.

## **Annual Meeting and Conference**

The most prominent NACCC event for laity and clergy is the Annual Meeting and Conference. The Annual Meeting is an important expression of Congregationalism where churches send an official delegate to help conduct the business of the assembled churches. The member churches *are* the National Association and it is at the Annual Meeting that churches come together to make decisions important to their common interests. While the delegates conduct the business, there is plenty for others to do. Many people who are not official delegates attend to partake in the fellowship and educational opportunities at the conference. (See more about the Annual Meeting and Conference in Section 2.3).

## **Silent Retreats**

Twice a year, the Society of Classical Retreat Guides hosts a silent retreat and invites clergy and laity to attend this time of spiritual reflection and renewal. One retreat is held just ahead of the Annual Meeting and Conference. The other, which usually meets for a longer duration of at least 2-3 days, typically takes place in the autumn and may occur regionally.

Members of the Society are available to lead or to train or assist others to lead Classical Silent Retreats for local churches or regional associations. There are offerings of varying lengths. Standard to all Classical Silent Retreats are prayer, devotional reading, and work in the quiet.

## **Continuing Education through the Center for Congregational Leadership**

The Center for Congregational Leadership hosts seminars on a variety of other topics of interest to the church and its leadership. Often, these seminars are held at the Center and are webcast around the country. Past topics have included:

- Stewardship
- Technology in Worship
- Web Savvy Ministry

to name a few.

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## The Congregational Symposium

Every other year, for the past 16 years, various churches around the country have hosted the Congregational Symposium. The Symposium brings together gifted speakers who have new insights in the basis and practice of Congregationalism. The Symposium gives clergy and laity an opportunity to be stimulated and challenged in a variety of ways. It also allows new friendships and connections to form. The Symposium is not a function of the NACCC and occurs only when a church is moved to host the next one. If no church emerges to host the symposium, it does not occur. The Center for Congregational Leadership provides advice and support to any church wanting to host the Symposium.

## The Youth Leader Training

From time to time, youth leaders from around the country are invited and encouraged to gather to hone their skills and discover new ideas together. These opportunities may occur in conjunction with other youth events or they may be promoted as opportunities for leaders to attend national youth ministry training events. The networking and fellowship that come from these gatherings encourages and strengthens those who are dedicated to this challenging ministry to youth.

## Service on Boards and Committees of the NACCC

Because the NACCC is an association of churches, it depends on representatives from member churches to join boards, councils and committees to guide the work and ministry of the NACCC. Opportunities abound! Some of those roles are filled through the nomination process and election by the delegates at the NACCC Annual Meeting and Conference. They include:

- **Moderator** – Serves as moderator of the Leadership Council and the Annual Meeting and Conference.
- **Vice Moderator** – Serves as moderator on the Board of Directors and typically assumes the role of moderator when the moderator's term of service ends.
- **Secretary** – Keeps a record of the proceedings and decisions of the Leadership Council, the Board of Directors and the Annual Meeting and Conference. Serves as official signatory of the corporation.
- **Treasurer** – Keeps a record of the financial expenditures of the corporation and reports the same to the Association.
- **Historian** – Keeps an accounting of significant proceedings of the Association and tends to the Association's archives.
- **Board of Directors** – Responsible for the fiduciary and policy oversight of the corporation.
- **Mission Outreach Ministry Council** – Responsible for the advancement of domestic and foreign missions as well as cultivating relationships with Olivet and Piedmont colleges,

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the International Congregational Fellowship, the American Congregational Association and ecumenical groups as appropriate.

- **Growth Ministry Council** – Responsible for supporting the establishment of new Congregational churches, encouraging and supporting local church in youth programming, providing youth programs at the national level, encouraging churches in their use of technology and developing worship and spiritual growth resources for churches.
- **Vitality Ministry Council** – Responsible for supporting seminarians, overseeing advisory services for member churches, promoting knowledge and understanding of the Congregational Way, providing leadership development events for clergy and laity, and advancing lay ministry.
- **Credentials Committee** – Tracks and reports the credentials and statistics of Annual Meeting and Conference representation.
- **Nominating Committee** – Receives and puts forth nominations for elected positions. This committee's members are nominated and elected from the floor of the Annual Meeting and Conference.

The Leadership Council is made up of members who serve by virtue of holding other elected or appointed positions in the NACCC:

- **Leadership Council** – Comprised of two members of each Ministry Council as well as the moderator, moderator elect and youth representative, this Council is responsible for casting vision and prioritizing programs and services of the NACCC, overseeing the Annual Meeting and Conference, sustaining the relationship with the Year Round Delegates, tending to inquiring churches and advancing their membership, and providing ceremonial and ambassadorial functions to the churches. The Treasurer and Secretary serve with voice but no vote.

Some positions are on task teams and are appointed directly by the Councils. These include all task teams of the Ministry Councils, Leadership Council, and Board of Directors including (to name just a few):

- Missions
- Congregational Foundation for Theological Studies
- Youth
- Annual Meeting and Conference Team

While the Councils are charged with oversight of program areas, the Task Teams are responsible for the hands-on work required to fulfill program objectives.

Ad hoc committee opportunities are created from time to time, depending on needs and circumstances. Additionally, the NACCC maintains a team of volunteer ambassadors who represent the NACCC at ordinations, installations, church anniversaries, and other special

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occasions. They also help guide member churches through the search process for a minister and respond to inquiries from churches who are considering membership in the NACCC. Nominations are handled through the Nominating Committee of the NACCC. It is their job to solicit the names of interested people and put selected people in nomination before the delegate body of the Annual Meeting. They encourage the submission of nominations all year long. On the next page, you will find a nomination form you may copy and use. **All year long, but especially when you receive information from them, please consider who in your church might have an interest in, and aptitude for any of the numerous opportunities available.** The NACCC is made strong and effective by the work of many people.

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**NACCC'S Nomination FORM**  
**DEADLINE for JUNE Nominations IS FEBRUARY 1**

Please submit a separate form for each person nominated - Forms may be downloaded from our Website at [www.naccc.org](http://www.naccc.org); Resources; Forms; Nomination Forms. (Please contact the individual being nominated before submitting this form.)

**For Officers, Credentials and the Annual Meeting & Conference Team, please select position by checking a box in the left column. All other positions are contingent upon consideration of new bylaws. NOTE: Please refer to the Website at the location referenced above, for a description of all positions. Please select area of interest in the right column. The combined Nominating Committees may then align individuals (with their consent) with positions that will be available for election at the 2014 Annual Meeting & Conference.**

POSITION OR AREA OF INTEREST FOR WHICH CANDIDATE IS RECOMMENDED: (check any that apply)

- |  |                                    |
|--|------------------------------------|
| Moderator (continues from prior election)                                  | Missions                           |
| Vice Moderator (serves four years; 2 as Vice Moderator and 2 as Moderator) | Ministerial Training               |
| Secretary (1 year term)  | Youth Activities                   |
| Treasurer (1 year term)  | Conflict Resolution                |
| Historian (1 year term)  | Church Planting and Revitalization |
| Credentials Committee (2 year term)  | Financial Planning                 |
| Annual Meeting and Conference Team   | Personnel and Policy Development   |
| Member-at-Large (3 year term)  | Fund Raising                       |
|  | Communications and Publications    |

NAME OF INDIVIDUAL: \_\_\_\_\_

CLERGY or LAITY \_\_\_\_\_ MALE or FEMALE (optional) \_\_\_\_\_ AGE \_\_\_\_\_ (optional)  
(Please circle) (Please circle)

HOME ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street City State ZIP

PHONE: Home \_\_\_\_\_ Work: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ OCCUPATION: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME AND ADDRESS OF NACCC MEMBER CHURCH: (must have active status) \_\_\_\_\_

SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES WITHIN:

- Local Church:
- Regional Association:
- National Association:

IS NOMINEE COMFORTABLE WITH AND HAVE FREQUENT ACCESS TO A COMPUTER? Yes / No

PLEASE PROVIDE TWO REFERENCES:

- Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_
- Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Has this individual been contacted and agreed to serve if nominated? Yes / No

Please provide, along with this form, a very brief profile of the person being nominated.

