

# NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

TO: NACCC MEMBER CHURCHES

FROM: NOMINATING COMMITTEE

RE: Nominations for positions to be filled by vote of the delegates at the Annual Meeting & Conference, June 2024 and current terms. Respective terms begin at the conclusion of the meeting.

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## **MODERATOR, Two-Year Term:**

[Two-year Term to end 2026; served two years as Vice-Moderator, first year of nomination]

### **Jodee Lord, Oakwood Heights Community Church, Staten Island, New York**

Jodee Lord is a member of Oakwood Heights Community Church on Staten Island, N.Y. She is actively involved in life at Oakwood and its community, serving on the Board of Deacons, Church Council, Pastoral Search Committees, Board of Trustees, Church Choir, and a food pantry volunteer. Jodee serves as 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President of S.I. Council of Churches and as Co-Chair of Congregational Support and Outreach. She has a deep dedication to the NACCC. She is currently serving as Vice Moderator and chair of the Board of Directors. Jodee serves on the Planning and Action Committee. She was also Chairperson for our most recent search for an Executive Director, and served on the Racial Justice Task Team, and the Bylaw's Task Team. Jodee has served on the NACCC's Women's Commission, Division for Ministry, Transition Team, Nominating Committee, Annual Meeting & Conference Committee, and Sexual Abuse Task Team. Jodee is a retired Preschool Director with a degree in Education and Psychology. She and her husband Fred of forty-seven years are the proud parents of daughters Sarah and Julia.

## **VICE-MODERATOR, Two-Year Term:**

**New Nominee** [2024-2026, first year of nomination as Vice-Moderator, serves two years as Vice-Moderator; may be nominated for two years as Moderator]

### **Rev. Dr. Martin (Marty) Hall, North Shore Congregational Church, Fox Point, Wisconsin**

A cradle Congregationalist, Marty has spent his life in and around the NACCC and its member churches. After obtaining a B.A. from the College of Wooster, Marty graduated as a CFTS Fellow from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1999 (later receiving a D.Min in Church Transformation and Revitalization from McCormick Theological Seminary in 2007). Marty previously served NACCC churches in West Bloomfield, MI, Clarkston, MI, and Fall River, MA. Currently, he is the Sr. Minister of North Shore Congregational Church in Fox Point, WI, where he has served since 2015. Marty has been active in regional and state associations throughout his time in ministry, and has served the NACCC in multiple ways, including the Nominating Committee, the 2010 Symposium Steering Committee, three bylaw revision teams, various financial teams, the Sexual Abuse Task Team, the Board of Directors, and most recently as a member of the Annual Meeting and Conference Committee and chair of the Host Committee for the 2023 AMC in Milwaukee, WI. Marty and his wife Sharon have three children: Becca (19), Megan (18) and Jay (15).

## **SECRETARY, One-Year Term:**

### **Dr. Kathleen (Kate) O'Dell, First Congregational Church of Anchorage, Alaska [Re-elected this year]**

Kate O'Dell has lived in Alaska since 1981 and has been a member of the First Congregational Church of Anchorage (FCC) since 1997. She has served the congregation in many roles including as Moderator, Clerk, chair of various boards and ministries, and as a member of the Host Committee for the 2010 NACCC Annual Meeting and Conference in Anchorage. She was the FCC Administrative Assistant for eight years, retired, but is now in that position again (retitled Church Secretary). In 2022, Kate was reelected as Clerk of the Pacific Northwest Association of Congregational Christian Churches, and she is FCC's Year-Round Delegate to the PNACCC. Kate is a member of the Host Committee for the 2024 NACCC Annual Meeting and Conference in Spokane, WA. In 2006, Kate retired as Professor Emerita of Teacher Education with the University of Alaska Anchorage College of Education. Her specialty was English Language Arts. Kate has served on boards of several nonprofit organizations, frequently as the secretary or chair of a communications committee. The Irish Club of Alaska just elected her their secretary for 2024.

