

MARCH 2018

The CONGREGATIONALIST

Magazine of the Congregational Way since 1849

VOL. 170 • NO.1

64th
Annual
Meeting
brochure
inside!

RECOGNITION
IS DUE

Learning
Christianity

AN EARTH DAY
THEOLOGY

*Is There Such a Thing as
Congregational
Spirituality?*



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EDITORIAL STATEMENT

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Neither *The Congregationalist* nor the NACCC has a creed or holds positions on social or theological issues; but we recognize the authority of each local church to do so for itself, if and as it wishes, and we encourage thoughtful and respectful discussion of our agreements and differences.



EASTER – April 1, 2018

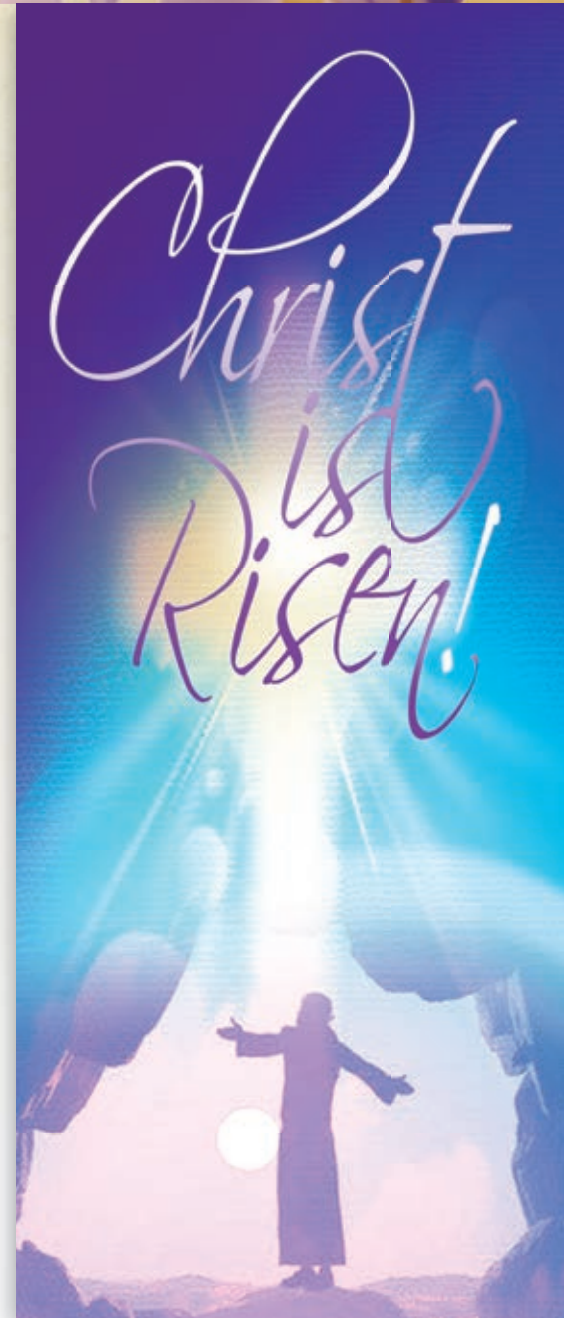
This issue of The Congregationalist will be distributed a bit before Easter. At Christmas, I shared a hymn written by G. K. Chesterton in this column as a way to help us reflect upon the events of Christmas. It seemed appropriate for me now to continue that practice and to share a poem written by Isaac Watts, based on Psalm 118: 24-26, to help us reflect upon Easter. This piece has also been set to music, using various hymn tunes, and could be used in your worship services on Easter..

PSALM 118, Part 4 by Isaac Watts
Hosanna; the Lord's day; or, Christ's resurrection and our salvation.

This is the day the Lord hath made,
He calls the hours his own;
Let heav'n rejoice, let earth be glad,
And praise surround the throne.
Today he rose and left the dead,
And Satan's empire fell;
Today the saints his triumphs spread,
And all his wonders tell.
Hosanna to th' anointed King,
To David's holy Son;
Help us, O Lord; descend and bring
Salvation from thy throne.
Blest be the Lord, who comes to men
With messages of grace;
Who comes in God his Father's name
To save our sinful race.
Hosanna in the highest strains
The church on earth can raise;
The highest heav'ns, in which he reigns,
Shall give him nobler praise.

As God's faithful people who are Congregationalists, we join the chorus of the church through the ages and sing "Hosanna" as we proclaim, "CHRIST IS RISEN! CHRIST IS RISEN INDEED!"

Grace and Peace, Michael



By Michael Chittum,
Executive Director

In the 1990's, a fad swept through the world of Christian young people. A certain slogan appeared on T-shirts, on jewelry, and on many other items of merchandise that were sold in Christian bookstores. Interestingly enough, this brand-new fad was really a hundred years old, being based on a novel written by a Congregational pastor in 1896.

Charles M. Sheldon was one of the leaders of the Social Gospel movement, sometimes called Christian Socialism. Charles Sheldon was born February 26, 1857, in Wellsville, New York. He was the son of a minister, and as a child he lived in a log cabin in the Dakota Territory for a few years. In 1889, he became pastor of a new church, Central Congregational Church in Topeka, Kansas.

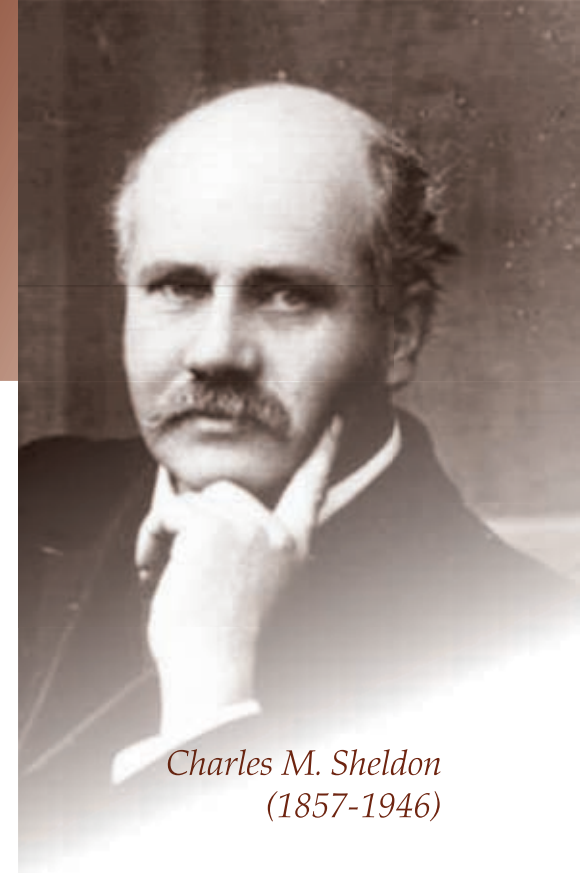
Sheldon had great sympathy for poor people. He spent a lot of time ministering to the black people in the Topeka neighborhood called Tennesseetown.²³⁶ During the depression of the 1890's, Sheldon wanted to know how the unemployed felt. He put on some old clothes and applied for a job at every business in Topeka. He was turned down every single time. Sheldon founded an organization called the Village Improvement Society, which (among other things) found jobs for many unemployed people.

Even though he was a tremendously popular preacher, Sheldon worked for many years at his church without ever asking for a raise in his salary. During this time, he wrote thirty books, as well as many articles, editorials, and poems. For a time, while still serving as pastor of Central Church, he was also the editor

of one of Topeka's major newspapers, the Daily Capital.

In those days, most American churches still had Sunday-night services in addition to their Sunday-morning worship. However, Sunday-night attendance at Sheldon's church was not very high. In order to increase attendance, he started telling very entertaining and very popular story sermons. In 1896, he began a series, essentially a novel with each sermon a different chapter, titled "In His Steps." Eventually, this became a book, after it was published in installments in a Congregational magazine called the Chicago Advance. The book version of "In His Steps" became a huge best-seller, not only in the United States but around the world.

"In His Steps" is the story of Rev. Henry Maxwell, a fictitious pastor of a prosperous church, not unlike Charles Sheldon. While he was working on his sermon one Friday night, a shabby man came to his door. Pastor Maxwell was busy, so he turned the man away. But his conscience bothered him as he watched the poor, dejected tramp walk away with his head down and his hands in his pockets. On Sunday morning, he had a surprise. At the end of the service, the very same man walked up the aisle and stood in front of the pulpit. The man began to speak: "I'm not an ordinary tramp, though I don't know of any teaching of Jesus that makes one kind of a tramp less worth saving than another. Do you? I lost my job ten months ago. Of course, I understand you can't all go out of your way to hunt up jobs for other people like me. I'm not asking you



Charles M. Sheldon
(1857-1946)

to; but what I feel puzzled about is, what is meant by following Jesus. . . . Do you mean that you are suffering and denying yourselves and trying to save lost, suffering humanity just as I understand Jesus did? What do you mean by it?"²³⁷ The man fainted after his speech, and a few days later he was dead, leaving behind a little girl, the child of the man and his late wife.

The following Sunday, Maxwell preached, "I want volunteers from First Church who will pledge themselves, earnestly and honestly for an entire year, not to do anything without first asking the question, 'What would Jesus do?'"²³⁸

236 Butman, "Following in His Steps," *The Congregationalist*, June 1984, 18, in Larson.
237 Charles Sheldon, *In His Steps* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1935), 8-9.
238 *Ibid.*, 15.

Adapted and reprinted with permission from *The Congregational Minute* by Robert Hellam, (Seaside, Calif., Robert Hellam, 2012.)



Along THE WAY

Congregational Church of Menifee Honors Their Veterans

In 2017, members of our congregation who are veterans were honored by the Quilts of Valor Foundation. Quilts of Valor began in 2003 as a grassroots effort on the East Coast to cover our troops “touched by war” with quilts after serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. It all started with one mother making a quilt for her son, and it has grown to a national endeavor, with over 170,000 quilts being awarded to veterans from all wars.

A Quilt of Valor is made of three layers, and each layer has its own special meaning:

- The top with its many colors, shapes and fabrics represents the communities and the many individuals we are.
- The batting, the filler, is the center of the quilt, its warmth. It represents our hope that this quilt will bring warmth, comfort, peace, and healing to the individual who receives it.
- The backing is the strength that supports the other layers. It represents the strength of the recipient, the support of his or her family, our communities, and our nation.

•Each stitch that holds the layers



together represents love, gratitude, and sometimes the tears of the maker.

