

NACCC NEWS

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2009

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FROM MY HEART TO YOURS

Dear Friends of the Way,

May 17, 1959, Erwin Britton, then Senior Minister of First Congregational Church, Wayne, Mich., and later to become Executive Secretary of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches, preached a sermon for the beginning of Michigan Week and in observance of Spiritual Foundations Sunday. The sermon won the NACCC's Best Sermon On Our Congregational Heritage award. Since we reminded our churches of this year's topic for the sermon recognition for 2010 as our Congregational heritage, I thought I would include a quote from Dr. Britton's sermon:

"Sixty-seven years ago, Rev. H.L.Hammond, speaking before the Michigan Congregational Conference...has given to our day prophetic words:

Teach Congregationalism pure and simple... confide in it...watch against any perversion of it, eternal vigilance is the price of ecclesiastical liberty...watch your standing committees lest they become sessions...watch your pastors and teachers. Expect and require of them that they preach on the true church polity...watch your seminaries and demand that (they) teach young ministers how to behave themselves in the church of God...watch the National Council, lest it grow into a General Assembly without the restraints of a written constitution...Congregationalism never stands in the way of true unity...(we) are solemnly bound to transmit it unimpaired to coming generations."

What is at the heart of our heritage? We'd like to know if your congregation would be able to answer that question.

Grace and Peace,
 Rev. Dr. Thomas Richard

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THE RETREAT SOCIETY EXPANDS ITS MISSION

At their annual meeting in Milwaukee this past June, the Congregational Society of Classical Retreat Guides made some changes in its name and focus. The new name is Congregational Spiritual Partnerships (CSP). There will be two foci: The Congregational Society of Clas-

sical Retreat Guides (CSCRG) and the Spiritual Life Ministry (SLM). The Society has been sponsoring quiet days and silent retreats for years. The new emphasis is in response to the Partnership's commitment to lift up the spiritual needs of our NACCC Churches.



YOUTH MINISTRY CONVOCATION

Oct. 22 to 25, 2009
Colonial Church
Edina, Minn.

For ALL those involved in ministry to youth. Cost is \$100 per person, includes refreshments, meals and materials. For more information or to register, call Linda Miller at the NACCC office, 800-262-1620, ext. 13, or the Colonial Church of Edina at 952-925-2711.

CENTER FOR CONGREGATIONAL LEADERSHIP

The new academic year is in full swing at Olivet College and the Center is celebrating its first year anniversary! Olivet College continues to be an ideal place for the Center. In the past year, the Center has hosted five seminars or meetings using the excellent facilities provided to us by the college. Meals are convenient and affordable at the cafeteria and a college agreement with an area hotel makes lodging costs very affordable for participants. The Center now has wireless internet access for guests and soon, signage will be placed, giving us our “official” look.

As Dean, I have been busy. I have begun teaching a freshman seminar class at Olivet and serve on the college’s Church Relations Committee. I had the pleasure of delivering the convocation at another Congregational college, Piedmont in Demorest, Ga. The annual Boston History and Polity Seminar gathered twelve people together for intensive learning and research in the Congregational Library. We were also introduced to the mission work of Seafarers Friend and Mariner’s House. By the time of this publication, the Center will have held its second CFTS Fall Seminar at the

college and hosted the NACCC Strategic Planning Team meeting.

Along with a dynamite steering committee, I am planning for the 2010 Congregational Symposium to be held at Olivet, Oct. 28 to 30. **SAVE THE DATE!** Our theme is “Congregationalism: Leading from the Wilderness.” The theme acknowledges that our churches are no longer “main stream” and will explore what opportunities exist for us from this new position. The Symposium will be co-hosted by Olivet College and the American Congregational Association and is reaching out to all the historical Congregational denominations for input and participation. Our keynote speaker will be Terrence Frethiem of Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minn. He has authored many books including, *The Bible as Word of God in a Postmodern Era* (Fortress, 1998; with K. Froehlich).

