

FORESEE



BI-MONTHLY NEWS from the CCCC

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CONSERVATIVE
CONGREGATIONAL
CHRISTIAN
CONFERENCE

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**2022 ANNUAL
GATHERING**
Join us in Rhode
Island

EFFECTIVE
CHURCH
STRUCTURES

MALAWI
UPDATE

- REGISTER FOR INTENSIVES
- REGISTER FOR THE ANNUAL GATHERING
- YOU TUBE PROJECT THAT NEEDS YOU!
- CHANGES & OPPORTUNITIES

CM COMMENTS



Welcome to the Annual Gathering

RON HAMILTON, CCCC CONFERENCE MINISTER

We will gather for the 74th annual gathering of the CCCC on July 19 – 22 at the Crowne Plaza in Warwick, Rhode Island. We are excited to gather again after a two-year hiatus of meeting due to the pandemic. Congregationalism has been defined as “churches gathered around Jesus Christ with His Spirit in their midst.” We have missed sharing this life together for the past two years. The Annual Gathering Committee has faithfully worked with the local churches and pastors to prepare for these meetings, and we are excited to share these days together.

The theme will be “On This Rock” and we will focus on Christ-centered Congregationalism. We have carried this theme forward from the 2020 annual gathering that could not be held due to the pandemic. This meeting was planned in conjunction with the 400th anniversary of the landing of the Mayflower at Plymouth, MA. (What’s 2 years in light of 400 years?) These meetings will help

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us better understand our heritage as Biblical Congregationalists and challenge us to carry on effective ministry in this generation and for generations to come.

The speakers for the plenary sessions are, as follows:

Tuesday evening – Nick Granitsas

The beginning of the Christ-centered Congregationalist movement (Psalm 119:97-105)

Wednesday afternoon – Bryan Long

Passing our faith to the next generation (Deuteronomy 6:4-9)

Wednesday evening – Terry Shanahan

I love to tell the story – Hebrews 13:1-16 (focus on Hebrews 13:8)

Thursday – Ed Stetzer

Session #1 – The moment we're on and the mission we're on (John 20:19-21)

Session #2 – Representing Jesus and the Kingdom (2 Cor. 5:16-21)

Friday – Ron Hamilton

Moving forward with a Christ-centered mission (Hebrews 12:1-3)

There is a full slate of seminars planned that relate to the theme and to the practical aspects of ministry in this generation. The business of the Conference will be conducted in three morning delegate meetings. The gathering also provides many opportunities for fellowship for those attending to connect with long-time friends and ministry peers along with new people to our Conference. Please join me in prayer for these meetings as we anticipate God's presence and blessing as we gather.

REGISTER NOW FOR ANNUAL GATHERING INTENSIVES

There are two opportunities at the start of the 2022 Annual Gathering for additional in-depth training. "The Plan" - hosted by the Church Multiplication team, and "Making Disciples: Key to Developing Your Church", hosted by the Church Development team. For more information or to register for either intensive course log on to: ccccusa.com/ag

CHURCH DEVELOPMENT



A CHURCH WITH EFFECTIVE STRUCTURES

JOHN KIMBALL, DIRECTOR OF CHURCH DEVELOPMENT

It is said that the seven words that kill a church are, "We have never done it that way before." While that thought may be the recognition of a new approach, in many cases it is a statement of congregational resistance.

One of the key areas of focus when helping a local church move toward greater kingdom fruitfulness is reworking various structures. Church structure – including the church's bylaws – must remain adjustable enough to appropriately morph as required to keep the congregation vitally connected with her community, meeting its ministry needs. We must always remember that structure serves Jesus' ministry, ministry does not serve the structure. Way too many local churches today say "no" to the leading of the Spirit because He is calling them to do something that does not fit their embedded structures.

The Natural Church Development tool (NCD) looks at eight quality characteristics – and one of these is Effective Structures. What do we mean by effective structures? Simple. The structures of the church support, promote and enhance needed gospel ministry and do not impede it. The numerous systems in the life of the congregation work together (in harmony, not dissonance) to fulfilling the church's purpose to reach the harvest of souls in her community. Effective structures foster effective planning, organize ministry and programs to accomplish real goals, promote ongoing innovation and change, and continuously raise up effective leaders to keep the church engaged in the harvest.

