



September 2024

Dear Congregationalist,

When I was called to serve as the Interim Executive Director [IED], a temporary position, I thought I knew most of what the NACCC does to assist your congregation since I had served on boards and committees over the years. Now I humbly realize that I was wrong - the NA accomplishes a lot more than I thought it did. I send this letter to you as the time for Rally Sunday comes around as an update and reminder of what your Association carries out, because I am learning more and more each day. With this letter I want to remind you of how you can help your Association help you and fellow member churches.

**The NA strives to listen.** We are always open to hear from you. Our leaders and our staff attended the Annual Meeting and Conference [AMC] to listen to you. We heard from you at the annual Convocation. Your leaders and your staff continue to invite your input.

**The NA strives to communicate.** We publish 'The Congregationalist', a magazine with a variety of thoughtful articles as well as opinions confirming that congregationalism is a big tent of associated congregations. We publish two monthly e-newsletters called Community Connections and The Messenger and another monthly e-newsletter, the YRD Line for our Year-Round Delegates, Moderators, your council members, as well as printed resources mailed regularly with crucial information offered to your congregation on how the NA can help you. We are continually working to improve our website, as well as our Facebook page.

**The NA strives to help you.** We assist daily with problem-solving the matters that you bring to us the best we are able. We provide information on relevant topics. We assist with pastoral searches. As funds are available, we can help with loans, and / or grants, such as the Vitality Grant program, the Hurting Churches Fund Endowment, the John Richard Memorial Endowment, and the Providence Endowment. We encourage sharing between congregations, i.e., churches helping churches. This is just some of what we can help you with.

**The NA strives to educate.** The Lay Ministry Training Program [LMTP] is an ongoing way of training individuals to serve you in your congregation, whether large or small. We continually offer relevant workshops, most at no charge. The speakers at the AMC and Convocations offer great insights. The Boston Seminar is open not only to Congregational Foundation for Theological Studies [CFTS] students but also to our LMTP students and new ministers from other traditions.

There is also a program explaining congregationalism. And we have many publications which are available.

**The NA strives to provide ways for you to share with those in need.** We are a clearing house and collection point for your contributions for those in need in the United States and in the world. We have collected and distributed funds, for example to financially assist those impacted by the flooding in Spencer, Iowa, global natural disasters, and aided local churches helping within their communities. We serve as the central point for our seventeen Mission Partners and affiliates, which span from Argentina to Cameroon, Colorado to Haiti. Our intent is to make your contributions meaningful to those who need support.

**The NA strives to do so much more.** To enhance spirituality, we publish Advent and Lenten Devotionals, which are written by the members of our churches. We also prepare a Two-Year Planning Calendar that references the liturgical calendar. To assist your church's investments, your church can participate in the Congregational Investment Trust [CIT]. We also provide grants and manage awards. Your NA also works with Regional Congregational Associations and in relationships with the International Council of Community Churches [ICCC] and the United Church of Christ [UCC]. There is more!

**How does the NA do all it does?** First, your Association relies on the help of all its member congregations: that's you! Then the NA depends on its 40-plus volunteer leaders who serve on its task teams, committees, councils, and boards. Most of what the volunteers and Moderators do is behind the scenes. I willingly share with you that I see the hard work they do and the many selfless hours they put in.

**Who supports your volunteers?** The NA has a small but wonderful paid staff of dedicated individuals: In Programs: Rev. Dr. Gerry Krupp. In Development: Kristin Ward. In Communications: Maggie Helmick. In Church Services: Laura Wright. In Missions and Outreach: Julie Robie. In Executive Assistance: Andrea McCall. Picture a circular table with each of our staff daily interacting with each other as a team to provide our best services to you. That is our task.

**We need your cooperation, input and support!** Every day I learn more about what we do, and who is doing it. I know that I am omitting much more of what we do. In summary, I am amazed and excited to serve as Interim Executive Director. My time is limited, but I hope to help the NA in our service to God through Christ's churches as all our ED's have done. Please keep our congregations in your prayers, as well as our ministers, our volunteers, our staff, for we need your spiritual support. As an Association, in order to do what we are called to do, we also need your continuing financial support through your church's Fair Share, Fair Share Plus, individual donations, and in legacy gifts.

**I ask you:** How can the NA help you? What do you need? Contact us.

**My prayer for you** is that you share all the love, blessings, and gifts which God has given you with others, for God's love, blessings, and gifts are never meant to be kept, but always to be shared.

*Barry*

Rev. Dr. Barry W. Szymanski  
Interim Executive Director [IED]  
National Association of the Congregational Christian Churches [NACCC]

P.S. Please share this letter with others.

P.S.S. There are even more acronyms that are used as shortcuts. Some are:

AMC	Annual Meeting & Conference
AMCC	Annual Meeting and Conference Committee
BOD	Board of Directors
BOG	Board of Governors
BLMG	Bloomerang
CCL	Center for Congregational Leadership
CFTS	Congregational Foundation for Theological Studies
CIF	Church Information Form
CIT	Congregational Investment Trust
ECRF	Executive Certificate in Religious Fundraising
GMC	Growth Ministry Council
HOPE	Heritage of Pilgrim Endeavor
H&P	History & Polity
LC	Leadership Council
LMTF	Lay Ministry Training Program
MIF	Ministers Information Form
MOMC	Mission and Outreach Council
NAPF	National Association of Pilgrim Fellowship
NOM	Nominating Committee
OGHS	One Great Hour of Sharing
PAC	Planning and Action Committee
P & A	Personnel and Administration Committee
SMF	Shared Ministry Fund
VMC	Vitality Ministry Council
YRD	Year Round Delegate [YRD Line –eNewsletter]

P.P.P.S. We have a relationship with these NA partners:

AMCO	The American Committee for the International Congregational Fellowship
CCP	Congregational Christian Partnership
CRS	Congregational Retreat Society
ICF	International Congregational Fellowship
IMN	Interim Ministry Network

WGS	Washington Gladden Society
CL&A	Congregational Library & Archives
LI	Lake Institute on Faith & Giving
OC	Olivet College
PU	Piedmont University
PC	Pilgrim Center for Reconciliation
UDTS	University of Dubuque Theological Seminary