

“Building International Bridges of Witness and Fellowship”

THE FORESEE

Conservative Congregational Christian Conference

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Around The Conference

Historic Downtown Church Responds to 21st Century Challenge

by Rev. Edward Rinehart, Pastor, First Evangelical and Reformed Church, Lima, Ohio

Founded by German settlers in 1864, First Evangelical and Reformed Church of Lima, Ohio might appear at first glance to be a historic, but stagnating, church in an otherwise bustling downtown. Passers-by on its one-way street might not be aware of the exciting changes in the life of this congregation, which joined the CCCC in 2003.

Over the past year the church has seen an 18% increase in worship attendance. The excitement of personal faith, a desire for greater community impact, and a renewed emphasis on missions have swept over the congregation. In September 2005 the congregation called Rev. Edward Rinehart as pastor. But the change cannot be attributed to any individual. The congregation and its leadership simply determined they would work as a team to seek and serve the Lord.

Change has been visible in many ways over the past year. Fifty people took part in a 16-week survey of the Old and New Testaments. On “Souper Bowl Sunday” the congregation broke its previous record for the amount of

canned food donated to local food banks. In Lima’s Labor Day parade First E&R won “Best Float” for a salute to local teachers; the youth group passed out 2316 school notebooks with a note, “Do your best, be your best!”



First E&R, Lima, Ohio is experiencing renewal inside and out.

The 2006 CCCC Annual Conference theme, “We have never stopped praying for you,” challenged First E&R’s delegates. Returning to Lima they began to pray each week over every pew of the sanctuary. The very first week every row had someone seated in it, including those in the balcony. Since the Conference others have joined this silent prayer ministry.

First E&R’s story continues as more things are being planned in the church rebuilding process. What prayer has done to renew the congregation’s life is now reflected in expansion of the church’s facilities and parking area. Lima residents who drive by can tell: this is not a stagnant church, but a shining beacon of God’s presence.

Submitted by Rev. Jay Warren, Western Ohio and Indiana Area Representative

Lone CCCC Church Serves Lone Star State

by Rev. Charles McCrillis, Texas Area Representative

St. John Congregational Church in Follett, Texas is the only CCCC church in the state. It was founded in 1925 by families emigrating from Russia to escape the turmoil in that country. Follett is in the northeast corner of the Texas Panhandle, only a few miles from Oklahoma. St. John is a country church serving Christ in that rural location by serving families within a thirty-mile radius.



St. John Congregational in rural Follett, the only CCCC church in Texas. Photo by Elmer Schoenhals.

Whereas the church began with families from Russia, it has since become more diversified to include many from other backgrounds. The congregation struggles with the issues many smaller churches face, such as how to embrace the youth in a way that will guide them into a living and strong relationship with Jesus Christ.

Pastor M. D. Methvin has served the congregation for six years, continuing a ministry that has spanned 56 years. We thank the Lord for the pastor and his dear wife Juanita, and the others who labor with him.

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From the Conference Minister

Changing Visions for an Unchanging Faith

In God's Word we're often reminded that some things must change, while others must remain the same. For example truth does not change, and God does not change. But we must all change. In John 15 Jesus said like the branches of a fruit tree we must all be



Rev. Dr. Stephen A. Gammon,
CCCC Conference Minister

pruned (changed) in order to bear more fruit, but when it comes to our relationship with Jesus we must always remain in Him (same). God has in store for us some ways in which we must be the same and some in which we must be brand new!

This has certainly been true for me personally. After 30 years of marriage Helen and I have celebrated that we still love and are committed to each other (the same) yet we're adjusting now to the quietness of the empty nest (the new). Also, after living in this body and using these hands for over 50 years now (the same) I've been scheduled to have surgery on my painful left hand with the promise that this can lead to pain-free use of my hand (the new). Both of these personal changes remind me that even when it's right, change isn't necessarily painless!

In the CCCC we also experience both what is the same and what is brand new. What can never change is our historic Christian faith, our shared convictions on the truth and authority of Holy

Scripture, our practice of congregational polity, and our commitment to "Honor Jesus Christ Together." But some things are new for us. One of these is a new national office, with more room including a prayer chapel.

