



**JULY 2026**

# THE CORNERSTONE NACCC EDITION

At the end of June our NACCC delegates and guests attended the annual conference in Springfield, Mass.  
This special newsletter features their stories.

The article below was taken from the NACCC Facebook page and highlights the conference. To think we were a part of this incredible mission. So many of you helped make the hats and bags and furnished supplies. We are indeed grateful.

As we continue reflecting on this year's NACCC Annual Meeting & Conference, we're grateful for the many people, ministries, and moments that made our time together so meaningful. Today, we're highlighting our Intergenerational Mission Project and our fruitful relationship with Napf/Hope. Our 2026 Intergenerational Mission Project was a wonderful reminder of what can happen when people of all ages come together to serve.

Thanks to the incredible generosity of churches and individuals across the NACCC, hundreds of supplies were donated, hats and scarves were lovingly knitted, ditty bags were carefully sewn, and countless hours were devoted to making this year's project a success. During the Annual Meeting & Conference, attendees of all ages gathered to assemble the bags alongside the youth attending the NAPF & HOPE Youth Conference.

Together, we were able to send Seafarer's Friend home with more than 300 complete ditty bags, along with additional supplies to distribute to the mariners who enter our ports every day. These hardworking individuals play an essential role in making so much of modern life possible, and we are honored to support Seafarer's Friend in caring for them.

Serving together across generations beautifully reflects the heart of our Association and reminds us that the future of the NACCC is strengthened when we learn, worship, and serve side by side. Thank you to everyone who helped make this meaningful project possible. -NACCC





## Mission Project with Seafarer's Friend at the NACCC Annual Meeting

Imagine stepping into a room full of hats and scarves, toiletries, pens and paper, Word Search books, and Bibles and being handed a ditty bag to fill for a seafarer you will never meet. That is what Marcia, Sharon and I did on Sunday afternoon in Springfield, MA at the NACCC Annual Meeting. It was unbelievably well organized thanks to the Mission and Outreach Ministry Council. A task that would have been overwhelming was fun! We got to meet some of the folks that oversee this ministry and they were so incredibly grateful. Seafarer's Friend is one of the oldest Congregational missions, supporting mariners for nearly 200 years. At final count 319 ditty bags were filled and \$1,700 collected for them at the church service that morning. Our Lenten project was to collect items for Seafarer's Friend and collect we did! January and Jonathan kindly brought them to Springfield. We also sent \$1,000 directly to Seafarer's Friend! What a generous congregation we have! I wish each and every one of you could have filled a ditty bag that lovely June day in Springfield.

Before and after each business session we heard from a different mission supported by the NACCC :Child Voice, the newest mission supported by the MOMC, acmnp (A Christian Ministry in the National Parks), Mission School of Hope (Cameroon), Happy Life (Kenya), and Panamerican Institute (Mexico). My take away...I want us to support them all!

We attended a workshop on Saturday morning, Equip your Church to Serve your Community, presented by Convoy of Hope. And received a Missions Resource Kit designed to :

- Develop a missions approach centered on compassion.
- Build strong partnerships in your community.
- Engage and mobilize your congregation.
- Share the story of impact effectively.
- Connect with Convoy of Hope for resources and support.

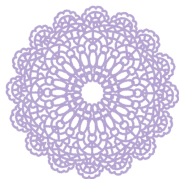
You will definitely be hearing more about this year long approach to serving our community in the coming months.

The theme of this year's NACCC Annual Meeting was Hope and a Future. The very first lecture we attended was given by Rev. Ian Macdonald, who wrote the book "\$h!t Jesus Says: Reclaiming Love in the Kingdom of Heaven" (2025). We each purchased his book and I only have read a few chapters, but the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter says it all in 3 words, "Love. That's it." (Submitted by Irene Maxcy)

Take the Doily Inventory and see what score you get.

Marcia, Sharon and I attended a workshop at the NACCC Annual Meeting and received this hand-out. At the end of the sheet it states, "When a church becomes a closed social circle, it is only a matter of time before the mission shrinks to "keeping the building open".