Nomination SUBMITTED BY: (Individual, Group, Church, Etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

(Please Print: Name, Address, phone, E-mail)

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE RETURN TO: NACCC NOMINATING COMMITTEES c PO BOX 288 c OAK CREEK, WI c 53154;  
Fax to: (414) 764 0819 Email  
[cdahm@nacc.org](mailto:cdahm@nacc.org)

### Leadership Team Travel Policy – (as of June 2013)

The travel policy for the NACCC Leadership Team is determined by the Executive Committee (under the current structure and the Board of Directors under the new structure). The following is a brief overview of that policy, which may be subject to change as policies are revised in response to the needs of our new structure. While the Policy states clearly that the NACCC will pay for a portion of the expenses for Leadership Team members to attend the Annual Meeting and Conference (and, if appropriate, pre-meetings), please consider whether you might further subsidize your own travel. All NACCC Leadership Team members are asked to cover up to 100% of the cost to attend the Annual Meeting and Conference (AMC), if possible, through personal funds or subsidies from their church or state/regional association.

#### Policy outline:

1. The NACCC will pay for a portion of Leadership Team expenses for one face-to-face meeting each year, to coincide with the AMC, as follows:
  - a. Costs to get to the meeting (transportation of any kind and meals en route) are to be covered by the Leadership Team member.
  - b. Costs for any meals other than group meals\* at the AMC are to be covered by the Leadership Team member.
  - c. Registration, room (1/2 of double occupancy rate), and AMC group meals\* are all covered by the NACCC, through the Shared Ministries Fund or individual group travel budget.
  - d. Pre-meetings: Only authorized Leadership Team members will be covered for pre-meeting expenses. (Note: The groups listed in *italics* in #2 below generally do not meet for pre-meetings. If you are unsure whether you are covered, contact the NACCC office.)
2. The "Leadership Team" is defined as: Board of Directors, Officers, Executive Committee, Leadership Council, Ministry Councils (Growth, Missions, & Vitality), Youth Commission, *Credentials Committee, and Annual Meeting and Conference Team members-at-large.*
3. Beginning with the 2014-2015 fiscal year, the NACCC will budget \$3,000 annually to cover travel costs for Leadership Team members who cannot afford to cover their travel costs to attend the meeting. These members are encouraged to apply for funding, with the actual amount awarded based on the expressed needs of the individual, not to exceed \$400 per person. Should the total amount requested for any given year exceed the budget, gifts will be prorated. Requests will be handled confidentially by the Executive Secretary or her/his staff designee.

\* Group meals are defined as those meals included on the registration form that are not special gatherings. As these can vary each year, Leadership Team members should consult annually with the NA's Meeting Planner to confirm which meals are covered by the NACCC.

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Section 1.5

Clergy and Laity Opportunities

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## 2. CONGREGATIONALISM IN ACTION

### SECTION 2.1: HERITAGE

#### Hallmarks of Congregationalism

Congregational Churches are sometimes known as the “Church of the Pilgrims” after the small congregations of the early 1600’s. The people of these congregations moved from England, some by way of Holland, and then to the new world in pursuit of religious freedom. From them, we inherited a wonderful spiritual heritage - one that is uniquely suited to our contemporary world.

This is a tradition that has deep convictions based upon the Word of God as each person interprets that Word according to the dictates of conscience, under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. According to Congregational luminary Harry Butman, this naturally attracts men and women of genuine conviction, of adventurous faith, and of gracious regard for each other’s sincerity to the Congregational Christian fellowship.

Since every Congregationalist possesses full liberty of conscience in interpreting the Gospel, we are a diverse group of people united under Christ. We believe there is strength in diversity and by it there are unending opportunities to learn from each other and to grow in faith.

- Christ alone is the head of the church.
- All church members are spiritually equal and called to the work of ministry.
- Every local church is autonomous and complete.
- Each local church is called into wider associations of fellowship.
- Believers are bound one to another in voluntary covenant.
- Every Christian possesses full liberty of conscience in interpreting the Gospel.
- The Bible is fully sufficient as our guide in matters of faith and practice and will inspire individuals and direct the church with fresh light and truth for every generation.

For a more complete understanding of these hallmarks, go to [www.centerforcongregationalleadership.org](http://www.centerforcongregationalleadership.org) and read “**The Art and Practice of Congregationalism.**”

#### History Polity Classes (online)

Through the NACCC’s Center for Congregational Leadership, your church members may learn more about the Congregational Way through the online Congregational History and Polity course. Designed in two levels, level one is appropriate for general membership, membership classes and confirmation classes. After completing level one, those who wish to know more can

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Section 2.1

Heritage

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proceed to the in-depth level two, especially appropriate for pastors who are serving member churches but who have come to the Congregational Way from other traditions.

## **Heritage Sunday**

Every year in November, churches have the opportunity to celebrate our Congregational Heritage by designating one Sunday as Heritage Sunday. By lifting up our heritage in the month that also celebrates Thanksgiving, we remind people that we are deeply rooted in the faithfulness of our Pilgrim and Puritan forebears and that our celebration of Thanksgiving is also rooted in their deep and abiding faith and practice.

## **Heritage Materials**

To help you in your celebration, a variety of Heritage materials for worship can be found on line at the NACCC ([www.naccc.org](http://www.naccc.org)) and Center for Congregational Leadership ([www.centerforcongregationalleadership.org](http://www.centerforcongregationalleadership.org)) websites.

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## 2. CONGREGATIONALISM IN ACTION

### SECTION 2.2: *THE CONGREGATIONALIST* MAGAZINE

#### Online and Hard Copy

*The Congregationalist* Magazine, of the Congregational Way, is published 4 times per year in March, June, September, and December. This glossy, full-color magazine is mailed to subscribers' homes and may also be seen online at [www.Congregationalist.org](http://www.Congregationalist.org)

This award-winning magazine engages a variety of lively and interesting topics and issues of interest to Congregationalists. Its pages are open to all relevant and articulate contributions.

#### Editorial Policy

Articles and editorials in *The Congregationalist* are by the authority of the editor and do not necessarily reflect policies and opinions of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches or its members. The NACCC reserves freedom of expression to its editors as well as freedom of opinion to its readers. An advisory editorial board helps steer policy and ensure editorial independence. Editor Larry Sommers calls the magazine the "kitchen table" where Congregationalists share ideas and exchange viewpoints.

#### Free Subscriptions

Subscriptions to the magazine are free of charge and make an especially appropriate welcome gift to your new Church members.

- One subscription is provided free of charge to each individual requestor who is a member of a church in fellowship with the NACCC.
- One complimentary "Newcomer Copy" will be sent to any person, one time only, upon request by a church in fellowship with the NACCC.
- One subscription to *The Congregationalist* is provided free of charge to each church in fellowship with the NACCC.
- One subscription is sent to each accredited theological seminary on the magazine's mailing list.

Simply contact Courtney Schultz [cschultz@naccc.org](mailto:cschultz@naccc.org) to begin receiving the magazine. Encourage your members to sign up for their own copies as well.

## Gift Subscriptions & Additional Copies

Do you know someone who is not a member of a Congregational Church but who might enjoy the magazine? You can purchase a gift subscription for only \$15 per year.

Churches that want more than the single free copy mailed to the church may purchase a bundle of six copies for \$75 sent to one address. Single copies may be purchased from the NACCC office for \$3.75 plus \$3.20 to cover shipping and handling.

## Advertising

Searching for a pastor? Churches seeking pastors receive a free notice of their pulpit vacancy in *The Congregationalist* automatically upon submitting their Church Information Form to the NACCC. Many raise their visibility by purchasing a small display ad. We will help you design a professional-looking ad at no extra design charge; or you can submit your own camera-ready professional ad.

Other advertising opportunities are available. For more information contact Carrie Dahm [cdahm@nacc.org](mailto:cdahm@nacc.org) or 1-800-262-1620 x1612.

## Supporting *The Congregationalist*

You can support the mission of *The Congregationalist* and help keep the magazine in print with a gift of any size.

### Editor's Round Table

Donors become members of the Editor's Round Table with a gift of \$100 or more.

- Supporting Members (\$100 or more)
- Elias Smith Connexion (\$250 or more), the
- Edward Beecher Society (\$500 or more), or the
- Henry Martyn Dexter Society (\$1000 or more).

Editor's Round Table members receive the editor's personal thanks, an annual written report, and an in-person oral report, with questions and answers, during the Annual Meeting and Conference.

### Joseph B. Polhemus Fund

While gifts through the Editor's Round Table support the current operations of the magazine, sustaining gifts may be made to the Joseph B. Polhemus Fund, named for a beloved former editor of the magazine. The building of this endowment will ensure the continued financial strength of *The Congregationalist* in the years to come.

