



December 1, 2019
NACCC NEWS
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Annual Meeting Accessibility Task Team to Provide Recommendations

Jim Waechter, Moderator

Fifteen months ago a Task Team was formed to envision how future NACCC Annual Meeting and Conferences might be attended by more member churches. In the past few years an average of 100 churches attended the meeting each year.

The Task Team created a survey that resulted in 150 individual responses, many who have attended previous annual meetings and a few from some who had never attended these meetings. The survey reviewed the many factors that churches and individuals take into consideration in their decision to attend a meeting. Follow up phone calls were made to some respondents who indicated a willingness to talk further with someone from the task team.

In November, after careful consideration and analysis of the survey and conversations, the Task Team presented its recommendations to the

400 YEARS OF *Faith*
AMERICAN
CONGREGATIONALISM
SINCE 1620

As we commemorate 400 years of American Congregationalism we will bring you historical information about the landing of the Pilgrims in Plymouth, as well as current events taking place in our member churches.

What is your church doing to commemorate 400 years of Congregationalism in America? Email us with your plans and we will highlight member church events here over the coming year!

Bulletin Inserts:

Annual Meeting and Conference Committee who supported taking the recommendations to the entire leadership of the NACCC including the Leadership Council, Board of Directors and the Congregational Foundation. As soon as these meetings are complete we plan to share the recommendations with all our member churches and will begin to implement the recommendations at future NACCC Annual Meeting and Conferences including [this coming summer's meeting in Portland, Maine](#). I'd like to thank Ashley Cleere and her entire Task Team for their thoughtful work on this task.

Find all of the short stories on our [website](#), or download the current month here:

[December 1](#)
[December 8](#)
[December 15](#)
[December 22](#)
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Advent Reflections

Rev. Dr. Cindy Bacon Hammer, Chair, Board of Directors

It is Advent--my favorite time of the church year. For the Board of Directors that means budgets are put to bed, reports are finalized, and everything has been made ready for the next fiscal year. What is really lovely is that once these business items are taken care of, we can relax and enjoy the season. We prepare for Jesus' birth with decorations and beautiful lights. We sing together the familiar songs of the season. We read of the prophets of old who had been waiting for the Messiah to come. And, we give thanks. We thank God for coming to earth to meet us in human form. We thank God for hope, peace, joy and love. And, we thank God for the mystery and wonder that seem to make themselves known at this time of the year. Peace seems possible. Because of Jesus' birth we have reason to hope. We are filled with joy in the enormity of love found in a tiny babe born in a humble stable. May your Christmas be filled with wonder and gratitude.



Boards Meet in Wisconsin

Ashley Cleere, President, Board of Governors

Amid changing colors of fall foliage, the Board of Governors of the Congregational Foundation (CF) gathered on October 23 and 24 in Oak Creek, joined by several members of the NACCC Board of Directors in person and by conference call. The prospective culmination of a three-year process of consolidation and transfer of endowments from the NACCC to the CF in April 2020 gave rise to several agenda items. Both boards and NACCC staff are working diligently to ensure preparedness and continuity as responsibilities shift. Other topics discussed were current and future fundraising endeavors, the progress of pertinent task teams including one addressing support for *The Congregationalist* and another envisioning an updated NACCC website, and plans for the 2020 [Annual Meeting and Conference](#) in Portland, Maine.

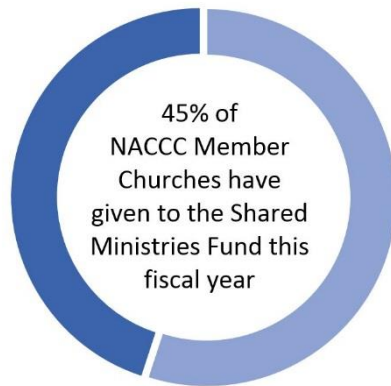
Member Church News

On November 1st, [People's Congregational Church of Bayport, MN](#) presented "[A Harvest of Hope](#)". This fall concert featured the SeVy Gospel Quartet and the newly formed People's Church Women's Ensemble. This event was made possible by a grant from the [John Richard Memorial Endowment](#).

Several NACCC member churches, including [Arbor Grove Congregational Church of Jackson, MI](#), [First Congregational Church of Saugatuck, MI](#) and [First Congregational Church of Portland, MI](#) are having "Blue Christmas" services on or around December 21st designed for those having a difficult time during the holiday season.

