

FORESEE



BI-MONTHLY NEWS from the CCCC

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CONSERVATIVE
CONGREGATIONAL
CHRISTIAN
CONFERENCE

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CM COMMENTS



Tis the Season

RON HAMILTON, CCCC CONFERENCE MINISTER



'Tis the Season! I'm not talking about Thanksgiving...Advent...Christmas...New Year's Day! I'm talking about annual business meetings. Most of our churches will hold an annual meeting in the next few months.

I spoke about the nature of Congregationalism at the annual gathering when I said that Congregationalists are known as the people who VOTE. However, our history as Biblical Congregationalists shows that our forefathers were known as people who were DEVOTED to the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Look again across the years to the church at Scrooby. Did they become Congregationalists just because they didn't like the form and government of the established church? Not for a minute! Their concern was for Christ!...To those men and women, the New Testament seemed to be saying that

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to people who faithfully come together with open and asking hearts the Risen Christ would come. They believed that the one thing that made it possible for Him to come to them was their common love for Him; that it was His presence among them – and this alone – that made them a church." (The Congregational Way by Arthur Rouner)

I am not for taking away anyone's vote. Rather, I believe that God's Word tells us that every vote should reflect our devotion to Jesus. An annual business meeting is a great opportunity to demonstrate a devotion to Jesus, His people, and His mission. The agenda should include times of worship, sharing from the Word, and prayer. This will center our hearts on the Lord and guides our decisions.

One of my favorite business meetings featured a unique time of sharing. Building on the Old Testament stories of building a memorial to the Lord, we asked everyone to join an exercise of building a memorial. One by one, people stepped forward and took a brick and help us build a memorial at the front of the church. We ask people to place a brick that demonstrated a special way they were encouraged in their faith in the past year. We then had people share stories of God's faithfulness in their lives and in the ministry of the church. Our hearts were unified in faith and all of the votes were unanimous.

A business does not have to a boring experience with an agenda of votes. ! It can be a time of joy and celebration that reflects our devotion to Jesus.



WE STILL NEED YOUR VIDEOS!

Yes! We are still collecting your videos! Questions? Head over to our YouTube channel for all the details! Reach out to us at communication@ccccusa.com with any questions.

CHURCH DEVELOPMENT



COMPREHENSIVE CHURCH DEVELOPMENT COACH TRAINING

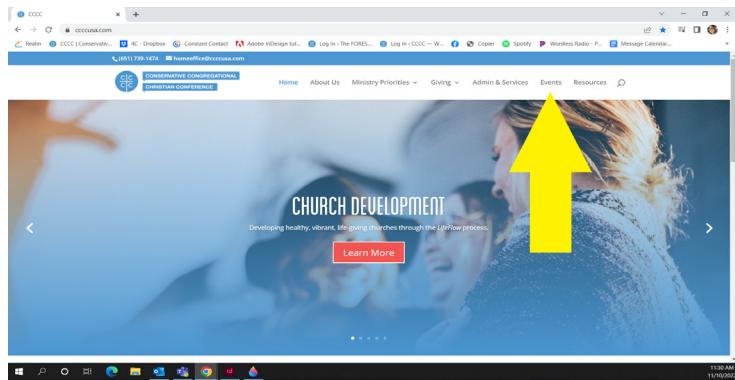
JOHN KIMBALL, DIRECTOR OF CHURCH DEVELOPMENT

Interested in becoming a certified Church Development Coach for the CCCC? A wonderful opportunity is coming soon!

The Church Development Team is again hosting a comprehensive Church Development Coach training event, November 28- December 1, 2022 at the beautiful Hampton Inn-Orlando Airport in sunny Orlando, Florida. This four-day event includes full Natural Church Development (NCD) assessment training and certification, as well as the needed instruction in procedures and best practices for coaches in the CCCC Church Development Process. As with previous training events, participants can begin serving as coach and consultant after completing all requirements. NCD coaches are eligible for discounts on NCD tools and resources.

This event is open to members of the CCCC who would like to get these certifications to benefit their own ministries. Registration fees range from \$100 to \$450 per person depending on which level of training is pursued. Please note that we are providing significant discounts for those who will use this training to serve the CCCC Family in both Church Development and as part of our Turning Point Initiative. To learn more about the discount, be sure to contact John Kimball at the Conference office before registering.

There is still time to register and space available. For more details, and to register, go to: www.ccccusa.com and click "Events".



