



June 1, 2024 Community Connections



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In Gratitude

Rev. Arthur Ritter, Moderator



My term as Moderator will end at the close of the Annual Meeting and Conference in Spokane in June. It has been a privilege for me to serve these past four years, helping an association and churches that have done so much for me during my years of ministry and indeed my entire lifetime. I am grateful to all of the volunteers on the boards, councils, and ministry teams. You are doing the important work of the Congregational Way! I would ask everyone to consider the value of such service in the future. Please step forward to find a place that suits your interest.

I want to thank the staff of the NACCC office. We have such talented and kind people assisting us in Oak Creek. Thank you to the Rev. Dr. Ashley Cleere for her leadership during my term of service. I wish her many blessings in her new calling. Thank you also to the Vice Moderator, Jodee Lord. We are certainly in excellent hands under her future leadership.

A Time of Transition

Jodee Lord, Chair of Board of Directors, Vice-Moderator



I would like to take this opportunity to thank our Executive Director, Rev. Dr. Ashley Cleere for her leadership over the past three years. Ashley has shared her talents and vision for the future with us. She has created new goals and has helped us move forward as an Association.

Her enthusiasm in visiting member churches on the Listening Tour has enabled a greater connection between the NA and the local church. The implementation of the Planning and Action committee has brought new and exciting objectives to Leadership. Ashley's ability to collaborate with different institutions has created numerous opportunities for our member churches.

We wish Ashley many blessings as she takes a call to pastor a church in New England. God Bless you and thank you, Ashley.

Introducing our Interim Executive Director

Jodee Lord, Chair of Board of Directors, Vice-Moderator

We welcome Rev. Dr. Barry Szymanski as Interim Executive Director to the NACCC. Barry has a long enthusiastic history within the NA. He has served on various Boards and Committees and has pastored numerous churches within the NA.

He will be supporting and supervising our NA staff and will work with the NA volunteer leadership councils. Barry's understanding and practice of the Congregational Way will be an asset in his dealings with NA member churches and those seeking information about the association. He will collaborate with and support the Association officers, Boards, and councils. Barry will serve as the face of the NACCC within and outside of the Association.

Congregational Investment Trust Update

Richard Davis, Board of Governors

During the first quarter, Mercer, a subsidiary of Marsh McLennan, acquired the institutional investment advisory business of Vanguard, which had managed our endowment accounts since late 2012. Mercer has \$340 billion in managed assets and is well regarded. The Investment Committee of the NACCC and its boards have consented to continue with Mercer. There will be no change in oversight or fees. We do not see any immediate changes to our investment philosophy and will be serviced by the same team. Mercer offers a broader array of options for us to consider.

The Trust at March end has \$28.2 million with Mercer, up from \$26.3 million at year end. \$19.3 million is our NACCC and Foundation endowments and some \$8.9 million belongs to 33 churches that use the Trust to manage their investments.

In other news we have streamlined the process for member churches to make withdrawals and make it possible to allow for wire transfers in and out. If you have questions or wish to consider using the NACCC contact [Cheryl Milnes, CFO](#).

Annual Meeting & Conference Highlights

Service and Mission Project | Baseball Game | Food Trucks

Care Bags and Cold Cups - A Service and Mission Project

If you would like to support this year's Annual Meeting Service and Mission Project, here is how you can help: The Host Committee will be assembling **Care Bags and Cold Cups** for the **Union Gospel Mission in Spokane**. Care Bags are distributed through the various locations that Union Gospel Mission has for their outreach. Each Care Bag is put together so that people can have some of their immediate needs met while they hear the good news of Christ.

Each Care Bag comes with:

- * Comb
- * Chapstick
- * Pair of socks
- * Notepad
- * Pen
- * Razor
- * Pack of gum
- * Toothbrush
- * Toothpaste
- * Travel size shampoo
- * Deodorant
- * Nail Clippers
- * Emory Board
- * Tissue packs
- * Body wash

For those who might be struggling with a temporary medical need, the Union Gospel Mission also distributes Cold Cups - a small little kit of items that would be helpful for those suffering from a cold or flu virus:

Each Cold Cup comes with:

- * Emergen-C packet
- * Cough Drops
- * Tissue Packs
- * Chapstick
- * Individual packets of Ibuprofen or Acetaminophen
- * Hot cider packet
- * Hot chocolate packet

We're hopeful that attendees will consider either bringing some of these items along **or** **simply order items online and send to this address: Warden Community Church; PO Box 338, Warden, WA 98857.** The Host Committee will transport them to the hotel for assembly. If your congregation would like to send funds to support the project, they

also can be received at the above address.

Take yourself out to the ballgame in Spokane!

You can now purchase your tickets to the ballgame on Thursday evening, June 20, 6:35pm in Spokane. **Tickets purchased within 48 hours of the game will still be available at the group rate but may be seated separately from the rest of the group.** A shuttle from the hotel will be provided. [Visit the ticket link](#) for more information.

Food Trucks and a Picnic!

Mingle with fellow Congregationalists in the beautiful Riverfront Park, on Monday, June 24 from 5pm until 7:30pm, just minutes from the hotel. You will have the opportunity to purchase your dinner from a couple of food trucks. There will be a variety of food options, from BBQ to Mexican, vegetarian dishes and desserts. Hope to see you there!

Join our team!

The NACCC is looking for a **full-time Communications Manager** to work out of the Oak Creek, Wisconsin office. In this newly created position, the *Communications Manager* will oversee all communications generated by the NACCC and the Congregational Foundation, including collaboration with staff and volunteer leadership to plan and implement effective branding strategies, social media/digital presence, fundraising initiatives, and any other type of communication involving member churches of the NACCC and other stakeholders, ministry partners, affiliated organizations, and community outreach efforts. Find the [detailed job posting HERE](#). Please send your application to: director@naccc.org.

Event Calendar

June 22 - 25, 2024

The 70th Annual Meeting & Conference of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches takes place in Spokane, Washington and virtually from **June 22-25, 2024**, hosted by the Pacific Northwest Association.

June 22 - 27, 2024

NAPF/HOPE NACCC Youth Conference in Spokane, Washington. We will be gathering in beautiful and scenic Spokane, Washington at Whitworth University. Find more information on our event page: [NAPF & HOPE CONFERENCE](#).

June 26, 2024

Quiet Day Retreat, hosted by the Congregational Retreat Society. This year's Quiet Day will be held at the Immaculate Heart Retreat Center after the Annual Meeting has concluded. This year's topic: "Silence is the language of heaven." Register for this event by contacting [Laura Wright](#). Strict deadline for registering:

[Article submissions for THE CONGREGATIONALIST](#)

Our Contact Information

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