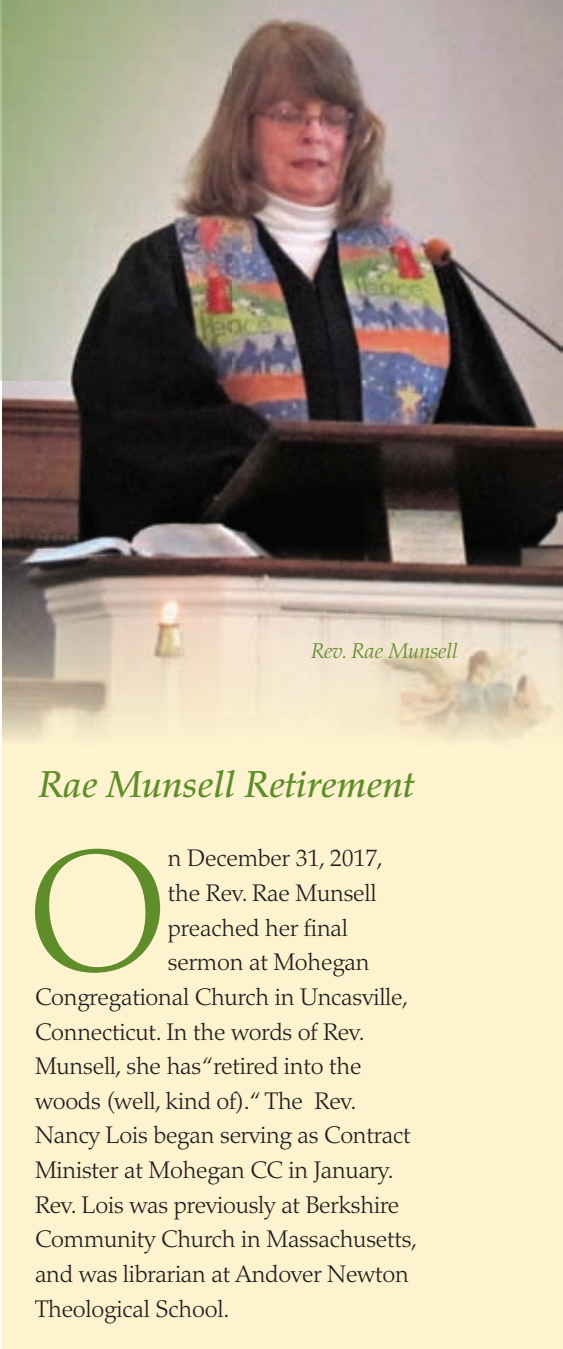
Members of our congregation who have received Quilts of Valor include veterans from WWII, Korea, Vietnam, and the Gulf War. Art Peterson vividly recalls pulling the bodies of friends back to friendly territory during WWII. Leah Chambers Otto, serving as an Army nurse at the same time, tells of cleaning the wounds of injured troops as they left the battlefield. Gene Glaser spent time in the Navy in air intelligence aboard ship during Indonesia unrest and Korea. Bill Rhoads served in the Army as a recruiter and Army Ranger and was in Vietnam during the Tet Offensive. Dan Richards was in the Navy during the Gulf War.

It seems every generation is touched by military conflict, no matter how much we want peace. While we may hate war, we honor and appreciate those brave people who have offered their lives for our freedom.

“Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.”
John 15:13 NIV

Submitted by Rose Rhoads,
Congregational Church of Menifee

Rose Rhoads presents a quilt to veteran Leah Chambers Otto, 94. Rose is a member of the Congregational Church of Menifee and an avid quilter. Making Quilts of Valor with her local chapter (Quilting Angels) is just one of the many ministries she is involved with in her church and community. She grew up a PK (preacher’s kid) playing hymns in her father’s Baptist church.



Rev. Rae Munsell

Rae Munsell Retirement

On December 31, 2017, the Rev. Rae Munsell preached her final sermon at Mohegan Congregational Church in Uncasville, Connecticut. In the words of Rev. Munsell, she has “retired into the woods (well, kind of).” The Rev. Nancy Lois began serving as Contract Minister at Mohegan CC in January. Rev. Lois was previously at Berkshire Community Church in Massachusetts, and was librarian at Andover Newton Theological School.



Veteran Dr. Art Peterson, 91, admires the beautiful quilt presented for his service.

Fox River Hosts CD Release

On Sunday, December 3, 2017, Fox River Congregational Church, Pewaukee, Wisconsin, hosted the premier CD release of the inspiring, new recording of our resident composer, Kostia. *Still, Still, Still* is a collection of piano impressions crafted by Kostia of traditional Christmas melodies. After hearing it, we think you will agree that the recording is destined to become a classic.



Kostia has arranged that half of all proceeds for this recording be donated to the church in perpetuity after production costs have been satisfied.

The event also highlighted our ministries and the unique characteristics of a local Congregational church. We will follow-up the event by reaching out to guests who provided contact information and, again, extend a caring and inviting hand.

Still, Still, Still and other Kostia recordings can be purchased at Amazon.com.

Submitted by Rev. Dr. Lonnie Richardson, Founding Pastor Fox River Congregational Church,

Trunk or Treat!



First Congregational Church of Toulon, Illinois, gets a Halloween make-over for its Trunk or Treat Halloween event this past fall.



Pastor Ron C. McLeod joins church historian Floyd Ham for a photo at FCC Toulon.



This past Fall, a group from First Congregational Church of Wauwatosa attended worship services at the Sikh Gurdwara in Brookfield, toured the temple and were treated to a magnificent lunch by their new Sikh friends.



A marker honors the Methodist church for bringing the Gospel to the area.

Four windows from the Methodist church were restored and installed at Edison Congregational Church.

Windows to the Past

In 1872, Southwest Florida was still a vast wilderness with only four families living in what would one day become the city of Fort Myers. However, that was the year when a Methodist circuit rider arrived after three days on horseback and preached the Good News of the Gospel for the first time in a small borrowed cabin. By 1879, the church was organized with 72 members, and the following year the first house of worship in all the area was built.

All the many churches in our area, including ours – Thomas A. Edison Congregational Church founded in 1925 – owe so much to those who were the first. That Methodist church became a powerful and effective church over the years. Its impact and history are stellar. But like many “downtown” churches it finally closed in 2016 and was demolished in 2017.

A few of the former members of the Methodist Church obtained some of the stained-glass windows when the church was demolished. As well, some of these folks soon became members of our congregation. Then through a simple email exchange, an idea became a real possibility. It was decided to make the effort to redesign and restore the four windows representing the four Gospels and place them in the four windows of our sanctuary.

While our church would benefit from the beautiful addition of the windows, we made it a priority of the project to help preserve the memory of those who paved the way for we who have followed. A bronze marker was purchased and installed to commemorate when the Gospel first came to our community.

The project included obtaining historical preservation approval, raising over \$52,000 for the restoration, the installation of hurricane glass protection and the actual restoration by Casola Stained Glass Studio.

On Sunday, November 5, 2017, a service of dedication was held for the windows.

This is just another wonderful chapter in the story of Edison Congregational Church as we continue to share the Good News in our time and place.

Submitted by Pastor Douglas Kelchmer, Senior Minister, Thomas A. Edison Congregational Church

News AND NEEDS of OUR Missions



Omega College Shoa staff accepted the award.

New Projects for Mission School of Hope

Mission School of Hope, Cameroon, plans to expand its ministry by starting a fishery. Fish are a very important commodity in Cameroon and there is a market for this. The mission will start small and grow.

Second, the mission hopes to build one school building per year for the next four years. Each building will have two classrooms for a total of eight -- two classrooms for kindergarten and six for elementary classes. Currently, children are being sent home because classroom space is inadequate. The hope is to have 500 children in school when the buildings are finished.

The third project is to build a playground. The community's children currently go to school, hunt, and farm. There are no recreational activities available for them. Building a playground with slides, swings and seesaws would provide recreation opportunities. The goal is to involve parents in their children's activities, as well.

One Great Hour of Sharing

The NACCC family has been very generous in donating to the many disasters that hit Texas, Florida, Puerto Rico, and Mexico this past fall. Almost \$100,000 has been collected for relief efforts for hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Marie.

Funds have been sent to Samaritan's Purse, Salvation Army, Church World Service, and Olivet College (work groups). More funds will be sent to other work groups going to Texas in the spring and summer. Hosanna Industries is working with a church in Texas and is planning some home building in the spring.

To help Puerto Rico, Florence Congregational Church in Florence, Massachusetts, raised enough money to purchase 1,000 water filtering units for the island. These filters, called Family Life Straw water filters, provide a family with 18,000 liters (4755 gallons) of clean, drinkable water and require no batteries. The church's work will continue into 2018. They have expanded their relief efforts to include batteries and solar radios with USB ports.



Life Straws packaged in duffels and ready for shipping.

Mission Mazahua, Mexico, answered the call to help earthquake victims in Oaxaca, Mexico by sending a group in November. Pastors, therapists, people handy at construction, doctors and nurses offered their services to the victims in Oaxaca. Another trip is planned for spring.



The Mexico earthquake devastated areas.

CONGRATULATIONS

Christ to the Villages, Nigeria, celebrated its 20th anniversary for the Omega College Shoa, a high school started in 1997. Hundreds have graduated from the school, which has won many awards on the local, state, and national level.

Cook Native American Ministries Foundation (CNAMF), Arizona, was recently awarded Best of Tempe 2017 – Religious Organization. "The award is a testament to our (CNAMF) efforts over the past few years. We are excited to be recognized for our efforts and hope this leads to additional opportunities to support even more Native Americans, their communities, and their churches," stated TJ Hansell, CEO and executive director.



Rev. Peter Smith, Hanson, Mass.; Rev. Jamie Bonnema, Maple Hill, Kan.; Joelle Sommers, Madison, Wis. (first row, l-r) Elba and Julio Santana, Bread of Life Mission; Jan Wilson, Greenville, Iowa; and Linda Miller, NACCC.

Mission Council Visits ECHO

The Fall Budget retreat for the Mission and Outreach Ministry Council was held at Educational Concerns for Hunger, ORG at Educational Concerns for Hunger Org. (ECHO) in N. Fort Myers, Florida. The group stayed in two of the houses on the campus. In addition to planning for the 2018-19 budget year, Council members enjoyed getting to know each other and learning about one of the NACCC's Recommended Missions. They also spent an afternoon working on the farm and doing some cleanup work from Hurricane Irma.

Feeding Program in Haiti

Love Worth Sharing, Haiti, has started a new feeding program and school at the "Mercy" location in Port-au-Prince. It will make a huge difference in the lives of children with disabilities.



Mercy location gets a new coat of paint.

For more information on any of these missions, or to donate to any of the above projects, please contact Linda Miller at the NACCC Office, 800-262-1620, ext. 1618, or lmiller@naccc.org.

For a complete listing of NACCC Mission Projects, please go to our website: www.naccc.org and click on the Missions tab.

Mission and Outreach Ministry Council
NACCC
PO Box 288
Oak Creek, WI 53154

Prayer

Prayers are Needed

Christian Mission in the Far East, Philippines: pray for a successful pastor's retreat this month.

Ministerio Vida Hospital, Honduras: pray for the stability of their country. They are going through a political crisis which affects the patients and their community. Pray for their safety.

Learning Christianity:

REFLECTIONS OF WILLIAM GARBER

Submitted by Rev. Arlin Larson

For Congregational churches, as for most Christian denominations, changes in secular and societal values led to stress within the church as to what their reactions, as Christians, should be. Prior to the Civil War, many important Congregationalists pressed for the abolition of the great sin of slavery. Splits within the church resulted because some strongly believed that the most important church activity should be Salvation of Souls and that the Bible attested that blacks should be slaves. They believed that societal changes should not be a concern of the church. Problems also arose because society shifted from rural to urban after the Civil War, and factories assumed that their only responsibilities were the making and conservation of capital while providing jobs, with no other responsibilities toward their workers. Most churches concentrated upon saving souls, while losing the respect of the workers facing poverty and terrible living conditions.