Want to know more? Have a conversation with the Church Development Team by calling the CCCC Office at (651) 739-1474.

CHANGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

*CCCC member church

Huron, SD

First Congregational Church *
Charles Borchard

Cedarville, MI

First Union Church (Independent)
Jim Huber

PASTORAL OPENINGS – CCCC Member Churches

Whittier CA

Plymouth Church

Beverly, MA

Pilgrim Church

Blackstone, MA

Christ Community Church

Essex, MA

First Congregational Church
(Part-time Associate Pastor)

New Bremen, OH

St. Peter's Church

Vermillion, OH

Vermillion Evan. & Reformed Church

Xenia, OH

Mt. Zion Church

Hollidaysburg, PA

St. John's Reformed Church

Rural Valley, PA

St. Paul Congregational Church

Parkston, SD

Parkston Congregational Church

Sparta, WI

First Congregational Church of Leon

SUMMER INTERNSHIP

Bronx, NY

Bronx Household of Faith

TURNING POINT REPLANT PROJECTS – Please contact Conference Minister, Ron Hamilton, for information about these projects.

Franklin, CT

Franklin Congregational Church*

Pottstown, PA

Renewal Community Church *
(part-time pastoral intern)

PASTORAL OPENINGS – Non-member Churches

Avon CT

Valley Community Baptist Church
(Converge) (Executive Pastor)

Colchester, CT

Christian Life Chapel (ECFA) (Part-time)

Peru, IL

First Congregational Church
(Independent)

Middleborough, MA

Rock Village Church (ABC)

Sutton, MA

First Congregational Church (UCC)

Bremen, ME

Bremen Union Church (Independent)

Pownal, ME

First Parish Congregational Church
(Independent)

Bloomingdale, MI

Bloomingdale Christian Church
(Independent)

Lansing, MI

Olivet Baptist Church (ABC)

Nevada, MO

First Christian Church (Independent)

Taylor, ND

Taylor Ecumenical Parish (Independent)

Colebrook, NH

Monadnock Congregational Church
(UCC)

Lake Grove, NY

New Village Church (Independent)

Lisle, NY

Center Lisle Congregational Church
(UCC)

West Pittston, PA

First Congregational Church
(Independent part-time)

Chepachet, RI

Chepachet Union Church

AROUND THE CONFERENCE

WESTERN REGION UPDATE

PHIL NOORDMANS, WESTERN REGIONAL MINISTER

One of the many prayer-promises we hold near and dear is this: If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. John 15:7, ESV.

For more than three years Lake Avenue Church in Pasadena, CA, has been praying for their next Sr. Pastor. On Sunday, May 15, Ron Hamilton, myself, and my wife, Teri, traveled to Pasadena to join our brothers and sisters in celebrating God's provision. What a glorious day as the church installed Rev. Dr. Matthew John.

On occasion we have included an update from our church in Longmont, Colorado. A new church-start named The Well has cleaned the facility and begun to meet in that classic sanctuary. A few weeks ago, I had the privilege of joining with the 175 people who gathered there for worship. The energy level was amazing! Once more the rafters are ringing with the praises of God's people! Pastor Philip Woods verbalized a compelling vision as he taught the Word. God is answering our prayers for that campus.

Immanuel Evangelical Church in Fort Morgan, Colorado, is a healthy congregation that desires to grow even stronger. After praying about what they could do to nurture and strengthen the bonds of love, they invited John Kimball to come and lead a seminar on Biblical Peacemaking. John aptly introduced and reinforced key Biblical perspectives pertaining to healthy relationships.

The CCCC's first guiding value is this: "A culture of believing prayer and intercession." In a few weeks (July 19-22), we will begin each day at our Annual Gathering in Warwick, RI, with a 45-minute season of prayer. For the CCCC, prayer is not merely an afterthought; it is truly a priority.