### **TREASURER, One-Year Term:**

#### **Patrick Stewart, First Congregational Church of Marshalltown, Iowa [Re-elected this year]**

Patrick served as the volunteer Youth Leader at his member church, LaMoille Congregational Church for nearly 20 years and is currently serving as the Chairperson of the Iowa-Nebraska Association Youth Task Team. Patrick has attended NAPF-HOPE conferences since 2005 and served as either an attendee, CIT, or counselor/small group leader. He has served as the Youth Representative on NACCC Leadership Council and is currently on the Annual Meeting Committee and is serving his fifth year on the NAPF-HOPE Planning Team. In September 1999, Patrick received his Associate's Degree in Accounting with Honors from the American Institute of Business in Des Moines, IA. He has over 20 years of bookkeeping, budgeting, and finance experience. Patrick is currently a Staff Auditor with the State of Iowa's Auditor's Office-Finance Division in Des Moines, IA. He enjoys listening to music, singing, playing co-ed softball and men's church league basketball, and watching the Iowa State Cyclones, Kansas City Chiefs, and Chicago Cubs. He really enjoys spending time with the church youth group doing fun activities and giving them the same experiences he had as a youth. Patrick looks forward to once again serving as the NACCC Treasurer for the next year.

### **HISTORIAN, One-Year Term:**

#### **Rev. Norm Erlendson, First Congregational (Road) Church of Stonington, Connecticut [Re-elected this year]**

Rev. Norm Erlendson has pastored Congregational churches in the NACCC since 1990. He is currently pastor of the historic Road Church, First Congregational, Stonington, CT, founded in 1674. He holds a master's degree in history from the University of Washington, and a Master's Degree in Christian Theology and Ethics from New College, Berkeley, California. He has taught Congregational History and Theology at the Boston Seminar, and also teaches the New Testament and Church History Survey courses in the Lay Ministry Training Program. He and his wife Barbara live in Pawcatuck, CT.

### **YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE – LEADERSHIP COUNCIL, One-Year Term:**

#### **Melinda Jaster, First Congregational Church of Elkader, Iowa [Re-elected this year]**

Melinda Jaster has been serving on the Christian Ed Committee and as a Youth Leader for almost 20 years starting in high school. She has also served on the Diaconate Committee for almost 15 years. For the past several years she has been part of the Iowa-Nebraska Youth Committee. Melinda first attended NAPF in 2003. Since 2009 she has attended NAPF-HOPE as either an attendee or counselor. For the past several years she has been videoing and taking pictures at the conference, making a video for those attending the conference. Melinda served as the Youth Representative for the 2022-2023 year. Melinda is employed by BassPro/Cabelas at the Distribution Center in Prairie du Chien, WI working in the inventory department and cross-trained in other areas to help as needed. She enjoys reading, listening to music, spending time with family and friends, and traveling.

### **MINISTRY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES SERVING ON THE LEADERSHIP COUNCIL**

#### **One-Year Term as Nominated by their Elected Council**

#### **Growth Ministry Council Reps:**

**Rev. Dr. William R. "Ron" Toliver Th.D., Crystal Congregational Church, Crystal, Michigan [term to end 2025]**

**Rev. Irvn Gammon, Florence Congregational Church, Florence, Massachusetts [term to end 2026]**

#### **Mission and Outreach Ministry Council Reps:**

**Joanne Simpson, First Church of Christ Congregational, Lynn, Massachusetts [term to end 2026]**

**Rev. Richard Miller-Todd, Berwick Congregational Church, Berwick, Iowa [term to end 2026]**

#### **Vitality Ministry Council Reps:**

**Rev. Robb Tarr, Gahanna Community Congregational Church, Gahanna, Ohio [term to 2025]**

**Cynthia Hardy, Congregational Church of the Valley, Chandler, Arizona [term to end 2025]**

### **ANNUAL MEETING & CONFERENCE COMMITTEE MEMBER-AT-LARGE – LEADERSHIP COUNCIL**

#### **New Nominee [Three-Year Term; 2024-2027]**

#### **Robert (Bob) Labadini, Deacon, Union Congregational Church of Amesbury, Amesbury, Massachusetts**

Bob became a member of the Union Congregational Church in 2009. In 2011 Bob was appointed to the office of deacon. He has also served as assistant treasurer and is currently serving as our church council's moderator. He has been involved in ministry search and call as well as reviewing and updating the Church's constitution and by-laws. In 2023 Bob was elected as a member of the Executive Council of the Massachusetts Association of Congregational Christian Churches. Bob's spiritual background spans the study of several religious and philosophical practices. During this time his strong relationship with his higher power developed. Bob was a newcomer to Protestantism in 2009 and has stated that, after worshipping with the congregation on several Sundays, his predominant reason for becoming a church member was the "sense of true fellowship" he felt being among them. Bob's personal background included a baccalaureate degree in business and a career in facility management and property physical/financial assessment.