THINGS TO NOTE

FLOURISH - A CONFERENCE OF THE NAE

The National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) sponsored a Flourish Conference in Nashville, TN on October 4 – 5. The purpose of the Conference was to learn about and discuss many of the challenging and contentious issues that we face in this generation. About 300 people from member denominations and organizations came together to hear from thoughtful speakers and to share in table discussions on these topics:

- Evangelism in a changing culture
- Racial justice and reconciliation
- Pro-life witness at the end of Roe v. Wade
- Pastoral care to hurting people
- Human sexuality
- Leadership challenges

Conference Minister, Ron Hamilton, and Board members, T.J. Turner, and Mike Haddad represented the CCCC at these meetings.

The teaching of thoughtful evangelical leaders opened the door for realistic and helpful conversations. I was encouraged by the openness and vulnerability of people who strive to be a faithful witness in our culture. – Ron Hamilton

"It was an encouraging picture of the unity of the body of Christ even as we wrestled with topics that have often bred division in the church. We need more opportunities just like this to practice open and biblical conversations regarding such complex issues with great humility and grace." – Mike Haddad

"Flourish left me more hopeful and optimistic for the future of Evangelicalism in America. It was the kind of thoughtful conversation about hard topics that needs to happen if we're going to meet the challenges we face with the Gospel of Jesus, and take seriously our calling to make disciples." – T.J. Turner

The NAE hopes to hold the Flourish Conference again and is considering regional gatherings to make this accessible to more people. It is important for us to tackle these challenging issues in a loving, God-focused, gospel-centered way.



REGIONAL PASTOR REPORT

AN INTRODUCTION TO CHRIST CHURCH IN LUFKIN, TEXAS

PHIL NOORDMANS, WESTERN REGIONAL PASTOR

Travel with me toward the eastern border of Texas to a growing city of 35,000+ named Lufkin. We drive to the southwestern side of the city and into the parking lot of one of the newer congregations in the CCCC family, Christ Congregational Church of Lufkin, Texas.

In the Conservative Congregational Christian Conference, we treasure, among other things, Reformed theology and congregational polity. Within these broad categories are found a variety of worship styles from casual to liturgical. Christ Congregational Church is warmly and decidedly liturgical.

I'm scheduled to preach on the Sunday we visit. Prior to the service, Pastor Randall Green, Lector Todd Stracener, organist David Lawson, and I meet in Pastor Randall's office. We talk through the 4-page order-of-worship that the congregation will follow.

Although Christ Church has been in existence for only 12 years – it was established in 2010 and joined the CCCC in 2019 – its new campus incorporates classical congregation styling. It is so well done that people in the community often use it for wedding venues. The opening page of the church's website, christchurchlufkin.com, is an apt introduction to this warm and wonderful congregation.

Welcome! Christ Church is a liturgical, evangelical, congregational body dedicated to the ongoing relevance of "traditional worship for contemporary people." Founded in 2010, we are grateful for our heritage that reaches all the way back to the original Mayflower pilgrims. We invite you to join us on a new walk down an ancient path.

Christ Congregational Church is a proud member of the CONSERVATIVE CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE, a theologically conservative denomination believing strongly in the autonomy of each local church under the headship of Christ, and working to advance the kingdom of our Lord through cooperative evangelism, church planting and missions.

And warmly liturgical this church is. The service begins with the ringing of the bells in the church's steeple and a Call to Worship spoken from the back of the sanctuary. The acolyte, choir, Cantor, and Pastor – all in robes – process in singing the opening hymn with great heart and loud voice. The service includes litanies, a choir anthem, a sermon, the Gloria Patri, the Apostle's Creed, and the Doxology. Most Pastors preach from a platform raised two or three steps above the congregations. At CCC, the pulpit is an 17th century antique – designed and built in 1676 by Sir Christopher Wren, the famed architect of St. Paul's Cathedral, London – that is raised five steps above the platform. The speaker climbs these steps – thereby elevating the Word – and preaches. This particular service concludes with the Lord's Supper. After a lengthy introduction that includes confession of sins and assurance of pardon, the congregation is dismissed row-by-row to come to the front, kneel at the railing, and receive the bread and wine from the hand of the Pastor as from Christ. The service concludes with the worship leaders recessing.

By the conclusion of the service, I felt enriched spiritually. The unseen hand of our Savior had ministered deeply by His Spirit to my mind, soul, and spirit.



AROUND THE CONFERENCE

LOOKING BACK TO MOVE AHEAD

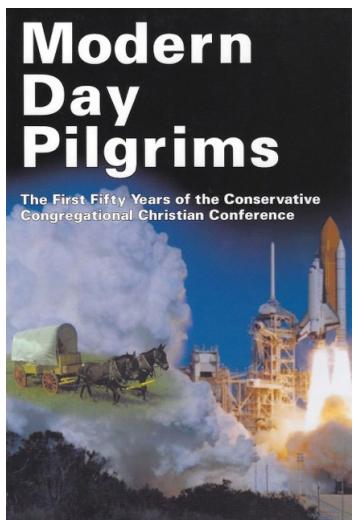
KIM GARDELL

We are excited to celebrate the 75th anniversary of our Conference in 2023. We will highlight the anniversary at the Annual Gathering, July 10-13th at the Rivers Edge Convention Center in St Cloud, MN. It will be a wonderful time of praise and celebration as we gather in fellowship. We are anticipating a joyful time.

