



RESOURCES FOR CHURCHES
IN MEMBERSHIP WITH THE
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CONGREGATIONAL
CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

*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.*

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

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Congregationalism Overview

The Guiding Principles of Congregational Christian Churches

- Christ alone is the head of the church.
- All church members are spiritually equal and called to the work of ministry.
- Every local church is autonomous and complete.
- Each local church is called into wider associations of fellowship.
- Believers are bound to one another in a voluntary covenant.
- Every Christian possesses full liberty of conscience in interpreting the Gospel.
- The Bible is fully sufficient as our guide in matters of faith and practice and will inspire individuals and direct the church with fresh light and truth for every generation.

The Origins of Congregational Christian Churches

Members of the Free Church Movement and our forebearers who pilgrimaged to the New World were inspired by the words of Matthew 18:20, wherein Jesus says, “For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them” (NRSV). They believed this expressed God’s Covenant of Grace and the presence of Jesus in their everyday lives and committed themselves to live faithfully as God required. They drew up their own covenants that they each agreed to, with membership to a church coming by way of voluntarily “owning” the covenant. They pledged to “walk together in the ways of the Lord, made known or to be made known” to them. With Christ as the head of the church, they would be blessed.

Understanding the Congregational Way

Congregational churches are sometimes known as the “Church of the Pilgrims” after the small congregations of the early 1600s. The people of these congregations moved from England to the New World in pursuit of religious freedom. From them, we inherited a wonderful spiritual heritage, one that is uniquely suited to our contemporary world.

This is a tradition that has deep convictions based upon the Word of God as each person interprets it according to the dictates of conscience under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. This naturally attracts men and women of genuine conviction, adventurous faith, and gracious regard for each other’s sincerity to the Congregational Christian fellowship.

Strength in Diversity

Since every Congregationalist possesses full liberty of conscience in interpreting the Gospel, we are a diverse group of people united under Christ. We believe there is strength in diversity, and by it, there are unending opportunities to learn from each other and grow in faith. There is a wide variety of thought and practice among our member churches. This reveals an essential aspect of Congregationalism: each church, using Scripture as its foundation and guided by the Holy Spirit, determines its faithful forms of worship, governance, and belief. This naturally leads to diverse worship practices, beliefs about God, and biblical interpretations among churches.

Further resources about Congregationalism can be accessed on our [website](#).

NACCC Purpose and Structure

Purpose of the NACCC

The National Association of Congregational Christian Churches (NACCC) is a membership organization dedicated to empowering Congregational Christian churches through fellowship, resources, and education. As a member of the NACCC, your church joins with other churches around the country for mutual encouragement and support. By sharing fellowship through the NACCC, each church is made stronger by access to a multitude of resources and expertise and by the assistance of neighboring churches. From helping your church find a new minister to aiding in your ministry and outreach programs, we're here to help you strengthen your faith community.

NACCC Membership

A church is considered an active member of the NACCC by making an annual financial contribution to the Shared Ministries Fund, which supports the association's operations. If a church fails to contribute to the Shared Ministries Fund, it becomes inactive. After three consecutive years of inactivity, the church is removed from the membership roll but may reactivate its membership by voting to rejoin, updating its information, naming a Year-Round Delegate, and making a contribution. While a target "Fair Share" contribution of \$13 per member is encouraged, any amount qualifies a church as active.

Structure of the NACCC

The NACCC is an association of individual churches stewarded by a dedicated board of volunteers who form our Leadership Council and Board of Directors and who determine and manage NACCC programs and policies. NACCC staff serves to encourage and support this important work on behalf of member churches.

As a voluntary association of churches, the NACCC does not create hierarchies that oversee local churches. Each member church is fully self-governing and spiritually complete. There is no authority over the local church except for Christ. Thus, the NACCC does **not**:

- Require local churches to adhere to a shared creed or statement of faith as a condition of membership
- Speak for all member churches on issues of theology, politics, or social concerns
- Credential clergy to ministerial service

The Congregational Foundation

The Congregational Foundation, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization established to raise funds and administer endowments that benefit the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches.

The mission of the Congregational Foundation is to support the NACCC's ministries and programs through a commitment to current donors and the development of prospective donors.

