



## **Year Round Delegate Orientation Packet**

The Year Round Delegate (YRD) program, beginning at the Annual Meeting and Conference in 2011, was designed to bring an additional voice from our local churches to facilitate two-way communication between our local congregations and the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches (NACCC).

While the program has been in place for nine years, its function and efficiency has been sporadic, working beautifully in some churches and almost non-existent in others. The Year Round Delegate Task Team is hoping that an Orientation Packet will give greater help to those serving as YRDs and to the churches that support them.

We recognize that each and every one of our congregations is different. What works in one church or in one part of the country doesn't necessarily translate to another church. Our diversity, and our commitment to embracing the differences in our churches is part of what makes Congregationalism great. To that end, we have created guidelines, based on what we have learned about YRDs in the years since the program began. Part of these suggested guidelines are "job descriptions" for YRDs, churches, and the NACCC. These suggested guidelines for how each part of the communication triangle might work will help us all bring to reality what was envisioned when the program was started.

While this packet is being put together in 2020, we all recognize that it will be a living document, changing over time as the needs of our YRDs and churches change. It will also change as more and more churches share their strategies for making the YRD program a strong part of each congregation.

We hope you find this packet helpful and will share your feedback and input to make this a better document and strengthen the YRD program.

*The Year Round Delegate Task Team*

## **WHAT IS A YEAR ROUND DELEGATE**

### **Suggested Guidelines for the Year Round Delegate (YRD)**

These suggested guidelines can help churches select their YRD and assist YRDs in understanding what is needed to be an effective YRD. Please note: The Year Round Delegate is not the same thing as the voting delegate / church representative to the Annual Meeting and Conference. While one person may take on both of these roles, these are very different tasks.

- The YRD should be an active member of her/his church.
- Where possible, the YRD should be someone other than the minister or staff member. (Clergy, church staff, and often church board members are / should be already in communication with the NACCC. The YRD can be an additional voice to share information from the NACCC to the congregation and from the congregation back to the NACCC.)
- The YRD should be enthusiastic about representing their congregation to the NACCC and about representing the NACCC to their local congregation.
- The YRD should be knowledgeable about the NACCC and its programs and services *or* be willing to learn more about the NACCC and its programs and services.
- The YRD should, wherever possible, have digital connectivity so they may access NACCC newsletters, emails, and resources.
- The YRD should be able to communicate verbally, in writing, and digitally with their congregation, church staff, and church governing bodies, as well as communicating with the NACCC.
- The YRD should be willing to be in regular communication with the church's governing bodies, reporting at meetings, when possible.
- Where possible, attend state / regional / national meetings and conferences.

## **HOW TO SELECT THE YEAR ROUND DELEGATE**

### **Suggested Guidelines for Member Churches & Local Congregations**

These suggested guidelines can help churches in selecting and supporting their Year Round Delegate (YRD), who could become an effective part of your church's communication team.

- Whenever possible, ensure that your YRD becomes an additional voice for your congregation and not someone already in the NACCC information loop.
- Identify ways and methods your YRD can regularly report pertinent NACCC information to your church's governing board and entire congregation.
- Help to ensure that your YRD is digitally connected to guarantee receipt of the YRD Line a monthly YRD e-newsletter, and other important NACCC e-news communications and mailings.
- Encourage your YRD to participate in, and monitor NACCC Facebook groups.
- Encourage your YRD to respond to questions included within the monthly YRD Line e-Newsletter.
- If your church has a newsletter, provide article space and encourage your YRD to report important NACCC news and happenings.
- When possible, encourage your YRD to attend state, regional, national NACCC meetings and conferences.
- Ensure that the NACCC office is made aware of changes in your church's YRD.

## **WHAT THE NACCC WILL PROVIDE TO MEMBER CHURCHES**

The NACCC provide services and resources to our member churches and are counting on our YRD's to help communicate and be our voice in the local church. Sharing important information and resources with church leadership and the Congregation will help to provide additional membership value and support to the church.

The NACCC will:

- Provide a YRD job description and guidelines, which will help your selected volunteer understand their position's role and expectation to the church and the NACCC.
- Send regular communications to local churches and identified YRD such as: *NACCC e-News*, twice a month (1<sup>st</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>), *YRD Line e-Newsletter* (20<sup>th</sup> of the month), various other targeted emails throughout the year which will share important announcements, NACCC services and resources, including financial support, and a fall and spring physical mailing.
- Create and provide a brochure which clearly explains the benefits of the Year Round Delegate to their local church.
- Coordinate a visit with leadership of the newly formed "Ambassador" program, with the YRD, and identified NACCC "Ambassador"
- Distribute success stories of local churches that are utilizing the Year Round Delegate program.

