

**A Sneak Peek...**  
**2020 Annual Meeting & Conference Workshops**

[updated January 13, 2020]

**GENERAL SESSION WORKSHOP**

**TITLE:** Fishing in a Shallow Sea with our founding fathers and mothers, the Pilgrims

**PRESENTER:** Rev. Dr. Michael Piazza

Rev. Dr. Michael Piazza is a spiritual visionary, author, and social justice advocate. During 23 years of his courageous leadership as senior pastor and later dean, the Cathedral of Hope in Dallas, Texas made religious history by reclaiming Christianity as a faith of extravagant grace, radical inclusion, and relentless compassion while becoming the world's largest liberal Christian church with a predominantly lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender outreach. A native of Georgia, Rev. Piazza has served churches in Texas, Georgia, Oklahoma, Florida, Connecticut, and New York, where he is the senior pastor of Broadway United Church of Christ on Manhattan's Upper West Side. He also is the founder and president of Agile Church Consulting. He holds bachelor's degrees in history and psychology from Valdosta State University; a Master of Divinity from the Candler School of Theology at Emory University in Atlanta; and a doctorate from Hartford Seminary, where he is a faculty associate teaching congregational renewal.

**TITLE:** The Congregationalist Magazine in the 21st Century

**PRESENTER:** Marianne King, Editor, *The Congregationalist*

What is the future of The Congregationalist magazine in a changing religious landscape? How can the magazine promote and support the Congregational Way? Readers and donors are encouraged to share their ideas at this interactive workshop.

**TITLE:** The Congregation's Song

**PRESENTER:** Jacque Jones, Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, NY

You will receive a greater understanding and appreciation of congregational songs with a hope that hymns will take on a greater importance in the lives of people who sing them.

**TITLE:** Humor and Laughter in Christ's Church

**PRESENTER:** Rev. Dr. Brett Younger, Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, NY

How do we best celebrate God's gift of humor? This workshop will explore the differences between telling jokes and proclaiming God's delight. Humor points out incongruities in the church and the world and creates a space where listeners imagine a better way. The conversation will suggest ways the church can employ humor effectively, amusingly, and meaningfully.

**TITLE:** Write On!

**PRESENTERS:** Pastor Carol Taylor, United Church of Beloit, Beloit, WI & Rev. Terry Bobzien, First CC, Pittsford, MI

Have some quiet time to write a devotional for our Advent or Lent Devotional booklet. With writers from our sister churches, we hold the NACCC in our hands when we use and share these devotionals. Join the Growth Ministry Council as they talk about how to write a devotional and actually write one (or more) for inclusion in the upcoming devotional booklets.

**TITLE:** Sexual Misconduct/Prevention

**PRESENTER:** Church Mutual Insurance

Recently, sexual abuse allegations against houses of worship have risen dramatically and more states are extending reporting and prosecution periods for such allegations. All organizations that serve children need to take proactive measures to protect their most vulnerable members and organizations from this insidious risk. This workshop will examine how recognizing and deterring grooming behaviors is the most critical defense against the risk of child sexual abuse.

**TITLE:** How to Organize a Church Group Mission Trip

**PRESENTER:** Pastor Jamie Bonnema, Maple Hill Community Congregational Church, Kansas, Mission and Outreach Ministry Council member

Organizing and leading a team of volunteers on a mission trip can be a confusing and daunting task. You will receive a list of planning stages and timelines and be able to speak directly with NACCC associated missions interested in hosting groups.

**TITLE:** Repairing A Broken Bible

**PRESENTER:** Rev. Ed Backell, Warden Community Church, Warden, WA

If your Bible is falling apart, you probably aren't." A nice sentiment, but what happens when your Bible IS falling apart? Do you have a damaged cover? Torn pages? Loose sections? Come find out how to make repairs to your favorite book! Bring your damaged Bible; some supplies provided for on-site repair.

**TITLE:** Understanding and Engaging the Younger Generation in Christian Mission

**PRESENTER:** Amy Kennedy, Co-Executive Director (Placement and Communications), A Christian Ministry in the National Park  
Are you looking for ways to attract younger people to your congregation? Learn more about the nuances of Millennials, Gen-Z, and Generation Alpha. Learn how they think, what they are looking for in a church, and identify ways you can more easily target these younger generations. The opportunities are endless, and you might be surprised to learn just what an asset these demographics might be to your church!

**TITLE:** Money: Practical and Theological Discussions for Church and Home

**PRESENTER:** The Congregational Foundation

Consideration of matters about personal finances invites faithful reflection. How is our sense of responsibility to family, the wider community, and future generations shaped by our understanding of God's unfolding role in our lives? By providing support and practical guidance, churches can help members discern how to make decisions that are congruous with their faith. In this workshop, attendees will hear examples of programs churches have offered and examine the theological strands of their perceptions of the meaning, value, and proper uses of money.