The vision of the Congregational Foundation is to seek to develop long-term, sustainable sources of revenue that support the NACCC's ministries and programs.

NACCC Board of Governors

The Board of Governors oversees the Congregational Foundation, ensuring all permanent endowments are administered for fiscal sustainability and adherence to donor wishes.

NACCC Leadership Council

The Leadership Council is responsible for the program implementation and strategic visioning of the NACCC.

NACCC Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is responsible for all legal and financial matters of the NACCC.

Ministry Councils

The development, clerical maintenance, and organizational advancement of the NACCC are the direct result of our ministry councils, which enhance the vitality, growth, and mission work of the NACCC.

Growth Ministry Council (GMC): The purpose of the Growth Ministry Council is to encourage and support congregations of the NACCC in their mission of faith and discipleship. Duties of the GMC include:

- Supporting the establishment of new Congregational churches
- Developing and supporting local churches in youth programming
- Providing leadership for NACCC-wide youth programming
- Providing support for the effective use of technology in the local church
- Developing meaningful and God-honoring worship and spiritual growth experiences

Vitality Ministry Council (VMC): The purpose of the Vitality Ministry Council is to encourage and support the strengthening of church life in member churches. Duties of the VMC include:

- Educational, financial, and spiritual support for seminary students
- Ministerial training
- Addressing issues relating to ministerial-congregational relationships
- Enhancing revitalization efforts
- Assisting with pragmatic aspects of local Congregational ministries, including stewardship education, leadership training, and strategic planning
- Promoting knowledge and understanding of the Congregational Way
- Advancing lay ministry
- Providing a pastoral search process for member churches and clergy

Mission and Outreach Ministry Council (MOMC): The purpose of the Mission and Outreach Ministry Council is to encourage and support local churches in their mission of spreading the word and work of Christ in the world, locally and globally. Duties of the MOMC include:

- Advancing domestic and foreign mission programs
- Nurturing partnerships with NACCC-recognized ministries
- Promoting relationships with other Congregational bodies
- Supporting ongoing communication with state and regional Congregational associations
- Cultivating ecumenical relationships and partnerships as appropriate

NACCC Staff

Members of the NACCC staff serve our organization in a professional capacity to provide administrative, development, communications, and structural support to our mission, vision, and overall association.

Support from the NACCC

As stated above, the NACCC does not hold a position of authority over its member churches. Thus, while we strive to provide useful, comprehensive resources for our members as a benefit of membership, the resources we offer are simply recommendations. Member churches are not beholden to following or utilizing them.

Pastoral Search Resources

The NACCC's Pastoral Search platform is a secure online resource intended to help connect churches that have pastoral vacancies to clergy who wish to be considered for open positions. Churches can use the Pastoral Search platform to provide up-to-date, detailed information about their open position, church, congregation, demographics, polity, and more.

Ministers searching for open positions can create profiles through the Pastoral Search platform that detail their experience, education, polity, and more. They can then search through open pulpit listings to find and apply to open positions of interest to them.

Additional pastoral search resources recommended by the NACCC include:

- [Job Description Templates](#)
- [From Call to Settlement](#): A booklet guiding churches through the process of calling, ordaining, and installing a new pastor.
- [Calling a Congregational Minister: A Handbook for Pastoral Search Committees](#): A handbook that guides readers through the steps of the search process.
- [Searching for a Minister: A Church Overview and Guide to Best Practices](#): A handbook outlining best practices in the search process.
- [Searching for Your Next Minister Through the NACCC](#): A handout for church members that provides an overview of the search process and how to get started.
- [Background Checks](#): The NACCC strongly encourages churches to request background checks of the ministerial candidates they are interested in pursuing for their open roles.
- [Minister Disclosure Files](#): The NACCC requires any minister seeking to use the Pastoral Search program to complete a Disclosure Form providing proof of claimed degrees, programs, certifications, and ordinations. Once a church has identified candidates for consideration for their open role(s), the church may request to access their candidates' Disclosure Forms.