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*The Congregationalist* Magazine

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## 2. CONGREGATIONALISM IN ACTION

### SECTION 2.3: ANNUAL MEETING AND CONFERENCE

#### What It Is

As indicated in Section 1.5, the Annual Meeting and Conference is an important expression of Congregationalism where churches send a delegate to help conduct the business of the assembled churches. The member churches *are* the National Association and it is at the Annual Meeting that churches come together to make decisions important to their common interests. While the delegates conduct the business, there is plenty for others to do. Many people attend who are not official delegates to partake in the fellowship and educational opportunities at the conference.

The Annual Meeting and Conference begins on a Saturday in late June and continues through the evening of the following Tuesday. Various churches and associations around the country host the event.

#### Why Attend

There are many reasons to attend the Annual Meeting and Conference. Enduring friendships are made there as well as useful connections with Congregational churches around the country. Seminars and workshops provide continuing education of interest to churches and church leadership. Multiple receptions and excursions provide fellowship opportunities and a chance to see different parts of the United States as the meeting is held in various locations. Additionally, the vital business of the NACCC is transacted in support of our common aims, goals, and ministries. The Annual Meeting is essential to our collective fellowship and identity as an association of autonomous churches.

#### Who May Attend

- **Delegates**
  - Anyone may attend the Annual Meeting and Conference but it is especially important for churches to be represented by a delegate. The delegate is the person designated to represent the church in the business proceedings of the meeting. An official delegate registration card is filed with the NACCC ahead of the meeting in order to qualify the delegate to conduct business on the floor of the meeting.



- A church that cannot send a member from its church may ask another church's delegate to represent their vote at the meeting. **One delegate may represent up to three churches.** Inquire within your local association as to who may be attending and willing to represent you.
- **Alternates**
  - Many churches also designate and register an alternate delegate. This person is qualified to conduct business from the floor of the meeting in the absence of the delegate. They also serve as a collaboration partner to the delegate when making decisions about how to cast a vote.
- **Others**
  - Of course, other attendees are always welcome. There is always plenty to see and do.

## **2. CONGREGATIONALISM IN ACTION**

### **SECTION 2.4: ANNUAL YOUTH GATHERING**

#### **NAPF (National Association of Pilgrim Fellowship) and HOPE (Heritage of Pilgrim Endeavor)**

Held annually (and sometimes in conjunction with the Annual Meeting and Conference), high school (NAPF) and college age (HOPE) youth meet for fellowship, spiritual growth and inspiration, and for mission work. The bonds of friendship that form endure for many years over many miles. Many participating youth go on to ministry in a variety of ways.

You do not need to have a youth group in your church to send someone to NAPF or HOPE. You need only encourage youth you know would benefit from such an experience to attend. (See Section 4.2 for more information on the Youth Fund for scholarships.)

#### **NAPF (National Association of Pilgrim Fellowship)**

NAPF is for youth who are entering 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. NAPF allows teens to meet and bond with other Christians from throughout the country and to share their faith in a fun-filled atmosphere. Small groups are led by dedicated adult counselors, many of whom volunteer and use vacation time to attend. In conjunction with tremendous worship music, worship times may be led by members of the Commission on Youth Ministries or other adult leaders as well as by local church youth groups who have been asked to prepare and lead morning and evening devotionals. Opportunities to express faith through acts of service are always a highlight of the conference. Any time a group of young people is gathered, there is always plenty of fun!

#### **HOPE (Heritage of Pilgrim Endeavor)**

HOPE offers young adults post high school through age 26 a great opportunity to further grow in faith with peers in an environment similar to NAPF. While still including worship, speakers, small group time, and mission work, HOPE promotes closer connection with peers and deeper discussion about faith through peer-led small groups. The experiences and perspectives that each person brings to their small group are valued and can enrich discussions about faith in remarkable ways. In addition, HOPE provides more opportunities for leadership involvement through prayer team, small group leader, or CYM (Commission on Youth Ministries) representative positions. HOPE creates a genuine, meaningful, and fun atmosphere to grow in faith while creating new friendships!

Both programs have one thing in common – a place, time and friends, with which to share their faith. The leadership team, counselors and participants come back year after year.

If a yearly conference were all the youth programs consisted of, it would be wonderful enough. However, it is only part of the youth program. The camaraderie and closeness are established by individuals for a lifetime. They cannot wait for only once a year to contact each other. They stay connected through three Facebook pages (NAPF – National Association of Pilgrim Fellowship, H.O.P.E, and NAPF/HOPE Alumni), emails, Skype and individual communication.

## **You Can Help**

Many youth around the country spend time raising funds to attend NAPF and H.O.P.E., but not all youth can afford to attend. You can make a contribution to the youth assistance fund through the NACCC. You will have the satisfaction of helping to bring our youth closer to Christ through this exciting gathering of Congregational Christian youth. (See Section 4.2 for more information on the Youth Fund for scholarships.)

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Section 2.4

Annual Youth Gathering

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## 3. CONGREGATIONALISM IN PRACTICE

### SECTION 3.1: BASIC ETHICS

#### **Boundaries are Important**

The relationship between the pastor and his or her congregation is a special one. Pastors have the privilege of walking with the people of God through all of life's joys, challenges and transitions. Good pastorates and good churches build trustworthy relationships together. Trust happens when all are clear about what to expect from the relationships. This doesn't mean that hurts and conflict won't happen in the life of the church, but trustworthy relationships weather the differences and difficulties and create stronger bonds in the process. An understanding of basic ethics will help create trustworthy relationships.

#### **Bylaws are Important**

Your Articles and Bylaws are the primary articulation of who you are together. Compliance with your bylaws and procedures is foundational in practicing trustworthiness. If your bylaws no longer fit your congregation, you may consider amending them so that all will know what to expect in your corporate identity and process.

#### **Confidentiality is Important**

You may expect your pastor to act with professional confidentiality. Professional confidentiality means that your pastor will not gossip about parishioners, disclose their difficulties to others without permission, or divulge what is learned in pastoral care/counseling sessions or health care settings.

However, there are limits to confidentiality. Often, pastors will receive people in pastoral care/counseling only when there is another person in the building. **This is a good practice and should be followed whenever possible.** Additionally, the pastor's office may have a window (advisable) or, if not, the session may be carried on with the door open. The fact that a person came in for a session with the pastor is not confidential. What is said within the session is.

Sometimes, by virtue of the need to coordinate schedules, events, and pastoral care, other church staff may become privy to pastoral concerns and needs. Church staff members are also under the ethical mandate not to gossip about parishioners, disclose their difficulties to others without permission, or divulge when someone has come for pastoral care/counseling sessions or accessed health care services.

Clergy are often mandated reporters. This means the state requires a minister contact state agencies when there is a disclosure or reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect. Proof of such a claim is not required. This is often true for disclosure or reasonable suspicion of elder abuse as well. State laws vary, so it is imperative that the church leaders and clergy know your state's laws. (see Section 3.2) When in doubt, a clergy person should assume he or she is a mandated reporter.

## **A Pastor's Relationships in the Church**

The pastor's role in a church is outwardly a highly social one. Relationships are important. From interactions at board meetings, to hospital bedsides, to counseling and pastoral care, to home visits, to coffee hour chit chat, a pastor's presence is part of the spiritual richness of the church community. However, the burdens of the pastorate can put an internal strain on the pastor. Burdens such as conflicting personalities, carrying confidential knowledge, and unduly high expectations of the pastoral role by parishioners can create a sense of isolation and loneliness for many pastors. Because of these typical dynamics, there are some general guidelines that help maintain healthy relationships in the church for parishioners and clergy alike.

**Concerning Friendships:** Because the church is its people, the church is a social place. Friendships of all kinds and of all levels are formed there. The pastor is no exception. Pastoral friendships will develop over time and with personal experience. Like all people, a pastor will find personal compatibilities with some, but not with others. Still, the pastor must accord all parishioners respect, acceptance of differences, and opportunity to spiritually grow. Deeply personal and exclusive relationships between a pastor and a parishioner can be problematic. Such relationships can cause other parishioners to feel resentment or accuse the pastor of "cronyism." They can tempt the pastor to speak too frankly about church difficulties and frustrations, potentially placing the parishioner-friend in an awkward position as a parish member. They can compromise the pastorate in many unintended ways, especially when one or the other becomes disappointed in the friendship and the "special" status accorded by it. This is not to say friendships don't form, but that they can only go "so far." Friendships whose depth and transparency compromise the pastor-parishioner relationship are "too far." For these and many other good reasons, a pastor must form deep friendships outside of the congregation. These friendships are necessary for a pastor to remain healthy and balanced in his or her pastoral role. A congregation can encourage their clergy person to form outside relationships by allowing time to serve on community boards and attend community functions, and giving the pastor adequate time off away from the church duties.