"ABIDE IN ME,
AND MY WORDS
ABIDE IN YOU,
ASK WHATEVER
YOU WISH, AND
IT WILL BE DONE
FOR YOU.
JOHN 15:7



MISSION UPDATE

MALAWI UPDATE

JEREMY SKAGGS, MISSION COMMITTEE CHAIR

This year we had 2 different teams visit Malawi. From the first team is Walter Kim, CCCC minister and president of the National Association of Evangelicals, who said of his family's time:

"In Malawi, we encountered a depth of economic poverty accompanied by so much spiritual prosperity. As we return to America, we recognize our country's economic prosperity and confront our spiritual poverty. In this missional moment, we must learn from the global church to come together across our differences to proclaim the gospel in word and deed."

I was excited to share the gospel of Jesus Christ to Muslim villages, until a very heavy burden manifested itself. My mind was plagued with perplexing questions. I couldn't get past the thought of dropping a Gospel bomb, the ensued collateral damage, and then flying off.

The gospel message required a life change and if they responded their lives could be uprooted. In all honesty, I had to reconcile within myself, if I truly believed what I preached.

I prayed and prayed until I realized that there is a cost either way. After all, "the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

I am excited to report that we helped strengthen the village churches in Malawi. In 3 events, we preached to 600+ people and nearly 200 people publicly came forward to begin their Christian journey. They were connected to a local pastor and introduced to their new Christian family.

God is on the move in Malawi and the church is growing daily.

GOD IS ON THE MOVE IN MALAWI, AND THE CHURCH IS GROWING DAILY.



CHURCH MULTIPLICATION

UNION CITY CHURCH

BRYAN LONG, DIRECTOR OF CHURCH MULTIPLICATION

A few weeks ago, I had the privilege to visit one of our Churches in Development - Union City Church in Brunswick, GA. Union City Church is led by Lead Pastor Drew Thompson, Associate Pastor Kory Engram, and Executive Pastor Madhur Dey. Together, they make up a diverse team to reach a diverse city. Brunswick is 55% African American, 35% Caucasian and 10% Latino. Their mission is to be a part of God's reconciliation movement in Brunswick.

It started with a question: What would a church need to be like to be good for the city?

They quickly discovered that the city and church were deeply racially and socioeconomically divided. Brunswick is where Ahmaud Arbery was murdered while jogging near his home in 2020. A vision was born to help people pursue reconciliation with Christ by putting their trust in Him, reconciliation with one another across racial and social lines, and reconciliation of Brunswick to the Lordship of Christ.

To hear their whole story, check out the video here.

We desire to help church plants by connecting them to established churches in the conference as a Sponsor Church. Sponsor Churches pray, encourage, and financially support new kingdom works. Pastor Drew will be leading a breakout session on racial reconciliation during this year's Annual Gathering, July 19-22 in Warwick, RI. I would strongly encourage those attending to join Pastor Drew for that session and consider becoming a Sponsor Church for Union City or another Church in Development in our conference.

If you'd like more information, please contact me at: bryan@theninevehnetwork.org



THINGS OF NOTE



COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE UPDATE

KERSTIN TURNER, COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE CHAIR

The home office of the CCCC has been working to reevaluate our communication efforts both in print and online – and one of the initiatives was to revitalize the board-appointed Communications Committee. The committee is comprised of Jonathan Romig, Jon Bryant, Sarah Coons, Jason McConnell and chaired by Kerstin Turner. This committee will seek to streamline our overall communication strategies and create policies to effectively "tell the story" of the CCCC. In this digital media age – where we hear about anything and everything so quickly, we are working to present CCCC in fresh and relevant ways.

One of the first projects we are focusing on is developing a YouTube channel – posting helpful content that introduces CCCC – who we are, what our member ministers and churches are like, and where we are going as a conference.

This is where we need YOUR help – we are looking to put together a video introducing our conference and we need your video skills! Before you panic, Jonathan Romig has made a GREAT intro video that explains what we are looking for. Anyone with a smartphone can do this. We promise.

We need 3 clips:

- Intro video – who you are, where you serve and year founded and where you're located.
- 3-5 second horizontal shot of your building or meeting place
- 3-5 second vertical shot of your building or meeting place.

Email the clips to: ccccuser8941@gmail.com Feel free to reach out with any questions and be sure to subscribe to our YouTube channel!