At that point, it is no longer a congregation loving and serving God and neighbor, just a clique or a social club with some nice prayers. The anger in reaction to moving small items or furniture around is a sign that the church is serving as an escape from the present, rather than responding to it"



# The Doily Inventory

*This is admittedly a flippant take on a pretty serious set of dynamics, but I have found these reliable indicators of church culture. Take this inventory yourself, see if you recognize the dynamics, and notice what your reaction to your score is. This is not science, this is a suggestion for reflection.*

## THE INVENTORY

How many doilies are in your church?	score
How many engraved plaques with names of families (ie "In Memory of So & So" or "Given by the So & Sos")? <i>(Add 20 points each if a particular family's name is engraved on either the communion cup or plate.)</i>	score
On a scale from 1-10, how much anger would you face if you moved or changed the doilies or plaques?	score
How many years have you run a deficit budget? Add one for each year.	score
How many years have you cut or not funded mission or ministry line items, or only had a Missions pass-thru item for members to send to favored charities? Add one for each year.	score
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>

## COMPLETELY ARBITRARY SCORING

- 1-10** Exemplar of health
- 10-20** Functionally healthy
- 20-40** Signs of big trouble
- 40+** It's a club, not a ministry.

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When I thought about the Doily Inventory I remembered the chairs on the pulpit that got replaced with new modern ones and what an upheaval that recently caused. Our organist left, along with other long time members. Has the church and its contents become the most important part of who we are? Or is God and neighbor what is most important to our congregation?

These questions are important to answer if we want to be a viable church in the next hundred years of SCCW. We will be celebrating 200 years in 2 years, what do we want that celebration to look like? A private social club or a welcoming church with God at its center? ~ Irene Maxcy

On Monday afternoon, after 3 full days of lectures, meetings and workshops, Marcia, Sharon and I attended a workshop lead by David Pier, retired dentist and leader at the Rockland Congregational Church. He outlined the book, *Leading Faithful Innovation*, which Pat Weaver made reference to from the Plentiful Gifts program she is participating in. This was a very in-depth outline of the book and the following is just a preview. ~ Irene

## **Leading Faithful Innovation: Following God into a Hopeful Future**

**Core conviction:** God is already active in the world. The church's task is not to invent a future, but to join the future God is already making possible.

The book's central movements:

### **1. Listen to God and to the Neighborhood**

Congregations often assume they know what their community needs. The book invites a posture of curiosity instead of certainty. Listening becomes a spiritual discipline---paying attention to God's movement in Scripture, in one another, and in the lives of neighbors.

### **2. Act Through Small, Faithful Experiments**

Instead of large, high-stakes programs, the authors encourage "low-risk, high-learning" experiments. These are small, time-bound actions designed to help the church learn what God might be up to. Experiments are not about success or failure---they are about discovery.

### **3. Share Stories of God's Movement**

Storytelling is the glue that holds innovation together. When people share where they've seen God at work---in their lives, in the community, in the church---discernment deepens. Stories help congregations notice patterns, celebrate hope, and build courage.

### **4. Cultivate a Culture of Spiritual Discernment**

Faithful innovation is not a technique, but a way of being. Over time, congregations learn to trust God's leading, embrace uncertainty, and move forward with humility and hope.

### **Summary of the Book's Goals**

- Shift from "fixing the church" to "joining God's mission".
- Develop habits of listening, experimenting, and reflecting.
- Strengthen relationships within the congregation and with the surrounding community.
- Build a culture where curiosity, courage, and storytelling shape decision-making.
- Equip leaders to guide change gently, pastorally, and collaboratively.

## NACCC 72nd Annual Conference (Springfield, MA)

Grace and peace to you all. I'm grateful for the opportunity to share a recap of my recent trip to the NACCC 72nd Annual Conference, held in Springfield, Massachusetts, and to give thanks for what God accomplished over those four days. This gathering was not only a season of instruction and worship, but also a wonderful time of reunion, encouragement, and renewed mission.

From the moment I began the journey, I felt a strong sense of expectation. I wasn't just attending a conference—I was coming to be strengthened for the work ahead, to listen, to learn, and to reconnect with people who share the same commitment to ministry.

Over the course of four days, the conference provided an atmosphere where the Word was honored and ministry was discussed with both clarity and heart. Each day brought meaningful moments—times of shared insight, reminders of our calling, and opportunities to be encouraged through prayer and fellowship.

There was a strong sense that we were moving together as the body of Christ—listening, growing, and supporting one another as we seek to fulfill God's purpose.

One of the highlights was being able to connect with mission partners who were also present. It was powerful to see the wider network of people laboring toward similar goals—people who are faithful, committed, and intentional about impact beyond the conference setting.