The other change is the appointment of two new national ministry staff members, bringing new energy to help us fulfill the vision the Lord has given to us together. Please be praying with me for Pastor *Ron Hamilton* and Pastor *John Kimball* as they begin their work respectively as CCCC Director of Church Multiplication and as CCCC Director of Conference Care/Director of Church Redevelopment.

May the Lord richly bless you and your congregation. And may the Lord continue to bless the CCCC so we may be resolute and changeless in the truth and commitment that are timeless. But we will all trust and follow Him in every change He intends!



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Conf. President: Nick Granitsas
Conf. Minister: Steve Gammon

Conference Office:

Phone: 651-739-1474
Fax: 651-739-0750
E-mail: dmjohnson@cccusa.com
Website: www.ccccusa.com

Prayer Requests:

CCCCprayer@hotmail.net

Mail address:

7582 Currell Blvd. Suite 108
St. Paul, MN 55125-2220

THE FORESEE Co-Editors:

Richard & Shirley Anne Leonard

E-mail: TheFORESEE@aol.com

Phone: 1-800-440-4043

Mail address:

P.O. Box 250
Kirkland, IL 60146

Deadline for the January/February 2007 issue is November 10, 2006.

Carlton's Comments

Helping Students with Annual Conference Expense

Again this year the Northeast Region assisted students under Conference Care in attending the Annual Family Conference. Last year two students received scholarships, and this year three students were able to spend four days at the meeting in St. Cloud, Minnesota. Michelle Durkee, Bob Francis and Maurice Cormier received a total of more than \$1000 contributed by interested churches and individuals. One large gift came from an offering received at an ordination service at the First Christian Church of Andover, Massachusetts.

The Conference, in recent years, has waived the registration fee for any Conference Care members. The faithful giving of individuals and churches in the Northeast has covered the cost of hotel room and meals. Depending on giving to the Family Conference fund and the number of Northeast students attending in any one year, some assistance with transportation expense might also be available.

No other single experience in the Conservative Congregational Christian Conference provides as clear a picture of what the Conference is all about. The



Rev. Carlton Walker, Northeast
Regional Minister

(continued on page 3)

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Family Conference involves not only individuals and representatives of member churches from the United States, but also Christians of congregational persuasion from other countries of the world who are often in attendance.

Bob Francis graduated in May from the Boston campus of Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary. He found the experience in St. Cloud invaluable as he prepares to serve the Lord in one of the Conference churches. He stated that he was most impressed by the prayer theme of the 2006 Conference, based on Colossians 1:9.

“I was challenged to praise the Lord first in my prayers, before I give Him any requests,” he said. Francis also related that the 7:00 a.m. prayer times were especially meaningful to him. Of the many workshops offered, he was able to attend one on being a pastoral candidate, one on spiritual healing and one on evangelism. The camaraderie with Christians from all over the country provided the “icing on the cake.”

This type of financial help in attending a Family Conference has proved to be an excellent asset to a student preparing to serve the Lord through the Conservative Congregational Christian Conference.

Rev. Carlton Walker
Phone: 518-346-3538
E-mail: ckwalker@cccusa.com

Bryan's Bytes

By Pastor Bryan Burrell, CCCC Webmaster

Good Old-Fashioned Communication

Email is one of the great inventions of our time. It can also be a royal pain. I receive scores of emails every day. Lately I've been taking a break from my email — just to remain sane!

One of the downsides to email is its impersonal nature. You don't hear the tone of a person's voice in email. As a result the chance for misunderstanding is amplified. The ability to respond immediately can be a temptation we should sometimes resist! There are times when email is not the right way to communicate.

Don't forget the good, old-fashioned face-to-face communication that has served us well for centuries. If that's not possible or available, a phone call can provide the tone that an email can't. And, where email has been used, a call can inform us that it was either not read or not received. In short, in this technological age we should never forget that often the time-tested methods of communication are, in fact, the best.

2007 Short-Term Mission Trips

The following trips sponsored by the CCCC Missions Committee are tentatively set for 2007. Don't let the cost be a deciding factor. Rev. Clair Longuevan, chairman of the Missions Committee, reminds us, “Where God guides, God provides.” Participants can send personal support letters to let their church, friends and family take part in the mission. You do not have to be a member of a CCCC church to participate.