CONFERENCE HISTORIAN



RELIGIOUS AFFECTIONS- BY JONATHAN EDWARDS

ALWYN YORK, CCCC HISTORIAN

By 1746 Jonathan Edwards had seen the excitement and inspiration of religious revivals, but he had also witnessed some of the controversy and negative effects they could produce. Many lives had been changed and churches were filled with new converts, but the revivals had also been subjected to severe criticism. Some prominent pastors had emerged as opponents of the revivals, arguing that they showed an unhealthy focus on emotion and experience and were causing conflict and division in the churches. The revivals had produced some effects that were dismaying even to friends of revival. Some ministers promoting revivals had succumbed to fanaticism, condemning other ministers they saw as unconverted, and even burning books. Some converts displayed strange and erratic behavior, claiming they were following leadings they had received from visions and voices. A distressing fact that leaders of the revival had to contend with was that some who had professed a dramatic conversion during that revival did not persevere in their faith, returning to old sins and lapsing back into indifference or unbelief.

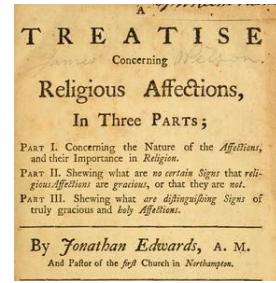
Jonathan Edwards, as the most prominent leader in the revivals, felt a special need to defend them. The result was a series of sermons he preached to his congregation in Northampton which was published as *A Treatise on the Religious Affections*. The book is divided into three sections.

The first section of the book addresses the place of emotion in religion, arguing that "True Religion largely consists in Holy Affections." This section is in response to the criticism of ministers who had faulted the awakening because of its focus on emotions. Charles Chauncy, a prominent Boston pastor, had argued that "an enlightened mind, and not raised affections" should guide people in religion as in other aspects of life. He believed that religion consists of reason and judgment and dutiful behavior. Showing the primacy of emotion in religion was not hard for Edwards to demonstrate. He points out "The holy Scriptures do everywhere place religion very much in the affections: such as fear, hope, love, hatred, desire,

joy sorrow, gratitude, compassion, and zeal." He goes on to provide abundant spiritual proof of this.

Section two of the book details some dramatic phenomena frequently observed during revivals which did not necessarily indicate true conversion. During the revivals people would experience powerful emotions, speak fluently and fervently of their conversion, spend much time in religious activities and express great confidence of their acceptance with God. Edwards argues that such signs may accompany true faith, but they are not decisive one way or another. People might get swept up in the emotion of a revival or be moved by a powerful preacher without undergoing a true lasting change through the work of the Holy Spirit. This would explain why some of those who spoke most dramatically of their spiritual experiences did not persist in the faith.

After discussing things which do not necessarily indicate true conversion, in section three Edwards goes on to list signs that a person's spiritual experience was truly the result of being given a new nature by the work of the Holy Spirit. A basic sign was love for God because of his holiness rather than for the benefits he could give. True conversion would produce a change in a person's character and temperament. Edwards says, "Truly gracious affections differ from those that are false and delusive, in that they tend to, and are attended with, the lamb-like, dove-like spirit and temper of Jesus Christ." Edwards concludes by declaring that the final and most definitive sign of the validity of religious affections is their effect on a person's behavior. "Gracious and holy affections have their exercise and fruit in Christian practice." Jonathan Edwards reminds us that the most reliable test of religious feelings was given by Jesus. "By their fruits you shall know them." (Mat. 7:20)





We look forward to the 2022 Annual Gathering to be held at the Crowne Plaza in Warwick, RI on July 19-22. Our theme will be "On This Rock: Examining Christ-Centered Congregationalism." Registration for the annual gathering is now available on our website at:

www.ccccusa.com/ag

More than 4 million Ukrainian women, men and children have been forced to flee their homes, and together, we can respond. World Relief is currently working with partners on the ground in Romania, Slovakia, Poland, Moldova and Western Ukraine to provide lodging, medical assistance, food and other basic necessities to those who have fled.

Donate today at: worldrelief.org/respond



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