

Guide for Contributors

The Congregationalist is a journal of ideas, a storehouse of practical advice for churches, a repository of Congregational history and tradition, the house organ of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches, and a beacon light of the Congregational Way. All this in just 24-28 pages, four times a year.

The Congregationalist is edited for its readers. We rely on our readers, and others interested in the magazine and in the future of Congregationalism, to suggest topics and particular authors who ought to address those topics. The editor welcomes all suggestions.

If you wish to be a contributor, here are some things you should know:

1. Space is limited. Write briefly and to the point.
2. Be familiar with the magazine and the kinds of materials we normally print. This is your best guide to the kinds of materials we are likely to print in the near future.
3. There are two main categories of contributions: News briefs and features.

News Briefs

For news briefs, published in “Around the NA,” just get the information to the editor in a timely way, by the most convenient means. Make sure you include contact information, in case we have questions. News briefs should be items of *more than purely local interest*, such as:

- New church plantings.
- Important anniversaries of churches or of the ordination of long-serving ministers.
- Callings of ministers to new pulpits.
- Major regional or national conferences, publications, or other events.

Only items significant to our national readership are published. The editor’s decision is final.

Features

A feature article may represent a considerable investment of your time and effort; wisdom counsels querying the editor before making that investment. By letter, e-mail, or telephone, pitch your idea to the editor. Tell briefly what the piece would be about, from what angle you would treat it, and why it is important to our readers. Also, tell about yourself — who you are, where you’re from, and how you relate to the article’s subject matter. We will respond promptly with a green, red, or yellow light — plus the approach desired and number of words.

As its name implies, *The Congregationalist* is interested in pieces on specifically *Congregational* topics, not on “generic” Christian themes.

We're not looking for pieces extolling missionary activity in the abstract, but we'd be receptive to good factual articles on Congregational missions past or present. Love and forgiveness are favorite Christian topics, but we want articles on how love and forgiveness are manifested in a locally autonomous, covenanted body of Christian believers. A historic treatment of the thoughts of Augustine or Luther would rate a "pass" — but you could hit a home run by delineating (with force, clarity, and authority) the ways in which Luther's or Calvin's theology is reflected in the life and work of John Robinson or Washington Gladden. How to run a good meeting is a common topic of articles in many publications; but how to conduct a proper and fruitful vicinage council would only see the light of day in one publication — ours.

As with news briefs, the editor's decision is final.

Guidelines for Text

The preferred format is a Microsoft Word document. Other means of submission will be accepted but may delay the working of the editorial process.

Do not submit copy with manually inserted indents or spaces between paragraphs. They force the editor to remove them all manually. If you need to see indents, or space between paragraphs, in your copy, learn how to put them there with global paragraph formatting in Word, which the editor can remove quickly and easily.

Use good grammar and check your spelling. Try to write in the active voice, with strong verbs and a control over your modifiers.

The Congregationalist uses *The Associated Press Stylebook* and *The Elements of Style*, by Strunk and White, as general authorities on style.

Guidelines for Photos

Photos must be sharp and in focus. Please set your camera's resolution and compression controls to their highest quality settings, even though this allows you to store fewer pictures on your card.

Send us photos of one, two, or three people doing something recognizable that relates directly to the story (e.g., volunteers packing food bags for the poor). Such illustrative photos are more prized than large group photos where everybody is simply smiling at the camera.

If you want to see your photo on the cover of *The Congregationalist*, make it a vertical format with great composition and compelling, emblematic subject matter.

Send the JPEG or, if possible, the raw file, exactly as it came out of your camera, without any intervening Photoshop work. If you must send a print, negative, or slide — check with the editor first, to make sure we can use it, we know it's coming, and we have a plan to return it to you.

Make sure that with each photo, you send caption information completely identifying all recognizable people in the photo and saying where and when the photo was shot and giving all needed information about what the people were doing.

Thank You

The Congregationalist depends on the active interest and participation of its readers to make it the best magazine it can be.

Thank you for your interest in contributing to *The Congregationalist*. We look forward to hearing from you!