Missions and Outreach

To support the mission and outreach efforts of our member churches, the NACCC, through the Mission and Outreach Ministry Council (MOMC), maintains relationships with numerous thoroughly vetted global mission partners. These missions all undergo regular review and evaluation to ensure their needs are genuine and worthy of your prayerful and generous support. Internationally, all NACCC-supported mission projects are led by indigenous missionaries who know the language and culture from birth and, as such, are more effective

than outside missionaries. Additionally, the NACCC partners with organizations and institutions that provide aid, serve, and educate within the United States.

The NACCC also maintains a crisis relief fund created to help those impacted by poverty, hunger, sickness, conflict, emergencies, and natural disasters worldwide known as [One Great Hour of Sharing \(OGHS\)](#). In distributing One Great Hour of Sharing funds, the NACCC always works through thoroughly vetted relief organizations proven to be credible, effective, and transparent in their use of funds. When possible, we make every effort to partner with member churches and mission partners closest to those in need.

Whether a donor contributes to OGHS, a specific mission partner, or the Missions and Outreach general fund, they can rest assured that 100% of their donation is contributed directly to their chosen fund or cause. The NACCC does not deduct any portion of donations made towards missions or OGHS for operational expenses.

Church Resources

The NACCC offers various resources to support a wide range of your church's needs, including:

- [Racial Justice Resources](#)
- [Ordination and Installation Resources](#)
- [Celebrating Baptisms](#)
- [Celebrating Church Anniversaries Materials](#)
- [Choosing Church Insurance](#)
- [Misconduct in Ministry: A Handbook for Congregational Churches](#)
- [Lent and Advent Devotional Booklets](#)

Clergy Resources

The NACCC offers numerous resources to support a wide range of clergy needs, including:

- [Clergy Compensation and Benefits Resources](#)
- [Housing Allowance Resolution for Pastors](#)
- [Congregational Heritage Resources](#)
 - [Figures of the Congregational Way](#)
 - [Resources on Congregationalism and the NACCC](#)
 - [Books on Congregationalism and the Congregational Way](#)
 - [Scholarly Articles on Congregationalism](#)
 - [Resources on What it Means to Be a Member of a Congregational Church](#)
 - [The Congregational Way Pamphlet Series](#)

Youth Resources

The NACCC offers several resources tailored towards supporting Congregational Christian youth, including:

- [Building Confirmation the Congregational Way](#): A Congregationalist-specific confirmation curriculum.
- [Resources for Christian Education and Vacation Bible School](#)

- Information on NACCC Youth Programming through NAPF and HOPE

Resources for Greater Congregational Fellowship

The NACCC encourages member churches to engage with state and regional associations of Congregational Christian churches and with NACCC-recognized ministries, such as affiliated colleges, universities, and other institutions. The relationships that develop in these interactions benefit the NACCC and its member churches by offering greater programming and fellowship opportunities throughout the year. A list of NACCC-affiliated recognized organizations and associations, as well as their contact information, can be found in the [NACCC Yearbook](#).

Financial Resources

Congregational Investment Trust: Providing a pooled endowment investment option for member churches with the potential for higher returns and lower fees.

Hurting Churches Fund: Assistance for member churches in times of financial challenge.

Building & Loan Fund: Assisting member churches with the financing of facility projects, including the modernization of facilities, building additions, capital improvements, facility repairs, or the relocation of a church.

Ministers' Assistance and Enrichment Fund: Reducing the cost of continuing education opportunities and providing emergency financial assistance.

The Retired Ministers Fund: Providing a modest annual gift to retired ministers who served NACCC churches for at least 10 years and were a member in good standing of an NACCC member church at the time of their retirement.

The Rev. Thomas and Kathleen Street Endowment: Supporting active and retired NACCC ministers in times of unexpected financial need.

Rev. Howard Conn Endowment: Reducing ministers' travel expenses to attend the NACCC Ministers' Convocation.

Sharing Vitality Grants: Supporting new or expanding ministries or projects intended to enhance the vitality of the local church.

John Richard Memorial Endowment - Fine and Performing Arts Grant: Supporting the production of fine or performing arts events in churches of 200 members or less.

Providence Endowment - Annual Meeting and Conference Grant: Helping churches offset the expenses of sending a delegate to the Annual Meeting and Conference.

Youth Conference Scholarships: Aiding in offsetting the cost of registering for NAPF & HOPE gatherings.