Congratulations to the [First Congregational Church of Akron, OH](#) who received who received an [Akron Beautification Award](#) from the Gardeners of Greater Akron for their "Feed My Sheep" garden

Shared Ministries Giving



The Congregationalist
December 2019



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from the NACCC Staff
Our offices will be closed from December 24, 2019-January 1, 2020

Send us your news & photos!
Submissions for the January issue are due by December 10, 2019
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

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Recent Calls and Ordinations

Congratulations

...

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@naccc.org or
(414) 856-1614

December, 2019

Recent Calls and Ordinations

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Calls

Rev. Averill Elizabeth Blackburn
Interim Minister
Florence Congregational Church
Florence, MA
September 1, 2019

Rev. Kevin Smail
Founders Congregational Church
Harwinton, CT
November 3, 2019



Did you know Theodore Parker...

Theodore Parker once described himself as the most hated man in America. He was a firebrand orator, a tireless social reformer and abolitionist. He was also one of the most learned American scholars in biblical studies of his day, a devout follower of Jesus, and an independent thinker, which made him a thorn in the side of Boston's religious establishment. He devoted his energies in advancing temperance, women's suffrage, women's equality, prison reform, and the abolition of slavery. He began his ministry at the Congregational church at Roxbury, near Boston. He was invited by a group of admirers to start a new congregation in Boston where he would gain a wider hearing. He named it the 28th Congregational Society of Boston. His informative and fiery sermons were soon drawing an audience of 2000 every Sunday.

Parker warned against the growing influence of business interests over good government that served the general public. A dozen years before Lincoln, Parker spoke of government "of all the people, for all the people and by all the people." Parker was also an active member of the Transcendental Club where he became friends with Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau. His most important sermon was, The Transient and Permanent in Christianity. He was dismayed that no Christian denomination would endorse the abolition of slavery, but he remained an optimist. A century before Martin Luther King Jr., Parker said, "I do not pretend to understand the moral universe, the arc is a long one, but I am sure it bends toward justice."

...was a Congregationalist?

Celebrating 400 Years of American Congregationalism
Learn more about our Congregational History at naccc.org



Call To Worship

L: Pilgrims are we, O Lord God ,we come
C: 400-year-old travelers with Your Son

L: When we have been weary, You have restored our souls
C: And set us on the path again, of redemption

L: We come to this hour seeking refreshment, courage, and the will
C: To continue this journey toward the community of heaven

Invocation (in unison)

Since the landing of our Pilgrim forebears, our worship has changed – it is less somber, with more music, condensed so often in an hour. What we still share with them in worship, is our constant need for courage to live as Christ would have us live. Come to us, Lord God. Imbue us with the adventurous spirit not only of the Pilgrims of old, but the pilgrims centuries earlier, both of whom gathered regularly on the Lord's day in simple surroundings to worship You with thanks. Amen

Historical story by: Rev. Norm Erlandson

Liturgy by: Rev. Tom Richard



Did you know Edward Beecher...

Edward Beecher was the son of Rev. Lyman Beecher, brother of Henry Ward Beecher, Harriet Beecher Stowe and others. With Isabella Porter he had eleven children. After studying at Yale and Andover he became minister of Park Street Church in Boston and, later, President of the newly founded Illinois College.

He was a close friend of Elijah Lovejoy and is said to have been present when the pro-slavery mob rioted and killed Lovejoy and destroyed his anti-slavery press. Beecher's appeal from the pulpit of the First Congregational Church (the Brick Church) in Galesburg, Illinois, inspired Mary Anne Ball Bickerdyke to become Mother Bickerdyke and the Florence Nightingale of America.

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Call To Worship

L: We gather together, to ask the Lord's blessing

C: God chastens and hastens, divine will to make known

L: The world's constant oppressors will cease from distressing

C: For we have the voice, and heart, and will to be God's pilgrim people

L: Come, let us worship as God's pilgrim people

Invocation (in unison)

Gracious God, we thank You for Jesus Christ, who inspired our ancestors to be who they became, and for each like revelation of Yourself in the hearts of all who followed them in the last four centuries. Teach us to know that Christ can inspire us this and every hour to be what we ought to be ourselves. Amen

Historical story by: Rev. Will Lange Liturgy by: Rev. Tom Richard



Did you know Lloyd C. Douglas...

Lloyd C. Douglas was a Congregationalist pastor who became one of America's most successful novelists in the 1930's and '40's. He grew up in Indiana, the son of a Lutheran pastor. He followed his father's career path in the Lutheran Church until 1915 when he became a Congregationalist, pastoring churches in Ann Arbor, Michigan, Akron, Ohio, and Los Angeles.