In 1886, Pastor Walter Rauschenbusch faced the problems of his congregation at a German Baptist church in an impoverished portion of New York City, noting that, while personal devotion was vital to the Christian life, prayer must transcend our own personal needs. In challenging persons who only saw faith as a personal quest to get to heaven he said, "The question is. which will do more to make our lives spiritual and to release us from the tyranny of the world, the thought that we may at any moment enter the presence of the Lord. or the thought that every moment we are in the presence of the Lord?"

Rauschenbusch believed the church to be the incarnation of the Christ-spirit on earth -- the organized conscience of Christendom. It should be the swiftest to consider every undeserved suffering, to speak against every wrong, and to rally moral forces in society against everything that threatens a better life for people. He consequently believed that labor needed to be supported against factors such as 21-hour workdays or longer, six and seven-day work weeks, child labor, and poverty-level pay.

Congregational Minister Washington Gladden also spoke for what he called the "Social Gospel" as a church attendee partnership in societal needs, not charity, and was very much concerned that ministers were too comfortable with preaching personal Salvation and overlooking social problems. To illustrate the need for his conclusions within the church, consider the May 14, 1887, issue of *The Congregationalist*, which included an opinion piece (reflecting many, if not most, churches), which advocated using a Gatling gun to handle dissatisfied workers whose superiors had kindly provided them jobs. In our time, Martin Luther King concluded that "it has been my conviction ever since reading Rauschenbusch that any religion which professes to be concerned about the souls of men and is not concerned about the social and economic conditions that scar the souls is a spiritually moribund religion only waiting for the day to be buried." In other words, Christian churches must take into account societal changes affecting their congregations or they would lose them.

This conflict between self and

community has also been played out, over the years within the business community. The so-called "Robber Barons" of the 1800s generated massive fortunes by making profits for themselves and their stockholders the primary object of their activities. This resulted in severe unrest and boom-and-bust cycles, causing strict banking controls to be implemented after the Great Depression. In 1943, Robert Wood Johnson, the founder of Johnson & Johnson, medical supply corporation, said that a corporation must work to serve five groups in the community in which it operated. These were, in order of importance: customers, workers, managers, the community and, lastly, the stockholders. Johnson & Johnson followed this philosophy of operation and still functions as a successful corporation.

However, in 1970 Professor Milton Friedman, a Nobel Prize-winning economist at the University of Chicago, convinced much of the business community that a corporation has responsibility only to its stockholders. The Great Recession, the concentration of wealth, and the downward plight of the Middle Class resulted. Business and churches are both part of the fabric of society and must not, therefore, seek only to serve their own ends. Present society has again reached toward the era of the "Robber Barons," and I believe that churches must again consider the value of the "Social Gospel" of Washington Gladden. Corporations must again consider the five interest groups outlined by Robert Wood Johnson. Society and the church are entwined and, as Martin

Luther King, Jr. said, the Church risks failure if it does not recognize current societal needs and work to meet them.

The Social Gospel advocated for Congregationalists by the Rev. Washington Gladden arose in the late 1800s as churches began to realize that they were losing their working-class congregants. Among many writers during the "Gilded Age" in Chicago who assessed this change, Maria Darker Wyncoop of the *Chicago Tribune* wrote: "Did ministers of the Gospel perform their duty and maintain the cause of the struggling poor as did Christ, our beloved country would not be in the condition it is today." Ms. Wyncoop believed that the spirit of Jesus was absent from the modern church. Partly because of her writings and those of others, the Annual Meeting of the Chicago Congregational Club in 1894 was dedicated to the "Relation of the Church to the Laboring World." The ministers and their well-off congregants heard and generally disliked the message that Christ was for the poor. He had warned the rich, he denounced force and wealth and usury. He was of and for the people.

The president of the University of Chicago, an attendee, apparently answered by saying, in essence, go found your own church to talk about societal problems. Most attendees seemed to believe that the Church should concentrate upon saving souls, rather than enter societal battles as well. What this decision had on the long, ongoing loss of membership is not clear, but needs continuing study.

I believe attention to the principles

of the Social Gospel is essential to the health of the church, since society and the church are and must be entwined. For me and probably many others, the process of "Learning Christianity" turns out to be a difficult life-long process. An ongoing task for me and the Church and its practitioners is to continue our learning and to fit it to societal needs in the best way possible. Since we are all individuals with differing backgrounds and needs, the task is difficult. What is satisfactory for one is not necessarily so for another, and we have introduced so many versions of Christianity to possible congregants.

However, we and the Church are members of societies and cannot avoid both affecting and being affected by the society we live in. In Congregationalism, Washington Gladden with his Social Gospel recognized this close interrelationship while preaching Congregational Christianity at a time of great social unrest. We are presently in a similar period of unrest, with the societal-stabilizing middle class under attack, and passionate people with differing and strange-to-us Christian beliefs seeking to lead us. Adherence to the Social Gospel with its emphasis upon both personal and societal application of Christian principles, seems to me an imperative for the Church. We must search for the most "Christian" solutions for our country and the world's many difficulties. Saving souls is not enough, saving society is also an imperative for "Salvation!"

Walter Rauschenbusch

William (Bill) Garber passed away on June 27, 2017, at age 99. Bill was a layman at Congregational Church of the Messiah in Los Angeles. Active in the National Association of Congregational Churches, he frequently attended the Annual Meeting and Conference, where he met the Reverend Arlin T. Larson. Bill began attending church at age four and continued his spiritual journey until his death. His family moved around California throughout his childhood, introducing Bill to a variety of Christian churches and theologies. In his early teens, Bill began to question how many Christians could continue to focus only on personal salvation amid the devastation of the Great Depression, the build-up to war, and increasing social ills. Furthermore, his family's impoverished status revealed a class divide in his own congregation. Young Bill was told to concentrate on his own salvation, because socio-economic success was beyond his grasp. The following is excerpted from an essay Bill wrote in 2011.

Honoring a Friend of NACCC

Shirley and I came to Redlands in 1976, when I became the Senior Minister of the First Congregational Church. We first met Madeline and Kenneth Hendershot when they came to church one Sunday morning not long after we arrived. They had moved from York, Pennsylvania, because of an employment opportunity Ken had been offered in San Bernardino. Their three daughters were in college or entering college, and so they became very involved in the life of the congregation.

Madeline served a term on the Memorial Committee and worked on updating the accuracy of the list of memorial gifts made by members of the congregation. Ken soon was elected to the Board of Directors and later served as Assistant Moderator and Moderator.

He was the Chair of the Board of Directors in 1993, when, through his leadership, the church raised over \$300,000 for the purpose of doing a seismic retrofit on the sanctuary building. He was also on the Board of Directors when the church undertook the raising of \$500,000 for the rebuilding of the two church organs. Again, he was on the Board of Directors when the church raised \$500,000 for the refurbishing of the stained-glass windows in the sanctuary.

As we shared in these responsibilities and as we worshipped and fellowshiped together, the Lindens and the Hendershots became good friends. But it was when the NACCC launched the Year Round Delegate Program that the friendship grew. Ken became the church's Year Round Delegate. The church decided that Madeline should also attend the meeting.

Shirley had been attending the Annual Meetings with me almost every year. So, beginning in 2009, Madeline and Ken started attending the Annual Meeting

by Rev. Dr. Lowell Linden

and Conference -- Ken was our Delegate and Madeline was our outgoing and friendly Attendee. She never met anyone she did not like, and she never forgot a name. She looked forward to the times of fellowship, receptions and singing. The Bible Lectures as well as the Congregational Lecture were a highlight, but the high point was often the Sunday worship service. While Ken and I attended to the business of the conference, Madeline and Shirley would often discover what was outside the hotel.

When we were in Milwaukee they said we needed to see the Harley-Davidson Museum. At the end of the tour there were a number of motorcycles that were fixed in place, but you could get on them. Madeline sat on one, and I will always remember the expression of sheer joy on her face - and she wasn't even moving. After the conference in Anchorage we took the train to Denali National Park. We spent the night and then, the next day, we took a twelve-hour bus tour. We saw Mt. McKinley without the clouds as well as a number

The Reverend Dr. Lowell Linden has been active in the National Association for Congregational Christian Churches since 1973. He has fulfilled terms on the World Christian Relations Commission, serving as chairman for the last two years; the Congregational Foundation for Theological Studies, the Executive Committee, with one year as chairman; and the Board of Governors of the Congregational Foundation. He was Senior Minister of the First Congregational Church of Redlands, Redlands, California, for 38 years and is presently the Minister Emeritus.



of grizzly bears. The following day we continued our train trip to Fairbanks and we flew home from there. It seemed that every year she made the time very memorable just by being there.

Madeline and Ken attended every Annual Meeting with us until the meeting in Salt Lake City in 2015. She was having health problems. The following year, in Dearborn, Ken was able to arrange for the necessary dialysis to take place at a clinic not far from the hotel. Shirley accompanied Madeline when she needed to go for treatment. There was still time for them to visit the Henry Ford Museum.

Madeline underwent heart surgery later that year and passed away in 2017. At the time of her passing she was serving on the Board of Directors of the church and she was looking forward to being a part of the Host

Committee at the meeting in San Diego. She leaves Ken, her three daughters and their husbands and four grandchildren.

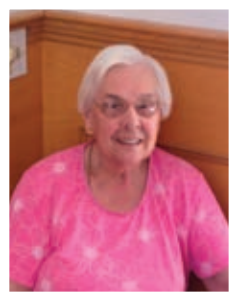
I served a term on the Board of Governors of the Congregational Foundation. The purpose of the Foundation is to raise money for the National Association. It does not determine the purpose for which the funds are raised. I had the privilege of being a member of the Boards of Governors when we called Mrs. Debbie Fulton to be the Director of Development. As we developed long range plans, one of the things she deemed important was the Endowment Fund for the Foundation. An Endowment Fund is monies that remain in the Fund but are invested. The proceeds of that investment are part of what the Foundation is able to give to the Association. Shirley and I are going to make a donation to the Endowment Fund of the Congregational Foundation in memory of Madeline Hendershot. This will honor her memory and will help insure the future of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches.

ROSIE RIVETER *by the Sea...*

by Rev. Dr. Michael W. Glidden

in Standish, Maine. "That pig got us through the cold winter," she noted as she continued to speak of those trying times.

I asked her on one of my visits if she ever heard of Roosevelt. Of course, I knew the answer, I was just looking to see her response. She spoke to me about the fireside chats that FDR gave, bringing a sense of calm during a turbulent time. It was at this time that Hilda went to Gorham State College to pursue a degree in history. After two years and a war that seemed to never end, Hilda left college to help in the defense effort. It was in South Portland that Hilda became part of the folklore of local history. She



Hilda is matriarch of Sebago Lake Church.

worked at the new shipyard in an area currently known as "bug light." During the early days of WW2, the residents of "bug light" were told to evacuate the area. Within a very short time, hundreds of families left their homes and possessions so that a shipyard could be constructed in the name of liberty and defense. There is a memorial

plaque at "bug light" with pictures of the workers who toiled long hours to build these great liberty ships. The women in the pictures were known as "Rosie's," an affectionate nickname for the women who worked at the shipyard doing many of the traditional male trades of that day. Hilda spoke of her job as a "Rosie" who tacked up many panels and then, with a face shield down and heavy gloves to hold the welding torch, made her mark on many ships that would leave the South Portland harbor in the name of

freedom. She told me the pay was quite good back then. A welder in the shipyard easily made \$100 a week, well beyond the \$40 that an average worker in town might make.

