

# NACCC NEWS

APRIL 2009

## FROM MY HEART TO YOURS

Dear Friends,

The old saying goes “necessity is the mother of invention.” It’s true. It is also true that using the time and talent of leaders in the field for the good of the NACCC makes sense for a tradition like ours which claims to practice the priesthood of all believers.

At four recent gatherings of clergy in Massachusetts, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Illinois, I spoke of an idea promoted by the Division For Ministry. It is to develop a plan to more effectively deliver key services to our member churches by using individuals within regions of the country to:

- 1) meet with churches inquiring about membership in the National Association,
- 2) consult with churches in conflict,
- 3) help churches in their search for settled or intentional transitional ministers,
- 4) join with teams of individuals around the country to research and suggest resources to our churches in a number of areas of ministry specifically geared to the needs of

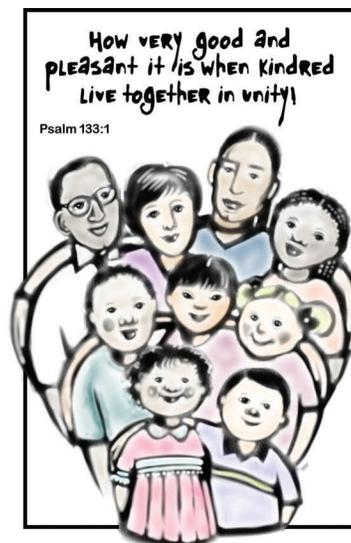
the local church. It expands not only a national network of talent but a more regional one as well.

Our state associations already provide regional representatives to help and encourage the work and ministry of local churches. In a Congregational system such as ours, it is perhaps more easily accomplished than in more hierarchical denominations. There is a different motivation as well – doing all we can to prayerfully support and respect local churches.

All four of these clergy associations have already stepped up and said they want to help deepen this partnership. In a recent letter to Executive Committee chairperson, Dr. Neil Hunt, the Southeast Michigan group outlined how such a system of care might help their conference and the NACCC.

It is a new day for our national and state associations. Despite the fact that it took some time in coming, it is here. We thank God for it.

Peace and Grace,  
*Dr. Tom Richard*



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## CENTER FOR CONGREGATIONAL LEADERSHIP



Don Tuski, President of Olivet College, greets attendees.

The Center for Congregational Leadership hosted a Congregational History and Polity Intensive Seminar at Olivet College (Olivet, Michigan) in February. Twenty people were in attendance. The group included clergy and lay people and represented states from as far away as California and Massachusetts, and as close as Michigan. The college facilities were excellent for both seminar work and meals. Olivet College President Don Tuski brought greetings to the group and Rev. Mike Fales related the Congregational history of the founding of Olivet College. The seminar was made possible by a private donation which subsidized registration fees.

The Center also hosted the February meeting of the Institute for Congrega-

tional Studies, a voluntary group committed to examining and discussing classical Congregationalism and its contemporary applications. Recent conversations took up issues of credentialing, the relationship of regional associations to the NACCC and the development of a new model for the Lay Ministry Training Program.

The new work of the Center is developing and the new location at Olivet enhances the Center's resources. Look for continued progress in this new and growing NACCC ministry whose goal, as always, is to support, encourage and serve its member churches.

Blessings,  
Betsey Mauro  
Dean

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## WORKSHOP ON INTERFAITH DIALOGUE

The Washington Gladden Society will present a workshop about the importance of interfaith dialogue to the local church. The time for interfaith dialogue has arrived. It is common to find Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, and Muslims in our workplaces, schools and neighborhoods. Opportunities for interfaith dia-

logue are all around us. A workshop on this important topic will be offered on June 28 at 1:30 p.m. at the Annual Meeting, followed by a question and answer period.

Additional information is available by contacting Reverend Norm Erlendson at [normerlendson@gmail.com](mailto:normerlendson@gmail.com).

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## DEADLINE APPROACHES FOR SUBMISSIONS

### Don't forget April 15th!

Taxes are due and it's also the deadline for returning the survey **A Snapshot of the Present/A Picture for the Future**. This is your congregation's opportunity to be heard.

Thank you to those churches that have returned their completed surveys! Your comments are appreciated and are being taken seriously.

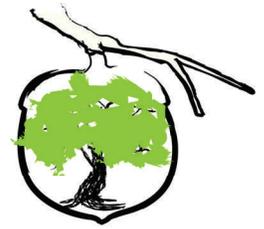


We're listening  
to you!