Each of these trips requires an application, a confidential pastoral reference, a valid passport, and a one-time, non-refundable deposit of \$100. For more information and an application packet, or to learn how you can financially support these trips, contact Rev. Longuevan, 2208 Dakota Drive, Grand Junction, CO 81503 (970-243-5949), email clonguevan@cs.com.

Once you are formally registered for a specific mission trip, all necessary updates will be forwarded to you. The information below is subject to change without notice; all costs shown are per person.

Cordoba, Spain — January 5-19, 2007

Building team, 16 people. Led by Clair Longuevan. *This trip is filled.*

Trivandrum, India — January 18-February 1, 2007

Medical Assistance Team, 5-8 spiritually mature people; no medical skills required — \$3200 (includes \$500 toward the cost of medical camps). Led by Gary Yurich, 800-423-0453 or 248-588-6426, email gyurich@bestlights.com. Help Indian congregations provide medical care to their villages, and assist Hope Children's Home.

Onda, Spain — March 30-April 13, 2007

Work Team, 5-7 people — \$1400. Led by Clair Longuevan. Install a church ceiling, assisting missionaries from Guatemala.

Czech Republic — June 29-July 15, 2007

English Camp Team, 15-20 people — \$1850. Led by Clair

Longuevan. A Christian book reflecting the camp theme is used as a base for sharing biblical truth while strengthening English skills. Class and discussion occur at multiple levels, depending on local participants' level of English. CCCC missionaries Jeff and Lisa Griffith will host the team.

Donegal County, Ireland — July 27-August 11, 2007.

Evangelism Team, 5 people — \$2075. Led by Clair Longuevan. Evangelistic outreach in Dungloe, in an area with few Protestant churches. Price includes airfare, bungalow lodging, food and two excursions to well-known castles.

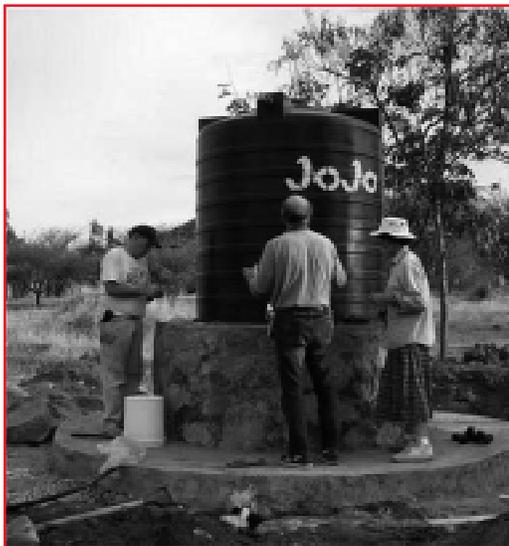
Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi — August 4-11, 2007

Youth Work Team, 20-25 young people — \$400.00 plus transportation to New Orleans. Led by John Eklund and Scott Koop. Cleanup, repair and building activities to assist Hurricane Katrina victims, as part of ongoing “Project Hope.”

Sherman Church Remembers 2005 Tanzania Mission

by Julie Astbury

In October 2005, eight members of Sherman Church, Sherman, Connecticut, traveled to the village of Bulima, Tanzania, on the southeastern shores of Lake Victoria. Our purpose was to share in the work of the Lion of Judah Academy, a school the church supports.



Members of Sherman Church set up a water tank in a Tanzanian village.

Team members taught classes (Bible, computer skills, music, sewing and others) and participated in children's ministries. They typed exams—in English and Swahili—and did library work. They installed a water tank, set up recreational and sports equipment, ran electrical conduits and performed other maintenance tasks.

We went with the vision of being God's hands and feet in Tanzania. Little did we realize we, too, would be served and would experience God's hands and feet working for our benefit as well. When we follow His example of serving others we too are blessed, whether at home or in Tanzania.

Team members were Pastor Paul and Julie Astbury, Paul and Carol Voorhees, Jill Finch, Mallory Moore, Debby Mastroni and Tara Alemany.

