



Congregational Communicator

A service of the Communication Services Committee
of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches

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Upcoming events...

- April 15 is deadline for Bulletin, Newsletter & Website Contests
- Devotionals, 15 other Learning Experiences at Tampa Annual Meeting

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Radio Days: Mission Becomes Marketing

By **DON MAYBERRY**

When First Congregational Church in South Paris, ME began airing Sunday worship services live on the local AM radio station, it was intended as a mission for shut-ins and for those unable to attend services on a particular week.

Once the program got started three years ago, the church decided to benefit from this outreach. The live broadcast was publicized in the monthly newsletter. Local newspapers were also invited to write articles, and they ran small newspaper ads. Keeping in mind that the “target audience” was the church’s own church shut-ins, they actually went around to their homes and nursing homes and helped them set their radios to the correct frequency. Because the station happens to stream their audio on line, “snow birds” that go south for the winter can even hear the local services Sunday mornings at 10 a.m. online at wtme.com.

Listeners do not hear a program produced for the radio, but the regular Sunday worship service. Nobody speaks directly to the radio audience, but simply “do church” and allow people to join in

over the air. And it’s a moderate voice on the radio, when most radio ministries seem to be overtly conservative.

In addition to the intended listeners, the church found people have used the live broadcasts as a way of finding out more information. After sampling their approach to worship, some people began to attend—some with great regularity. Although it was meant as a mission for a specific group of people, the radio service has served as a marketing tool as well. Ulti-

mately, mission is marketing because whenever you do God’s work it will attract others to join you.

This is not something that would work for every church. It could be cost-prohibitive in some communities due to the price of radio air time. However, in smaller markets like South Paris it is indeed very cost-effective.

Rev. DONALD MAYBERRY is pastor of First Congregational Church in South Paris and a member of the Communications Services Committee.



The radio broadcast allows listeners to worship at home.



**Have a question on
church marketing?**

**Send it to cc@nacc.org
and get answers.**

The Question:

How do we encourage participation in our church youth group? We've tried sharing information on our program with parents, and asking the youth what they want. However, the youth don't show up, even for programs that they requested.

The Answers:

Andrea Nierenberg, Networking Expert and Author:

In order to get the youth involved, you have to 'speak their language and give them what they would like'.

Find someone in the congregation who can form a committee and make that person or persons the committee chairs where they can reach out to friends and people they know who are their age and who can ask each other what they want out of the congregation and how they can achieve it.

Like anything, you have to think "what is in it for them"—why should they spend time at the church instead of somewhere else....make it worth their while. Their interests and the bonus will be that they will attend, get involved and bring their friends. That is networking!

Alan Seltzer, Communication Services Committee

If the youth don't show up for events that they suggested, there are two possible problems. It's possible there's a conflict with another group that your youth also participates in. First, try holding the event at a different time.

There's also the possibility that the youth gave the answers they thought you wanted to hear instead of what really interests them. Try having someone that you know the young person gets along with—either an adult or another youth—and ask them to find out what activities they would enjoy. The answer may be completely different.

ANDREA NIERENBERG heads the Nierenberg Group, a business consulting firm based in New York City. She is the author of two books on networking and is working on her third book. Both are available at the aStore at Amazon.com.

ALAN SELTZER is a member of Church-in-the-Gardens in Forest Hills, NY and chairs the Communications Services Committee of the NACCC.

"You need to
think 'what is in it
for them' "

—Andrea
Nierenberg

Effective newsletters say a lot about your church

By **CAROL TAYLOR**

A church newsletter says many things about a church. It not only conveys information to members and friends, it can say that the pastor and church staff care about effective communication, neatness, accuracy. How do we convey this in just a few pages?

Brevity is important in a church newsletter. Keeping articles short and concise is a key to keeping folks reading. We need to make a conscious effort to not be wordy in our newsletters. Do take care to always include the Where, When, Who and Why for events. Be aware of the tone of words used. Negativity or sarcastic humor may play in person, but rarely come across well in the written word. For example, writing "Let's come" instead of "Why not come" is a way of keeping the tone positive. Be sure all content is proofread. The first step is computer spell check. But have someone read through as well, as spell check won't catch everything. The ideal is to have someone other than the main editor do the proofing, as we tend to read what we meant, instead of what is actually on the page!

Allowing some white space around articles helps make it more readable. Eyes get tired

First Congregational Church of Beloit, WI won the annual Newsletter Contest in 2006.



just reading text without a break.

Graphics help keep the newsletter looking attractive, and will draw the reader's attention. Graphics also make it seasonal. A border of leaves can spiff up a page in fall, and beach toys make a summer calendar look festive. Too many graphics, though, can make your pages look cluttered.

Have your church contact information, including phone and fax numbers, website URL and office hours in each newsletter.

Including the mission statement is a nice touch to convey your church identity.

Your church newsletter is a wonderful means of reaching members and friends for Christ. Be sure yours is up to the task!

Carol P. Taylor is employed as Administrative Assistant at First Congregational Church of Beloit, WI. Carol is also an active member and Licensed Lay Minister at her home church, Second Congregational of Beloit. She has taken an active role in producing the newsletters at both churches.

"Always include the Where, When, Who and Why for events."



Time is running out...

The entry deadline for the annual Newsletter, Bulletin, and Website Contests is April 15. See page 4 for details.

News and Notes: Contest Deadline, Workshop

Less than a month remains before the entry deadline for three annual contests celebrating excellence in communication in our churches. These competitions honor creative and informative church publications, hopefully inspiring and educating others.

Please submit entries as indicated below.

- **Worship Bulletin Contest:** Send samples to Lisa Dembkowski, 114 College Hwy. Apt. 12, Southampton, MA 01073.
- **Church Newsletter Contest:** Send samples to Sandy Pierson, P.O. Box 218, Auburn, NH 03032.
- **Church Website Contest:** Send URL and notice of intent to enter to Alan Seltzer at AJSinNYC@yahoo.com



Worship Bulletins and Church Newsletters will be judged according to the following categories: Simplicity, Clarity, Aesthetic Appeal, Contact Information, Creativity, Seasonal Appropriateness, Relational/Personal Connections, Calendar of Events, Information, Communication of Identity (church's mission statement, affiliations, etc.).

Submissions for all three contests must be received by Sunday, April 15 to be considered. The contests are sponsored by the Communication Services Committee.

“Pen and Prayer” Session on Devotionals in Tampa

While at the Annual Meeting in June, be sure to attend “Pen and Prayer: A Guide to Writing Devotionals”, one of 16 learning experiences offered during the NACCC meeting. Sign up now at the NACCC website.

Offered twice on Sunday, June 24, the one-hour session gives information on creating a devotional guide for your church, or how to write one for the NA's Lenten or Advent devotionals.

Dawn Carlson of the Communication Services Committee and Lisa Dembkowski, the recently-named Publisher for the NA, will lead the sessions. Dawn recently edited a devotional focusing on “40 Days of Prayer for Children” for her local church. Lisa is a former editor of the NA's annual devotionals.

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Write to us!

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The Communication Services Committee encourages and assists members of local churches to communicate vibrantly and effectively with one another, with members of local churches, with participants in the work of the National Association, and with the public at large, to further the work of Christ.

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