## **Continuing Members-At-Large on the Annual Meeting & Conference Committee [no vote necessary]**

**Rev. Joyce Acree, Demorest, Georgia [term to end 2025]**

**Rev. Dr. Karen Robu, Plymouth Congregational Church, Wichita, Kansas [term to end 2026]**

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS [Staggered Terms, as indicated]**

**New Nominee [Four-Year Term 2024-2028]**

**Carol Taylor, United Church of Beloit, Wisconsin**

Carol Taylor has been Licensed Minister at United Church of Beloit, WI, since completing the NACCC Lay Ministry Training Program in 2006. She is active in local community outreach and missions. Carol is past member and Chair of the Growth Ministry Council and is current co-editor of the annual Lenten and Advent Devotional booklets. Carol and husband Martin (who serves as United's Year-Round Delegate) have attended NACCC Annual Meetings for many years.

## **Continuing Members on the Board of Directors [no vote necessary]**

**Rev. Thomas Van Tassell, First Congregational Church, Saugatuck, Michigan [term to end 2025]**

**Curt Schmidt, Congregational Church of Bound Brook, Bound Brook, New Jersey [term to end 2026]**

**Robert Weers, Congregational Church of Soquel, California [term to end 2027]**

## **GROWTH MINISTRY COUNCIL**

**New Nominee [Three-Year Term 2024-2027]**

**Lisa VanAlst, Preston City Congregational Church, Preston, Connecticut**

Lisa VanAlst grew up in the state of Indiana and made the journey to eastern Connecticut with her husband and three children in 2005. Having left everything she knew and loved; she sought out a church community. They discovered Preston City Congregational Church in the summer of 2009 and have never left. She joined the Sunday School staff a few years later. Then she became a Youth Group Co-Leader, Mission Trip Co-Leader and joined the Scarecrow Festival Committee. In her spare time she was a Paraeducator at Plainfield Public Schools where she worked in the Intense Learning Program. She is currently the Director of Religious Education at Preston City Congregational Church and a Grammie to three beautiful grandbabies. She also substitutes at school, and she is volunteering on her church's 325th Anniversary Committee. She also loves reading, traveling, and spending time with the best husband in the world.

## **Continuing Members of the Growth Ministry Council [no vote necessary]**

**Pastor Michael K. Freeman, Hampshire Colony Congregational Church, Princeton, Illinois [term to end 2025]**

**Rev. Dr. William R. "Ron" Toliver Th.D., Crystal Congregational Church, Crystal, Michigan [term to end 2025]**

**Rev. Irven Gammon, Florence Congregational Church, Florence, Massachusetts [term to end 2026]**

**Sharon Brown, Meadowbrook Congregational Church, Novi, Michigan [term to end 2026]**

## **MISSION AND OUTREACH MINISTRY COUNCIL**

**New Nominee [Three-Year Term 2024-2027]**

**Ann Goecke, La Moille Congregational Community Church, Marshalltown, Iowa**

Ann is a life-long member of the LaMoille Congregational Church, which is part of a small rural community in Iowa. She has served in numerous leadership positions within the church and is currently a member of the Christian Education Committee, teaches Sunday School, and serves as the church Treasurer. Recently retired from a career in the Financial and Insurance industry, Ann remains busy with her hobbies of quilting and gardening, she is an active member of the Polk County Master Gardeners volunteering to help with the upkeep of community gardens and educational events for the organization.