**Dating in the Church:** In the "old days," when the single, male pastor came to town, many people wanted to introduce him to somebody they thought would be a good spouse. With today's interpersonal complexities, this quaint notion is just that . . . a quaint notion. For many

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Section 3.1

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reasons, it is unadvisable for a single pastor to date parishioners. In some states, it is even illegal for a clergy person to become romantically or sexually involved with a member of the church. One reason has already been covered in the previous section on friendships, but other reasons exist. For instance, in the course of dating, if misunderstandings arise or the relationship turns out to be an incompatible one, the break up can cause emotional and spiritual wounds to the individuals and, with its ripple effects, to the congregation. Another important reason is the perceived power in the role of the pastor. Many times, people project onto the pastor qualities of morality, reason, and virtue that aren't always earned and may not be present in the individual. This can cause someone to feel "love" for the pastor out of proportion to their knowledge or experience of the pastor (this can be true if the pastor is single or married). If the pastor begins dating a person who has these feelings and the relationship doesn't work out, it is easy for that person to feel led on or deeply rejected by the pastor. He or she may believe their feelings have been exploited by the pastor. Again, the effects of the disillusionment can adversely affect the entire congregation. This is not to say that dating in the church doesn't happen and that it can't lead to happy endings, but that the complications of relationships that don't work out make it risky business, and best to be avoided. If such feelings develop between single, consenting adults, it is important that one of the couple leave the church for a time so that the relationship can develop outside of the complexities of church relationships.

**Relationships that Transgress Boundaries:** Under no circumstances should a pastor initiate or respond to an overture that is flirtatious, sexually suggestive or sexually involved with anyone in the parish, male, female, single, married, young, old. Such relationships violate the trust of the congregation and may result in dismissal. If sexual engagement or erotic behavior occurs with someone who is not yet an adult, it is illegal and needs to be reported to authorities. Check your state's statutes regarding mandated reporting. If in doubt, **consult an attorney.**

Please **See section 3.2 on Safe Churches.** There, you are urged to adopt policies and procedures that promote good, healthy and trustworthy relationships in the congregation. We direct you to the website of Church Mutual Insurance Company where you may find free, helpful, safety resources. [www.churchmutual.com](http://www.churchmutual.com). If allegations are substantiated, be sure to inform the NACCC. You are also directed to the NACCC website ([nacc.org](http://nacc.org)) or the Center's website ([www.centerforcongregationalleadership.org](http://www.centerforcongregationalleadership.org)) to access "Misconduct in Ministry: A Handbook for Congregational Churches."

## When a Minister Leaves

All pastorates come to an end. The reasons why they end vary, but each ending changes the relationship of the pastor to the congregation. The general rule is that when a pastor leaves, he or she relinquishes all pastoral duties and interests, and leaves the congregation at least for a designated period of time. The primary reason for this is to help the congregation receive and

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bond with their new minister, whether that person is an interim or a newly called and settled minister. If your former pastor doesn't return your phone calls, or when contacted gently but firmly redirects you to your current pastor, it is not that she or he doesn't care for you. Your former pastor cares so much for you that he or she wants you to have the best possible relationship with the new pastor that you can have and not stand in the way of that. The goal of any former pastor should be the unqualified success of the new pastor. The goal of any church should be the same.

## **Keeping the “Interim” in Interim Minister**

The time between settled pastors is called the interim period. This time of change often provokes congregational anxiety. The pastor called to help the congregation through this time is called an Interim Minister or an Intentional Transitional Minister (see the NACCC website for more information). Often, a church is comforted by the presence of the interim and enjoys the good skills and gifts the interim minister brings to this time of congregational change. The natural inclination in such circumstances is to want the interim to stay on as the settled minister.

However, the tradition and wisdom is that it is unethical for an interim minister to place his or her name in candidacy as the settled pastor. This rule ensures that an interim minister does not interfere with the search process or the church in their discernment of new leadership. This ethical rule helps the church stay true to its task rather than be tempted by a potential “quick fix” to their need and relief of their anxiety. This is a time of vulnerability for churches. A good interim knows this, respects this and does not position himself or herself to take advantage of that vulnerability by candidating for the settled position.

Upon conclusion of an interim ministry, the same rules for when a pastor leaves (above) apply.

## **Basics for Pastoral Discretionary Funds**

Many churches have discretionary funds for pastors to distribute to those in need. Often, use of these funds is confidential, protecting the dignity of those who come asking for help. However, certain safe guards should be put in place to reduce the temptation to misuse or misappropriate these funds. Some simple policies will help. First, a pastor should keep a balance sheet of the fund and record the type of help given (e.g. gas, \$20.00). The pastor should generate a monthly report to the trustees or deacons or other appropriate groups showing the beginning balance of the fund, monthly expenditures and the remaining balance. If you collect discretionary funds through a special offering, the treasurer should be responsible for counting and depositing the offering, and then informing the pastor of the deposit and fund balance. Also, the treasurer should balance the account as appropriate.

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Sometimes, a person wants to help an individual by passing money through the discretionary fund, thereby ensuring a tax deduction for their help. This is never a good practice unless there is a church wide appeal for a specific cause and clear communication that all funds received for that purpose will be used for that purpose. Sometimes, an appeal will generate more income than needed. Be sure to state in your appeal how overages will be used.



## 3. CONGREGATIONALISM IN PRACTICE

### SECTION 3.2: SAFE CHURCHES

#### Disclosure Process

The NACCC requires that all ministers seeking a church call through the NACCC search process create a disclosure file for church inspection. This is a service the NACCC provides to our member churches to support you in making informed choices for pastoral leadership without breaching your autonomy to discern who the Spirit is calling to ministry in your church.

Use of NACCC services for the purposes of seeking a pastoral position is considered a privilege and not a right. We believe that healthy relationships between a pastor and parish are built not just with attention to ethical confidentiality but also with appropriate transparency. The NACCC disclosure policy creates a reasonable standard for the privilege of using the NACCC network when a minister is seeking a pulpit. It is a tool for member churches that, when used, helps a church make healthy decisions when looking for new pastoral leadership. This process provides an avenue for self-disclosure with dignity and for documentation of reconciliation. It allows appropriate communication of group findings so that an abusive personality exposed in an NACCC church in one region can't easily go to another region and repeat the harmful behaviors. This policy is established as a service to member churches. This is not a "credentialing" policy. ***The NACCC does not guarantee the accuracy or veracity of the file contents.***

#### Child Protection Policies

The NACCC ***strongly*** encourages its churches to adopt child protection policies. To that end, we direct you to our website for sample policies other churches have used or are using. We also direct you to the website of Church Mutual Insurance Company where you may find free, helpful, safety resources. [www.churchmutual.com](http://www.churchmutual.com). All churches should have glass in all classroom and youth room doors. Special attention to chaperone policies is also essential, including, *but certainly not limited to*:

- No youth leader will be alone with a minor, especially in a car, unless there is an emergency
- All youth group gatherings will have at least two chaperones in attendance, one of each gender if it is a mixed gender group
- Overnight youth functions of any kind will also have at least two chaperones in attendance, one of each gender if it is a mixed gender group
- Background checks on all volunteers

Again, we cannot emphasize enough your responsibility to create safe space and engender trust through child protection policies.

A helpful resource to guide your policies concerning all forms of misconduct is the document “Misconduct in Ministry: An Handbook for Congregational Churches.” You may access this handbook at the NACCC website ([www.naccc.org](http://www.naccc.org)) or the Center’s website ([www.centerforcongregationalleadership.org](http://www.centerforcongregationalleadership.org)). **Please familiarize yourself with the information in this handbook before need arises.** It will help you put good practices in place to reduce the possibility of misconduct in your church.

## Background Checks

The NACCC is proud to announce its partnership with Intellicorp, a company that does background checks of clergy, staff and volunteers for the NACCC and its churches. Intellicorp delivers trustworthy, inexpensive, and timely assistance for such things as pastoral searches, newly hired church staff, and volunteers in any number of church ministries and programs (such as youth workers, Christian education workers, church day care workers, etc.)

