

# NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

TO: NACCC MEMBER CHURCHES

FROM: NOMINATING COMMITTEE

RE: Nominations for positions to be filled by vote of the Delegates at the Annual Meeting & Conference, June 2021 and current terms. Respective terms begin at conclusion of the meeting.

---

## **MODERATOR, Two-Year Term:**

[Two-year Term to end 2022; vote was taken in 2020, first year of nomination]

### **Rev. Dr. Cynthia Bacon Hammer, Madison, Wisconsin**

The Rev. Dr. Cynthia Bacon Hammer retired from Heritage Congregational Church in Madison, WI in 2020. Prior to that, Cindy served churches in Elkader and Burlington, Iowa as well as Beloit, Wisconsin. She chaired the NACCC New Hymnal Committee, which produced *Hymns for a Pilgrim People* in 2007, has served as Chair of CFTS and the Center for Congregational Leadership Subcommittee, offered workshops at the NACCC's Annual Meeting, presented papers for Congregational Symposia, was the Congregational Lecturer at the 2015 Annual Meeting, and hosted the 2012 Congregational Symposium. As part of the Wisconsin Congregational Association, Cindy has served in numerous roles, including: Moderator, Secretary, Chair of Youth and Camp, Camp Minister and Director, President of the Clergy Association, and member of the Leadership and Lay Ministry Training Course Committee. For the LLMTTC, Cindy has taught courses in Worship, Wisdom Literature, Pastoral Care and the Gospels.

## **VICE-MODERATOR, Two-Year Term:**

[Two-year Term to end 2022; vote was taken in 2020, first year of nomination as Vice-Moderator, serves two years as Vice-Moderator; may be nominated for two years as Moderator]

### **Rev. Art Ritter, Novi, Michigan**

Art plans to retire as Senior Minister of Meadowbrook Congregational Church, Novi, MI in April. He is a native of Stanton, MI and grew up in the Traditional Congregational Church there. Art has a B.A. from Alma College and an M.A. from Central Michigan University and worked first as a Parks and Recreation Director in Bridgeport, MI. He graduated from the United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities and the Congregational Foundation for Theological Studies in 1985. Ordained in that same year, Art has also served National Association churches in Toulon, IL; West Bloomfield, MI; and Salt Lake City, UT. He has been active within regional associations and the National Association, with terms on the Christian Education Commission, Nominating Committee, Division for Ministry, Congregational Church Development Division, Executive Committee, and the Annual Meeting and Conference Committee. Art and his spouse Laura have two adult daughters, Maren and Amelia.

## **SECRETARY, One-Year Term:**

### **Rev. April Barrett, Portland, Michigan [Re-elected this year]**

April Barrett has been the pastor of First Congregational Church of Portland, Michigan, since July of 2018. She has pastored in Free Methodist and American Baptist churches, as well as serving in the Dominican Republic, Japan, and Costa Rica as a missionary. April has served in many ministry roles including mission board, mother's club ministry, Stephen Ministry, pulpit fill and workshop speaking, and as children's director and teaching director for the women's Community Bible Study class in Jackson, Michigan. She attended the Boston Seminar in 2019 with several others who are new to the Congregational Way. April and her husband Patrick have been married for 31 years and have two adult daughters.

## **TREASURER, One-Year Term:**

### **Jeffrey H. Dillon, Franklin, Wisconsin [Re-elected this year]**

Jeff and his wife Sharon are charter members of Faith Community Church, Franklin, WI. He has served this congregation as Treasurer (25 years), Moderator, Vice Moderator, and Chair of the Board of Religious Education. Jeff is a retired civil engineer, working 34 years for the City of Milwaukee and finishing his career as the city's Transportation Design Manager. He served two years as Assistant Treasurer of the NACCC prior to being elected Treasurer at the 2005 Annual Meeting. Jeff also serves as Treasurer of the Southeastern Wisconsin Chapter of the National Spinal Cord Injury Association. Jeff and Sharon have two adult children, Alison and Ryan.

## **HISTORIAN, One-Year Term:**

### **Rev. Dr. Mary E. Biedron, Farmington Hills, Michigan [Re-elected this year]**

Mary (Mimi) Biedron (M.Div., D.Min.) serves at North Congregational Church, Farmington Hills, MI, where she has been Associate Minister (1998-2011) and is currently Senior Minister (2011-present). Prior to that, she was the Director of Christian Education at First Congregational Church of Toledo, Ohio from 1981-1998, when she was active in Congregational activities as a layperson. She is a 1999 graduate of the CFTS program, and is currently the Moderator of the Southeastern Michigan Association of Congregational Churches, as well as a member of the Board of the Congregational Library and Archives. She and her husband, Glenn, have three adult children and two grandchildren.