I enjoy visiting Hilda. After each visit, I feel as if she has ministered to me. Listening to her stories, I learned what a "living faith" is about. What it means to trust in God for the big picture and to not fret about the details along the way. Hilda taught me to learn to live with the ambiguities of life. Oftentimes in life there is no clear direction, but we must trust that the Spirit will lead us. Hilda still bears the marks of her early life. Her hands are rugged and strong. When she greets me each week, I feel safe in her presence. Knowing that Hilda is a "Rosie" and a Saint of Christ, along with her powerful grip, I know that I have a friend that is praying for me and encouraging me in the ministry.



The Rev. Michael Glidden, D.Min, has been the senior pastor of the Sebago Lake Congregational Church in Standish, Maine, since 2012. He has been pastoring since 1993. Rev. Glidden earned his Master of Divinity Degree in 1995 from Bangor Theological Seminary and a Doctor of Ministry Degree from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in 2002. He was ordained in 2000. Mike lives in Saco, Maine, with his wife Rhonda.

As you enter the Sebago Lake Congregational Church on any Sunday, you will notice in the corner sitting on a 100-year-old chair, parishioner Hilda. Hilda faithfully greets parishioners and visitors every Sunday by handing out a bulletin with a big smile. She's been greeting people for over half a century. At 95 years of age, Hilda is a matriarch of the Sebago Lake Church. She's also a good storyteller, bearing witness to the many high and challenging times of the church's 100-year ministry in the community. Hilda with a smile says that she has seen it all!

Over the years, I've gotten to know Hilda in a personal way. She was born in 1923. Her father was a farmer who raised livestock for survival. As a young girl, she remembers getting a pig's tail for Christmas. "The tail even had a ribbon on it," laughed Hilda as she told me about life during the Great Depression

A memorial at Bug Light Park commemorates Liberty Ships built there.

Accidental GEEK

By Dawn Carlson

A number of years ago, Rob Brink wrote a great introduction to Trello, a collaboration tool that has become the "go to" web page for NACCC committees, boards and councils. It's a great tool, and we have all come to depend on it to share agendas, meeting notes and minutes and resources that make the work go more smoothly. The phrase, "... and it's been posted on our Trello board," has become a regular statement in NACCC emails.

But a Trello board can be used for much more than group communication and collaboration. Lifehacker.com says you can use Trello to organize your life. I'm not sure about that, but I use it twice a year to organize Advent and Lent. For me, it's become an indispensable tool.

Basically, Trello takes a web-based page and lays out lists horizontally across the page so you can see, in one glance, your entire projects. Within each list are vertical cards, with supporting information, that can be dragged, dropped and copied to other lists. It's like virtual post-it notes on a giant cork board, with an ability to reorder and move about as needed. In a way, it's a much greener way to have a huge ring binder filled with everything in one place.

When I set up a Trello board for Advent, my lists are basically these: Overall Theme, Weeks of Advent & Services, Special Services, Online Studies, General Resources. Each list includes the graphics that go with that,

such as the weekly bulletin art and online banners. The lists for the Weeks of Advent included the lectionary texts and sermon notes. Online studies cards include daily devotionals and calendars. As needed, I add more cards and lists, allowing me to see all of my seasonal planning in one place. So, how could Trello be a handy and productive tool for you? You could use it with committees in your church or to plan a sermon series. It might become a useful tool to plan a month's or quarter's worth of sermons or a fundraising project. You can even use it to plan a wedding or family vacation, as a weekly planner or keep notes for a home improvement project.

There are Trello apps for your phone, and things can be added to your board via email, so the possibilities are endless. We can all welcome a time saving, space saving and paper saving tool that keeps us organized and on top of the daily things that drop in our laps. Trello may just be that for you.



The Rev. Dawn Carlson

The Phoenix Congregational Fellowship - A Church without Walls
Find us online: The Phoenix Congregational Fellowship
Find us on Facebook: The Phoenix on Facebook

SOLE HOPE Shoe Party:

ALL-CONFERENCE MISSION PROJECT — SAN DIEGO

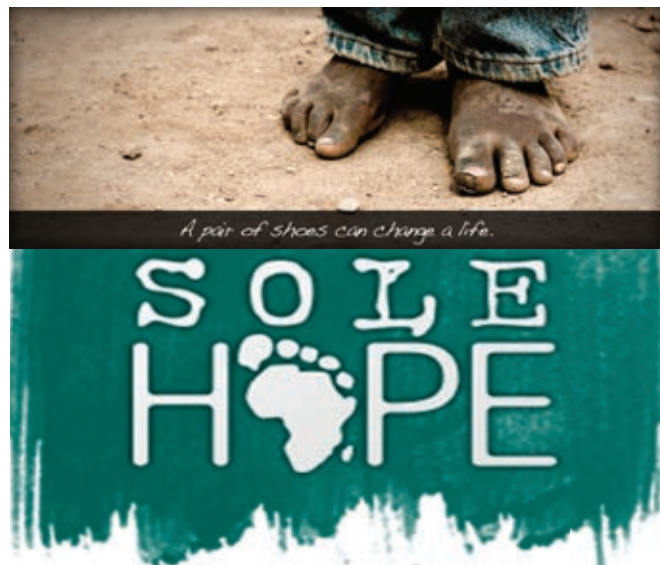
By Laura Hamby

Start today: Collect used blue or black jeans and financial donations to support our mission project in San Diego.

Ship denim to: First Samoan Church, 1345 S. 45th Street, San Diego, CA 92113. If you are driving or have room in your suitcase, bring the jeans with you.

Send Next Step donations to: NACCC, PO Box 288, Oak Creek, WI 53154. Please specify Sole Hope Project.

Thank you for putting your soul into the Sole Hope Mission Project! For information and tips for shipping discounts, email: laurajhamby@gmail.com.



It's a party. No, it's a mission project. Yes it is a party and a mission project! Sole Hope Shoe Parties are a chance for people of all ages to participate in the shoe-making process.

NAPF/HOPE and NACCC Annual Meeting and Conference attendees will come together for the All-Conference Mission Project on Sunday, June 24 in San Diego. We have teamed up with Sole Hope to prep the fabric that will be finished into shoes in Uganda. The shoes will go on the feet of children to help them live free from jiggers. Sole Hope believes actions based on love and hope can change a nation. Their servant model for love and hope is Christ Jesus.

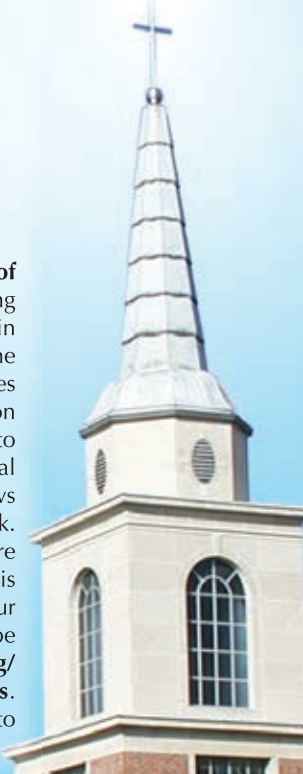
Jiggers is a common term for tungiasis, a tropical, parasitic skin disease that results when infected fleas burrow into skin, usually the soles of the feet. Untreated, patients can die of secondary infections such as tetanus and gangrene.

The shoes are cut from old denim jeans, (not stretchy denim). Each pair of shoes requires a Next Step Donation of \$10 to cover the process of shipping the shoe parts we prepare to Uganda; paying the wages of the tailors and shoemakers; purchasing the additional shoe materials; and getting them to a clinic and onto the feet of the children.

Seeking a Minister



First Congregational Church of Royal Oak (Michigan) is seeking a **full-time Senior Minister** to join us on a journey to discover the meaning of the Gospel as it relates to our daily lives. This person may not have all the answers to life's theological, philosophical and moral questions, but knows the important questions to ask. A vacancy notice with more detailed information about this position opportunity and our 300-member church can be found at <http://www.fccro.org/welcome-to-fcc/opportunities>. Inquiries may also be directed to FCCROSearch@gmail.com.



The CONGREGATIONALIST

Magazine of the Congregational Way since 1849

AT A CROSSROADS:

Determining the Future of the Congregationalist

By Marianne King, editor

Dewey Gierke, pastor at First Congregational Church in Cape Coral, Florida, recently referred to *The Congregationalist* as "the one thing that unifies the diverse churches and congregations that make up the NACCC." I like that thought. There are myriad ways the magazine can serve Congregationalism: preserving its history for future generations; advancing the understanding and practice of the Congregational Way; helping our members overcome the challenges facing today's churches; and providing a platform for theological thought and discussion, among others. But, Dewey's comment seemed to zero in on a key fact: The Congregationalist reminds us all, regardless of our thinking or theology, that we share our approach to practicing church.

Unfortunately, we are faced with another, less pleasant fact: The Congregationalist is operating at a serious deficit.

According to Dan Drea, NACCC chief financial officer, "The annual cost of producing the four issues of the magazine is about \$60,000. Revenues from the magazine plus contributions in support of the magazine bring the net cost down to \$40,000, which is absorbed by the Shared Ministries Fund budget of the NACCC." As production costs rise, so does the financial burden on the Shared Ministries Fund.

We need to reduce expenses, and consider proposals from interested vendors in the hopes of lowering costs while maintaining quality. Strategies are also underway to increase the magazine's appeal to advertisers. Neither effort is likely to make up the shortfall. As a result, The Congregationalist Task Team is investigating other options for lowering expenses, such as greatly reducing the number of magazines printed and encouraging more folks to read the magazine online.

Before we take any such steps, we need to hear from you, our readers. This is your magazine, and your feedback is vital to its future health.

You are encouraged to participate in an online Reader's Survey, so we can better understand how and why you read *The Congregationalist*.

To take the survey, please enter the following link in your website browser: www.surveymonkey.com/r/9TNLLZ6



AWAKENINGS

Congregational Symposium

Explore Congregationalism's involvement in the Great Awakenings of the 18th and 19th centuries and how it informs our identity today.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER
The Rev. Dr. Eric Elnes
Author, *Gifts of the Dark Wood*

October, 11–13, 2018
First Congregational Church
Marshalltown, Iowa



FCC - Marshalltown symposium host

Papers are invited on symposium themes: *Awakening in History, Awakening in Spirit, Awakening to New Dreams*

Contact: Rev. Dr. Charles Packer
drcapacker@gmail.com
1-800-262-1620 Ext. 1613



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Intimately CONNECTED

(AN EARTH DAY THEOLOGY)

by Lawrence H. Balleine

Its first edition appeared in the spring of 1970. Occurring on college campuses around the nation it was called a “Teach In,” and was designed as a day set aside to increase our awareness of the various environmental issues we were facing and to commit ourselves to be good stewards of creation. This initial effort, which in succeeding years would become known as Earth Day, continues to be celebrated annually on April 22. Although not officially a “holy day,” Earth Day addresses an important subject that is found early in scripture: our relationship with the creation.

Environmental issues are now often considered “political issues.” Yet they have always been much, much more. They are faith issues and have been ever since the second creation story. Recorded in the second chapter of Genesis, this creation account reminds us that God “placed the man in the garden to till it and keep it.” It is a symbolic way of indicating humankind’s responsibility to maintain and safeguard the creation, and serve as a steward or caretaker of it.