## More Information

More information on the disclosure process, child protection policies and background checks can be found on our website at [www.naccc.org](http://www.naccc.org)

## Dealing with Scandal and the Media

Churches occasionally find themselves embroiled in situations where their minister or other high-profile individual associated with the church is accused of improprieties or criminal behaviors. Sometimes, the nature of the accusation(s) attracts unwanted media attention that must be managed by the church. In such cases, it is important that the church appoint one and only one spokesperson to receive media requests for information and statements. **There should be no comment made by any other staff person, officer, or member of the church.**

Additionally, if deemed appropriate, that person should have access to legal counsel and confer with one other designated person for guidance before issuing any statement(s). If the allegations are criminal in nature, please inform the Executive Secretary of the NACCC. We are available to support you through these difficult times.

## Healing from Trauma

Congregations that suffer trauma of any kind need skills and time to heal. Sometimes, that skill and help can come from the church’s pastor. Other times, especially when the pastor is the source of the trauma, outside help is needed. There is no handbook that can provide a step-by-step response to experiences of betrayal and bullying. But there are several resources a church can call upon for help. The experience of the NACCC staff is a good place to begin. Because

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Safe Churches

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betrayals of trust have deep repercussions in a congregation, it is often a good idea to bring in an outside advisor to help people sort through their feelings and begin the conversations and actions that can bring healing. At times, it is appropriate to turn to community experts such as counselors, social workers, psychologists, doctors, attorneys and other clergy who may have experience in leading a congregation through difficult times. Services and liturgies of grieving can be of great help in acknowledging the reality of the circumstances while also opening the door to hope and, sometimes, reconciliation. Prayer is always needed. It is important to know that you do not have to go through difficult times alone or without the reminder that God's grace is present even in the midst of hurt.

Again, we refer you the document "Misconduct in Ministry: An Handbook for Congregational Churches." You may access this handbook at the NACCC website ([www.naccc.org](http://www.naccc.org)) or the Center's website ([www.centerforcongregationalleadership.org](http://www.centerforcongregationalleadership.org)). **Please familiarize yourself with the information in this handbook before need arises.** It will help you put good practices in place to reduce the possibility of misconduct in your church.

### 3. CONGREGATIONALISM IN PRACTICE

#### SECTION 3.3: PERSONNEL CONSIDERATIONS AND POLICIES

##### Importance

A healthy church has policies and procedures by which the church and the minister can dialogue effectively about job expectations and performance. Because the relationship between pastor and people is a partnership, it is vital that each tends to the health of the relationship. A supportive pastoral review process is a way to do this. Unfortunately, too many churches try to implement the process as a reaction to growing dissatisfaction or conflict. A healthy process is one that, when in place, can avoid conflict to begin with. The review is *not*, and never should be a punitive process.

##### Review Process

There are many fine resources for adopting good review processes. The NACCC has some resources on its website. The Center for Congregational Leadership has many helpful books referenced on its web site. If you choose, an advisor can help you establish and implement personnel reviews for church staff, paid and unpaid. A healthy and fruitful process will allow for mutual dialogue between church representatives and employees. A good and fair review will be based on a person's job description rather than vague "feelings." It will help set mutual expectations for the upcoming year and allow the employee to express how the church leadership might help promote successful goals. It may also protect the pastor from a future disgruntled member. Ultimately the review process is an opportunity to work together in ministry for the glory of Christ.

##### Pastor/Parish Relations Committee

Many churches follow a model of pastoral support through a pastor/parish relations committee. This committee often acts as a supportive "sounding board" for the pastor and occasionally is called upon to mediate disputes with the pastor that may arise from the congregation. While this committee can be of help to a pastor, it is not the same as a personnel committee that is responsible for staffing policies and performance reviews, and should not be used as such.

##### Call and Employment

Because of the unique nature of ministry that presumes a person does not choose to be a pastor but is called by God to be one, there is often hesitancy to treat the pastor as a church employee who is subject to accountability. Indeed, many lay people feel uncomfortable

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reviewing their pastor given their reverence and respect for the office. There are even some pastors who will claim that their unique profession places them outside the accountability of personnel reviews.

However, in spite of the unique aspect of call in ministry, the pastor is still collecting a pay check from an employer, who happens to be the church. Personnel reviews are perfectly appropriate and highly desirable, promoting transparency and healthy ministries. A church can acknowledge and even celebrate a person's call to ministry, the anniversary date of being called to that church, an ordination date and other pastoral milestones. (October is Pastor Appreciation month). However, a pastor who is also an employee should never be exempt from personnel reviews.

## **Compensation**

It is important for churches to provide the pastor with compensation and benefits appropriate for the duties the church expects of their pastor. A person with a Master of Divinity degree should be compensated at a level equivalent to other, similarly degreed professionals (for instance, teachers in your community.) A person with a doctorate (D. Min. or Ph.D.) should be similarly compensated (school superintendent is a good parallel here.)

Full time lay ministers can expect a lower compensation than someone with a seminary education. Part time ministers can expect compensation based on the number of hours the church asks for. Regional, urban and rural areas, church size and economics all play a part in determining a compensation package.

A good resource is the Compensation Handbook for Church Staff available at [www.yourchurchresources.com](http://www.yourchurchresources.com) and also on the website of the Minister's and Missionary's Benefit Board (MMBB) at <http://mmbb.org/search/results/?q=compensation+levels>

## **Part Time Ministry and Tentmakers**

Tentmakers (so called because the apostle Paul made tents while also engaging in itinerant ministry) are people who work full or part time at a job while also serving a church. Necessarily, the church work is part time and is secondary to the person's other job. In part time ministry, it is essential that the expectations of the church and their minister be clearly set forth in a job description. The contract of engagement should be reviewed at least annually. Churches with part time ministers often must have strong lay leadership to "fill in the gaps" of ministry.

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## Compensation is More than Money

- **Vacation Time**

- Because a full time pastor puts in 50 to 60 hours of work per week, is on call 24/7, spends many evenings away from home in church meetings and rarely has two days off in a row, vacation time is essential. The “industry standard” for full time ministers is four weeks off. Many churches add another week for so much time served up to a certain amount (for example, an extra week off for every 3 years served up to six weeks off). Some churches grant additional “light duty” weeks after Christmas and Easter.

- **Compensatory Time**

- Because the nature of ministry creates unpredictable schedules, many churches encourage pastors to take “comp time” when a week has been extraordinarily demanding of a pastor’s time or emotional and spiritual resources. Because this flexibility is based on trust that the opportunity will not be misused, it is important that the pastor be able to explain exercising the privilege if asked.

- **Continuing Education Time**

- The demands and rapid changes of ministry make continuing education a necessity for pastors and churches. A pastor who engages in no continuing education often becomes a less effective pastor for the church than those who do. Many churches recognize this and grant two weeks off for continuing education beyond vacation time. Continuing education time may be used for attendance at the Convocation (see Section 1.5), at a retreat or at a seminar. Continuing education keeps a pastor’s skills sharp and their attitudes fresh and positive.

- **Sabbatical Time**

- Along with vacation time and continuing education time, many churches grant their pastor three months off, with pay, after every 7 years of service. This is a time for the pastor to engage in a time of intensive study or to take on a professional project that requires more focus and attention than can be otherwise had. Sabbatical planning is usually undertaken in an intentional way by both the church and the pastor. While the idea of the pastor being away for such a length of time is often intimidating to a church, by its conclusion, both the church and the pastor have found new strength, resiliency and discernment. When done with intentionality, it is a positive experience for everyone. If you would like to speak with churches who have taken this step, the NACCC can put you in touch with them.