## CAMPAIGN CORNER

**NATIONAL OFFERING IS BRANCHING OUT**

By  
Diana David  
Campaign Administrator



*BRANCHING OUT*

The *Branching Out* campaign has now received more than \$50,000 in support from 44 member churches who have participated in the National Offering. Our heartfelt gratitude goes to the following churches for the blessing of their involvement:

**ALABAMA**

Pine Forest Congregational Christian Church, *Lanett*  
Langdale Congregational Christian Church, *Valley*  
Cedarwood Community Church, *Wetumpka*

**ALASKA**

First Congregational Church, *Anchorage*

**CALIFORNIA**

Church of the Oaks, *Del Rey Oaks*  
Congregational Church of the Messiah, *Los Angeles*  
New Faith Fellowship of Orange County  
Congregational Church, *Orange*  
First Congregational Church, *Redlands*

**CONNECTICUT**

Grace Congregational Church, *Farmington*

**FLORIDA**

First Congregational Community Church, *Cape Coral*  
First Congregational Church of Naples, *Naples*  
Stuart Congregational Church, *Stuart*

**ILLINOIS**

First Congregational Church, *Toulon*

**IOWA**

Berwick Congregational Church, *Berwick*  
First Congregational Church, *Clear Lake*  
First Congregational Church, *Elkader*  
Grace Congregational Church of Greenville, *Greenville*  
First Congregational Church, *Marshalltown*  
First Congregational Church, *Spencer*

**MAINE**

Congregational Christian Council of Maine  
East Orrington Congregational Church, *Orrington*  
First Congregational Church, *Searsport*

**MASSACHUSETTS**

First Congregational Church, *Adams*  
First Congregational Church, *Nantucket*  
First Congregational Church  
of Williamsburg, *Williamsburg*

**MICHIGAN**

First Congregational Church, *Clarkston*  
North Congregational Church, *Farmington Hills*  
Horton Congregational Church, *Horton*  
Arbor Grove Congregational Church, *Jackson*  
First Congregational Church, *Lake Odessa*  
Olivet Congregational Church, *Olivet*  
Onondaga Community Church, *Onondaga*  
Rockwood First Congregational Church, *Rockwood*  
First Congregational Church, *Royal Oak*  
First Congregational Church, *Saugatuck*  
First Congregational Church, *St. Johns*  
Women's Fellowship of  
First Congregational Church, *Wayne*

**NEW HAMPSHIRE**

Campton Congregational Church, *Campton*  
First Congregational Church, *Pittsfield*

**NEW YORK**

The Church in the Gardens, *Forest Hills*

**NORTH CAROLINA**

Bear Creek Congregational Church, *Robbins*

**WISCONSIN**

North Shore Congregational Church, *Fox Point*  
Community Congregational Church, *Kewaunee*  
First Congregational Church, *Wauwatosa*

In the true spirit of Congregationalism, these churches freely participated in various and creative ways. Some used the offering materials supplied by the NACCC office while others conducted offerings on their own. Ranging in size from dozens to hundreds of members, their gifts have run the gamut of tens to thousands of dollars.

*(continued on next page)*

## BRANCHING OUT *(continued from page 3)*

Regardless of church size or offering amount, together they have made a significant contribution that will help ensure that our churches have ministers trained in the Congregational Way and resources for church growth.

These churches, which represent only 10% of our total NACCC membership, have demonstrated that joining together in fellowship can make a substantial impact.

The *Branching Out* campaign is halfway toward reaching its \$5 million goal and still needs your support. It is not too late to participate in the National Offering, so if your church is not on this list, please consider joining us. The NACCC office can provide all materials needed, so please call me at 800-262-1620, x25, or email [ddavid@naccc.org](mailto:ddavid@naccc.org).

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## LOOKING AHEAD TO ANNUAL MEETING 2009

By now your pastors, church secretaries or other church leaders should have received the Registration Brochure for this year's Annual Meeting of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches, which will be held in Milwaukee, WI June 27-30. If you have not yet received this material, ask your church leaders and, if necessary, call the national office at (800) 262-1620 for a Registration Brochure.

This meeting is an exciting opportunity for worship, fellowship and education. As we gather from our disparate fellowships across the country this June and unite as one fellowship in Milwaukee, we will be blessed with a diversity of worship offerings, including a Sunday morning worship service that will include many of the Wisconsin Congregational churches and pastors, a joint choir, and a spirit of oneness in the Lord as we take of the bread and cup and celebrate again the seal of the covenant of forgiveness together.

