



400 YEARS OF *Faith*
AMERICAN
CONGREGATIONALISM
SINCE 1620

Did you know Lyman Beecher...

Though Lyman Beecher was the founder of a famous family of Congregational preachers, his father and grandfather were blacksmiths. As a student at Yale, Beecher was led to the Lord by Timothy Dwight, president of the college. Ordained in 1799 at age twenty-four, Beecher first served in a Presbyterian church, but he was not a good fit in that denomination, even being tried for heresy for preaching against the hyper-Calvinist doctrine that God has specifically elected certain individuals to go to hell, and they should just accept that. Though he was acquitted of heresy, he still left the Presbyterians to become a Congregational preacher.

During what he called his “continuous revivals,” Beecher preached fervently about repentance and faith in Jesus, but also railed at drunkenness, Catholicism, and Unitarianism. He initially supported antidisestablishmentarianism, not wanting Congregational churches to lose their status as the established church of New England. Later, Beecher changed his mind and said that disestablishment was “the best thing that ever happened” to the churches. “It cut them loose from dependence on state support and threw them wholly on their own resources and on God.”

In 1827, Beecher preached these words against slavery, crying that the flame of freedom still “burns, and still the mountain heaves and murmurs; and soon it will explode with voices and thunderings and great earthquakes. And then will the trumpet of jubilee sound, and earth’s debased millions will leap from the dust and shake off their chains and cry, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David.’”

...was a Congregationalist?

Celebrating 400 Years of American Congregationalism
Learn more about our Congregational History at naccc.org

Call To Worship

L: Hear ye hear ye, descendants of the Pilgrims

C: This is the appointed time to assemble in this meetinghouse

L: To praise God in the remembrances of our spiritual ancestors

C: So shall we sing and pray this hour, in thanks-giving for the men and women of our past

L: God continues to give us a pilgrim’s heart

C: Praise the Lord!

Invocation (in unison)

Let Your holy presence be among us, O Lord, in this year of remembrance, that we, being made aware of the conviction and character of those before us, may enter into our inheritance, standing firm in the convictions for which they ventured to this new world freedom. Let our forebears’ dedication to freedom and righteousness be their gift to us this day, and all our tomorrows. Amen

Historical story by: Rev. Robert Hellam

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