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- **Benefits**

- Just like the families in your church, clergy families need and deserve access to and help with health insurance, retirement savings and disability insurance. The NACCC has an agreement with MMBB to provide opportunities for these things. When coupled with other compensation, the benefits provided by MMBB provide protection and peace of mind for your pastor and his or her family. You may contact MMBB directly for the name of a representative in your area. You may find more information at their website, [www.mmbb.org](http://www.mmbb.org)

## **Compensation Packages**

Many churches set a total for monetary compensation and then allow the minister to designate the dollars as he or she sees fit. There are many clergy tax advantages to doing so. Clergy may divide their monetary compensation into categories of:

- Salary – given directly to the pastor as taxable income
- Housing Allowance – given directly to the pastor, but the IRS considers this to be nontaxable income
- FICA – is usually fully paid by the minister unless the church and minister agree that the church pays ½
- Health Insurance – paid directly to the health insurance provider by the church
- Disability Insurance - paid directly to the disability insurance provider by the church
- Retirement Savings - paid directly into an established retirement account in the pastor's name by the church
- Books – reimbursed by the church to the pastor upon submission of receipts
- Auto Mileage Reimbursement – reimbursed by the church to the pastor upon submission of mileage log
- Continuing education – reimbursed by the church to the pastor upon submission of receipts or paid directly by the church

Clergy and churches can be guided through this process with the *Church Law and Tax Report* and *Guide for Church-related Employers* available on the MMBB website. [www.mmbb.org](http://www.mmbb.org)

## **On Members being Employees**

A final word is in order on the difficult issue of church members as employees of the church. In Congregational practice, the settled minister becomes a member of the church. In common practice, many church employees are also members of the church. Perhaps it is the organist, or the Sunday School Superintendent, or the Parish Nurse. No matter what the position, the supervision of employees who are church members is often difficult, yet especially necessary in these circumstances. Needing to terminate an employee who is also a member often creates conflict in the church. For this very good reason, many churches have policies in place that

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prohibit members from becoming employees, with the exception of the pastor. Since such a policy isn't always practical, here are a few guidelines that can help navigate these choppy waters. That person:

- Is always an employee first and a member second. This means there is no separating what one does as a member from how one behaves or what one says as an employee. The employee designation trumps the member designation. (Such is true for the pastor as well).
- Is subject to the same review process and personnel policies as all other employees.
- Must respect his or her supervisor and act accordingly. This includes being subject to termination if the supervisor is charged with that authority. If the supervisor does hold that authority, then the church leadership must support the decision of the supervisor even if they don't agree with it. The time to question the decision is in the supervisor's review process, not in the "court of the congregation."

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## **3. CONGREGATIONALISM IN PRACTICE**

### **SECTION 3.4: CHURCHES IN CONFLICT**

#### **Conflict Happens**

Conflict in a church, while never welcome, is to be expected. We come together as people at different stages in our faith journey and with different ideas to contribute to the community. Naturally, opinions can differ, one from another. Conflict can be both healthy and destructive to the church depending on the circumstances, the leadership, the personalities involved and any number of other diverse factors. It can be brought out by major decisions to be made, by an acute and precipitating incident in the church, by disagreement over purpose and/or over how to resource the church's ministries or other events. Destructive conflict left unaddressed will cause great harm to the body of Christ and calls for the engagement of an outside advisor to help you navigate the turbulent waters. In cases of destructive conflict, an advisor, as an outside voice, is a must and is a most worthwhile investment in the health of the church. A church might also employ an advisor to help avoid conflict, for instance to help manage a difficult discussion coming up or to help a congregation recover from a significant trauma.

#### **How the NACCC Can Help**

The NACCC has advisors to help you navigate the waters of conflict. Knowledgeable in the dynamics of conflict and skilled at listening, advisors help you examine your challenges, identify your opportunities and discern your options for personal healing and institutional health.

The NACCC will introduce you to an advisor based on your initial contact with us. After that, the advisor and the church contract together the terms, scope and compensation of the engagement. Each advisor is independent of the NACCC. The NACCC simply acts as a referring agent.

#### **To Engage a Conflict Advisor**

The beginning of the advising engagement is initiated by a telephone call to the NACCC. A call for information may be initiated by anyone in the church. However, if a church wants a referral, a call must be initiated by the pastor, moderator, or chair of a committee or board.

Each advising engagement will be tailored to the specific circumstances of the church. In general, the advisor, in an initial phone call, will gather basic facts from the pastor or lay leader who is designated as the "contact person" for the church in this process.

In some cases, but not all, a formal agreement will be drafted to promote clarity, trust, and understanding among all parties. Signed by a representative of the Church governing board (moderator, clerk, president, etc.) and with the knowledge (and sometimes the signature) of the pastor, it will include, among other things:

- the scope of the engagement
- articulation of goals for the engagement
- the time frame for agreed upon activities and goals
- how the arrangement will be publicized to the church
- agreed upon fees for both on site and off site labors

In engaging an advisor, the church agrees to

- commit itself to the process and do the work required to create successful and positive outcomes
- be open with the congregation about the arrangement, the process, and reason a consultant has been engaged
- facilitate and schedule the gatherings with publicity, notifications and other appropriate means
- publically disseminate the consultant's final report to the congregation or engaging board or committee
- depending on the duration and scope of the engagement, reimburse the advisor for all expenses related to it, i.e. transportation costs, accommodations, and any materials needed. A fee may be negotiated for longer term consultations

Note: if your church's financial circumstances make it unable to pay for an advisor, please inquire of the Dean of the Center for Congregational Leadership about the availability of grants.

### **3. CONGREGATIONALISM IN PRACTICE**

#### **SECTION 3.5: ADVISORS AVAILABLE TO CHURCHES**

#### **What Are Advisors?**

The NACCC networks with a number of skilled individuals who are willing and able to help churches in a variety of ways. These advisors are people who have significant experience in Congregationalism and church life. They are also willing to make themselves available to churches who wish to engage in conversations that enhance church vitality.

#### **Why Choose an Advisor?**

A church, for a variety of reasons might choose to engage an outside facilitator to meet with its leadership groups and concerned individuals.

Generally, churches engage an advisor when they want to:

- Ensure good practices of Congregationalism
- Determine vision and purpose
- Chart out steps for the future
- Understand challenges
- Manage conflict
- Promote healing

Advising topics include:

- Finding your next minister
- Celebrating ordinations and installations in the Congregational Way
- Creating a healthy culture for church vitality
- Creating a culture of generosity for year round stewardship
- Charting your course with strategic planning
- Updating your church's structure and governance
- Reviewing your pastor and other church staff and volunteers
- Managing conflict
- Church revitalization
- Closing Churches

## Resources are Available on Line

Before deciding to engage an individual you will want to check out our resources and suggestions on line at [www.naccc.org](http://www.naccc.org) and [www.centerforcongregationalleadership.org](http://www.centerforcongregationalleadership.org). Under the Advising topics, you will find useful information and a variety of resources to guide you. After reviewing these materials, you may decide to engage an advisor to help you take the next steps.

An advisor can help a church make healthy decisions when responding to current challenges. Delivery of consulting services varies based on the type of services needed and the circumstances of the request. Services may be delivered by telephone, by computer or in person, or a combination of all three. The costs for services also varies based on delivery method and length of involvement in the consulting process.

Our advisors come from around the country, with a variety of backgrounds (clergy, laity, NACCC staff). The type of advising, the depth of involvement and the follow-up will vary depending upon your circumstances. In every case, the NACCC works with you to ensure you are receiving high quality, appropriate help to address your needs. Each advisor is independent of the NACCC. The NACCC simply acts as a referring agent. To find an advisor best suited to your circumstances and needs, call the NACCC office at 1-800-262-1620 or use the Contact Us page on our website. <http://www.naccc.org/contact-us.html>.

## Advising at a Glance

	Length of Engagement	Methods of Engagement	Costs and reimbursements	Formal agreement needed?	Vote of Congregation or governing board needed?	Web Link
<b>Finding your Next Minister</b>	Short term	Web resources Telephone Webinar  In person	No fee No fee No fee  Travel expenses	No	No	<a href="http://www.naccc.org/Churches/FindingAMinister.aspx">http://www.naccc.org/Churches/FindingAMinister.aspx</a>
<b>Ordinations, Installations and Anniversaries</b>	Short term	Web resources Telephone	No fee No fee	No	No	
<b>Church Vitality</b>	Moderate term	Web resources In person	No fee Travel expenses	Yes	Yes	
<b>Generous Stewardship</b>	Short term	Web Resources In person	No Fee Travel expenses	No	No	
<b>Strategic Planning</b>	Moderate term	In person	Travel expenses and stipend*	Yes	Yes	
<b>Church Structure and Governance</b>	Moderate term	Web resources In person	No fee Travel expenses	Only if travel involved	Yes	<a href="http://www.centerforcongregationalleadership.org/governance.html">http://www.centerforcongregationalleadership.org/governance.html</a>
<b>Reviewing Pastor, Staff and Volunteers</b>	Moderate term	Web resources Webinar In person	No fee Travel expenses	Only if travel involved	Yes	
<b>Managing Conflict</b>	Long term	In person	Travel expenses and stipend*	Yes	Yes	

\*based on a sliding scale and ability to pay

## Making the Hardest Decisions of All

Advisors can help churches engage in a number of discussions and decisions that can help create and maintain church vitality. However, not all churches can sustain themselves. Today, less people are practicing their spirituality in an organized church and an increasing number of people in American society consider themselves to have no religious identity or affiliation. The result of these contemporary trends is that many of our churches are experiencing declining membership numbers, increasing average age of members and loss of youth in the church. Sometimes, churches find they have become too small and aged to continue as a self-sufficient community. There are many options for a church facing these circumstances. Some options include:

