



May 1, 2021

NACCC NEWS

Community Connections

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We Are Grateful!

Rev. Dr. Cindy Bacon Hammer, Moderator and Rev. Art Ritter, Vice Moderator

It is an exciting time for the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches! Our [new website](#) has launched, we have a [new Executive Director](#) starting June 1st, our [virtual Annual Meeting & Conference](#) will take place in June, and we bid a fond farewell and offer our heartfelt thanks to Rev. Dr. Michael Chittum.

Michael has served as the Executive Director of the NACCC since June of 2015. He has shared his gifts freely, preached and prayed in many of our churches, celebrated with us, and shared in our sorrows. Michael's attention to detail, easy-going demeanor, and clear speech has served the NACCC well. He has set and achieved many goals, helping us move forward as an Association while promoting the Congregational Way.

On May 13, we will offer an official 'goodbye' to Michael via Zoom. Both Michael and Vicki will be taking the call from the Oak Creek office, as they both deserve our thanks for their dedication, intelligence, hard work, and faithfulness. If you would like to join the call, but do not have the Zoom link, please [contact Carrie Dahm](#).





Just launched! Check out the new and improved website of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches!

www.NACCC.org

Change and Continuity

Bob Smith, Congregational Foundation Board of Governors

Spring is a wonderful time of year. Trees begin to blossom, the grass begins to grow, and the days become longer. These changes we have always experienced, and we welcome them every year. Change is also coming to The Board of Governors. We say goodbye to our President Ashley Cleere, who is moving on to become the NACCC and [Congregational Foundation's](#) new [Executive Director](#).

We also want to welcome Sandra Leonard to the Congregational Foundation Board of Governors and look forward to the fresh ideas and perspectives she will bring. We thank all those who have served in the past and look forward to those who will serve in the future as together we seek to provide financial resources to our member churches and to the work of the NACCC.

NACCC Updates

Lay Ministry Training Program Info Session

Saturday, May 22nd
1 PM Eastern, 12 PM Central, 11 PM Mountain, 10 AM Pacific on Zoom
[Click here to learn more.](#)



The Congregationalist

Send us your news & photos!
Submissions for the June issue are due by May 20, 2021
development@nacc.org

National Association of Congregational Christian Churches

8473 S. Howell Avenue, P.O. Box 288
Oak Creek, WI 53154
800-262-1620 ext. 1610

Recent Calls and Ordinations

Congratulations

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The following churches recently ordained or called ministers to their churches.

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.

Jeremiah 29:11

For more information on our pastoral search process, please contact Laura Wright at: lwright@nacc.org or (414) 856-1614

May, 2021

Recent Calls and Ordinations

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Ordination

Edward Gabrielsen

Rockland Congregational Church

Rockland, ME

April 18, 2021

Rev. Dr. Ashley Cook Cleere Named New Executive Director

The Executive Director Search Committee and the Board of Directors are pleased to announce the selection of Rev. Dr. Ashley Cook Cleere as the new Executive Director of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches (NACCC). The selection was made after a national search process, numerous interviews, and thoughtful deliberation.



Jodee Lord, chair of the Search Committee said “We were excited what we learned about Rev Dr. Cleere through the interview and through conversations with her references. She is passionate about and experienced in the NACCC. Ashley is a leader who is willing to be part of the team. She is a reliable and good administrator but also a visionary and innovator.” Jodee explained that the committee was particularly impressed and excited by the comments to questions related to visioning that the Rev. Dr. Cleere presented to the committee during the process. She was a unanimous choice of the Search Committee.

Ashley’s personal resume most recently includes work as Chaplain, Director of Church Relations and Associate Professor of Philosophy and Religion at Piedmont College. Her role at Piedmont included strengthening ties with the NACCC, promoting student recruitment to establish a more diversified student body, and partnering with students, faculty, staff, and community organizations to effect change in the college community. While chaplain Ashley worked with budgets and goals, personnel selection and evaluation, fundraising, and programming.

Ashley has also served as Interim Senior Pastor at Central Congregational Christian Church in Atlanta GA; Founding Minister at Covenant Congregational Church in Demorest GA; Minister of Congregational Life at South Congregational Church of Hartford CT; and Pastor of First Congregational Church of Etna in Pittsburgh PA. She is a graduate of Hamilton College, Union Theological Seminary, and Columbia Theological Seminary.

Rev. Dr. Ashley Cook Cleere Named New Executive Director—continued

At the time of Ashley's selection, she was serving as President of the Board of Governors of the Congregational Foundation. As President, she was a voting member on the NACCC Board of Directors and served from 2017-2020. Other work included serving as a member of the Nominating and Annual Meeting and Conference Committees, Missionary Society, and Congregational Foundation for Theological Studies (CFTS).

Rev. Art Ritter, NACCC Board of Directors Chair stated, "We are excited about the choice of Ashley Cleere as the new Executive Director. Her experience within the NACCC will be helpful as we deal with the unique issues of our time and we look forward to her leadership in helping us define and work toward a bright future. We are grateful for the excellent work of the search committee."

The members of the Search Committee and the Board of Directors ask that everyone keep the Rev. Dr. Cleere in prayer as she begins her new position on June 1st. Her selection will be on the agenda for ratification by the Delegates at the virtual Annual Meeting and Conference on June 19, 2021.

To nurture fellowship among Congregational Christian Churches and to support ministries of the local church in its community and to the world, all in the name of Christ.



Lay Ministry Training Program Informational Session

Saturday, May 22, 2021

10:00 AM Pacific, 11:00 AM Mountain, 12:00 PM Central, 1:00 PM Eastern



As we prepare to launch our newly revamped, virtual Lay Ministry Training Program in September of 2021, we will be offering a 1-hour Zoom class on Saturday, May 22 at 10:00 AM Pacific Time, 11:00 AM Mountain Time, 12:00 PM Central Time and 1:00 PM Eastern Time. We will take this opportunity to answer questions and give you an idea of what the online classes will look like.

To Register:

<https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJcqc-morDMrHdZwhUohXfwRndtxHQXfKrLU>

- ◆ **Questions:** Please contact Polly Bodjanac at (920) 655-3597 or pollybodjanac@gmail.com or Laura Wright at (414) 856-1614 or lwright@naccc.org