This responsibility became absolutely clear to me some years ago in another garden scene. Having lived in church-owned housing all our post higher education life, my spouse and I never owned any real estate. This changed in 2001 when we purchased five acres of rural land in Green County, Wisconsin. Although we continued to rent most of the acreage to a neighboring farmer for an alfalfa crop, we retained a small section for a vegetable garden.

After tilling the soil in preparation

for planting our first garden, I knelt down to remove some of the remaining weeds. That’s when it happened! I was seized with a feeling and a realization I did not expect. I assumed that I would feel a grand sense of “ownership,” but instead – kneeling in the moist, freshly turned soil and listening to the chirping sparrows in the brush of the nearby fence line and smelling the distinct aromas that often permeate the heart of America’s dairy land – I felt both small and humble. I recalled the names “Prisk” and “Bidlingmaier.” These were the families who had previously “owned” this land. And then I thought, “We now own it, but only for a while. In less than fifty years it will belong to someone else.” I realized it is ours NOT TO CONTROL. It is ours TO TAKE CARE OF and to be responsible for so that, in time, it can be passed on to someone else, just as it had been passed on to us. Moreover, I recounted that I had often spoken about stewardship of creation and being a caretaker of God’s good earth; but at that moment I felt what it means to be a steward or caretaker of the land. And as I sensed a connection with the land’s previous owners as well as a connection with the fertile soil that was now sifting through my fingers, the meaning of the words of the Genesis story came alive in a profound way: “I had just “tilled” the garden; now I realized I must also “keep” it.

The Ten Commandments are found in Exodus and repeated in Deuteronomy. They, along with over 600 other laws, were designed to help organize, protect, and direct the life and conduct of the early Hebrew people who had left their

captivity in Egypt and were returning to the land of their ancestors. Whereas the first three commandments from the Top Ten list (the Ten Commandments) deal with our relationship with God, the last seven address our relationships with each other. That’s why we often refer to the two tables of the law. Noting this “dual direction” – toward God and others – Jesus’ response to the Pharisees’ challenge (“Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?”) is not surprising: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

Yet it is profoundly intriguing that appearing in scripture before the commandments listed in Exodus and Deuteronomy are “earlier” commandments. They are found in the two creation stories recorded in Genesis 1 and 2. And among them are commands that do not deal with our relationship with God. Nor do they address our relationships with other persons. Instead, they speak to our relationship with the creation.

Indeed, it is important to realize that there are two creation stories found in the book of Genesis: the account wherein God creates for six days and rests on the seventh recorded in Genesis 1, and a second narrative found in Genesis 2 wherein God “forms man from the dust of the ground” and then plants a garden in Eden where “he put the man

whom he had formed.” The reason for two stories? Those compiling Genesis drew from at least two sources. Although there are many differences between the two stories, they both claim God to be the creator and both indicate that humankind has been given a position of great responsibility in relation to the rest of creation. Yet how we carry out this role differs greatly. In the first creation story, humankind is given “dominion” over the rest of creation and told to “fill the earth and subdue it.” In the second, God places man in the garden (the earth/environment) to “till it and keep it.” That is, to maintain it, safeguard it and to be a steward and caretaker of it. “Is this a case of the Bible presenting us with two rather contradictory statements, and we are left to decide which one we will follow?”

We have a choice. We can view ourselves as “apart from nature,” or as “a part of nature.” If we choose the former, we will probably be advocates of the creation story recorded in the first

chapter of Genesis where humankind is commanded by God to “be fruitful and multiply” and to “subdue” the earth. If, however, we view ourselves as “a part of” nature, we will probably subscribe to the creation story found in Genesis 2 where God places the man in the garden (on the earth) to “till it and keep it.” And that choice – viewing ourselves “apart from” nature and then acting in ways which indicate we feel detached from the creation; or, considering ourselves as “a part of” nature and acting in accordance with this connection – can have a tremendous impact upon the environment. For if we see ourselves “apart from nature,” there is a greater risk of treating the environment with neglect and even disrespect. (This is especially true if we feel it is our role to impose our will upon nature.) Whereas if we see ourselves as a part of nature, we are much more likely to appreciate it, seeking to live in harmony with it.

This concept of being “a part of nature/

creation” and consequently, being “at one with creation” took on additional meaning and was reinforced by a recent experience at a powwow at the Trail of Tears Commemorative Park in Hopkinsville, Kentucky. There I met Keith “Little Badger” – a member of the Metis tribe – and his spouse, “Talking Bird.”

“Be sure to go out in the circle and dance when they call for an ‘All Nations’ Dance,” said Little Badger.

“But I’m not Native American.”

I responded.

“Doesn’t matter. We are all connected as brothers and sisters; just go out there and enjoy yourself,” Little Badger said reassuringly.

Soon I heard the invitation over the public-address system: “Next we have an All Nations Dance.” “Should I enter the circle and attempt to dance, or shouldn’t I,” I asked myself. “Why not?” I finally decided. Not without some hesitation, I, along with about fifty other folks –

Continued next page





Intimately CONNECTED

(AN EARTH DAY THEOLOGY)

(Continued)

almost all Native American – stepped into the dance circle. Many were wearing Native American ceremonial attire; a few, like me, were dressed in casual clothing. With a diameter of about thirty or forty yards, the circle provided ample space for all of us.

A colorfully clad Native American began to beat the powwow drum. “What do I do now?” I asked myself. I decided to walk the perimeter of the circle. Then, from my young adult years wherein I had worked with the Boy Scouts, I recalled some Native American dance movements: “Toe-heal; toe-heal; toe-heal.” I attempted to dance. I felt clumsy and wondered what a spectacle I might be making of myself. But no one seemed to notice. I became less aware of my surroundings, except for what was immediately under my feet. “This ground,” I thought to myself, “this ground is harder than any ground I have ever stepped upon. It is harder than concrete.” And then, in another moment came an extremely strange sensation. I felt as if my body was shrinking. I ceased to feel my usual 5 feet and 7 inches. I felt as if I was only about three feet tall. This feeling of “diminishment” was not

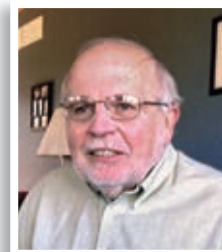
bad, unpleasant, or scary. Rather, it was pleasing, peaceful, blissful, and almost euphoric. Moreover, I felt intimately close to the Earth beneath my feet – connected in a way I had never felt before. The feeling continued until the beating of the drum ceased. Then, within a few seconds, my 5-foot, 7-inch frame “returned.”

“Wow!” I said to myself as I exited the circle. “I need to tell Little Badger and Talking Bird what just occurred.” After glancing back at the circle, I hustled off with both awe and excitement to report my experience to Keith and Cheryl.

Reaching their tent, I blurted out: “You wouldn’t believe what just happened out there.” Keith nodded and smiled as if he already knew what I was about to report to him before I said it. “Larry, he responded, “you were just connecting with our Earth Mother. Native Americans believe all living things are connected in a deep (intimate) spiritual way. The bird to the branch, the branch to the tree, the tree to the earth. You were experiencing that kind of connection.” This epiphany was one of the most powerful experiences I’ve ever had and continues to influence the way I feel about creation and our connection with it.

Maybe this intimate connection with the earth should not be surprising; after all, in the second creation story – the one recorded in Genesis 2 – God formed Adam from the dust of the earth and then breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being. Are we not therefore – from the beginning – connected with God who breathed that breath of life into us, and connected to the earth from which we were formed?

“Filling” and “subduing” and living “apart from” creation or “tilling” and “keeping” and “being” a part of “creation – that is our choice. I prefer the latter. For the former often proves to be short-sighted and self-serving; the second encourages us to tenderly care for God’s good earth and then pass down this wonderful gift to those who succeed us. As a grandfather of four grandchildren, I desire for them and their future children an earth with clean water and air, good soil, and abundant wildlife, and where creation continues to be viewed and treated with care and respect.



Lawrence Balleine is a 1975 CFTS graduate and past contributor to *The Congregationalist*. Now retired, he served as a pastor with Congregational and United Church of Christ congregations for over forty years.



RECOGNITION is DUE

The recognition of one’s peers is the highest form of praise, so the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches (NACCC) is especially pleased to provide its members opportunities for recognizing ministers who have made special contributions to Congregationalism.

Excellence in Ministry Awards

Annual Excellence in Ministry Awards are given at the discretion of the Vitality Ministry Council (VMC).

Award nominees should exemplify personal commitment to the Congregational principles of faith, freedom, and fellowship. Churches or individuals may make nominations. Supporting documentation, such as letters of support and/or articles about the nominee, may also be submitted to assist the VMC in its selection process.

Butman Awards

The Harry R. Butman Award is given to an ordained minister who has served at least 10 years in an NACCC church. The nominee must have demonstrated a commitment to the principles of Congregationalism. The \$500 award is intended to provide ministerial assistance to lift and encourage a minister.

The Jennette Butman Award goes to the spouse of a Congregational minister who has served an NACCC church for at

least 10 years and has assisted his or her spouse in ministry. The \$500 award is based on need, merit, or outstanding achievement.

Deadline for submitting nominations for the Butman awards is April 30, 2018. Award winners will be announced at the 2018 Annual Meeting & Conference in San Diego.

Joseph Jones Russell Sermon Award

The J.J. Russell Sermon Award recognizes pastoral excellence in preaching related to Congregationalism. Submitted sermons must focus on some aspect of classical Congregationalism and its relevance for today. The sermon must have been preached/can be preached any time from July 1, 2017 to April 30, 2019. An applicant must be an ordained pastor who is serving an NACCC active-member church of under 400 congregants.

Submissions must include the following:

- 1) A copy of the Sunday worship bulletin at which the sermon was preached,
 - 2) DVD, YouTube, or website link of the sermon in its entirety (visual and audio preferred),
 - 3) Full manuscript or a minimum two-page outline transcript of the sermon.
- Send links and documents to the Rev. Justin J. Nierer via email at

theoutreachguy@hotmail.com. Please email Rev. Nierer if you require a mailing address or for submitting a DVD.

The winner of the Russell Award will be announced at the 2019 Annual Meeting and Conference in Cleveland. Winner of the award will receive \$350, full registration to the NACCC Annual Meeting and Conference, and a 50 percent discount on the room rate at the meeting.

Nomination Forms

To obtain a nomination form, go online to <http://www.naccc.org/awards.html>. All completed nomination forms and materials should be submitted by email to Rev. Nierer at theoutreachguy@hotmail.com.



2018 Meeting AND EVENTS

Sleeping, Dreaming, and Awakening:

Biblical and Spiritual Reflections on a Human Process

The Rev. Dr. Charles Packer, Chaplain-Director of the Congregational Retreat Society, and Dean of the Congregational Foundation for Theological Studies, will lead three sessions during the Quiet Day Retreat held on Friday, June 22, 2018, from 9:00 am to 3:30 pm, at the Spiritual Ministry Center, one block from the Pacific Ocean, at 822 Del Mar Avenue, San Diego, California 92107.

Although we consider the process of sleeping, dreaming, and awakening as a normal process and part of the human condition, many cultures and religious traditions have regarded this regular pattern as having psychological and spiritual significance. Even in the Bible, people have life-changing encounters with the divine as a result of it. Scripture offers insights into why we sleep, dream, and awaken; the importance of where we do these things; and the meaning of each portion of the cycle. The retreat will provide long blocks of silence to read, meditate, journal, and delve deep.