The Center now has a fan page on Facebook. Search “Center for Congregational Leadership” if you want to become a fan and get notifications on upcoming events. Thank you for your prayers and other support.

Blessings,
Betsey

BETTER CONNECTIONS WITH LEADERSHIP TEAM CHURCHES

Among the “Expectation and Responsibilities of NACCC Leadership Team Members” recently passed by the Executive Committee are (1). A commitment to pray for the work of the National Association and its churches on a regular basis; and (14). Act as your Church’s contact person for all Association news and information. There are prayers written by the Congregational Society of Classical Retreat

Guides for both your church and the National Association. They are available on the CSCRG page at www.naccc.org. In your newsletters and bulletins be sure you are listed with Church staff and ministries as a representative to whatever division, commission, committee, or team you have been appointed or elected to on the NACCC leadership team.

BEST PRACTICES: MINISTER'S ASSOCIATION OFFERS FREE ORGAN LESSONS

June 1, 2009

Some church people bemoan the lack of trained organists in their community, but an enterprising ministerial association in Maine is doing something about it.

Facing a shortage of musicians able to provide organ music in the churches of Searsport, Maine, the Greater Bay Area Ministerium put together a new program that allows students to qualify for three hour-long lessons given by Dr. Carlton Russell, retired professor of music and college organist at Wheaton College. The lessons take place at the 1906 Lane pipe organ at the First Congregational Church in Searsport and on a new Insignia 548 organ loaned by Rodgers Instruments.

"As you know, there is a dearth of young organists in America, with obvious implications for the future of the organ as, among other things, an instrument of worship," explained Dr. Russell in a letter introducing the program. The first two students, Grant Richards and Zora MacClintock, began their lessons on Memorial Day after an introductory session with Dr. Russell and the Rev. Dr. Arlin T. Larson, pastor of First Congregational Church. Funds for the program have been provided by the churches of the Greater Bay Area Ministerium and by donations.

The organ education idea was the brainchild of the late Cj Sambach. At the invitation of the Ministerium, Mr. Sambach presented his organ "Informances" to area students and played a public recital at the Searsport church in the fall of 2007. A second recital in the fall of 2008, by Dr. Russell and flutist Diana Brookes Brown, raised additional funds. The pro-



gram also builds on the work of the late Dr. Ralph Stephenson of Belfast who likewise sought to increase organ awareness among local students through his summer Organ Academy.

Duane Kuhn, executive vice president of Rodgers, noted that ministerial associations throughout the United States would benefit by considering the same approach. "Churches have much to gain by coming together in this way to provide training for their own future organists," he said. "Working cooperatively, the members of the Greater Bay Area Ministerium are ensuring that their congregations will not have to see the organ sit unused in a corner. Instead, they'll have the support of magnificent music to help them raise their songs of praise."

Rodgers is the world's largest builder of stereo-imaged church organs and pipe/digital organs. Rodgers is a member of the Roland Group, headed by Roland Corporation, a world leader in electronic musical instrument technologies and electronic musical instrument sales and manufacturing.

(This article appeared in the Rodgers Organ Company recent national newsletter)

BEST PRACTICES
IS AN IDEA ORIGINATING WITH REV. MICHAEL ROBERTSON, A FORMER EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE NACCC. EACH YEAR WE ADD TO THE LIST OF GREAT IDEAS THAT COME FROM OUR MEMBER CHURCHES AND DUPLICATE THEM FOR DISTRIBUTION AT THE ANNUAL MEETING, AS WELL AS PUT THEM ON OUR WEB SITE:
WWW.NACCC.ORG

CAMPAIGN CORNER



NEW DEVELOPMENTS

Several years ago when the NACCC began the *Branching Out* capital campaign, we embarked upon a transformative process. Capital campaigns are not just about raising money, they are also about realizing dreams. While we have yet to achieve *Branching Out's* \$5 million goal, participating in the campaign has already stimulated the Association to grow in new directions.

The *Campaign Corner* column is transforming as well. From now on, it will appear as *New Developments*, and include news of other stewardship opportunities as well as campaign updates.