These are occasions to look back to cherish our past and look forward as we set a course for the future. These times call us to review, assess, learn from our experiences. We are also called to prayerfully plan for the future. Our history demonstrates that we are a body of believers with a passion to faithfully follow the Lord as we work to reach people with the good news of His kingdom. The record of the last 25 years is full of exciting and encouraging stories of God's provision and faithfulness.

As was the case when we celebrated our 50th Anniversary, a committee is working to chronicle what God has done in and through us. A new, two-volume, revised and expanded edition of *Modern Day Pilgrims* is in progress and will be released at the AG this coming July. In preparation for printing the 75th anniversary expanded edition, the first book, *Modern Day Pilgrims, The First Fifty Years of the Conservative Congregational Christian Conference*, which is out-of-print, has been digitalized and is now available in electronic form.

To purchase your e-pub copy of the first edition, click on the link below or go to: www.ccccusa.com/modern-day/



AROUND THE CONFERENCE

CHURCH LEADERSHIP AFTER COVID

RAY DELAURIER, NORTH CENTRAL REGIONAL PASTOR

Iowa pastors and church board leaders gathered on September 24th at Zion E&R Church in Garner. I had the opportunity to present the "Church Board Training" seminar #1 to the group encouraging church board members to understand their role in leading the church, with the pastor to fulfill the Great Commission. Good discussion followed.

Additionally, Pastor Tom Gerdts spoke on the great value on "Incarnational Ministry" which is being physically present with people to whom we minister. Certainly the Covid years wedged people from those who minister to them and people feel a disconnect from one another and from their pastors. Many incarnational ministry stories were shared by the group.

Host pastor Brian Lund who gave a stirring message regarding unity in a divided culture and church said, "It was a great blessing for our church family, as well as leaders from four other denominations besides the 4Cs, to sit under Dr. DeLaurier's teaching on biblical leadership. His challenges from God's Word called us back to new covenant love, to biblical church life, and spiritual leadership truths. If Dr. R. Kent Hughes was correct when he observed, "It is a sober fact that as goes the leadership, so goes the church," then we all need to give more priority to our congregation's elders, deacons, and ministers, and the biblical principles required of godly leadership.

Audio and digital resources will be posted at: www.zioner-church.com/2022leadership/



CONFERENCE HISTORIAN



JONATHAN EDWARDS AND CONCERTS OF PRAYER

ALWYN YORK, CCCC HISTORIAN

Jonathan Edwards lived in a frontier community. Northampton, Massachusetts was on the western edge of English settlement in North America during his lifetime. Yet his outlook was far from provincial. He carried on extensive correspondence with Scottish ministers who were revival leaders, and he had a global vision for the spread of the gospel. He is most remembered as a theologian, but his contact with ministers in Scotland led him to write a book that was not a theological treatise but rather a call to action.

In 1744 a group of evangelical ministers in Scotland formed a prayer union to intercede for the world-wide expansion and prosperity of Christ's kingdom. This group was led by some of the ministers with whom Edwards was corresponding. They proposed that part of every Saturday evening and Sunday morning, and all of the first Tuesday of every quarter be given to "united extraordinary supplications to the God of all grace" asking that "he would appear in his glory... and manifest his compassion by an abundant effusion of his Holy Spirit on all the churches and the whole habitable earth." This "Concert for United Prayer" was carried on in Scotland for two years, and the response was encouraging enough that in 1746 they decided to extend it for another seven years. At that time they published a "Memorial" describing their plans and encouraging others to join them. About 500 copies were sent to North America.

Jonathan Edwards responded to this appeal by not just issuing a pamphlet to promote the Concert of Prayer but writing an entire book. Its long and elaborate title is an apt summary of its content:

An Humble Attempt to Promote Explicit Agreement and Visible Union of God's People in Extraordinary Prayer, For the Revival of Religion and the Advancement of Christ's Kingdom on Earth, pursuant to Scripture-Promises and Prophecies concerning the Last Time. The book is an expansion of a sermon Edwards preached on Zechariah

8:20-22, which speaks of a time when "Many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem and entreat the favor of the Lord."

The Humble Attempt presents the proposal issued by the ministers in Scotland and gives its background. Then Edwards proceeds to encourage prayer such as the Scottish ministers proposed by giving biblical reasons why prayer for the spread of the gospel can be expected to be answered abundantly by the Lord. Edwards argues, based on Romans 11, that "there will be a great outpouring of the Spirit and ingathering of souls into Christ's kingdom, first of the Jews and then of the Gentiles" before Christ's return. He looked forward to a time when, as Isaiah 11:9 says, "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." He encouraged Christians around the world to unite in prayer to hasten that day.