## RESOURCES

These resources may be helpful YRDs and their congregations.

### *Digital links*

<https://www.naccc.org/>

The NACCC's website

<https://www.facebook.com/thenaccc>

The NACCC's Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/NACCCYRD>

The YRD Facebook group page

[The Congregationalist - Promoting the Congregational Way \(naccc.org\)](#)

The Facebook presence of the NACCC's Congregationalist magazine.

An additional Facebook presence for NACCC churches, even though it's not an official NACCC group page.

## **Year Round Delegate Success Stories from Around the Country**

In our church, (when we can meet) we always have a part of the service for announcements, prayer requests etc. It is during this time that I make announcements in regards to what is happening within the association, the needs and praises. We also have a monthly newsletter that I can share information.

During our current crisis, I have the option to talk with the minister and share any needs and he can share during his online service.

*Patty Smith, Berwick Congregational Church, Berwick, IA*

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At First Congregational Church, Saugatuck MI, the Year-Round Delegate is a member of the Board of Ministry (BoM). The official title is Congregational Way Captain. The YRD role is written into the job description for this BoM position which is an elected position. (It did take several different tries to explain what the YRD was and how it should be part of the job description, but everyone is comfortable with it now.). By having the YRD as part of the leadership team, we have a closer relationship with our sister churches and the National Association. For the second year in a row, we are supporting one of the NA Recommended missions because of the personal contacts from the NA meetings.

The Board of Ministry (formerly called the Prudential Committee) meets monthly to discuss the business of the church. As YRD, I report on any meetings I attend as our delegate (regional, state, or national), as well as communicate information relevant to our church from the Yard Line, or from the National Office. I also seek input when questions come up that are “survey- type” ones that require a response to the state or NA. For our church I assist our Pastor with new member classes by defining and discussing Congregationalism. Also, I oversee the “What it means to be a Congregationalist” literature that we keep in the pews.

First Congregational Church of Saugatuck is a small congregation in a Lake Michigan resort town. Our membership includes around 80 relationships of all ages from elementary school to octogenarians. The active congregation is about 40 people. We have a small choir, a small Sunday School and a small Women’s Fellowship. Our membership mostly lives in nearby and adjacent communities. Summer, of course, brings back our Snowbirds. The church plays a significant role in the Saugatuck Community. Last year, with the help of many community

members, we raised over \$60,000 to pay for a new roof. Currently members are supplying a Mask Ministry to make sure community folks have sewn cotton masks.

*Cathy Brockington, First Congregational Church, Saugatuck MI*

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I have been the YRD for the past two years and I have had some successes. I think that those success stories are based on the credibility I bring to the table. I have been a member of my church for about 13 years. My first responsible position was the chair of the search committee when our pastor received a call to another church. My next position was chair of the Deacon board, our governing body. During that time, I became familiar with all our members as well as the workings of the church.

Once my term on the board ended, I became the YRD. I attended two conferences as a delegate and brought back ideas and concepts that were discussed in the various seminars. I presented these ideas to our Deacons and some were implemented improving the workings and fellowship of our church. My search with the assistance of Marie Steele and my attendance at the conferences helped me better understand what the NA could do for our church, you don't become aware of the NA 's abilities if you don't reach out.

We are a congregation located in northwest Florida with approximately 100 members. Our membership is made up of senior citizens with some younger individuals.

*Jerry Zwaga, Citrus Springs Community Congregational Christian Church*

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My success comes largely from a passion for the NACCC. This passion was developed over the 4 years I was selected to be our delegate to the Annual Meeting. This attendance gave me a better understanding of the Congregational Way, so it was a natural fit for me to be the Year-Round Delegate. I am responsible for making sure that we have an effort each year to collect our Fair Share dues; I am responsible for sharing about the Congregational Way and the services of the NACCC during Founders Month which is every Thanksgiving. I am called upon when help is needed from any of the NACCC services. I visit the NACCC website regularly to familiarize myself with the information, resources

and documents that are available. I have served on the past 2 search committees that our church has held so I am familiar with the CIF and how to get it updated on the NACCC website. Each year, I confirm that our pastor is attending Convocation and that someone is attending the Annual Meeting (if it's in the budget). This year, I made sure that someone is attending the virtual Annual Meeting.

