

NACCC E-NEWS

THE MESSENGER

November 15, 2024

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Thoughts: What do people look for in a congregation?

Rev. Dr. Barry W. Szymanski, Interim Executive Director



When Jesus preached, he met people where they were. We strive for happiness. We want to be blessed. We yearn to be welcomed by God and others. Jesus instinctively knew this. As individuals encountered Jesus, they witnessed his joy. His peace. His happiness. His holiness. Just by being with him, they realized what he preached when he announced that the Kingdom of God is near. He told us that the poor in spirit are blessed for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven, that those who mourn will be comforted, and that if a person is pure in heart, they will see God.

So, when individuals apprehensively walk up to the doors of your church on a Sunday morning, full of uncertainty, what are they expecting? Do they yearn for a taste of God's kingdom? Might they anticipate being comforted from the wear and tear of their daily world? Will they expect to experience an integration of the divine and the secular?

Those who walk through your church door on Sunday, whether they can articulate it or not, have expectations. They are looking for your congregation to be the light of the world. If your church building has a steeple, it serves as a beacon, but the real light of the beacon is within your building. Jesus's summon to us is to "let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven."

(Note: 'Thoughts' are Barry's musings based upon scripture and remain his own opinions, and not those of the National Association, though he prays that they are meaningful to all.)



Celebrating Happy Life Children's Home

Julie Robie, Missions Coordinator



We are overjoyed to celebrate an extraordinary milestone with our mission partner, [Happy Life Children's Home](#). Since their founding in 2002, they have selflessly rescued and nurtured over 1,000 children, offering them not just a safe haven but a future filled with hope and possibility because of the love of Christ. This achievement is a testament to their unwavering commitment to transforming lives through love, compassion, and care.

We are deeply grateful for their tireless dedication and proud to stand beside them in their mission to continue bringing hope, healing, and opportunity to children who need it most. As we reflect on the thousands of lives touched and transformed by their work, we look forward to many more years of partnership, growth, and impact.



Thanksgiving Proclamation

We Congregationalists are a people of thanksgiving! With gratitude for your fellowship in the National Association of Congregational

Christian Churches, we offer our annual [Thanksgiving Proclamation](#). We invite you to read it from the pulpit, insert a copy in your Sunday's Order of Worship, publish it as part of your weekly news bulletin, project it onto your screens, or otherwise share it.

We pray that you will experience abundant joy and countless blessings during this season of remembering God's goodness and provision.



Support Christmas Food Baskets

Panamerican Institute, NACCC Mission Partner

Panamerican Institute's 53-year tradition of supporting their students' families during the holidays with Christmas food baskets continues!

Each basket costs \$60 to produce and includes food items like pasta, sauce, vegetables, and rice, as well as household necessities like toilet paper and toothpaste.

If you're interested in supporting this work, you can donate directly to the Christmas Food Basket project [here](#) or [through the NACCC](#) by mail, over the phone, or online - just be sure to designate your donation to Panamerican Institute's Christmas Food Baskets.



Event Calendar

February 11, 2025, 6:15 pm - 7:45 pm CT (4:15 pm PT; 7:15 pm ET)
Webinar Series: Cultivating Generous Congregations Course

This four-part interactive seminar is intended to help your congregation build a culture of generosity unique to your needs and challenges. [Click here](#) for more information or to register to attend.

March 13-17, 2025

Freedom Journey Trip, Greenville, SC

The focus of this trip is to learn more about the African American culture, deepen our faith, and learn how God's grace carried generations of people through unspeakable hardship. [Click here](#) for more information.



Your NACCC Staff!

Have questions? Seeking resources? Contact us at (414) 856-1620.

Kristin Ward: Development

Maggie Helmick: Communications

Laura Wright: Church Services

Rev. Dr. Gerry Krupp: Programming

Julie Robie: Mission and Outreach

Sarah Sobecke: Interim Executive Assistant

Rev. Dr. Barry W. Szymanski: Interim Executive Director

Thank you for being a vital part of our community. Your engagement, support, and commitment to the Congregational Way is valued and appreciated.

We encourage you to share this newsletter with friends, family, fellow congregants, and anyone else you think could benefit from it.

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