## **Continuing Members of the Mission and Outreach Ministry Council [no vote necessary]**

**Rev. Bob Higgins, St. John Church of Idalia, Idalia, Colorado [term to end 2025]**

**Amana Talala Mbise, Anchorage, Alaska [term to end 2025]**

**Joanne Simpson, First Church of Christ Congregational, Lynn, Massachusetts [term to end 2026]**

**Rev. Richard Miller-Todd, Berwick Congregational Church, Berwick, Iowa [term to end 2026]**

## **VITALITY MINISTRY COUNCIL**

**New Nominee** [Three-Year Term 2024-2027]

### **Rev. Julie Sheridan-Smith, First Congregational Church of Wauwatosa, Wisconsin**

Rev. Julie Sheridan-Smith has served as Senior Minister for First Congregational Church of Wauwatosa Wisconsin since October 2022. Julie had served as Associate Minister for North Shore Congregational Church in Fox Point Wisconsin where she began working as the Children's Ministry Director and Christian Involvement Coordinator. During those years while she and her husband Tom raised their three children, she pursued a Bachelor of Arts in Theology followed by a Master of Divinity at Dubuque Theological Seminary. Having been raised Catholic, Julie became a firm believer in the Congregational Way, and has served in several roles with the Wisconsin Congregational Association including Moderator and has been active and enriched by the Minister's Fellowship Committee, including serving as President for two years. She has also been very active with the Youth Summer Camp through the WCA and on the mission team with Hosanna Industries in Pennsylvania.

### **Continuing Members of the Vitality Ministry Council** [no vote necessary]

**Cynthia Hardy, Congregational Church of the Valley, Chandler, Arizona** [term to end 2025]

**Rev. Robb Tarr, Gahanna Community Congregational Church, Gahanna, Ohio** [term to end 2025]

**Rev. Mark Tanner, Skowhegan Federated Church, Skowhegan, Maine** [term to end 2026]

**Rev. Dr. Robin Carden, Suttons Bay Congregational Church, Suttons Bay, Michigan** [term to end 2026]

## **NOMINATING COMMITTEE** Nominated by Board of Directors

**New Nominee** [Completing term for Joelle Sommers 2024-2026]

### **Rev. Dr. Patrick Hunt, Heritage Congregational Church of Berea, Ohio**

Rev. Patrick Hunt has been the pastor of Heritage Congregational Church in Berea, OH for the past 17 years. During this time, he has served in various capacities with the Ohio Association of Congregational Christian Churches and the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches. He has been the moderator of the OACCC 3 times and served as a trustee. With the NACCC, he has served on the Growth Ministry Council, the Hurting Church Fund, the NA Executive Director search committee, and the NA Planning and Action Committee. He and his wife have been married for 54 years, have 3 children, 8 grandchildren, and 2 great grandchildren. Rev. Hunt and his wife live in Brook Park, Ohio.

**New Nominee** [Three-Year Term 2024-2027]

### **Rev. Doug Gray, First Congregational Church of Salt Lake City, Utah**

Rev. Doug Gray is passionate about teaching and learning, contemporary music and playing games. These have served him well in leadership capacities in HOPE, the Wisconsin Congregational Association Camp, and as worship leader for NAPF/HOPE (2010). He currently chairs the Lay Ministry Editorial Board, has offered presentations at the CFTS AMC Seminar ("Approaches to Church Conflict"), and has authored *Building Confirmation the Congregational Way*. Doug grew up in Los Angeles and Milwaukee, and has served churches in New Jersey, Maryland, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Massachusetts. Most recently, Doug and his family have been part of the grace filled and adventurous First Congregational Church of Salt Lake City. He is married to Dr. Cynthia B. Gray, and they have three dynamic, grown children.

**New Nominee** [Three-Year Term 2024-2027]

### **Rev. Kay Miller-Todd, Berwick Congregational Church, Berwick, Iowa**

Rev. Kay Miller-Todd has been a member of the Berwick Congregational Church, Berwick, Iowa, for more than twenty years. In that capacity, she has taught Sunday School and Adult Bible studies, and she has led the Kids' Club and the choir. She has also worked in the Berwick Food Co-Op. She served on the Annual Meeting and Conference Team for three years as the representative of the Iowa-Nebraska Association when it hosted the 2014 Omaha meeting and conference. In December 2016, Kay retired from the Iowa Department of Justice after serving as an Assistant Attorney General for 32 years. Kay was ordained as a Congregational minister in 1983 and was installed in January 2017 as co-pastor of Berwick Congregational Church. She retired from Berwick Church in the fall of 2021. In the fall of 2022, she began serving as Moderator of the Iowa-Nebraska Association.

### **Continuing Members of the Nominating Committee** [no vote necessary]

**Jami Backell, Warden Community Church, Warden, Washington** [term to end 2025]

**Rev. J.R. McAiley, Center Congregational Church of Atlanta, Georgia** [term to end 2025]

**Rev. Justin Nierer, Sandstone Congregational Church, Jackson, Michigan** [term to end 2026]