My learning is intentional; I make a point to read all communications from the NACCC which gives me a lot of information as to what is happening in the NA. Communication is the key. If information shared by the NACCC is of importance to share with the entire congregation, then I make sure it is included in our monthly newsletter. I think it's important for the local church to be connected to the NACCC, whether or not you attend the annual meetings. The delegate is that link so it's important that the delegate stay current on events and they keep themselves in front of their congregation as that link.

Our church is located one mile from an NFL stadium. Half of our church calendar revolves around football events in our city. We're in a small city, and we are a smaller church. We have approximately 100 members, 70 of which are regularly involved in the church. We are mostly an older and retired congregation, although last year we hired two Family Life Pastors (husband and wife team) that are millennials and we are working at developing a contemporary service, in addition to our traditional service.

*Polly Bodjanac, Pilgrim Congregational Church, Green Bay, WI*

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I have been asked what is a "Year-Round Delegate"? I am one for my home church, The First Congregational Church of Pittsford, Michigan. I see my position as one to help keep my home church connected to the NACCC. Some would say that is the minister's job. While this is true it is also those in the congregations' responsibility to keep informed. Two people working together is always better than one. What one sees as important the other may not. Not all ministers see the value of following the NACCC and as YRD you may be able to encourage your minister's interest in the NACCC.

As YRD one needs to check their computer link to the NACCC at least once every week or two, note the latest news and then SHARE IT with others in your church. Every church has different forms of communications that work for them. However,

just copying the news and putting it in a box or mail to others does not get as much attention as personally handing a copy to another or just simply verbally communicating the news to others. Of course, personal contact, face to face is now a problem, so a phone call or another form of communication using a computer depending on the person you wish to share with, may have to be used. A follow-up call or text with a reply notice often needs to happen to make certain the news reached the other person and that they read it.

I also ask to be on the agenda of the quarterly and annual church meetings to share a brief report. At times I may also attend the Deacons, Trustees, etc. meetings to share a specific topic of news. We need to share good news, bad news and info for consideration by our local church as it relates to the NACCC.

If your church does not have a YRD I urge it to name someone to this position. I strongly urge such a person to be someone other than your minister.

*Cinda Lou Walton (Emens), The First Congregational Church of Pittsford, MI*

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Here at Second Congregational Church in Warren, Maine, I try to keep our congregation informed about NA by writing a piece for our monthly newsletter and by bringing information to our council meetings. I also print any important information for our Deacons, Trustees, Missions and Sunday School.

We have Mission Moments about once a month or so, at our Sunday Service. There is a possibility that we could do a NA moment also.

It is difficult right now with the virus and also, we are without a settled minister. I will keep on getting the information out there.

*Marcia Cifaldo, Second Congregational Church of Warren, ME*

**Suggested Guidelines for Annual Meeting & Conference Delegates**  
**(These guidelines show the differences between expectations for Year Round Delegates and Annual Meeting & Conference Delegates)**

Ideas offered to help maximize the experience for you and your congregation.

*Pre-meeting opportunities*

- Browse the NACCC website [www.naccc.org](http://www.naccc.org) to become acquainted with the structure of the NACCC.
- Review documents that you receive in advance to familiarize yourself with topics that will be voted on.
- Meet with the alternate, your minister, and others who will be attending, as well as church leaders, to discuss any questions, concerns, needs, or celebrations your church has regarding the NACCC.
- Develop a workshop strategy.
  - Consult with fellow church members to decide which workshops are most pertinent to your congregation.
  - If others from your congregation are attending the AMC, choose different workshops in order to bring as many ideas as possible back to your church.
  - Use the Working the Workshops planner to develop your schedule.

*Possibilities during the meeting*

- Take notes during plenary sessions featuring details that would be of interest to your congregation:
  - Key topics of discussion or major votes during business meetings
  - Bible lectures
  - Congregational lecture
  - Keynote speaker
  - Credentials report
- Visit the Expo for resources that pertain to your congregation.
- Compile notes and materials from workshops you attend.
- Post pictures on your church's Facebook page or website throughout the meeting.
- Provide updates via email or social media to your congregation regarding events that will be livestreamed.
- Write a report on the AMC for your church newsletter or website highlighting features of the meeting most relevant to your church.

*Opportunities following the meeting*

- Give a report during a worship service or at your church's annual meeting in which you share insights about the Congregational Way and the NACCC.
- Meet with church leaders to discuss possibilities for implementing things that you learned by dialoguing with other Congregationalists in workshops.

