



CASE FOR SUPPORT

Located in rural Michigan, on the north edge of town, sits a small church. The road in front of the church is paved, but only to the edge of the church property, and, if you look north, you will see fields of crops and windmills. The building was constructed in the 1970s, and very little has been improved or updated.

Although the church is considered small, according to membership, the congregation has a big heart and is filled with love and devotion for God and their Congregational church. The members work extra hard helping in any way they can to ensure the success of their church.

However, even with dedicated, hardworking members reaching outside of your church family for help sometimes becomes necessary. Shortly after joining the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches (NACCC), the church was in the midst of a search for a new minister. The NACCC helped with the entire process, and successfully assisted the search committee to connect with a qualified minister, who also had been a graduate student of the Congregational Foundation for Theological Studies program. The minister continues to faithfully serve at the church, and the congregation couldn't be happier.

With a small congregation, this church was also financially challenged when facing a major expense— replacing the original, 40-year-old boiler. Once again, the NACCC was there to help. The NACCC "Hurting Churches Fund" provided a generous grant towards the fundraising effort to purchase a new heating system.

"The NACCC was the help we so desperately needed."

-Minister, Member Church

"The National Association of Congregational Christian Churches (NACCC) does so very much at relatively little cost. The organization does not seek to control the pulpit, or anything else for that matter, in the local church. Rather, it strives to provide what is needed to assist churches in doing what God intended, providing sanctuary, support, and challenge to the People of God.... The NACCC does a very good job at fostering the three F's: Faith, Freedom, and Fellowship." -Leadership, Member Church

Parishioners place an important value on their Association membership and believe in the NACCC's mission, services, and fellowship for all its member churches.

"...Just to hear folks say, "this will be so helpful back home" or "this resource will help our board understand better" or even, "this will free up some of my time." Those are words I have heard more than once after a workshop at our Annual Meeting and Conference. To me, that means we've done our jobs and truly provided the support a church needed." -Dawn, past leadership

Our Mission:

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.

FAITH-FREEDOM-FELLOWSHIP

Traditionally, Congregational churches and the NACCC have stressed three core values: Faith, Freedom and Fellowship. Within those core values, simplicity, sincerity, and service are a few fundamentals which enhance the dynamics of the Congregational way.

A Congregational church's "Faith" is organized around a covenant, a binding promise between the people and God, and that defines their life together.

Every church is complete under Christ with the authority to be "Free" to administer its own affairs as it seeks to be faithful to Christ.

Congregational churches have always valued "Fellowship" and have depended upon other churches for advice on important matters.



Second Congregational Church, Warren, Maine

Our Vision:
*Vital and healthy
Congregational Churches,
sharing the love of
Jesus the Christ.*



Little Stone Church, Mackinac Island, Michigan

DISTINCTIVE FAITH & HISTORY

Congregational churches trace their roots to a group of English Separatists, who gathered in the 16th century. In the context of the Protestant Reformation, these believers sought to form a church that would be under God's authority alone, not bound by edict or canon law. Strong convictions led to the 1620 journey on the Mayflower that brought some of these dissenting Christians to America.

As Congregationalism developed, these faithful people sought to honor Christ, to transform society, and to reflect a model of faith and life set forth in Scripture. This model is defined by covenantal relationships, which bind together individual members, local congregations and God. From the beginning of Congregationalist life, the principles of *faith*, *freedom*, and *fellowship* were emphasized.

The National Association of Congregational Christian Churches was born in the 1950s. The core principles and practices of the historic Congregational Way – followers of Jesus Christ, faithful worship of God, freedom of conscience, a priesthood of all believers, local church autonomy, individuals who voluntarily accept the covenant of their church, and fellowship with sister churches – were the driving values in the formation of the NACCC.

AN ASSOCIATION OF INDIVIDUAL CHURCHES

The NACCC depends on a structure of volunteers to determine and manage programs and policies. The association fosters relationships between congregations while promoting faith, freedom, and fellowship. The NACCC helps churches thrive, primarily by delivering services that individual churches cannot easily or efficiently provide for themselves.

- The NACCC is supported by more than 300 qualified and motivated volunteers.
- Each year approximately two dozen national and international missions receive significant contributions and financial assistance from individuals, foundations, member churches, and NACCC endowments.
- On average between 20-25 member churches call new ministers to their pulpits each year through the “Pastoral Search” program, and another 30 churches throughout the year are at different stages in the process.
- Approximately 800 contributions from individuals and foundations support the NACCC and Congregational Foundation each year and more than 90% of member churches are donors.

