

National Association of Congregational Christian Churches Growth Ministry Council (GMC) Annual Report 2021

To some extent, this has been a slower year than normal for the Growth Ministry Council. Due to a full year of COVID-19, our merry band of misfits have been somewhat quiet. That said, the pandemic has GMC thinking of other ways that we can support local churches.

One of them has been through the online Prayer Group. First, we want to thank the Rev. Dr. Shawn Stapleton for the tireless work he has done in not only launching this group, but in making sure that it remains active. Be sure to login Thursdays at 1:00 pm (CST).

At our monthly meetings, we have been brainstorming other ways that we can be a resource to our diverse congregations. One idea that is in the works is developing a technological pay-it-forward fund. The Coronavirus has forced churches to think outside the box. Many of us discovered Zoom over the past year. It has enabled us to offer worship to those unable or hesitant to come to worship in person. Many churches have decided that they will use Zoom once the pandemic passes. It is a great way to reach parishioners who are homebound. Other churches are unable to use Zoom due to lack of technical resources. We dream of starting a fund that will provide grants to churches to improve their technical capabilities. The key is that such churches will not have to pay us back. They can if they wish. However, we would prefer that they pay it forward. In other words, if they are able to raise the funds that they would use to pay us back, we want them to donate that money to another church that is in need. This idea is still in the embryo stage. Watch for further developments.

GMC continues to facilitate the Hurting Church Fund. We have not received any applicants recently but encourage you to get the word out to churches about the purpose of this fund, which is “to assist member churches of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches (NACCC) through challenging times.” This quote, along with the application details, are available on the NACCC website, which, if you have not seen it recently, has been revamped!

One of the areas which GMC oversees is the publication of the devotionals that come out twice a year. There are a few people (other than the writers, of course) whose efforts make this such a success. Along with fellow GMC member Carol Taylor, kudos go out to Terry Bobzien and Casey vanderBent. They make it look easy, but we all know that this is a Herculean task. One of the best bits of feedback we have received is that people use these devotionals throughout the year — not just during Advent and Lent. They are truly a treasure trove of spiritual nourishment.

It is our pleasure to serve you. Please feel free to contact us with your needs or suggestions. In the meantime, I wish all of you, our brothers and sisters in the NA, God’s —

Peace & Blessings,
The Rev. Dr. John Tamilio III, Chairperson
The Growth Ministry Council