## **Year Round Delegate - Frequently Asked Questions**

Over the years, members of the Year Round Delegate (YRD) Task Team and church officials have been asked the same questions by those serving as YRDs or those tasked with identifying YRDs for their churches. Our goal is to collect these questions and answer them as best we can.

### **Q: What is a YRD anyway?**

A: When the YRD program was started, we envisioned that the YRD would be an extra person, in each church, who could communicate information from the National Association (NACCC) to the local church and to bring questions and information from the local church to the NACCC. Basically, the YRD is an additional avenue of communication between the NACCC and the local church, and vice versa. Contrary to popular opinion, the YRD does not have to be a lifelong appointment.

### **Q: What does / can a YRD do?**

A: The role of the YRD will vary from church to church. The ideal YRD will receive information from the NACCC (through emails, newsletters, etc.) and share that information with their congregation. When the NACCC needs information from local churches, the YRD will help share that information from the local church back to the NACCC office. The YRD can also play a vital role in reporting the regular and ongoing work of the NACCC to the local church so that congregants are more informed about the NACCC, what it does, and how it supports our member churches.

### **Q: If someone in my church asks a question that I can't answer, where do I go for the answers?**

A: There are lots of places to get your questions answered. You might begin with the YRD Facebook group where your questions can be answered by your peers. The YRD Facebook group is a closed (private) group and you must request membership. You can also contact someone on the YRD Task Team or the NACCC office.

**Q: Why is a YRD important for my church? Why should we have a YRD?**

A: Communication is vital in any relationship. It's no different between our local churches and the NACCC office. The NACCC is here to support our member churches in whatever they need to meet their ministerial needs. The member churches also support the NACCC financially, with identifying the areas where the NACCC can be most supportive, and in facilitating communication among our churches. The YRD can have an important role in ensuring that communication is a priority and is regular and ongoing between the local church and the NACCC.

**Q: What skills should a YRD have?**

A: Well, a few superpowers wouldn't hurt, but lacking those, a YRD should have basic technology skills. Communication between the NACCC and YRDs is done through email, which may include newsletters and other things. A YRD should understand how to share this information with others in their congregation, whether that's through forwarding an email, copying and pasting an article, or composing a summary of the information shared. A YRD should know who to contact at the NACCC office when questions need answering. While it's not required, ideally, YRDs participate in the Facebook groups for the YRD and the NACCC Meetinghouse, both great information sharing / Q&A sites.

**Q: Why should someone other than the minister be the YRD?**

A: This may be one of the most asked questions we get. In some churches, the minister is the YRD. That may be because there is no one who is willing to serve. In that instance, it would be great if the minister mentored someone to serve as the YRD, who would then, in turn, mentor their successor. The primary reason for the YRD to be someone other than the minister is that ministers, whether full time or part time, are incredibly busy. Having an extra set of eyes on NACCC information (the YRD's eyes!) can help support the minister in her/his work, removing that need to be on top of everything at every minute. A YRD who is a member of the congregation can also be someone who the minister can bounce ideas off of, a huge support to their work.

**Q: How does the YRD differ from the Annual Meeting & Conference (AMC) Delegate?**

A: The YRD is generally a year-long appointment or church office, doing the work throughout the year. The AMC delegate is tasked with attending, voting, and reporting on the Annual Meeting, usually a commitment of about 2-3 months time.

**Q: Should the YRD and the AMC delegate be a different person?**

A: These two very different roles can be filled by the same person, but they don't have to be. It's up to the church to make these decisions as to what works best for them.

**Q: What are some of the ways the YRD can interact with / report to the church?**

A: The YRD can take advantage of a variety of ways to interact with and report to the church. They can: write a regular article for the church's newsletter, report on the church's Facebook page, report at meetings of the church board, write a piece of the church's annual report, or report to the congregation during worship on a regular basis.

**Q: How can I help mentor the person who will serve as the YRD after me?**

A: We have never suggested an amount of time for the YRD to serve, but as with most committees, at least three years is a great amount of time. That first year is often spent getting up to speed. The second year is fully understanding and interacting. In that third year, it's a great time to mentor a successor to help them get up to speed and shorten their learning curve. You could identify who will be that successor, begin sharing the YRD Line (the monthly YRD newsletter), the NACCC Communicator and The Messenger (the two monthly NACCC newsletters), various parts of the NACCC website. And you can be that person who answers questions and models how to get answers to questions you might have.