- Federating with another church
- Merging with another church
- Starting over in a different way
- Dissolving, liquidating and distributing assets to:
  - Missions
  - the NACCC's "Remembered Churches Fund" for Church Vitality
  - the NACCC Shared Ministries Fund Endowment
  - the Center for Congregational Leadership Endowment
  - any number of other worthy Christian endeavors

Before making any decision, an NACCC advisor can help you look at options for revitalization and lead you in the difficult and sometimes contentious discussions that come about in times of extreme challenge and when facing momentous decisions. Call the NACCC to discuss options for advising and other considerations at times such as these. A cautionary note: sometimes, a "maverick" minister with a small but significant following will come to a struggling church offering to "grow" the church by bringing his or her flock into the fold and becoming the minister of the entire group. At first glance, it seems to be an opportunity to keep the church open and going. In our experience, these "opportunities" usually have very unhappy endings for the original Congregationalist members and the beloved Congregational church with its assets becomes the property of another group. Again, before making any decisions, call the NACCC for support and information.

## **4. CONGREGATIONALISM IN SUPPORT**

### **SECTION 4.1: RESOURCES AVAILABLE**

#### **Where to Find Some Good Resources**

There are many resources at your fingertips at [www.naccc.org](http://www.naccc.org) and [www.centerforcongregationalleadership.org](http://www.centerforcongregationalleadership.org). Taking some time to explore these sites can lead you to books, pamphlets, brochures and other information that can be of use to your church and your members. In addition to finding information on Congregationalism, you can access the NACCC Yearbook which contains information concerning member churches, clergy, NACCC structure and personnel, both paid and volunteer. You will also find information about NACCC supported Missions, the CFTS program for seminarians, help in starting new churches and many other things. Enjoy exploring!

#### **Pastoral Search Process**

One of the most important transitions in the life of any church is when one pastor leaves and the church embarks on a search for their next pastor. The process can seem daunting. The NACCC provides many good resources to help you. The first place to start is on the website at [www.naccc.org](http://www.naccc.org) under Churches, Finding a Minister. The *Pastoral Search Handbook* and The *Guide to Best Practices* offer invaluable guidance. Additional help is just a phone call away at the NACCC office. Additionally, NACCC advisors in your area are available to meet with you.

#### **Missions**

Church involvement in Mission Outreach is vitally important to church health and ministry. However, it is often difficult to determine which missions are in genuine need of help and if your contributions are being used for their intended purposes. The NACCC maintains critical partnerships with a number of international and national missions, ensuring the integrity of these missions. When you give to missions through the NACCC, you may be assured that your contributions are being appropriately used to forward these exciting ministries. Every dollar given to missions goes to missions.

#### **Devotionals**

The devotional life is one that deepens faith when practiced regularly. There are many fine devotional materials to be found. The NACCC produces devotionals for both the season of Advent and the season of Lent. The devotions found in these annually issued booklets are written by Congregationalists around the country and are rich in diversity.

## **Presenting the NACCC to your members**

Many times, individual church members ask of their leadership, “Why are we a member of the NACCC? What is it they do for us?” To help you answer that question, the NACCC has available a helpful brochure simply explaining this partnership and the benefits of membership. You may order these brochures by calling the NACCC at 1-800-262-1620 and asking for the brochure “Serving the Churches that Serve Christ”.

## **Misconduct in Ministry: A Handbook for Congregational Churches**

From the introduction: “This handbook is designed to encourage discussion in your church as to *why* certain actions are inappropriate or unacceptable -- not only for the clergy but for all who are engaged in service in the name of your church. It will help you design procedures and policies for your congregation and guide you in handling allegations of misconduct should they occur and encourage you to cooperate with secular authorities in accordance with the law.”

## **The Art and Practice of the Congregational Way: A Church Guide**

This new handbook helps your church members understand what is unique and distinctive about the Congregational Way. It is a basic, practical guide to why we do what we do and the way we do it.

## **What it Means to be a Member of a Congregational Christian Church**

The classic booklet by Rev. Henry David Gray and updated by his son, Rev. David Gray and grandson, Rev. Doug Gray is a handy summary of exactly what its title says. Measuring 6  $\frac{3}{4}$  inches by 3  $\frac{3}{4}$  inches, it is a perfect size to include in a letter or place in the hymnal rack in the pew. Booklets may be ordered from the NACCC office for a nominal cost.

## **Principles and Practices: The Congregational Way of the Churches of the National Association**

This 12 page booklet by Lloyd Hall, Jr., and Karl D. Schimpf articulates the foundational principles of Congregationalism and the values embraced by the NACCC.

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## ***The Congregational Way Series***

This series of six, colorful, trifold brochures by various authors present some fundamental understandings of Congregationalism. They include:

- *The Biblical Basis of Congregationalism* by Harry R. Butman
- *The Congregational Way* by Steven H. Ware Bailey
- *New Testament Tests for Congregationalism* by Henry David Gray
- *The Congregational Christian Way of Life* by Phil R. Jackson
- *The Meaning of the Meeting House* by Arthur A. Rouner, Jr.
- *With One Sound of the Heart* by Howard J. Conn

A perfect complement to this series is the trifold brochure *What Do Congregational Christians Believe?* by Steven A. Peay.

All of these brochures may be found in digital format on the website of the Center for Congregational Leadership, [www.centerforcongregationalleadership.org](http://www.centerforcongregationalleadership.org) or may be ordered from the NACCC office.

## **Other Resources**

There are many other fine resources available, too numerous to include here. Be sure to visit our websites and explore the treasure trove of information available.

## **4. CONGREGATIONALISM IN SUPPORT**

### **SECTION 4.2: FINANCIAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE**

#### **The Congregational Investment Trust (CIT)**

The CIT was created in 1991 as an endowment trust for donor gifts and contributions to the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches. It is also offered as an investment tool that member churches can use for their own endowment gifts. When member churches deposit their endowments in the CIT, their assets are pooled with the deposits of other investors, allowing greater cumulative purchasing power of all CIT participants than a church alone might realize. The trust should not be used as a short-term or money market vehicle as principal values will fluctuate.

#### **Building and Loan Fund**

The Building and Loan Fund's purpose is to promote, encourage, assist, and, in any manner, aid the establishment, building, remodeling, maintenance, repair, location and/or relocation of Congregational Christian Churches which are members of the NACCC. Churches may apply for low interest loans. The NACCC seeks and encourages contributions to the fund so that it may extend assistance to an increasing number of Churches.

#### **John Richard Fund**

John Richard was an avid and gifted musician whose appreciation for the musical arts was a source of inspiration for many. The John Calvin Richard Fund was established by his family as a loving and living memorial to him. His love for music and theater performance was a large part of his talented but short life.

The Fund awards annual grants of up to \$500.00 to National Association member Churches of 200 members or less which are planning a Fine or Performing Arts event in their Church. Application deadline is April 1 and funds must be used by the following April 1.

#### **Providence Fund**

The Providence Fund was established and funded by the host committee of the 2004 Annual Meeting and Conference, and continues to grow through gifts from benevolent individuals who wish to help Churches who might not otherwise be able to send delegates to the NACCC's Annual Meeting and Conference.

The Providence Fund provides needs-based grants to churches to enable their representation at the Annual Meeting and Conference by offsetting associated expenses. Grants of up to \$500.00 may be applied to registration and housing costs of the Annual Meeting and Conference. Deadline to apply is April 1<sup>st</sup>. Details for eligibility may be found at [www.naccc.org](http://www.naccc.org) under the donations tab, Congregational Foundation, Funds.

## **Youth Fund**

### **GENERAL NAPF AND HOPE SCHOLARSHIP**

The NACCC Commission on Youth Ministries has scholarships available to provide assistance to reduce the cost of the registration to the NACCC annual youth conference NAPF or HOPE. These include one (1) full scholarship and as many part scholarships as deemed appropriate from available funds in a given year. Be sure, also, to check with your state or regional association for scholarships that might be available for NAPF and HOPE scholarships as well as for Mission trips.

### **MEMORIAL DAY FRIENDS SCHOLARSHIP**

A special scholarship in conjunction with the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches Commission on Youth Ministries and the Memorial Day Friends group is being set up to provide full-payment of one (1) registration to the NACCC annual youth conference NAPF or HOPE. The Memorial Day Friends group is comprised of several past members of NAPF and HOPE.