Branching Out

September marked the one year anniversary of the Center for Congregational Development at Olivet College. An additional \$2.5 million is still needed to fully fund the Center and we are continuing to seek sponsored gifts, a matching gift challenge, or a capstone gift pledge to finish the campaign.

Churches can support the campaign by continuing to participate in the National Offering. Thanks to a generous second gift from First Congregational Church in Redlands, California, we have now raised more than \$57,000 from only 46 member churches!

A. Vaughan Abercrombie Memorial Fund

A fund for educating Congregational leaders has been established in the Association, in memory of Rev. Dr. A. Vaughan Abercrombie by his family. As one of the founders of the National Association, Rev. Dr. Abercrombie was a champion of the Congregational Way. A minister, teacher, leader, poet, author, and inventor, his life was filled with the love of learning and a passion for the spiritual life. Contributions may be sent to:

The A. Vaughan Abercrombie
Memorial Fund
c/o Dr. Thomas M. Richard
NACCC
P.O. Box 288
Oak Creek WI 53154-0288.

September marked my three year anniversary as part of the NACCC staff. Since then, I have become more involved with the Congregational Foundation in the role of part-time Director of Development. The NACCC is now a much different association and I am very thankful to have been and continue to be a part of this transformative process. If you would like more information about our new developments, please contact me at 800-262-1620, x25, or email ddavid@naccc.org.

Diana David
Director of Development (Part-Time)

OUR THANKS TO FIRST-TIME CONTRIBUTORS!

The following churches became first-time contributors to the Shared Ministries Fund between April 1, 2009 and September 30, 2009: Congregational Church of the Valley, Chandler, Ariz.; Craig Memorial Congregational Church, Paradise, Calif.; The Congregational Church of the Villages, Lady Lake, Fla.; Cedarcrest Community Church, LaGrange, Ga.; First Congregational Church of Evanston, Evanston, Ill.; Winthrop Congregational Church, Holbrook, Mass.; Sawyer Memorial Congregational Church, Jonesport, Maine; McGraft Memorial Congregational Church, Muskegon, Mich.; Rapid River Congregational Church, Rapid River, Mich.; Colonial Church of Edina, Edina, Minn.; South Barnstead Congregational Church, Strafford, N.H.; Agape Congregational Church, Bowling Green, Ohio; Lawrenceville Community Church, Springfield, Ohio; Alexis Congregational Church, Toledo, Ohio. Thank you for the blessing of joining in fellowship with other NACCC churches contributing to the Shared Ministries Fund!

NEWS FROM THE FIELD

First Church, Lynn, congregation is filling M&M canisters with change to support a delegation of youth for the NAPF mission conference to Alaska...**FCC, Wauwatosa**, did VBS for kindergarten through 6th grade "Paul and the Underground Church;" recently confirmed nine young people... **Plymouth, Racine** showed the film "The Cotton Patch Gospel," the musical score written by Harry Chapin...**Plymouth, Minneapolis**, during July had a different kind of art show entitled "Sacred Ground," art from around the Twin Cities was brought to the church, celebrating moments or place rich with divine presence... **Amelia Christian**, while Rev. Debord is on sabbatical, the church is blessed with a strong leadership team and a gifted interim...**FCC, Allegan**, have set up a LOVE, INC garden table at the local garden market, the proceeds to go to the church's mission outreach...**FCC, Otsego**, the missions team collected new bed pillows in preparation for their annual Christmas baskets for those in need...**Maple Hill Community Cong'l**, sponsoring a nine-day trip to Israel, including sites such as Capernaum, Tiberias, Nazareth, Galilee, Cana and Masada...**Grace Church, Columbiana**, had a stargazing camping trip for the church family, a SONROCK kids camp, as well as a day trip for youth to Cedar Point... **FCC, Clear Lake**