The Magee Scholarship: Providing financial aid for mission personnel to pursue secondary or higher education in theology or other training directly relevant to field missionary work.

Marion Bradshaw Memorial Award: Awarding an ordained minister who is personally committed to Congregationalism. To be used toward continuing education.

Harry R. Butman Award: Awarding ministers with 10+ years of service in NACCC churches who are personally committed to Congregationalism.

Jeanette Butman Award: Awarding spouses or widows of NACCC ministers with 10+ years of service in NACCC churches who have been of help to their spouses.

Joseph Jones Russell Award: Awarding the best sermon related to Congregationalism and the Congregational Way by an ordained, active pastor of a member church.

Charles Rush Award: Awarding individuals working toward worthwhile social and personal goals and exemplifying the excellent spirit of the Reverend Rush.

Member Church Endowment Service: Providing donors a safe, managed means of leaving their church a funded or testamentary gift.

Opportunities for Giving

Donate to the NACCC

Financial contributions are vital to the ongoing health and vitality of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches and the Congregational Foundation. Donations to the NACCC support our 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 maintain our continued growth.

Shared Ministries Fund: Contributions to the Shared Ministries Fund directly aid the operations, programs, resources, and services of the NACCC.

1620 Legacy Society: The 1620 Legacy Society serves to honor and recognize those who have included or arranged to include a planned gift in their estate plans to benefit the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches or the Congregational Foundation.

The Congregational Foundation: Donations to The Congregational Foundation provide long-term, sustainable sources of revenue that support NACCC ministries and programs.

NACCC College Assistance Fund: Donations to the NACCC College Assistance Fund support the immediate needs of students at Olivet College and Piedmont University and their engagement in high-impact programs.

One Great Hour of Sharing Fund: Donations to the One Great Hour of Sharing Fund provide financial support in relief of poverty, hunger, sickness, conflict, emergency, and natural disaster.

Mission Partners of the NACCC: Contributions to the mission partners of the NACCC directly support the global mission and outreach groups that are partners and affiliates of the NACCC.

The Congregationalist Magazine: Donations to *The Congregationalist* sustain the publishing, printing, and mailing of the magazine, which is provided free of charge in service of promoting the Congregational Way.

Resources for Education and Ministry Training

Congregational Foundation for Theological Studies (CFTS): Recognizing that no one seminary can provide Congregational churches with the variety of leaders and theological viewpoints needed for ministry in our diverse congregations, CFTS students attend accredited seminaries and engage in Congregational studies through CFTS. The program is free and open to students with acceptances to accredited seminaries in pursuit of a Master of Divinity or equivalent degree, with the intention to enter ministry in an NACCC member church.

Lay Ministry Training Program (LMTP): This three-year program was created to provide training for people interested in serving their church more fully. Through virtual classes led by NACCC clergy and church leaders, student cohorts build stronger understandings of biblical knowledge, theology, worship, pastoral care, Christian education, Congregational history and polity, and more. The program is designed to be accessible and affordable. Scholarships are available through the Vitality Ministry Council.

Congregational History and Polity Course: This free, self-paced program is designed to strengthen and deepen one's understanding of Congregationalism. There are two levels of the course. Level 1 provides a basic education on the history, theology, spirituality, and practice of Congregationalism to those who are new to it or wish to learn more about it. Level 2 provides a more in-depth education on the same topics as Level 1 and is intended for those looking to serve a Congregational church in a leadership role.

Events and Programming

Ministers' Convocation

Every year, the NACCC hosts a gathering for clergy designed to provide continuing education, spiritual reflection, and rest. Convocation typically takes place after Easter, a perfect time for clergy to renew themselves. Many churches set aside money to send their pastor to this event, knowing that the spiritual rest their pastor gains benefits the church in many ways.

Annual Meeting and Conference (AMC)

The most prominent NACCC event for member churches and their laity and clergy is the Annual Meeting and Conference. The AMC is an important expression of Congregationalism, where churches send an official delegate to help conduct the business of the assembled churches. It is at the Annual Meeting that churches come together to make decisions important to their common interests. While the delegates conduct the business, there is plenty for others to do. Many people who are not official delegates attend to partake in the fellowship and educational opportunities the AMC offers.