Both scholarships provide assistance to anyone wishing to attend NAPF or HOPE who has financial need and has shown outstanding development in any or all of the following areas:

- Christian character
- Participation in local church youth programs
- Community service

Scholarship applications shall be available to all who are affiliated with a church that maintains membership in the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches. More information can be found at [www.naccc.org](http://www.naccc.org) under Churches, Services for Churches

## **Seminary Scholarships**

Through the Congregational Foundation for Theological Studies (CFTS) program, several scholarships are available to seminarians who are also enrolled in CFTS. These scholarships offset the high cost of a seminary education. Many individuals and many churches set up ongoing scholarships in their own names or in honor of others.

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## **Ministerial Assistance and Enrichment Fund**

This fund provides two kinds of assistance.

1. From time to time, clergy are faced with personal emergencies and need modest help to meet their challenges. The Ministerial Assistance portion provides emergency financial assistance to ministers, both active and retired. Through this fund, dedicated care-givers can also receive support in times of need.
2. The Enrichment portion of the fund is used as financial supplemental support for a variety of continuing education opportunities including the Minister's Convocation, continuing education, and sabbatical leaves. This fund is not endowed and relies on contributions from individuals and churches for continuing support.

All help is strictly confidential. Inquiries may be made to the Executive Secretary of the NACCC.

## **The Retired Ministers Fund**

This fund was established by the Rev. Dr. Max Strang, a long-time Congregational minister, and Mr. Fred Hoerner, a Congregational layman, to recognize the value of the service rendered by retired Congregational ministers and their spouses. This endowed fund has been supported generously by the churches and individuals of the NACCC and provides a modest annual gift to all retired ministers who have served NACCC churches.

## **Contributions Accepted**

We welcome and encourage churches and individuals to make donations to these funds and scholarships so that these ministries may continue. If you would like to know more about any of these funds, please contact the NACCC office.

Contributions may be made on line by going to [www.naccc.org](http://www.naccc.org) and clicking on the "Donate Now" button. They may also be made by check, payable to NACCC and mailed to:

NACCC  
P.O. Box 288  
Oak Creek, WI 53154

## **5. CONGREGATIONALISM IN AFFILIATION**

### **SECTION 5.1: REGIONAL ASSOCIATIONS**

#### **Congregational Fellowship**

A vital part of Congregationalism is for churches to be in fellowship with one another. Around the country churches gather themselves into state and regional associations for the purposes of mutual support and encouragement, to strengthen relationships and help in understanding and responding to regional needs and issues. Often these are opportunities for education and program development, helping churches gain new ideas and skills. The NACCC encourages all of its member churches to participate fully in State/Regional Associations, whenever possible.

#### **Moderators' Quarterly Conference Calls**

The NACCC encourages communication among the state and regional associations and with the NACCC. To that end, the NACCC hosts quarterly conference calls with State and Regional Association moderators for purposes of sharing ideas and information. **There is no charge to you for these quarterly calls.**

#### **NACCC Support**

The NACCC makes available to State and Regional Associations access to our conference call provider so that you can teleconference within your region for your particular work together. The NACCC issues you a participant code and once the bill for your call is received by the NACCC, it is forwarded to you for payment. Remember, charges do not apply to the quarterly calls the NACCC hosts for regional and state moderators, only to your own conference calls if you wish to use our system.

Also, you may have access to the list of Year Round Delegates for your region as a conduit for communication for your activities.

#### **Helpful Information for the NACCC from State and Regional Associations**

To facilitate good communication, it would be very helpful if State and Regional Associations would inform us of:

- Regional meetings
  - Send us your meeting announcements and agendas
  - If you schedule your spring meeting in the fall, let us know so we can put your spring meeting on our calendar well in advance

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- Let us know if we can provide any information or personnel for your meeting
- Vicinage councils, ordinations and installations
  - Let us know if you have vicinage councils coming up so we might pray for your discernment and wisdom in the process and send letters of greeting and encouragement
- Moderators and Officers
  - Tell us when a new moderator is elected so we can include that person on our conference calls
  - Tell us who your officers are so we may publish that information on our NACCC website

For all of the above, contact Linda Miller, [lmiller@nacc.org](mailto:lmiller@nacc.org) or 1-800-262-1620 x1618.

## **5. CONGREGATIONALISM IN AFFILIATION**

### **SECTION 5.2: AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS**

#### **Colleges**

Because they respected learning and felt the need to have educated ministers, the early New England Congregationalists founded the first colleges and universities in our country, including Harvard, Yale, Dartmouth, Williams, Bowdoin, Middlebury and Amherst. The Congregationalists who founded these and many other institutions took care to make them self-perpetuating colleges with their own boards of trustees, not church-sponsored institutions like their English counterparts.

Today, there are no strictly Congregational Christian colleges or seminaries. Those called to ministry in the Congregational Way study at many institutions, including those sponsored by other denominations. They can also benefit from special study programs under the aegis of the Congregational Foundation for Theological Studies, a division of the NACCC.

#### **Olivet College, Olivet Michigan**

Founded by Congregationalists, Olivet College is a private liberal arts college located in south-central Michigan. The college was the first in the country by charter to accept women and persons of color. Its more than 900 students participate in a unique educational experience known as the Olivet Plan. As part of this effort, students are engaged in both classroom and practical programs incorporating real world experiences with lectures and service learning. The College's commitment to providing access to a comprehensive and diverse learning environment is reflected in all aspects of the Olivet Plan. The aspirations of Olivet College are advanced in the College's vision: *Education for Individual and Social Responsibility*.

#### **Piedmont College, Demorest, Georgia**

Piedmont is a private liberal arts college founded by Congregationalists and based upon the Judeo-Christian tradition. The Judeo-Christian tradition comprises the humane values upon which Western Civilization is based. It promotes concern for others and the acceptance for individual responsibility that are essential for ethical conduct and citizenship. Through fostering understanding and acceptance of this tradition, Piedmont College strives to further develop the individual's personal growth through self-understanding and the ability to lead and work effectively with others.

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## Research and History

### **American Congregational Association (Congregational Library and Archives), Boston, Massachusetts**

“The Congregational Library and Archives are administered by the American Congregational Association, a non-profit organization founded May 25, 1853. The 1853 ACA charter stated that the organization was incorporated "for the purpose of establishing and perpetuating a library of religious history and literature of New England, and for the erection of a suitable building for the accommodation of the same, and for the use of charitable societies." It was felt that the latter should be done or the original Puritan literature would be lost. The Congregational Library now holds 225,000 items documenting the history of one of the nation's oldest and most influential religious traditions.” (from their website, [www.14beacon.org](http://www.14beacon.org) )

## International Associations

### **International Congregational Fellowship**

“The International Congregational Fellowship is a vibrant global expression of a multiplicity of local Congregational churches and associational bodies across the world. For Congregationalists, how our churches are organized and run have to reflect the principles and values that Jesus taught, and the pattern we find for church life and Christian leadership in the Bible.

Congregational churches do not exist in isolation but have traditionally formed free associations or networks. ICF provides a global identity and a valuable opportunity for Congregationalists from all over the world to enjoy fellowship with one another.”

(from their website: [www.intercong.org](http://www.intercong.org)).

ICF holds a conference every four years.

### **American Committee of the International Congregational Fellowship (AMCO)**

This organization is comprised of Congregationalists, representing the North America region of the International Congregational Fellowship. Members who attend the Annual Meeting and Conference often meet together and invite all to join them in this vibrant fellowship.

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## **Societies**

### **Washington Gladden Society**

The purpose of the Washington Gladden Society is to honor Washington Gladden's memory by applying the insights of the Social Gospel Movement to the important, controversial ethical and theological issues of our own times, and serving as a forum for discussion among Christians and local Churches in the Congregational tradition.

This Society was born out of the needs expressed by laity and clergy who felt it worthwhile to expand the witness of the NACCC, while keeping their decisions, actions, and resolutions independent of the Association's business. Meetings are held at the time of the Annual Meeting and Conference.

For more information, please go to the website: [www.washingtongladdensociety.org](http://www.washingtongladdensociety.org)

### **The Congregational Society for Classical Retreat Guides**

This Society's mission is to offer silent retreats, days of prayer, and other useful means of lifting up the power of individual and corporate prayer life. See Section 1.5 for more information on retreat opportunities for clergy and laity.

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