The cost is \$30 per person, and there is limited space available. Please contact Rev. Packer at drcapacker@gmail.com soon, but no later than May 31, 2018, if you would like to attend. Checks made out to the Congregational Society of Classical Retreat Guides may be sent to: Rev. Dr. Charles Packer, Pine Hill Congregational Church, 4160 Middlebelt Road, West Bloomfield, Michigan 48323

Boston Seminar in Summer 2018

The next Boston Seminar in Congregational History and Polity will take place from Sunday, July 29-Friday, August 3, 2018, as an opportunity to visit the settings of some of North American Congregationalism's origins, including Plymouth Plantation and some of the earliest Congregational meeting houses in the country. A requirement of students in the Congregational Foundation for Theological Studies program, a limited number of spaces are open for others who may wish to take part and explore the roots of Congregational identity, faith, and practice. Presentations on subjects related to Congregational history and polity by the Rev. Norm Erlendson and the Rev. Dr. Charles Packer will take place at the Congregational Library in Boston, and students will be able to spend time doing research. Some rooms are reserved at the Mariner's House in Boston's North End, but will fill quickly.

For more information and to indicate interest, please contact Rev. Dr. Charles Packer, Dean of the Congregational Foundation for Theological Studies, by phone at 1-800-262-1620, Extension 1613, or by email at drcapacker@gmail.com.

Awakenings Symposium in October 2018

After a long hiatus, a new Congregational Symposium is being held, hosted by the First Congregational Church of Marshalltown, Iowa, from Thursday evening to Saturday mid-day, October 11-13, 2018!

The Symposium will make us more aware of Congregationalism's involvement in and response to the Great Awakenings of the 18th and 19th centuries. However, the concept of "awakening" can inform present and future expressions of Congregational identity, worship, spirituality, and aspiration, as well. Papers are being invited and will engage the categories of: Awakenings in History; Awakenings in Spirit; and Awakening to New Dreams. This event will highlight the scholarship of many among our churches and especially focus on the research of several graduates of the Congregational Foundation for Theological Studies program.

The Rev. Dr. Eric Elnes, Senior Minister of Countryside Community Church (United Church of Christ) in Omaha, Nebraska, and author of *Gifts of the Dark Wood*, will be the keynote speaker for the symposium. Currently, Dr. Elnes is involved in the establishment of the Tri-Faith Initiative, described by its website as being "made up of three Abrahamic faith groups who have chosen to be in relationship together as neighbors on one campus, committed to practicing respect, acceptance and trust." Dr. Elnes is a highly sought-after presenter on a wide variety of topics, including worship renewal, spiritual practices in a post-modern world, faith and Creation care, and others.

Further details will be forthcoming, but

please feel free to make inquiry with the Rev. Dr. Charles Packer, Dean of the Congregational Foundation for Theological Studies, at "<mailto:drcapacker@gmail.com>" drcapacker@gmail.com or by calling 1-800-262-1620, extension 1613.

49th Annual Midwest Minister's Convocation April 9-12, 2018

Join us for education, inspiration and relaxation at the Weber Center in Adrian, Michigan, April 9-12. The event offers an exciting program of speakers and entertainment.

Featured speaker is the Rev. Dr. Kyle J.A. Small, Dean of Formation for Ministry and Associate Professor of Church Leadership at Western Theological Seminary. Dr. Small is an ordained pastor (originally in the Evangelical Covenant Church and now in the Reformed Church in America). His teaching and research focus on the church in America, spiritual formation, leading Christian communities, and theological education.

According to Dr. Small, "The church is a living organism that is local and transcendent. It is located in human communities such as neighborhoods and organizations. It is holy under the power of the Spirit and in the name of Jesus. How do we wrestle with the holy and human nature of organizations? What does the cultural and continent nature of American organizations have to do with the church? What organizational forms and innovations are emerging that can join the church to the power of the Spirit in the name of Jesus?" These things will come together as attendees seek to deepen their ability to lead the church in mission.

Sr. Nancy Murray, Adrian Dominican nun and sister of actor Bill Murray, will perform her acclaimed one-woman show depicting Saint Catherine of Siena on Monday evening, April 9. The Rev. Tim

Chappell, a professional comedian and Senior Minister of First Congregational Church of Clarkston, Michigan, will provide an evening of comedy.

The Weber Center offers hospitality, beautiful facilities and grounds, good food and peaceful areas for personal reflection and prayer. The smoke-free facility features double or single private rooms with baths. All floors have internet access. The woodland setting includes an outdoor labyrinth and circle meditation

garden. The Weber Center is 90 minutes from Detroit's Metro airport. Call the center at 517-266-4000 to arrange for airport pick up and drop off for a nominal fee.

Cost for the conference, meals, and lodging is \$250. **Registrations must be received by March 19, 2018. Space is limited. For registration forms and program information go to www.naccc.org or www.centerforcongregationalleadership.org.**

CHRISTIAN PILGRIMS TOUR September 20-28, 2018

England, Netherlands & Boston

Join us on this educational and inspiring journey as we trace the steps of our Pilgrim heritage! Executive Director Rev. Dr. Michael Chittam will be lending his knowledge along the way to help us understand the history.



Fly from Boston non-stop to London for sightseeing before heading north to Nottinghamshire. Other stops in the itinerary include Retford, Babworth, Bawtry, Austerfield, Amsterdam, Leiden. the tour will finish up back in Boston in the town of Plymouth at the world famous Plymouth Rock.

Cost for this trip is \$3124 per person, double occupancy based on 100 people. (Not inclusive of all meals, days spent independently from group in London, or entrance fees such as Plymouth Plantation.)

Breakfast included 9/22-9/28. Single occupancy available.

Prices and schedule subject to change. Contact Doreen Drew & Amy Wylie - the Travel Experts at Cruise Planners American Express for complete details at **1-800-497-2129** or email Amy.Wylie@CruisePlanners.com Website: www.cleartravellnow.com

The Local Church IN A DIVIDED WORLD

Ronald R. Johnson is author of *What Does God Do from 9 to 5?* He has a Ph.D. in philosophy from Saint Louis University and teaches extension courses for Spring Arbor University in Michigan. He is writing a biography of Lloyd C. Douglas.



by Ronald R. Johnson

Everybody's saying that America is becoming divided. That's the persistent refrain these days, but in one sense, we've been divided from the beginning.

Federalists pushed for adoption of the Constitution while anti-federalists warned that the national government would take away states' rights. Some wanted the new nation to be free of the scourge of slavery while others fought hard to preserve the plantation way of life. Regional differences were already in place in colonial times. Even the Plymouth colony, which is so central to Congregational history, had to deal with the differences between those who had come to the New World for religious freedom and those who had come merely for economic opportunity.

But although we've been divided throughout our history, we all sense that there's a more profound schism occurring now. So deep is this gap, in fact, that we can't even agree on its causes. But I am hoping to pinpoint a few of the symptoms.

The most obvious manifestation of the current division is the fact that each side considers its opponents evil. We have a long history of disagreements in this country, but these days it is common for us to think of those who don't agree with us as villains. We do not try to understand their motives because we assume that they are irrational. We do not search for points on which we can compromise because one does not make concessions with the devil.

This is a problem, however, because a democratic republic such as ours is based

on open discussion and deliberation. When we dismiss each other, ruling out the possibility of fruitful conversation about the matters on which we disagree, then we imperil the social bonds that make it possible for us to live together in peace and liberty.

I mentioned this recently to my students and one of them replied, "I can see what you're saying in principle, but this case is different. [Person X] really is evil."

That, of course, is the problem: that we are so used to thinking in these terms that it is only by a conscious effort that we will be able to view the situation otherwise.

"Okay," another student said. "They're not evil. They're just stupid."

This reminded me of something Shailer Mathews once wrote. Mathews was the chair of the Religion Department at the University of Chicago in the early twentieth century. He told about a professor of religion at a Christian college who was summoned before the school's Board of Trustees for allegedly calling his opponents "knaves." "That's a lie!" he said. "I didn't call them knaves. I said they were naive."

It makes little difference whether we consider our adversaries demons or dunces; one way or the other, we're declaring them unworthy of our respect. They are not our equals, either morally or intellectually, nor would it do us any good to try to reason with them, we tell ourselves. Regardless of what has caused us to come to this moment, this is one of the most important symptoms of our current social malaise: that we are quite solemnly convincing ourselves that those

who do not think as we do are beneath us.

The second symptom is our tendency to embrace one set of values theoretically and a different set in actual practice. We believe in free speech, but we refuse to listen. We uphold the right of all to vote but we do not trust half of the electorate to choose wisely. On social media we casually "Like" all kinds of things that we would never say to anybody's face.

There's nothing new about this. Hypocrisy is as old as civilization. Our aspirations have always outreached our grasp, and in each generation prophets have arisen to make us aware of this discrepancy and to call us to repentance. What's new in this present crisis, however, is that our prophets are as guilty as the rest of us. On the religious scene, leaders of many denominations are reducing Christian faith to a few hot-button social issues and declaring that those who disagree are not really Christians. On the political scene, many of our nation's leaders are so busy finger-pointing that they are unable to point the way toward greater unity. Whatever the causes of our current division may be, one important symptom is that we have few authentic prophets calling us to live up to our highest ideals.

The third symptom is a shrinking of our window to the world. The debate over "fake news" is only one small part of this problem. Now that we have limitless sources of information available to us online, we could hypothetically broaden our horizons, learning about ways of life that have been inaccessible to us until now. In actuality, however, we tend to choose sources of information that

confirm what we already think or express a worldview which readily fits in with our own. When we do make an occasional foray into some other camp of thought, it is often just to get ammunition. Armed with a few choice quotations, we go back to our own camp and tell everybody about the outlandish things we overheard in enemy territory. Then our "Friends" share our consternation by "Liking" our comments.

Education, in a broad sense, has always been at the heart of the American ideal. By joining together in a common social bond on an equal basis, we mutually enter into an adventure of discovery. As we cooperate with one another in the making of a free society, we cannot help but learn about each other and from each other. We become educated just by working together with those who do not share our view of the world. But we are increasingly being offered the opportunity to pick and choose our social circles, and our window to the world becomes more narrow with each choice.

If I have accurately described some of the symptoms from which we're suffering as a people, then here's the good news: the local church can be a powerful antidote.

I said that we've gotten into the habit of demonizing those who disagree with us, but in the local church we gather to worship with real people who represent the other side. Of course, our congregation may be somewhat lopsided on either the liberal or the conservative end of the continuum, but chances are that there's somebody

from the opposing camp sitting next to us in the pew. Any married couple may have divergent political ideals, or if our congregation has large families there will surely be a variety of views represented within them. Perhaps we've never thought about it before, but they're there whether they speak up or not. And because we're assembled in the name of Christ, we're invited to extend the hand of fellowship to one another. The church is a level playing field, or is supposed to be, anyway. We're all equally in need of the regeneration that only Christ can give. It's a great place to look one another in the eye and practice the art of acceptance—the same acceptance that we hope Christ will give to us.

That's the lesson that the Parable of the Unforgiving Debtor is meant to illustrate (Matthew 18:21-35). There's something particularly distasteful about the first debtor, who owed so much, having no compassion on the second debtor, who owed so little. We're all debtors before God, and if, in the current social climate, we're tempted to forget that, then the local congregation is a great place to rediscover the truth.