We are blessed to have with us two distinguished lecturers to expand our thinking about the Lord and about our Way. The Rev. Dr. Charles G. Adams, called "one of the most prominent and dynamic ministers in the United States"

by the Chicago Defender in 1997, will serve as the Bible Lecturer for this year's meeting. Dr. Adams currently serves as the William and Lucille Nickerson Professor of the Practice of Ethics and Ministry at Harvard Divinity School.

Rather than enlisting one Congregational lecturer, Moderator Lottie Jones Hood has asked several diverse speakers to share their experiences and viewpoints on the theme, "The Congregational Way: What It Means To Me and Why I Love It." The panel will consist of Jim Hopkins, a layperson from Riverpoint Congregational Church in Rhode Island; Betsey Mauro, an ordained minister who has served in many leadership roles in the National Association and who now serves as the Dean of the Center for Congregational Leadership at Olivet College in Olivet, MI; and Reno Wright, a member of the First Congregational Church of Detroit, MI since 2007 and a candidate for the Congregational Fellowship for Theological Studies. Pastor Sandy Freud of the New Faith Fellowship in Orange County, CA, who has served the NACCC in many and diverse ways over the years, will facilitate the discussion.

**For more information about the meeting, log on to [www.nanewthing.org](http://www.nanewthing.org) regularly. New information is being added consistently as the meeting draws near. Meanwhile, be sure and fill out your registration form and send it in early to secure your congregation's spot at this historic meeting.**

## A YEAR OF PRAYER

Submitted by Don Mullen  
 Congregational Society of Classical Retreat Guides

Dear God of all your people, hear our prayer this day.  
 Your church comes before you with her needs.

O God, hear our prayers.  
 I am a little baby, lying in my father's arms,  
 may I be warm and safe today,  
 and all my days as long as I shall live.

O God, hear our prayers.  
 I am a teenager. I am reaching out with my mind.  
 My parents think I am rebellious. I am not.  
 I am searching. Be with me in my search.

O God, hear our prayers.  
 I am going to graduate from college soon.  
 Guide me all the days of my life.  
 Guide me to find opportunities, purpose  
 and success.

O God, hear our prayers.  
 I am a business person and I am afraid.  
 The economy is tanking. Will I go under?  
 Please see me through these troubled days.

O God, hear our prayers.  
 I am a grandmother whose children and grandchildren have lives of their own.  
 And, many of my friends are gone now.  
 How I would love to have someone to talk with and share the day.

O God, hear our prayers.  
 I am just a person who needs your spirit,  
 O God, to help me carry my pain.

O God, hear our prayers.  
 We are your people, to whom you have given so much.  
 Help us to recognize those who are in need. Thank you.

O God, hear our prayers.  
 Your church speaks to you.  
 We listen for your voice, feel your support and long for your guidance.

Be with us and love us always. In Jesus name. Amen



*Pray Without Ceasing*

## IN DEMAND: LENTEN DEVOTIONALS AND WRITERS

On the day before Ash Wednesday we received word from our mailing person, Gary Socha, that we **sold out** of Lenten devotionals. More churches ordered them this year? Our marketing is working better? Churches are more involved with observing Lent? We're not sure yet, but we'll analyze it for purposes of planning. At this point, we are celebrating the good

work of Dawn Carlson, the editor, and all the writers who submitted material. It is not too early to mention that the Advent devotional is in the process of searching for an increasing number of veteran and new writers. If you are interested, please contact us and we'll pass your name on to the Communications Services Committee.



### YOUR PRAYERS ARE NEEDED....

For those who have not heard yet, Rev. Dr. Lloyd Hall is facing some very damaging and serious legal issues. He has resigned his position at Plymouth Church in Lansing and several NACCC-related positions. As the case unfolds, we ask that you keep Lloyd and his family in your prayers, as well as the people of Plymouth Church and all those who may be affected by these concerns. All are suffering greatly.