NAPF & HOPE Gathering

The NAPF and HOPE Gathering is an annual event often held in conjunction with the NACCC's Annual Meeting and Conference, bringing together two vibrant yet distinct groups of young people in a shared faith experience. NAPF is designed for youth entering grades 9–12, offering engaging worship, music, service opportunities, and fun in a supportive, counselor-led environment. Simultaneously, HOPE provides young adults post-high-school through age 26 with a peer-led space to deepen their faith through meaningful discussions, leadership opportunities, and shared experiences.

Boston Seminar

Intended for Congregational Foundation for Theological Studies and Lay Ministry Training Program students as well as new-to-us ministers, the Boston Seminar entails a multi-day visit to Boston, Massachusetts, where participants spend time learning about the history and polity of Congregationalism and the unique culture of Congregational ministry through research and gatherings at the Congregational Library & Archives and visits to surrounding areas like Plymouth, Massachusetts.

Webinars

The NACCC regularly offers webinars designed to support the leaders and congregants of our member churches by fostering learning, inspiration, and fellowship. These webinars encompass a wide range of formats, from structured training series led by experienced facilitators that equip participants with practical skills to conversational forums that provide a welcoming space for sharing questions, challenges, and successes around specific topics. Through these online gatherings, the NACCC seeks to strengthen our shared ministry and deepen the bonds within our congregational community.

Stay Connected with the NACCC

The NACCC is most valuable to your church when you are aware of everything we have to offer. Here are the best ways to stay in the know.

Year-Round Delegates (YRD)

Each member church is strongly encouraged to designate a Year-Round Delegate as the main communication link between their church and the NACCC. While others – pastors, church administrators, moderators, etc. – also communicate with the NACCC in important ways, it is the primary job of the Year-Round Delegate to keep the lines of communication open to support our partnership. Year-Round Delegates should be willing and able to:

- Share information from the NACCC to their congregation
- Convey the views and ideas of their congregation to the NACCC
- Participate effectively in online exchanges

To designate or change your Year-Round Delegate, send the following information to NACCC Church Services Coordinator [Laura Wright](#).

Please Complete this Form to Name Your Church's Year-Round Delegate

NAME: _____

EMAIL: _____

MAILING ADDRESS: _____ CITY _____ STATE _____

PHONE NUMBER: _____

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP: _____ CITY _____ STATE _____

CERTIFIED BY (PRINTED NAME): _____

SIGNED, OFFICE HELD: _____

[**Facebook**](#)

“Like” or “follow” our Facebook page for brief, casual updates and reminders about events, opportunities, resources, and more.

[**E-Newsletters**](#)

The NACCC sends out three e-newsletters each month. Our *Community Connections* and *The Messenger* e-newsletters go out on the first and fifteenth of each month, respectively, providing timely updates and information from NACCC staff and leadership.

The third e-newsletter we produce, known as the YRD Line, goes out on the 20th of each month, providing a highlight on NACCC happenings as well as direct access to a wealth of NACCC resources. The YRD Line is tailored to Year-Round Delegates, but anyone interested in receiving

it is welcome to email Communications Manager [Maggie Helmick](#) to be added to the mailing list.

The Congregationalist

Connect with the NACCC community through thought-provoking, long-form articles, published quarterly online and in print.

NACCC Website

We encourage all members of the NACCC to explore our website, a valuable hub of information designed to support and connect our Congregational community. Whether you're looking for details on upcoming events – either in person or online – practical resources for churches and clergy, information on financial assistance opportunities, or resources to deepen your understanding of Congregationalism, our website has it all.

NACCC Yearbook and Member Directory

Every year, the NACCC puts together a yearbook that includes information on our affiliated colleges and universities, state and regional associations, member churches, ministers, Board of Directors, Congregational Foundation Board of Governors, Leadership Council, ministry councils, global mission partners, nominating committee, staff, and more. It is an excellent resource for accessing contact information that can aid you in taking full advantage of fellowship and connection opportunities within the NACCC network. Similarly, our online Member Directory provides access to the location and contact information of our member churches, affiliated clergy, and retired clergy.