The church is also—and has always been—the headquarters for overcoming hypocrisy. Despite the old cliché that the churches are filled with hypocrites, it is the local congregation, more than any other social group on earth, that has the resources to surmount this problem. In our music, our preaching, our fellowship groups, our praying, and almost everything we do, we are invited on a regular basis to compare our lives

with the One who came to serve rather than be served. No other force at work in this world so consistently reminds us to match our words and deeds to His.

Finally, faced with a narrowing of people's worldviews, it is the local congregation that offers an alternative, for when we enter its doors, we find them opening outward onto the largest of all horizons: eternal life with an Eternal Lord. In His presence we are called to expand our horizons rather than restrict them, to open our hearts and minds rather than close them, to learn the new things He would teach us rather than merely to confirm what we already think we know.

Everywhere around us we see the symptoms of growing division. Most alarming of these is our increasing inability to talk to one another. But in the local church, we are offered the tools for encountering one another in honesty and compassion, equally aware of our need of God's grace. As we meet together in His presence, we are invited to form lasting bonds that cannot be sundered, even in these dark times.

Is there such a thing AS A “CONGREGATIONAL SPIRITUALITY”?

by Daniel Kidder-McQuown

The history and polity of Congregationalism are well-known in our tradition. For those who want to learn more (laity and clergy), there is an excellent online course available through the NACCC website, and many other opportunities for further learning.

But when we talk about the experience of being Congregational, this is perhaps a whole different subject. There are many aspects of our churches that make us like other traditions. Like most Protestants, we have strong traditions of worship: music, preaching of the Word, fellowship, et al. But is there something in our tradition that makes the experience of being Congregational truly unique? Experience is the realm of spirituality, not necessarily theology. What I’m asking is whether sitting in the pews, or board meetings, or fellowship hour in a Congregational church offers something a person would not find elsewhere? Other traditions can point to such experiences: Catholic members can point to the Eucharist, Methodists to their hymnology, Quakers to their silence, etc. And while I have always heard Congregationalists point to their history and polity as unique, I’ve always wondered if the spiritual experience is unique.

What can a Congregationalist point to that is truly different, in terms of their experience? I do not have the answer to this question; my input here is only seed for future exploration. However, I strongly believe more conversations and study about the subject would be helpful. The question of Congregational spirituality is important for at least two good reasons. First, an exploration of answers to this question will help us understand our members and friends more deeply. Second, because in today’s marketing world, it helps to further clarify our niche.

In a recent sermon over Thanksgiving at Arbor Grove Congregational Church, I proposed two distinct spiritual characteristics of the experience of being Congregational, the second contingent on the first. Based on Jewish and Calvinist understanding of being chosen as whole people (e.g., Deuteronomy 10:14-15), I talked about how the Congregational Way can be experienced in a way that makes our kind of “church” unlike any other tradition. Because of our history and polity, Congregationalists at their best practice a radical egalitarian, democratic, and holistic religion. At our best, everyone has an equal say over the church, and everyone puts the whole

(the corporate) over their individual (or individual family) desires. This inclusion and empowerment can have a dramatic effect on one’s spirituality. The feeling of truly being part of a whole – not a lesser or greater, not an individual fragment, but a genuinely valued equal member of the covenant – can be transformative. As I said in my sermon, appeals to unity are something found in all Christian churches. But Congregationalists offer an experience of empowerment as members that is quite unlike other traditions.

The second unique spiritual experience that I propose is freedom. This experience is based on – comes from – the first experience of being valued as part of the whole. I was ordained at a 300-year-old Congregational church in Rhode Island, and now serve a relatively young (69 years) congregation in Michigan. I have always been a scholar of history, appreciating and teaching about our roots. One of the things that attracted me to Congregationalism was how our focus on corporate, egalitarian membership naturally led to our leadership in freedom movements in American history. In the past, Congregationalists believed that since they received “the light of life” (e.g., John 8:12) from God, their

duty was to bring this light into the world’s darkness – especially in matters of oppression, social injustice, poverty, literacy, corruption, and others. This light didn’t belong to them only; it was to be shared with all. It was the idea that the church – as a center of one’s civic life (e.g., “Meetinghouse”) – should naturally empower others for freedom. This spirit of freedom – corporate, civic, egalitarian – was the inspiration behind so many Congregationalist-inspired movements, like the American Revolution, abolition, Washington Gladden and the workers’ rights movement, and the ordinations of the first woman in America, first African-American, and first member of the LGBT community.

Such advocacy and social action was all about bringing the freedom of the Gospel into people’s lives who needed it the most. It was a fire that burned for a long time within our Congregational churches. Because members felt free – as equal members of a whole – they naturally wanted the same for their brothers and sisters in need.

I have used past tense in describing Congregational spirituality, and that was intentional. I believe our tradition may need to re-discover these, in the face of our modern era. In my recent Thanksgiving sermon with Arbor Grove, I argued that Congregationalism, like other “mainline” Christian traditions, has been facing a 50-year storm. This storm has severely challenged the faith as seen in our dwindling memberships, aging congregations, loss of appeal to the younger generations, and the church

losing relevancy as a center of civic life. The response I propose is a re-discovery of our uniquely Congregational spirituality. While American society becomes increasingly focused on individuals and partisan disunity, Congregationalists need to stand out. We need to re-discover, re-ignite our spirit of radical, empowering egalitarian church. While people increasingly come to church with a “What can the church do for me and my family?” we need to teach “What can I do for the body of Christ?” While our social fabric in America becomes more divided, we need to offer our Congregational Way at its best. Like the Congregationalists who helped build a “United States,” perhaps our tradition is needed more than ever. And it starts in each of our fellowships.

As for freedom, I see Congregationalists and most mainline churches responding in one of two ways. Some of our churches continue with a bunker mentality, and let the storms of society rage around us, hoping they will blow over. For these congregations, they largely avoid talking about “sensitive” or “divisive” issues – need I mention what those issues are? Meanwhile, these same congregations wonder why an “All Are Welcome” on the church sign is not enough to bring people back to church. Imagine our ancestors in Congregational faith avoiding issues like our churches do today. Would mission work, democracy, abolition, suffrage, and Civil Rights have happened if we had avoided these issues in our congregations? “Freedom” movements are all around us, just

Rev. Daniel Kidder-McQuown has been senior minister of Arbor Grove Congregational Church in Jackson, Michigan since 2015. He was ordained in 2000, and has served as a church pastor, hospital chaplain, and college chaplain in the past. His Master of Divinity degree is from Princeton Theological Seminary. Daniel is originally from Springfield, Illinois.



waiting for us to get involved. And there are plenty of these movements (e.g., fighting human trafficking) which everyone can agree on. Freedom for all is not a partisan value; it is a Gospel value.

The other way some of our churches seem to be responding to the storm is “If you can’t beat ‘em, join ‘em.” Some Congregational churches have decided to mirror American society, including its focus on individual customer satisfaction and trends. I have no problem with this approach, except the effect it has had on our Congregational theological tradition. It seems many churches have given in to individualistic theology. Salvation of the individual is taught, but salvation of the world and our social responsibility is diminished or dismissed. Because of this individual focus, Congregationalists seem to have forfeited their role as a movement and their authority in the civic realm. Imagine our ancestors saying churches have no role in politics? Ha! A re-discovery of spiritual “freedom,” based in our corporate, congregational way, will naturally help us to stand out in our world. In the past, Congregationalists paved the way for what we love about America; we can do so again!

There you have it – two initial answers to the question, “Is there such a thing as a Congregational spirituality?” As I said, I hope this article stimulates more conversation, response, and perhaps a celebration and re-discovery of our experience as people of God. I look forward to your thoughts!

Letters TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

I read with interest Rev. Dr. John Tamilio's thoughtful article on interfaith dialogue in the most recent issue of *The Congregationalist*. I value Dr. John as a colleague, and appreciate our Association's magazine as a sounding board for thoughtful reflection. In that vein, I was especially drawn to his discussion of Inclusivism and Incarnation. His article explored the age-old question of whether all religions are different paths to the same destination, or whether there might be some unique merit to Christian faith. I appreciate that in the Spirit of Jesus the Peacemaker we, as Christ's disciples, are to imitate our Lord in the way we engage with our near and global neighbors.

The question of what happens to those who have never heard the Gospel has long been a topic of serious debate in the broader Church. The brevity of a letter to the editor makes serious consideration of the topic impossible here, but I would like to continue the exploration that my colleague began.

I'd suggest we keep two thoughts in mind, especially as we evaluate Rahner's concept of the "anonymous Christian":

First, that we remember what the Incarnation cost Jesus, from the humility of His birth to the humiliation of Good Friday, with countless disrespectings in between. This should warn us against the well-worn chestnut of "It doesn't matter what you believe so long as you are sincere." The crisis of shrinking attendance in mainline congregations teaches us that "It doesn't matter what you believe" is all-too-quickly translated as "It doesn't matter if you believe."

The second consideration is for how "anonymous Christianity" might work itself out in the various world faiths. Considering that many of these religions have within them acts that must be performed – alms-giving, pilgrimages, etc. – in order to be how does this settle against the rediscovery of Salvation by grace through faith which was the rally cry of the Protestant Reformation?

I am an avid backpacker who led outdoor ministry events for more than 20 years. The beauty of nature reveals a beautiful God. As one who struggles with a strong awareness of my own unworthiness of Christ's favor, the grace shown by the Creator in revealing His Son compels me to offer impassioned worship and devotion. My stumbling attempts to respond to God's Grace faithfully are only met by further grace. World news confirms that I am not the only sinner in need of a Savior. As we engage in interfaith dialogue, let us not fail to obey our Lord's Great Commission, and pay forward the grace shown us by sharing the Good News our struggling global neighbors need to hear.

Grace & peace,
Peter Smith, D. Min.
Sr. Pastor, First Congregational Church
Hanson, MA
Member, Missions and Outreach
Ministries Council

RE: Honoring the Flag

Robert Hellam's anti-flag commentary (*The Congregationalist*, December 2017) calls for a response.

A great many churches proudly display the American flag in their sanctuaries,

and with good reason. Most importantly, it symbolizes our striving toward the ideal of one nation under God. It also demonstrates how fortunate we are to live in a country where freedom of religion is enshrined in the Bill of Rights.

Banishing the flag, sad to say, is yet another example of liberalism run amok. Perhaps Dr. Hellam is also troubled by hymnals which include songs such as "America the Beautiful" and "My Country, 'Tis of Thee." Would he also advocate their removal?

There is no reason to believe that Christianity and Americanism are in conflict. To the contrary, faith and America's democratic values are inseparable. Ronald Reagan said it best: "I believe with all my heart that standing up for America means standing up for the God who has so blessed our land."

John Staples
Leesburg, Florida

A note from Robert Hellam:

John Staples is making some assumptions. He claims that my action is an example of "liberalism run amok." What he does not know is that in my politics I am somewhere to the right of Rush Limbaugh and Michael Savage and even Donald Trump. It is just a question of what belongs in God's house and what does not.

Editor's note: Thank you to all who take the time to respond to and comment on content in the magazine. In addition to writing Letters to the Editor, we encourage readers to take advantage, also, of The Congregationalist Facebook page to continue the interesting conversations begun in the magazine. You can "friend" us at www.facebook.com/TheCongregationalist/.

Necrology 2018



Rev. Dr. Rick Hartley, 48, of Mukwonago, Wisconsin, passed away unexpectedly on November 10, 2017.