## **YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE – LEADERSHIP COUNCIL, One-Year Term:**

### **Patrick Stewart, Marshalltown, Iowa [Re-elected this year]**

Patrick served as the volunteer Youth Leader at LaMoille Congregational Church for nearly 20 years and is currently serving as the Chairperson of the Iowa-Nebraska Association Youth Task Team. Patrick has attended NAPF-HOPE conferences since 2005 and served as either an attendee, CIT, or counselor/small group leader. He has been the Youth Representative on NACCC Leadership Council for the past several years and is currently on the Annual Meeting Committee along with serving his second year on the NAPF-HOPE Planning Team. Patrick is employed by a local non-profit community action agency working as the Payroll Manager in the finance department. He enjoys listening to music, singing, playing co-ed softball and men's church league basketball, and watching the Iowa State Cyclones, Kansas City Chiefs, and Chicago Cubs. He really enjoys spending time with the church youth group doing fun activities and giving them the same experiences, he had as a youth. Patrick looks forward to serving another term as the Youth Representative.

## **MINISTRY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES SERVING ON THE LEADERSHIP COUNCIL**

### **One-Year Term as Nominated by their Elected Council**

#### **Growth Ministry Council Reps:**

**Mary Prendergast, Pilgrim Congregational Church, Pomona, California**

**Rev. Dr. John Tamilio III, Congregational Church of Canton, Canton, Massachusetts**

#### **Mission and Outreach Ministry Council Reps:**

**Rev. Jamie Bonnema, Maple Hill Community Church, Maple Hill, Kansas**

**Janet Wilson, Grace Congregational Church, Greenville, Iowa**

#### **Vitality Ministry Council Reps:**

**Rev. Justin Nierer, Sandstone Congregational Church, Jackson Michigan**

**Rev. Sarah Terlouw, First Congregational Church, Saugatuck, Michigan**

## **ANNUAL MEETING & CONFERENCE COMMITTEE MEMBER-AT-LARGE – LEADERSHIP COUNCIL**

**New Nominee [Three-Year Term 2021-2024; Completed a Three-Year Term 2016-2019]**

### **Colleen Murray, Gahanna, Ohio**

Colleen has dedicated most of her life to trying to make a positive difference in the lives of children. She is the proud mother of two grown sons and is currently the facilitator for an intervention room at Gahanna Lincoln High School. She also works with K-5 children and facilitates arts and crafts at the YWCA after school program and summer camp. She was raised in the Congregational Church and is the daughter of the late Rev. Dr. Robert Murray. She has participated in choir and drama ministry at Gahanna Community Congregational Church since 1986, where she often plays special flute music. She has served as President of the Ohio Association Women's Fellowship, on the Church Services Commission and on the Annual Meeting Conference Committee for the NACCC. She is in charge of church outreach programs which benefit the students in the district where she is employed. She is an amateur photographer who enjoys trying to capture nature and the beauty of God's world.

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS (Staggered Terms, as indicated)**

**New Nominee** [Four-Year Term 2021-2025]

### **Rev. Thomas Van Tassell, Saugatuck, Michigan**

Tom retired in 2020 from the First Congregational Church of Spencer, Iowa, after serving 23 years as Co-Pastor with his wife Wendy. He previously served as Associate Minister of Plymouth Church in Lansing MI, and in education and youth ministry with the First Congregational Church of Greenville MI and the First Congregational Church of Los Angeles. Tom now lives in Holland, Michigan and is a member of the First Congregational Church of Saugatuck, MI. He has a B.A. from Hope College, an M.A. from Michigan State, an M.Div. from Yale Divinity School, and is a 1990 graduate of CFTS. Within the NACCC, Tom served as Co-Director of NAPF, on the Youth Commission, Division for Ministry, Vitality Ministry Council, Plymouth 400 Task Team, two Executive Director search teams, and will soon conclude serving CFTS. He has also served in various offices and teams in the Michigan Conference, Cal-West Association, and the Iowa Nebraska Association. Tom currently serves as the secretary of both the International Congregational Fellowship (ICF), and the American Committee (AMCO) for ICF. Tom and his wife have two adult children and one grandchild.

## **Continuing Members on the Board of Directors** [no vote necessary]

**Jodee Lord, Oakwood Heights Community Church, Staten Island, New York** [term to end 2022]

**Claudia Kniefel, First Congregational Church, Anchorage, Alaska** [term to end 2023]

**Rev. Dr. Beth Bingham, Congregational Church of the Chimes, Sherman Oaks, California** [term to end 2024]

## **GROWTH MINISTRY COUNCIL**

**New Nominee** [Three-Year Term 2021-2024]

### **Rev. Ezekiel Rodriguez, National City, California**

Pastor Ezekiel Rodriguez has been serving in the ministry for over 30 years and has acquired his Bachelor's in Theology. He has served in various roles within the church including the most recent planting Faith Community Church in National City, California. A few years into planting this church, God performed a miracle that would forever change our lives: What we call The miracle on 16th street. The First Family Congregational Church and the Faith Community Church merged to become one and is now named First Family Community Church. Pastor Rodriguez has served as North American Mission Regional Church Plant Director, Minister Resource Director in Cal-West, and has served in Convention Committees and the Border Crisis Ministry. He currently serves on the Cal-West Congregational Advisory Board. He looks forward to serving this new role and is ready to be a blessing however the Lord leads.