Eminent Congregational Christians – Fourth in a Series

Eric Liddell, Athlete and Missionary

by David A. Williams, Fort Worth, Texas and
Richard C. Leonard, Ph.D., Co-Editor of *THE FORESEE*

Viewers of the 1981 Oscar-winning movie *Chariots of Fire* saw Scottish athlete Eric Liddell (portrayed by Ian Charleson) as a strong Calvinist Christian. What Hollywood didn't tell them is that Liddell was a committed Congregationalist who spent his life, after a brief Olympic career, as a missionary in China.

Born in China in 1902 of Scottish missionary parents, Eric was educated in Britain. He studied science at the University of Edinburgh, where he played on the rugby team and ran various racing events including the 400-meter, which he ran in the 1924 Paris Olympiad.

After graduation from the University, Eric returned to China where he taught science at the Anglo-Chinese Christian College in Tientsin (Tianjin), run by the London Missionary Society. He also was superintendent of the Sunday school of Union Church of which his father, James Liddell, was pastor.

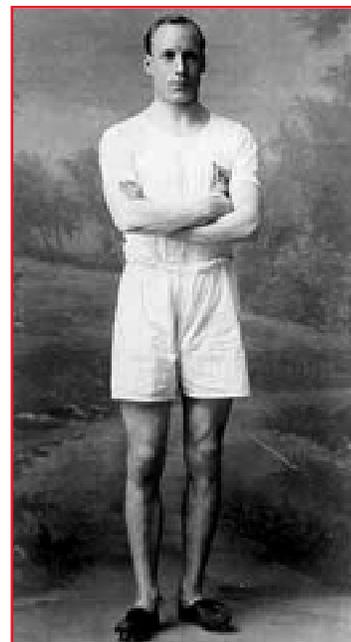
Eric was furloughed to Edinburgh in 1931 to complete his theological studies at the Scottish Congregational College, and the following year he was ordained to the Congregational ministry. Returning to China he resumed his duties and, in 1934, married Florence McKenzie.

In 1941 Florence and their two daughters left for Canada because of dangerous conditions in China, which Japan had invaded. Eric remained in China, moving to a rural mission station in Siaochang to relieve his ailing brother Rob, a physician. Eric never knew his third daughter, born in Canada.

1943 the Japanese sent all mission personnel to the Weihsien Internment Camp. There Eric became a leader helping to organize recreational events, educational activities and worship services for the detainees. Under conditions of stress and privation he developed a brain tumor, and died in 1945.

Eric Liddell's remains were interred in the Mausoleum of Martyrs in Shih Cha Chuang, China. During the 60th anniversary of the liberation of the internment camp, the city of Weifang laid a wreath at his memorial marker there, previously erected by the University of Edinburgh.

In 1942 Liddell published *Prayers for Daily Use*. In this book he wrote about obedience as the key to knowing God: "Obedience to God's will is the secret of spiritual knowledge and insight. It is not willingness to know, but willingness to *do* (obey) God's Will that brings certainty." As a Congregationalist missionary, Eric Liddell lived out his own words.



Matters for Prayer

Let's be praying as a CCCC family about these concerns:

- Pray for the meetings of the CCCC Outreach and Services Council to be held in St. Paul, November 9-11.
- Pray for a smooth transition to our new CCCC office location, now under construction.
- Pray for the Lord's financial provision to meet our CCCC budgetary needs.
- Pray for Conference Minister Steve Gammon as he serves us and for quick healing from his hand surgery.
- Pray for Ron Hamilton and his family as he begins his ministry as CCCC Director of Church Multiplication.
- Pray for John Kimball and his family as they prepare to move to Minnesota and as he begins his ministry as CCCC Director of Conference Care and Director of Church Redevelopment.

Pietism in the Sky

Faith that isn't biblically grounded is like a hot air balloon.

There's something funny going on in the church these days. I keep hearing things like, "Doctrine divides; we don't need theology, we just need the Bible." This is nothing new. It's a mindset that reaches back to the nineteenth century in America.