Rev. Hartley earned numerous degrees, including a Master of Divinity, Doctor of Ministry, and a Master of Sacred Theology. He was called to ministry in Minnesota (twice); New Orleans; Lincoln, Montana; and Wisconsin (twice), serving as pastor to several congregations over a span of 20 years. He served First Congregational Church Mukwonago, Wisc., from 2006 to 2013, was NACCC Historian, 2009-2010, and was a member of the Arbella Society.

He published articles in the *International Congregational Journal* and served on the Theological Commission of the International Congregational Fellowship, giving lectures in the United States, Bulgaria, and England. He also developed a lay school for ministry.

Rev. Hartley leaves behind his wife, Karla, and three children.



George Raymond Burrows, 81, of Alpena, Michigan, passed away January 10, 2018.

Burrows served as a chaplain in the United States Air Force until 1958. He worked in the insurance industry until his retirement in 1998, splitting his time between work, church ministry and the Boy Scouts of America for more than 50 years.

Burrows was called to be pastor of the Long Rapids First Congregational Church in 1982, completing years of lay ministry. He completed his education with the NACCC and was ordained in 1985, serving as pastor until his retirement in 1995 as Pastor Emeritus.

Burrows is survived by his wife, Marilyn, two sons, four grandchildren, a brother, and a sister. Services were held at Long Rapids FCC. Memorials may be made to Long Rapids First Congregational Church, Boy Scouts of America Northern Trails District, or Friends of Thunderhead.



Miriam C. Resch, D.Min., 64, of Elkhart, Indiana, died January 1, 2018, at her residence.

Resch earned her master's degree at Princeton Theological Seminary and Doctor of Ministry Degree from Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary. She was a 1978 graduate of the NACCC Congregational Foundation of Theological Studies, and ordained in 1978 at Plain Congregational Church, Bowling Green, Ohio. She received the DFM Sermon Award in 1987.

Resch served churches in Cheshire, Ohio; Ashland, Nebraska; and Granger, Iowa. She was Executive Director/Pastoral Counselor of the Samaritan Center in Elkhart and Huntington, Indiana; a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, and published author.

Services were held January 5, 2018. Memorial contributions may be directed to Child and Parent Services, 1000 W. Hively, Elkhart, IN 46517



Ed Millar was born May 26, 1934 and died May 25, 2017. He was actively involved in the National Association for Congregational

Churches for over a decade.

Following high school in Rosemead, California, Millar joined the U.S. Air Force and was director for the base choir in England. He attended Occidental College in Los Angeles.

Millar was supervisor of the Maintenance and Repair Division of Sears and continued his involvement in music, serving as choir director for Church of the Lighted Window in La Cañada Flintridge, then Community Christian Church in Huntington Park, an NACCC church. He was lead tenor for First Congregational Church in Los Angeles, and sang in the choir at Oneonta Congregational Church in South Pasadena. Millar served on the board of the Panamerican Institute (an NACCC-supported mission) from 2000 to 2004 and the Christian Education and Spiritual Resources Committee from 2008 to 2010. He was also involved with CAL-WEST Churches and Ministers Association.

Millar is survived by wife Gay of 50 years, three children, two grandchildren, a sister, and a cousin.



W. Ray Cleere, 81, of Atlanta, Georgia, died peacefully on January 26, 2018, of complications from Alzheimer's disease. He was

president of Piedmont College from 1995 until his retirement in 2011.

Dr. Cleere earned degrees from Appalachian State University, University of Mississippi, and University of Georgia. He served as head of the first counselor education program at West Georgia State University. In 1970, he became dean, then vice president and dean of faculties at Valdosta State University School of Education. In 1982, Dr. Cleere became vice chancellor of academic affairs for the University System of Georgia and, in 1987, was appointed first commissioner of higher education for the State of Mississippi, overseeing the first public higher education desegregation case to go before the U.S. Supreme Court. During his tenure as president of Piedmont College, he met and married Ashley Cook Cleere, college chaplain and director of church relations. He is survived by his wife, Rev. Dr. Ashley Cook Cleere; his daughter, his sister and four nephews. A memorial service was held on February 17. Memorial contributions may be made to Piedmont College, PO Box 429, Demorest, GA 30535.

Wayne Riggs was born in Virginia on November 7, 1931, and died December 16, 2017, in San Diego.

Riggs began his ministry while attending Johnson Bible College and transferred to Lynchburg College in 1951. He was ordained by the Virginia Association of Christian Churches in 1953. He attended seminary in Enid, Oklahoma, becoming a U.S. Navy chaplain after receiving his Master of Theology Degree from Phillips Graduate Theological Seminary in 1957. The Navy sponsored his graduate education in human development with emphasis on psychology, sociology, and theology at Harvard University, after which he spent 10 months in Vietnam as a Marine. During his military career he also served as command chaplain at Marine Corps Base Quantico, and chaplain for the FBI Academy, managed Navy chaplain training for five years, directed a ministry across 17 shore stations and seven aircraft carriers in the Navy Pacific Fleet, and served as director of the Naval Chaplains School in Newport, Rhode Island.

From 1990 until his retirement in 2013, Riggs served as Pastor of Plymouth Congregational Church in San Diego. The San Diego City Council, California State Assembly, and California State Senate each honored his involvement in social and economic justice issues. He is survived by wife Vickie Chance Riggs, a sister and his three children.

Services were held January 5, 2018. Memorial contributions are requested for The Navaux Lab at UCSD School of Medicine, 214 Dickenson St., San Diego, CA 92103.

Pastorates AND PULPITS

Recent Calls

Union Congregational Church, Oakville, Conn. has called the Rev. Carmen Cavallaro as Pastor.

In Search

Senior Minister

- Chiltonville Congregational Church, Plymouth, Mass.
- Duluth Congregational Church, Duluth, Minn.
- El Dorado Community Church, Eldorado, Calif.
- First Congregational Church, Ashland, Neb.
- First Congregational Church, Emporia, Kan.
- First Congregational Church, Fall River, Mass.
- First Congregational Church, Interlachen, Fla.
- First congregational Church, Marshfield, Mass.
- First Congregational Church, Portland, Mich.
- First Congregational Church, Saugerties, N.Y.
- First Congregational Church, Terre Haute, Ind.
- First Congregational (Road) Church, Stonington, Conn.
- Flatbush-Tompkins Congregational Church, Brooklyn, N.Y.
- Founders Congregational Church, Harwinton, Conn.
- Mayflower Congregational Church, Mansfield, Ohio
- Mohegan Congregational Church, Uncasville, Conn.
- Mount Hope Congregational Church, Livonia, Mich.
- Olivet Congregational Church, Olivet, Mich.
- Ozaukee Congregational Church, Grafton, Wis.
- Plymouth Congregational Church< Kenosha, Wis.
- Second Congregational Church, Jewett City, Conn.
- St. Johns Church, Idalia, Colo.
- Stafford Springs Congregational Church,
Stafford Springs, Conn.
- Thomas A. Edison Congregational Church, Ft. Myers, Fla.
- Trinity Congregational Church, Adams, Wis.
- Flrst Congregational Church, Royal Oak, Mich.

Associate/Assistant Minister

- United Church of Marco Island, Marco Island, Fla.

Non-NACCC Church

- First Community Church of Christ, Joplin, Mo.

Correction:

Our apologies to the Rev. Dr. John Tamilio for an error with his article, "The Challenge of the Incarnation to Interfaith Dialogue: A New Approach," in the December issue. A glitch with the layout system resulted in the inclusion of two paragraphs at the very end of the article which do not belong there. John has a reputation with this magazine for submitting perfectly edited manuscripts. Thank you, John, for your kind understanding. *The editor*



SEEKING A MINISTER

Mt. Hope Congregational Church, located in Livonia, Michigan, is family-oriented with a rich, traditional history. We are currently seeking an approachable, energetic senior pastor who delivers engaging sermons and will shepherd us in our spiritual and congregational growth. Our Bible-centered congregants offer a strong support system for both our members and the community. Both ministerial and pastoral duties, including regular office hours, are expected.

To learn more about this opportunity, please go online to the NACCC website: <http://www.nacccsecure.org/Ministries/MinisterialOpportunities.aspx>



Mt. Hope Congregational Church
30330 Schoolcraft Rd.
Livonia, MI 48150
734-425-7280
MtHopePulpit@gmail.com
Web: MtHope.com

49th Annual Midwest Minister's Convocation April 9-12, 2018

Weber Retreat Center
Adrian, MI

Cost: \$250
(includes conference, meals & lodging)

Speaker: Rev. Dr. Kyle J. A. Small
Dean of Formation for Ministry & Associate
Professor of Church Leadership
Western Theological Seminary

Registration deadline: March 19, 2018

Registration forms and information at:
naccc.org
or
centerforcongregationalleadership.org

2018 CALENDAR

APRIL 16, 2018

General copy deadline for The Congregationalist June 2018 issue. Contact Marianne King, editor, Marianne.kingwi@gmail.com or 800-262-1620, ext. 1624

APRIL 9-12, 2018

49th Annual Minister's Convocation Mid-West

The Weber Center, 1257 East Siena Heights Drive, Adrian, MI

JUNE 15-16, 2018

Faith: For Such a Time as This

The Old Meeting House Congregational Church, Colegate, Norwich, Norfolk, England
www.oldmeetinghousechurch.org.uk

JUNE 22, 2018

Quiet Day Retreat

Spiritual Ministry Center, one block from the Pacific Ocean, at 822 Del Mar Avenue, San Diego, CA

JUNE 23 - 26, 2018

64th Annual Meeting & Conference of the National Association of Congregational Churches

San Diego Marriott Mission Valley, 8757 Rio San Diego Drive, San Diego, CA

JULY 29 - AUGUST 3, 2018

Boston Seminar in Congregational History and Polity

Mariner's House, 11 North Square, and Congregational Library, 14 Beacon Street, Boston, MA

OCTOBER 11 - OCTOBER 13, 2018

Awakenings Symposium

First Congregational Church, 312 West Main Street, Marshalltown, IA

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Copy deadline for each issue is noted in the previous issue's "Calendar" section.

Letters to the Editor are welcome. All letters may be edited for clarity and length. We regret we cannot publish or respond to all letters.

The NACCC reserves the right to refuse any advertisement.

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The CONGREGATIONALIST

Magazine of the Congregational Way since 1849

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Subscriptions Policy

- One subscription is provided free of charge to each individual requestor who is a member of a church in fellowship with the National Association.
- One complimentary "Newcomer Copy" will be sent to any person, one time only, upon request by a church in fellowship with the National Association.
- A subscription to The Congregationalist is provided free of charge to each church in fellowship with the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches and one to each accredited theological seminary on the magazine's mailing list.

Single copies may be purchased from the National Association office for \$3.75 plus \$3.20 to cover shipping and handling.

We seek and gratefully accept voluntary donations to help keep this magazine in print. Donations are tax-deductible except for the first \$15 of donation per subscription received by the taxpayer per year.

The Congregationalist | ISSN 0010-5856 | Postage paid at Madison, WI 53714-9998. Published quarterly by the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches, 8473 S. Howell Ave., Oak Creek, WI 53201-0288.

Periodicals postage paid at Madison, WI and additional mailings offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Congregationalist 8473 S. Howell Ave., Oak Creek, WI 53201-0288.

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