**TITLE:** What is an Ecclesiastical Council?

**PRESENTER:** Vitality Ministry Council and CFTS

What is the potential for Congregational Churches in engaging the process of Ecclesiastical Councils? They are not only for the very important occasions of the ordination and installation of pastors (in which they are almost always advised), but can do so much more for the local church in terms of discernment on making significant changes in programming, gaining wisdom for better stewardship of resources, working toward the transformation of situations of conflict, and so much more! Attend this workshop/panel discussion and hear from churches, lay leaders, and pastors on how they use these amazing tools to guide their churches and ministries effectively towards God's will!

**TITLE:** Reading and Praying the Scriptures with Our Ancestors

**PRESENTERS:** Pastor Dan Vellinga, First CC, Marshalltown, IA and Rev. Dr. Charles Packer, Dean of CFTS, Pine Hill CC, West Bloomfield, MI

Lectio Divina is an ancient spiritual discipline of reading the Scriptures with the heart and the intuition. The early church fathers and mothers developed this method that has continued to be appreciated by Christians through the centuries. Practiced individually or in a group, it is a way to investigate how the Bible speaks to the individual, while complementing traditional methods of Scripture study. Participants will be able to reflect on scriptures cherished by our Pilgrim ancestors as we celebrate our 400 years of Congregational history and spirituality. This workshop will be offered twice, once by Pastor Dan Vellinga of First Congregational Church of Marshalltown, Iowa, and another time by the Rev. Dr. Charles Packer of the Pine Hill Congregational Church of West Bloomfield, Michigan.

**TITLE:** Social Action and the Spirit of Jubilee

**PRESENTER:** Rev. Jacob Poindexter, First CC, Anchorage, AK

The Spirit of Biblical Jubilee is Restorative Justice for the Land and its People, (Leviticus 25). Social Justice is also the basis and mission of Congregational life. A full expression of the Spirit of God in a congregation necessitates participation in the work of justice in its community. Through sharing stories of Congregational Social Action in Anchorage, Alaska, Rev. Jacob Poindexter will show how judicious, persistent engagement in social action has broadened the influence, and enlivened the spiritual life of the First Congregational Church of Anchorage in exciting and unexpected ways. This workshop will inspire churches in every community to look for opportunities to work for justice and experience the joy of Jubilee for themselves.

**TITLE:** Where have all the emerging adults gone?

**PRESENTER:** Rev. Timothy Garvin-Lieghton, Campus Minister & Assistant Professor of Religion at Piedmont College

The workshop will explore the growing absence of Millennials and Generation Z in mainline Protestant churches. While their absence can be attributed to Millennials and Gen Zers leaving churches they were raised in, the bigger picture shows that more and more Gen Zers are being raised in homes with no religious tradition whatsoever. The question we must wrestle with is, how do churches reach out to emerging adults who have little or no religious background?

**TITLE:** Self-Care in Ministry: Running the Race Through the Land of Chaos

**PRESENTER:** Kathrin Gabriel-Jones, CPC, ELI-MP, Volunteer Encouragement Coach for Ministering to Ministers, Encouragement Coach at Gabriel-Jones Coaching

Since 1994, Ministering to Ministers has sought to care for those in ministry who have been wounded by painful conflicts, terminations, and congregational loss. As we celebrate our 25th year, Ministering to Ministers seeks to expand our support to all who serve in ministry through encouraging self-care, advocating healthy relational habits for improved emotional intelligence, and inspiring hope in the midst of chaos. We will focus on introducing the radical concept of self-care while answering the call of ministry, specifically entertaining the possibility that self-care is not the heresy we often think it to be. Engaging resources and support available through Ministering to Ministers as well as her own practice, Kathrin encourages compassionate consideration of our own personal blocks that make our self-care item 9 on a list of the 3 most important things we need to do.

**TITLE:** Why Your Church Needs a Writing Group and How to Start One

**PRESENTER:** Carol Younger, Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, NY

What happens when a group explores Scripture with their journals and pens? Children learn new ways to explore Jesus' story, youth find current meaning in the ancient texts, and adults discover truths that they often overlook. Whether or not this is something you love to do or an activity you rarely practice, writing can be beneficial for our spiritual formation. Writing can become a way to pray. Writing helps us wrestle with what we believe and express what we think. Writing groups build community through their meaningful conversations. Participants will leave this workshop with a four-week plan for forming a group and leading it to reflect on four of Jesus' parables. Carol Younger, editor of the daily devotional guide Reflections (NextSunday Resources) and member of Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, loves working with churches to form and lead groups in a ministry of writing.