just finished a Women's Bible study of "Esther – It's tough Being a Woman," with 29 participants; they also offered summer art lessons "Art 101 and God" for those who enjoy art but don't necessarily consider themselves artists... **FCC, Florence**, any church would like to enjoy 20% increase in sales at their annual plant sale such as Florence did this past year. The congregation believes that \$ grows on plants; they included in their summer newsletter safety tips for the season for children and families...**FCC, Wayne**, as of this issue of the NACCC NEWS, we have heard that the congregation voted to call Rev. Tom Healy as their new senior minister, after a very successful two-year interim ministry period... **Farmington Hills**, hope lives and the youth are preparing hygiene kits for a local outreach program to prove it; during the summer one of the women's groups has dinner together and goes to the movies; a retreat for women (theme: women of the Bible) is planned in October... **Messiah**, has a bookcart for the exchange of good books, and it's going very well; a reader's group is discussing Huston Smith's "The Way Things Are;" recently hosted Jamine and Erlinda Julian missionaries in the Philippines... **FCC, Emporia**, has a van and drivers to pick up people for worship and other church events; they are training people to operate their

audio-visual equipment for their two services, which are also broadcasted on local cable channel...**Riverpoint Cong'l**, their delegate to the NACCC meeting and conference was excellent! From lectures to workshops this delegate got everything she could out of the meeting; Riverpoint church is a small church with big ideas and always busy doing outreach into their community and the world...**FCC, Mansfield**, is on Facebook. In addition to the printed publications and a new Web site, they are using Facebook to stay in touch with a new generation of communicators... **North Shore Cong'l**, had a job networking gathering in August; church nurse Dottie Schimpf shared tips on nutrition for older adults in a recent newsletter; Associate Minister Sue LeFeber is working on her D. Min degree... **FCC, Marshfield** (a new member church of the NA) is going "green" by encouraging members to receive the newsletter by email; during this interim period Rev. Thornton has started two "listening circles" to bring people together to resolve what remains as issues of conflict...**FCC, Naples**, their steeple was attached to the new building recently, take a look at their Web site, www.firstccnaples.org, what an amazing new church start!



CHRISTMAS IN THE MISSION FIELDS

Christmas is coming soon. As you plan for your Christmas giving, please remember our Missions. Your donations need to arrive at the NACCC Office by Nov. 15 in order to get to the missions in time for Christmas. Send donations to NACCC, P.O. Box 288, Oak Creek, WI 53154. Thank you.

2009 ADVENT DEVOTIONALS

The first day of Advent is November 29. Don't wait until the last minute to order your Advent Devotional. The cost is only \$2 per copy plus shipping charges. Call or e-mail us now to reserve your copy. 800-262-1620 or miller@naccc.org.

EXECUTIVE AND FRATERNAL VISITS

Rev. John Carson

California: Pilgrim Congregational Church, Pomona; First Congregational Church, Redlands; Oneonta Congregational Church, South Pasadena; Desert Congregational Church, Twenty-Nine Palms.

Illinois: Central Congregational Church, Galesburg

Indiana: First Congregational Church, Terre Haute; It's All Good Café, Whiting

Maine: Maine Sea Coast Mission, Bar Harbor; Washington County Association

Minnesota: Colonial Church, Edina

Missouri: Piney Woods School, Piney Woods

Wisconsin: North Shore Congregational Church, Fox Point

Rev. Dr. Betsey Mauro

The Little Stone Church, Mackinac Island, Mich.; Piedmont College, Demorest Ga.; Etna Congregational Church, Pittsburgh, Penn.

Bill Rafuse

Attended anniversary celebration at First Congregational Church, Clear Lake, Mich., on behalf of the NACCC.

Rev. Dr. Thomas Richard

Florida: Cape Coral Community Church, Cape Coral; Edison Church, Ft. Myers; Mt. Dora Community Church, Mount Dora; Treasure Island Community Church, Treasure Island.

Georgia: Trustees meeting at Piedmont College, Demorest; The Methodist-Congregational Federated Church, Demorest.

Massachusetts: Massachusetts Clergy Retreat; Inter-Mountain Association.

Michigan: Plymouth Congregational Church, Lansing; Center for Congregational Leadership, Olivet.