In his spare time he wrote a novel that was published in 1929 under the title, *Magnificent Obsession*. It sold millions of copies and was made into a movie in 1935. It is the story of a hedonistic young man whose life is saved after an accident, but causes the death of an eminent doctor. The young man then determines to become a doctor. He dedicates his life to serving others, and in the process, becomes a Christian. With this initial success Douglas resigned from the ministry to write full time. He enjoyed tremendous success as a novelist. Most of his novels became best sellers and several became popular films. All of his novels had moral and religious undertones. Two of his most popular works were set in the time of Christ.

The Robe, published in 1942, is the story of the Roman soldier present at the crucifixion of Jesus who wins the condemned man's robe in a dice game. It takes him on a journey to discover who Jesus really was and to join the Christian movement. *The Big Fisherman* is about the apostle Peter. Both novels were made into very successful movies.

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Call To Worship

L: Each day will have its trials

C: Each day we'll see God's grace

L: For God has promised surely

C: To bless us in our place

L: May we live with a pilgrim's spirit

C: This hour and every day

L: To cast our lot upon the Lord

C: In work, in worship, and in play

Invocation (in unison)

Gracious God, we thank You for Jesus Christ, who inspired our ancestors to be who they became, and for each like revelation of Yourself in the hearts of all who followed them in the last four centuries. Teach us to know that Christ can inspire us this and every hour to be what we ought to be ourselves. Amen

Historical story by: Rev. Norm Eriendson

Liturgy by: Rev. Tom Richard



Did you know Samuel Fuller...

Samuel Fuller came to America on the *Mayflower* in 1620. He was a physician, in fact the only one in New England for a long time. Leaving his wife and daughter behind for the time being, Dr. Fuller was among the signers of the Mayflower Compact. He soon became a deacon of the church at Plymouth.

Colonists had mixed opinions about Fuller's medical abilities, although most of his patients seemed to appreciate his talents. One grateful patient was John Endicott, the leader of the Salem Colony, who when he fell ill, Dr. Fuller was called for. Endicott reported that Fuller was a great help, not only to him personally, but to the whole colony.

Endicott had heard some negative rumors about Plymouth Colony, but Dr. Fuller was able to convince him that those reports were erroneous. Gaius Glenn Atkins wrote that Fuller, "according to a tradition that Congregational historians cherish, converted doubting Endicott to Congregationalism."

This was important, because John Endicott went on to become the longest-serving governor of Massachusetts Bay Colony, where he had also served as town councilor, magistrate, militia leader, and deputy governor. Massachusetts Bay Colony was the beginning of true Congregationalism, maturing out of Separatism.

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Call To Worship

L: We are keepers of the Way

C: We come, aware of our place as 21st Century pilgrims.

L: May we bring to this worship hour and to our very lives, a commitment to refashion this world for Christ.

C: May we renew and cherish our life together, as God's free people.

Invocation (in unison)

We thank You, good Lord, as we pray, for Your blessings on this day and this hour of worship. We thank You for the pilgrim spirit which You have instilled in us from the beginning of the Christian Church, through the time of the Pilgrims of our shores 400 years ago, and into this congregation. May our worship honor their faith and their spirit.

Historical story by: Rev. Robert Hellam Liturgy by: Rev. Tom Richard



Did you know Anne Bradstreet...

"The finest bread hath the least bran; the purest honey the least wax; and the sincerest Christian the least self-love." This devotional lyric was written by Anne Bradstreet, early Puritan wife, mother, and America's first published female poet.

She was born into an upper class Puritan family that afforded her the opportunity to receive an excellent education in history, literature and language. Anne married Simon Bradstreet in 1628. Her father, Thomas Dudley, worked closely with John Winthrop to form the Massachusetts Bay Company and organize the first Great Puritan Migration to New England. In 1630 Anne sailed with Simon and her family on the Arbella to the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Anne's father and her husband served as its governor. Anne and Simon had eight children.

In the midst of her many household duties she made time to journal her thoughts in a book she always kept at hand. In it she wrote letters to herself, to her husband, to her children, or poems about her love for God and her family. Her writings show her to be a loving wife and mother. Anne also wrote poems that expressed her religious beliefs, her thoughts on life in the Colony, and her opinions about the role of women in Puritan society. A collection of her poems was published in London under the title, *The Tenth Muse Lately Sprung Up in America*, (1650).

Today Anne Bradstreet is appreciated as colonial America's first published female poet.

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Invocation (in unison)

Let Your holy presence be among us, O Lord, in this year of remembrance, that we, being made aware of the conviction and character of those before us, may enter into our inheritance, standing firm in the convictions for which they ventured to this new world freedom. Let our forebears' dedication to freedom and righteousness be their gift to us this day, and all our tomorrows. Amen

Historical story by: Rev. Norm Erlendson

Liturgy by: Rev. Tom Richard