## **Continuing Members of the Growth Ministry Council** [no vote necessary]

**Pastor Carol P. Taylor, United Church of Beloit, Beloit, Wisconsin** [term to end 2022]

**Curt Schmidt, Congregational Church of Bound Brook, Bound Brook, New Jersey** [term to end 2022]

**Mary Prendergast, Pilgrim Congregational Church, Pomona, California** [term to end 2023]

**Rev. Dr. John Tamilio III, Congregational Church of Canton, Canton, Massachusetts** [term to end 2023]

## **MISSION AND OUTREACH MINISTRY COUNCIL**

**New Nominee** [Three-Year Term 2021-2024]

**Gerald (Jerry) Zwaga, Citrus Springs, Florida**

Jerry and his wife Carolyn have been active members of the Citrus Springs Community Congregational Christian Church for 15 years. Before moving to Florida, they were active in the First Congregational Church, Swanzey, NH. At Citrus Springs he has held multiple positions: Deacon, Chair of the Deacon Board, Trustee, Chair of two search committees. For the past four years he has been the Year Round Delegate for his church. Jerry retired from Travelers Insurance as Director of Training.

**New Nominee** [To Fill an Unexpired Term 2021-2023]

**Thomas Chelimsky, Fox Point, Wisconsin**

Tom Chelimsky is a member of North Shore Congregational Church in Fox Point, WI since 2012. He and his wife Gisela are both physicians and enjoy mission work here and abroad. They have visited and offered medical care at the Asociacion Civil Cristiana Congregational led by Dr. Harding Stricker in Northern Argentina, and Pilgrim's Presence in Western Kenya led by Mr. Geoffrey Lipale. Tom also went to Jordan to offer some care to the refugees from Syria in camp Zaatari. In all of these trips, the joy of fellowship through prayer and the giving of ourselves to Jesus first was the source of indescribable blessing.

**Second Time Nominee** [To Fill an Unexpired Term 2021-2022; Completed a Three-Year Term 2017-2020]

**Barbara Dabul, Sun City, Arizona**

Barbara Dabul, Ph.D. has been attending Congregational churches all her life, in Illinois, California, and currently Sun City, Arizona. She has served in several capacities at her local church, including church clerk, as well as three years on the Mission Board and coordinating visits to shut-in members during the Christmas and Easter seasons. She made a personal medical mission with a laryngectomized friend in 2008, bringing \$20,000 of medical equipment to Costa Rica. During the week of their stay, 16 members of a laryngectomy club learned to communicate with family and friends.

**Continuing Members of the Mission and Outreach Ministry Council** [no vote necessary]

**Janet Wilson, Grace Congregational Church, Greenville, Iowa** [term to end 2022]

**Rev. Jamie Bonnema, Maple Hill Community Church, Maple Hill, Kansas** [term to end 2023]

## **VITALITY MINISTRY COUNCIL**

**Second Time Nominee** [Three-Year Term 2021-2024; Completed a Three-Year Term 2018-2021]

**Rev. Ian Macdonald (M.Div.), Soquel, California**

Rev. Macdonald shares the gospel story each week from his backyard via an innovative home church worship service he has developed. His ministry reaches hundreds of people across the country through the use of social media and other technological tools. Prior to New Church Sherman Oaks, Rev. Macdonald accepted a call to be the 17th Sr. Minister of the historic First Congregational Church in Greenville, Michigan in August 2014. During seminary, he did his internship at Congregational Church of the Chimes, in Sherman Oaks, CA. Having earned his Master of Divinity from Fuller Theological Seminary (Pasadena, CA), he also holds a Bachelor of Arts in Communication from California State University, Fullerton with an emphasis in Advertising, as well as an Associate of Arts from Montgomery College. He is an alumnus of the Congregational Fellowship for Theological Studies (CFTS) and was the recipient of the John W. Claxton Memorial Award for Excellence in the understanding and practice of Congregationalism. His love for world travel and passion for meeting people became the genesis for his blog *Jesus, not Jesús: My Daily Struggle To Find God In Our Midst*. He currently lives in Los Angeles, CA with his wife Kathleen and their three spirited children named Fiona, Colleen, and Sean.

**Continuing Members of the Vitality Ministry Council** [no vote necessary]

**Cynthia Hardy, Congregational Church of the Valley, Chandler, Arizona** [term to end 2022]

**Rev. Dr. Irven A. Gammon, Florence Congregational Church, Florence, Massachusetts** [term to end 2022]

**Rev. Justin Nierer, Sandstone Congregational Church, Jackson, Michigan** [term to end 2023]

**Rev. Sarah Terlow, First Congregational Church, Saugatuck, Michigan** [term to end 2023]