Jonathan Edwards' optimistic view of the future growth of Christianity enabled him to anticipate, before that great missionary endeavors of the nineteenth century, the spread of the gospel of Jesus Christ "throughout all parts of Africa, Asia, America and Terra Australis [Australia]." The initial impact of the Humble Appeal was greater in Scotland than America, but it grew over time, so that over seventy years later Edwards' great-grandson could write that this book "has been a prime cause of the present concentrated movement of the whole church of God to hasten forward the reign of the Messiah."

The message of this book remains a challenge and encouragement to the church of Jesus Christ today. It inspired the Concerts of Prayer ministry of CCCC member David Bryant. Bryant led concerts of prayer at a memorable CCCC Annual Meeting at the YMCA of the Rockies in 1990. (This meeting had special meaning for me, since this was the meeting at which I was received into the Conference.)

CHANGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

PASTORAL OPPORTUNITIES - CCCC CHURCHES

Emporia, KS	First Congregational Church
Beverly, MA	Pilgrim Church
Blackstone, MA	Christ Community Church
Blandford, MA	First Congregational Church
Essex, MA	First Congregational Church (Part-Time Associate Pastor)
Newburyport, MA	Hope Community Church (Part-time Children's Min Coord.)
Wakefield, MA	First Parish Cong Church (Associate)
Calumet, MI	North Point Church
Maple Rapids, MI	Maple Rapids Cong Church (Pastor of Family & Student Ministries)
Dickinson, ND	Evangelical Bible Church (Associate Pastor/Worship)
Scottsbluff, NE	Salem Congregational Church
Monadnock, NH	Monadnock Cong Church
New Bremen, OH	St. Peter's Church
Vermillion, OH	Vermillion Evangelical & Reformed
Xenia, OH	Mt. Zion Church
Hollidaysburg, PA	St. John's Reformed Church
McClure, PA	Mt. Bethel Church
Rural Valley, PA	St. Paul Congregational Church
Zelionople, PA	St Peter's Reformed Church
Bridport, VT	Cong Church of Bridport
Sparta, WI	First Cong Church of Leon

TURNING POINT RE-PLANT PROJECTS

Please contact Conference Minister Ron Hamilton for information about these projects

Pottstown, PA	Renewal Community Church * (part-time pastoral intern)
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PASTORAL RESIDENCY

SW Harbor, ME	Southwest Harbor Cong Church* (two-year residency training)
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PASTORAL OPPORTUNITIES – Non-member Churches

Avon, CT	Valley Community Baptist Church (Converge) (Executive Pastor)
Colchester, CT	Christian Life Chapel (ECFA) (Part-time)
Peru, IL	First Cong Church (Independent)
Pleasanton, KS	First Christian Church
Pownal, ME	First Parish Cong Church (Independent)
Rye, NH	Rye Cong Church (Independent)
Derby, NY	First Church of Evans (Independent)
Dover, OH	Ruslin Hills Church (EARC)
Berrysburg, PA	Lykens Valley Charge (UCC)
West Pittston, PA	First Cong Church (Independent part-time)
Chepachet, RI	Chepachet Union Church

CHURCH MULTIPLICATION

NINEVEH CONFERENCE UPDATE

BRYAN LONG, DIRECTOR OF CHURCH MULTIPLICATION

A few weeks ago, church planters, revitalizers, and advocates from around the country gathered for the 2022 Nineveh Network Conference. We spent three days together in Philadelphia to worship, connect and recharge. One afternoon, some of us decided to do the most touristy things you can do in Philadelphia – run the Rocky steps. If you've never seen the movie Rocky, Sylvester Stallone is a boxer training for his big fight. In the ironic training montage, it concludes with the music swelling as he ascends the steps of the Museum of Art overlooking the skyline with arms raised high.

So, in cheeseball fashion, we played the Rocky music and ran up the steps until we reached the top sporting the famous pose. For some of us (not naming names) it was a bit of a challenge. We're not used to scaling steps in hot weather. But we all got to the top running together. You see where I'm going with this...

The theme of our time was stories and we heard from a number of folks about the ups and downs of ministry life. There was a general acknowledgement that pastoral life is a difficult climb, and we shared our challenges on the journey. But what also came through clearly is that it is worth it because we have friends running beside us and the great promise of Christ at the end of the race. We will be able to raise our arms in victory together. We were reminded of that in the city of brotherly love....

Lots more could be said, but I'd rather just show you. Check out some of the highlights for our time and plan to join us next year in Boston, MA.