Their presence added an extra layer of perspective and helped reinforce the importance of collaboration as we serve other around the world.

But beyond the program, what truly made the trip special was the reunion.

I had the joy of meeting and reconnecting with my peers and classmates—sharing greetings, catching up on life and ministry, and remembering the journey that brought us to this point. It was a refreshing encouragement to see familiar faces again and to hear how God has been working in each person's story.

I was also thankful to see and fellowship with instructors who helped shape my foundation for ministry. Their encouragement and continued wisdom reminded me how valuable mentorship and faithful instruction are.

And of course, I'm grateful for the friends—the ones whose friendship feels like family. Those conversations, laughter, and moments together made the entire experience feel warm, personal, and genuinely uplifting.

When the conference ended, I left thankful and renewed. I returned to ministry with renewed energy, fresh perspective, and deeper gratitude for the people God places around us—especially those who pray, learn, and serve alongside us.

I am grateful to everyone who made NACCC 72nd such a blessing—especially those who led, served, and welcomed others with love.

With gratitude,  
Rev. January M. Peavey, NACCC YRD

## NACCC 72nd Annual Conference (Springfield, MA)

Thank you everyone for allowing me to be our church alternate delegate. It is hard to put into words this experience - meeting and worshiping and learning - with over 200 people of our congregational faith. seeing old friends, making new friends and working together.

Irene did such a great job of writing of some of our experiences. I will just give you some additional into.

Next year's meeting is in Lansing, Michigan, the 73<sup>rd</sup> National meeting of NA on June 26-28, 2027. Re. Bette's friend, Re Garry Fisher's church is involved with this 2027 meeting to be held at the Crown Plaza Hotel.

This year there were over 250 persons in attendance with 72 delegates, which is 33% of our churches.

Below is just a sampling of the daily events for you to see just what transpires at these annual meetings, fun, fellowship and friendship. You should seriously consider attending one of these conferences.

- Marcia Cifaldo

# DETAILED AGENDA

72ND NACCC ANNUAL MEETING AND CONFERENCE  
 SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS  
 JUNE 27-30, 2026



### SATURDAY, JUNE 27

8:00-9:00 am	<b>Mission Partners Meet &amp; Greet Continental Breakfast</b> Sponsored by the Mission and Outreach Ministry Council No Cost; Advanced Registration Required
9:15-10:15 am	<b>Workshop: Rev. Ian Macdonald - Gospel Spice</b> Sponsored by the Washington Gladden Society
9:15-10:15 am	<b>Workshop: David Pier - Is Your "Inherited" Church Getting in the Way of Being a "Relevant" Church?</b> Sponsored by the Growth Ministry Council
10:30-11:30 am	<b>First-Time Attendees' Welcome Orientation</b> Hosted by Moderator Jodee Lord, Vice Moderator Rev. Dr. Marty Hall, and Foundation President Laura Hamby
10:30-11:30 am	<b>Workshop: Jessie Grabill - Plan Your Year in Local Missions with Convoy of Hope</b> Sponsored by the Mission and Outreach Ministry Council
10:30-11:30 am	<b>Workshop: Rev. Robb Tarr - Vitality Ministry Grantee Progress Reports</b> Sponsored by Vitality Ministry Council
11:30- 12:45 pm	<b>Lunch Break</b> Hot Buffet; \$35 per Person; Advanced Payment Required
12:45-1:00 pm	<b>A Time for Prayer and Song</b>
1:00-2:30 pm	<b>Business Session 1</b> The agenda for each business session will be shared prior to the session.
2:30-3:00 pm	<b>Break</b>
3:00-4:00 pm	<b>Plenary Session 1: Rev. Douglas Stivison - Prophetic Preaching</b>
4:15-5:15 pm	<b>Plenary Session 2: Dr. Allison Norton - A Future and a Hope: What the Data Says About Congregations After the Pandemic</b>
5:15-7:30 pm	<b>Dinner Break</b>
5:30-7:15 pm	<b>Donor Reception</b> Hosted by the Congregational Foundation Board of Governors. By invitation only.
7:30-8:30 pm	<b>Town Hall</b> Hosted by NACCC Leadership
9:00-9:30 pm	<b>Vespers</b> Hosted by the Congregational Retreat Society

"And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of His glory in Christ Jesus." – Philippians 4:19