## NEWS FROM THE FIELD

*Winthrop Cong'l*, their donations for the local food pantry have moved from once a month to every week, in light of the pronounced need... *FCC, Toulon*, the Super Seniors adult ed. group is discussing "the benefits of waiting," examining the proverbs that exemplify patience... *FCC, Wauwatosa*, finding peace and balance for your life, how to talk to your kids about spiritual issues, Spiritual Growth 101, how to manage your children's use of technology, are the topics of the Lenten adult ed. program... *FCC, Rockwood*, Rev. Packer has written about the good news amidst the bad news. A very good article. Ask him for it... *FCC, Mansfield*, plans for March - Gabriel Faure's "Requiem" by the chancel choir; Youth Sunday; men's retreat book study, "If Grace Is True."; and a women's retreat on "peace." *Iowa/Nebraska Assoc. newsletter, Spirit in the Plains*, tells us that the association is looking into the possibility of inviting the NA to Iowa for their Annual Meeting in 2013; they have devised a great plan for letter interchanges between member churches of the association. They pair up churches and then ask them to write in the genre of St. Paul's letters to the early churches; *FCC, Akron*, has a long list of small group opportunities, here are a few mentioned by congregational members - bicycle outings, book club, meet-and-eat group, cooking group, gardening, service groups; during Lent Wednesday Night Live will feature spiritual journeys and spiritual cinema discussions... *FCC, Rochester*, sending a member of the church on a mission trip to Guatemala; participating in ecumenical mid-week Lenten services... *FCC, St. John's*, one of their members has taken one weekend a year for 20 years to travel to a summer camp that serves severely handicapped children. He mends, fixes, and cleans up the camp. Each year he takes members of the church interested in this extraordinary ministry with him... *Plymouth, Racine*, has a "welcome table" on which are helping booklets, such as information on the NACCC, current editions of the Daily Bread, copies of previous ser-

mons, welcome forms for visitors, the history of the church... *FCC, Portland*, just celebrated its 166<sup>th</sup> year; they are gearing up for a Spring sale in their parking lot. Time to clean out the closets; Just held a choir workshop at which choir members learned breathing techniques, timing and note identification... *Winthrop*, hosting free family film Fridays held in conjunction with Holbrook Public library; they are painting the sanctuary floor with volunteers from their membership!... *FCC, Emporia*, teens are attending Acquire The Fire youth rally... *FCC, Otsego*, church members will again participate in the "Relay for Life" for the American Cancer Society. The event takes place in August at the County Fairgrounds; the Mayberry Bible Study is being led by a couple in the church. Discussion? Morals, integrity, goodness, forgiveness and honesty... *Messiah*, one of the speakers visiting the future planning committee is the president of the group Alliance For a Solution to Congestion at LAX: periodically, the church offers what they call vagabond trips - trips to interesting places and programs of interest to church members... *Church In The Gardens, Forest Hills*, The Black Storytellers are presenting biblical stories, songs, dances in the African Heritage genre; they are about to launch their new web site; Board of Deacons is leading a discussion on the Trinity - how do you experience God? as part of the church's passionate spirituality team ... *Amelia Christian*, the Board of Deacons published a page of reasons why senior adults in their church are so important to them (wisdom patience, kindness, humility, time to socialize, and giving)... *Plymouth, Wichita*, presented "Word and Note" with Philip Gulley (pastor and author), James Mulholland (author and speaker), Beverly Hoch (musician), Burton Tidwell (organist at Plymouth), and the Merling Trio (internationally-known ensemble) a three-day lecture and music festival.

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS TO ASSEMBLY AT ANNUAL MEETING 2009

The recent conference-call meeting of the Executive Committee approved the following recommendations to the assembly at the Annual Meeting and Conference in Milwaukee. These, along with others from earlier committee meetings, will be included in a list of decisions to be ratified by delegates at the Annual Meeting and Conference.

\*Agreed that we should join the International Congregational Fellowship as a way to celebrate our expanding relationship with other Associations of Congregational Christians in the world.

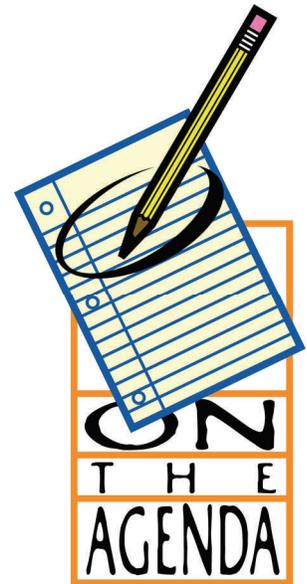
\*After three years of study, created the Annual Meeting and Conference Team which will expand the number of people helping to plan annual gatherings.