Michigan: Two additional visits to the Center for Congregational Leadership, Olivet: speaker at Stewardship Seminar, attendee at Strategic Planning Team gathering.

Wisconsin: Faith Community Church, Franklin; St. Jacobi Congregational Church, Richfield; First Congregational Church, Wauwatosa.

ORDINATION ANNIVERSARIES

October

Oct. 1, 1978 Michael J. Matheny
 Oct. 1, 1984 Dr. James Clifton
 Oct. 1, 1989 David Hulings
 Oct. 1, 1995 Robert Morris
 Oct. 1, 1996 Lee Attema
 Oct. 2, 2004 Lee Ann Gagne
 Oct. 5, 2000 Robert Howell
 Oct. 6, 1969 Donald C. Mullen
 Oct. 6, 1979 Cynthia L. J. Shepherd
 Oct. 6, 1991 Dr. Dewey E. Gierke
 Oct. 7, 1955 Joseph Cooke
 Oct. 7, 2001 Diane Wise
 Oct. 8, 1961 Edwin G. Remaly
 Oct. 8, 2000 Dr. Lori Wiley
 Oct. 11, 1987 Dr. Jay M. Groat
 Oct. 11, 2003 Robert J. Moynihan
 Oct. 12, 1980 Glenn A. Stone
 Oct. 12, 2008 Jonathan Roach
 Oct. 13, 1985 Richard J. Koch
 Oct. 13, 1991 Richard E. Hotchkin
 Oct. 14, 1984 Ruth M. Lyons
 Oct. 14, 1984 Jay M. Terbush
 Oct. 15, 1952 Harvey L. Pierce
 Oct. 15, 1994 Douglas Gray
 Oct. 15, 2006 Joshua F. Davis
 Oct. 16, 1988 Joel Curtiss
 Oct. 17, 1971 David L. D'Arcy
 Oct. 17, 1976 Scott L. Barton
 Oct. 18, 1998 Robert Bartletta
 Oct. 19, 1975 Duane Kellogg
 Oct. 19, 1986 Sally J. Nolen
 Oct. 19, 2003 Michael Mitchell
 Oct. 20, 2002 Barry A. Lucas
 Oct. 22, 2000 Cathy Houston
 Oct. 22, 2000 Michael S. Robertson
 Oct. 22, 2002 Kathryn E. Smith
 Oct. 23, 1983 Sanford Freud
 Oct. 24, 1999 Kathryn Rust
 Oct. 25, 1959 Gary W. Smothers
 Oct. 26, 1974 Wesley Woodman
 Oct. 26, 1985 John C. Swanson
 Oct. 26, 2003 Mark L. Jarvie
 Oct. 27, 1969 Isaiah J. Cho
 Oct. 27, 1974 Ralph DiBiasio-Synder

Oct. 27, 1996 Bruce J. VanDer Kolk
 Oct. 28, 1973 Robert H. Fleischmann
 Oct. 23, 1973 Charles M. Whipple
 Oct. 28, 1968 Eugene F. Whitney
 Oct. 28, 2001 Cayle Beagle
 Oct. 31, 1971 Richard R. Kurrasch
 Oct. 31, 1981 Carol DiBiasio-Synder
 Oct. 31, 1993 Jerrold Jones