Encouraging the active fellowship of the NACCC member churches hinges on the belief that God has given each Congregational church every power and gift necessary for its spiritual life and development for ministry. Advancing the Congregational Way and its principles is at the heart of the NACCC’s mission. Christ alone is the head of the church; each congregation is free to determine its statement of faith, select and ordain its clergy, and maintain stewardship of its resources and property.

“Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”

-Luke 6:38 NIV

STRENGTHENING MEMBER CHURCHES

The NACCC exists to serve its membership through services and fellowship opportunities.

The NACCC serves as a conduit for that fellowship and encourages member churches to realize the importance of seeking and giving advice and support from one another. Congregations may need assistance in finding a new minister, or resources for understanding Congregationalism, stewardship, Christian education, youth ministry, leadership training or revitalization. Examples of NACCC services:

- **Pastoral Search and Call**
- **Fellowship**
- **Missions Connection and Validation**
- **One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) Coordinated Response to Worldwide Emergencies**
- **The Center for Congregational Leadership**
- **Congregational Foundation for Theological Studies (CFTS)**
- ***The Congregationalist* Magazine**
- **Financial Aid and Services**

As Congregationalists, we value freedom, but freedom comes with responsibility. We have a bond with one another and with those who follow after us. It is not about how much we have, but what we do with what we have been given. As we seek to serve and nurture our congregations and advance our tradition, our prayer is that you will partner with us by making a generous contribution to the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches.

GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

Unrestricted Gifts

Donations through unrestricted gifts are critical investments to the future health and growth of the NACCC. Member churches are encouraged to provide an unrestricted annual gift to the Shared Ministries Fund, which supports the operations and services of the NACCC.

Restricted Gifts

Donors often choose to support specific projects, programs, missions, scholarships, and endowments. The Association welcomes those outright gifts and often pursues them through customized specific solicitations. Upon receiving that gift, the NACCC places the appropriate restriction on it and limits its use for that purpose only, providing the donor assurance that their gift will be used as they envisioned.

Planned Giving

Wills and bequests provide a simple way to make a gift that will keep on giving after a person's life time. Designating the NACCC or Congregational Foundation in a life insurance policy or retirement account, is commonly used. Planned Giving contributions help to ensure the longtime health and success of the Association.

National Association of
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FINANCIAL NEEDS

Donations to the NACCC support its mission and vision through the NACCC's programs and funds, which in turn support church ministries, education and leadership development, growth, and the health of local churches. Financial support to the NACCC is vital to our success, and will help to maintain our continued growth. Gifts to the NACCC fund the following initiatives and entities.

- **Shared Ministries Fund:** The operations of the NACCC are funded primarily through generous donations of member churches and other individuals who believe in the important work of the Association.

"We choose to give because we are grateful for all the NACCC has done to help our church. The church is aware that organizations providing services to the local church cost money. The budget for the NA is not extravagant. And we have certainly benefitted from the organization."

-Minister, Member Church

- **Mission and Outreach Ministry Council:** All donations made to the mission's program go directly, dollar for dollar, to the work in the mission fields. All expenses for administration, communications, and evaluation are paid from the NACCC Shared Ministries Fund.

"The Missionaries that I have met and the relationships I have formed literally around the world are priceless. The prayers and financial support we are able to extend around the world on behalf of the churches of the NACCC is humbling."-Greg, past leadership-Mission and Outreach Ministry Council

- **Vitality Ministry Council:** The NACCC Vitality Council places emphasis on encouraging, supporting, and strengthening church life in member churches.

"When my church needed pastoral search support after the retirement of our long-time minister, the NACCC was there to offer guidance and support." -Leadership Member Church

- **Growth Ministry Council:** This Council aims to establish new churches while encouraging and supporting NACCC congregations in their mission of spiritual growth experiences and discipleship.

"The NACCC could not have been more helpful in planting this new church. The NACCC also made a loan when we really needed it. It was a loan just on our good faith to repay which we did as we were able."

-Leadership, Member Church

- **Congregational Foundation:** The Congregational Foundation is a separate nonprofit organization established with the sole purpose of raising funds and establishing Endowments to benefit the NACCC.

"I give to the Congregational Foundation because it is focused on the future of the NACCC. My contributions will directly support its development, marketing, and funds management work in support of the NACCC." -Jim, past leadership and longtime donor