\*Are considering a list of expectations of NACCC leadership team members as a means to deepen our connection with the churches from which leaders come.

\*Accepted invitations for hosting future Association gatherings from Minnesota (2012), Florida (2013), and Iowa in 2014).

\*Agreed on the implementation of a disclosure protocol for all clergy who use our search process.

\*Voted to contribute to the renewal of the memorial to the Pilgrims at Scotia Creek, where the first attempt to sail to religious freedom was thwarted by authorities. This renewal effort is being led by our sister churches of the UK.



## SPIRITUAL RETREAT PRIOR TO ANNUAL MEETING

On Friday, June 26, there will be a one-day spiritual retreat at North Shore Church sponsored by the Congregational Society of Classical Retreat Guides. Email Society President, the Rev. Martha Swanson, for more information, [uccwoll@verizon.net](mailto:uccwoll@verizon.net).

The Society's annual meeting will be held Monday, June 29, at 7 a.m. during the NACCC Annual Meeting and Conference in Milwaukee.

## EXECUTIVE AND FRATERNAL VISITS

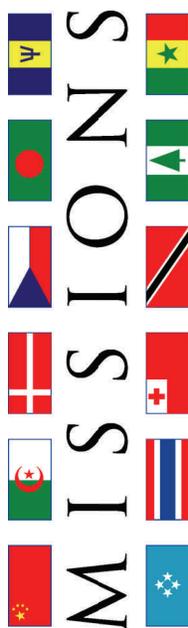
Tom Richard visited the Wisconsin Clergy Group meeting in Mukwanago, WI; Mid West Association clergy, Galesburg, IL; Central Church, Galesburg, IL; FCC, Bennington, VT; Sun City, AZ; FCC in Albany, NY.

John Carson visited GAP Ministries in Haiti, Christ to the Villages in Nigeria and the Mission School of Hope in Cameroon, as well as the Spring meetings of the Massachusetts and Wisconsin Associations and the dedication of Cedarcrest Community Church, La Grange, GA.

## EDITOR OF THE CONGREGATIONALIST

The deadline for resumes for editor of The Congregationalist, the magazine of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches, is April 15. If interested, please send your resume by email to [cdahm@naccc.org](mailto:cdahm@naccc.org)





## A WORD ABOUT MISSIONS

The World Christian Relations Commission urges prayers for all missions and missionaries.

In a recent letter sent to our NACCC-member churches, the WCRC has urged them to pray for the work of missions near and far and to include those missions in church worship bulletins, newsletters, and their Web sites.

The commission's primary interest is to promote ecumenical and interfaith relations and understanding in our Association's churches.

SUPPORT THE NACCC WHILE SHOPPING ONLINE AT AMAZON.COM

While shopping online at Amazon.com, you can have a portion of the proceeds donated to the our National Association by using the link:

<http://astore.amazon.com/naccorg-20>

What a great way to support us while buying the things you planned on purchasing anyway!

This is a year-round campaign through Amazon, so please save this link in your bookmarks/favorites file so you will remember to use it each time you buy online.

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**WE'RE ON THE WEB!**  
**[www.naccc.org](http://www.naccc.org)**

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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION  
 OF  
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## DIGITAL PICTURES FOR WEB SITE

We are at that point in the development of our new web site that pages on the new site are being "populated." Part of the NA staff's excitement about the new Web site is the ability we will have for pictures. That's where you come in. Please send the NACCC office digital pictures of activities at your church. Send them to the following staff:

[bmauro@naccc.org](mailto:bmauro@naccc.org) - adult education gatherings, board meetings, seminary students, lay ministers

[cdahm@naccc.org](mailto:cdahm@naccc.org) - church leadership pictures

[miller@naccc.org](mailto:miller@naccc.org) - mission board, mission trips, church dedications, new building projects, children, church school gatherings

[gsocha@naccc.org](mailto:gsocha@naccc.org) - youth retreats, groups, projects

[scarson@naccc.org](mailto:scarson@naccc.org) - ministers, worship, [lrichard@naccc.org](mailto:lrichard@naccc.org) - church pictures, church graphics

## FREE HYMNALS

Mayflower Congregational Church in Grand Rapids, MI, is purchasing new hymnals and will have 200-300 hymnals in excellent condition to give away. They are willing to ship. Contact Joyce Torrey, Music and Worship Committee, [joycetorrey@aol.com](mailto:joycetorrey@aol.com) or 616-866-1610.

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