November

Nov. 1, 1964 Gary W. Pierce
 Nov. 1, 1969 Ted W. Seglo
 Nov. 1, 1978 Alan R. Ferguson
 Nov. 1, 1980 Robert K. Livingston
 Nov. 1, 2001 George Johnson
 Nov. 2, 1991 Ashley M. Cleere
 Nov. 3, 1991 Susan Hunnicutt
 Nov. 3, 2002 Adam Soderberg
 Nov. 4, 1990 Norman Erlendson
 Nov. 4, 2000 Ivy Beckwith
 Nov. 5, 2006 Emily Robertson
 Nov. 6, 1994 Wendy G. Van Tassell
 Nov. 7, 1965 Dr. Leon Hermes
 Nov. 7, 1997 Robert G. Moston
 Nov. 8, 1975 William C. Lange
 Nov. 9, 2002 Harlan Nuss
 Nov. 9, 2003 Thomas T. Boehne
 Nov. 9, 2003 Irvan Gammon
 Nov. 11, 1971 Stephen W. Tucker
 Nov. 11, 1979 Noel D. Vanek
 Nov. 14, 1952 James E. Kurtz
 Nov. 14, 1993 Rick Hartley
 Nov. 15, 1967 John J. Lancz
 Nov. 15, 1978 Dr. John F. Doud
 Nov. 19, 2005 Christopher Stephens
 Nov. 20, 1983 Dr. Ardyth Kovacevich
 Johnson
 Nov. 20, 1994 John W. Deuble
 Nov. 21, 1976 John A. Lindvall
 Nov. 21, 1998 Claude L. Dunn
 Nov. 22, 1945 Angus G. MacDonald
 Nov. 22, 1999 Karl Kraemer
 Nov. 24, 1976 David C. Hirtle
 Nov. 24, 1985 Eric Lison
 Nov. 25, 1984 Carolyn Bradley
 Nov. 30, 1975 John Koehler



**Best
Wishes!**

INTERNATIONAL CONGREGATIONAL FELLOWSHIP

The following is the text of comments made by Dr. Thomas Richard at the opening session of the 9th Quadrennial Meeting of the International Congregational Fellowship held on July 23, 2009.

I bring you greetings from your sisters and brothers in the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches. This is my first time at an ICF gathering. I'm looking forward to spending time with you and deepening relationships which, in some cases, were only begun as a result of the theological symposium held at FCC Wauwatosa several years ago. Before then I knew many of you from outside the United States as people with great hearts and keen minds. Now I also know you as dynamic disciples of Christ.

At this gathering, the National Association is celebrating its membership in the International Congregational Fellowship! It only took...well, we won't go into that. We are at the table in this international fellowship and proud to be here!

These are interesting times for the people of God. More and more, as I read about what is happening to churches, denominations, and associations of churches around the world, I am struck by the similarity of our challenges:

- A realization that, indeed, in tough economic times fear trumps religious life far more than any of us at this gathering would like to admit.
- A realization that a consumer-driven faith has all but replaced the more thoughtful and reflective practice of being present to God.
- A realization that we overcome the challenges of religious bigotry and prejudice, when we truly accept Jesus pre-eminent dream – that we live in community with all people.
- And, a realization that conferences like this are, at their best, platforms upon which we encounter each other's religious worlds, we renew the deeper purposes for which we exist as God's people, and we pronounce blessings on each other, in God's name.

I pray these are days of enlightenment for you and for all of us who have come together in the name of Christ. John Carson and I look forward to our time with you. God bless you and keep you in these next several days.

Rev. Dr. Thomas M. Richard
Executive Secretary



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF
CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

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*Bringing together Congregational
Christian Churches for mutual
care and outreach to our world in
the name of Jesus Christ.*

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WE'RE ON THE WEB!
www.naccc.org

2010 ANNUAL MEETING IN ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

The excitement and enthusiasm is building – can you feel it?

I had the pleasure of meeting with our host committee this past month and are they organized! Truly exciting plans are being worked on and what a dedicated group they are. They have already “seen the great light” as far as hosting us is concerned.

Our keynote speaker is Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Bingham, Pilgrim Congregational Church, Pomona, Calif., and former minister of the First Congregational Church in Anchorage. She has experienced first hand that wonderful “light” as winter turns into Spring each year.

Our Congregational Lecturer will be Rev. Wayne Riggs from San Diego, Calif. Rev. Riggs is a most enthusiastic speaker and is a true believer in the Congregational Way.

Dr. Jeffrey Kwan, Associate Professor of Old Testament, Pacific School of Religion, Berkeley, Calif., will be the Bible Lecturer. You will not want to miss his words of enlightenment. We are planning on having a question and answer period following each lecture so come prepared for an exciting time of involvement.

See you in Anchorage.

Sherry Glab
Moderator