What's funny is that, disclaimers notwithstanding, there is indeed a collective body of doctrinal truth in what we might call the evangelical faith. It's no less doctrinaire than the most tightly worded creed. It's not written down anywhere in any singular corpus, but it's a cliché-ridden body of truth—"evangelical" truth—that has become encased in an oral tradition.

To be sure, there are evangelical doctrinal statements aplenty. But they're minimal, if not reductionist. Empirical observation suggests a great deal of latitude in their application. The tradition I'm talking about is no less dogmatic than the most rigorous creeds and confessions of ages past. Its adherents cling to this body of truth, supposedly based on the Bible, with a bulldog tenacity that would shame a Spanish Inquisitor.

One example comes from a prominent New York City radio preacher. Expounding a passage from Genesis, he made the startling application, "Aren't you glad that God doesn't deal with us that way today?" The context matters little; it is the sweeping generalization about how God deals with His creatures that was bothersome. He was giving expression to that "evangelical" oral, but no less dogmatic, tradition that the God of the Old Testament—whom I thought was unchangeable—has somehow mellowed from Malachi to Matthew.

Cliches abound in this oral tradition. Granted, cliches are unavoidable, and we all use them. The problem arises when their meaning is lost. In conversation recently someone made the remark, "I'm covered by the blood." Now that's a phrase rich in meaning. Sad to say, the person didn't really know

by Rev. Robert G. Hall, Co-Pastor, Bronx Household of Faith
what it meant. But hey! It has a nice spiritual ring to it, don't you think?

Recently an acquaintance that had long since moved to another state dropped by for a visit. We asked the usual questions: Are you walking with the Lord? What church are you attending? In this instance it was the Episcopal Church. Not wanting to be judgmental, despite what has been going on in that ecclesiastical body, I tried to find something in its history with which I could find common ground. "Oh! You must be learning the Thirty-nine Articles, that's a wonderful tradition." The person shot back, "I don't wanna know about any thirty-nine articles, I just wanna know about Jesus." Sounds very pious. But it was a way of saying, "Buzz off. I don't want to talk about any specifics in my life."

Here it is in living black and white—the same stuff as the contemporary "evangelical" faith, an oral tradition that can be summarized as "me and Jesus." Let's just keep our faith in the upper reaches of the spiritual stratosphere.

Oh, there's more. One of the nodes that bulges out of this tradition is a funny understanding

of grace. It's a view that dogmatically asserts that we're saved by grace, not by works. This means (though it would never be written down anywhere) that we're saved regardless of works. I heard a form of it again in my Bible class as we were talking about believers who've fallen away. Someone piped up, "But God is married to the backslider!"

This is not the Biblical "not of works lest any man should boast." This is grace isolated from works—a form of grace that floats up there as a hot air balloon, but not tethered to a life to be lived here and now. The grace the Apostle Paul speaks of teaches us to say "no" to ungodliness and worldly passions (Titus 2:11-12). In contemporary "evangelical" faith it has morphed into something quite different over the last half century.



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Something is getting lost as this oral tradition is being passed from generation to generation. Yet we refuse to be more precise in our theological formations because that would smack of dead orthodoxy and cold theologizing. “This is a matter of the heart.” So it is. But our sinful hearts unwittingly attempt to trim God down to a manageable size.

What are we left with? A touchy-feely kind of oral tradition that fits well with the postmodern mind. I can put my own spin on it. I can define my relationship with the Lord—a personal relationship, mind you—any way I want. Hmmm—I thought it was the other way around. I thought He set the terms of this new covenant relationship.

Enough of this pietism in the sky! I tell people that they need to add verse 10 when memorizing Ephesians 2:8-9. *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this*

not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Grace must have its visible, God-glorifying effect in the real world. *Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven* (Matthew 5:16). Even a cursory reading of Scripture has to tell us that the Gospel is more than “ask Jesus into your heart and you get to go to heaven when you die.” Don’t shrink back from teaching and preaching the whole counsel of God, nor from faithfully passing it on to the next generation.

Reprinted from City Lights, Bronx Household of Faith, Winter 2006

Spirit of the Pilgrims Our Legacy Today

by Rev. Alwyn York, Conference Historian

As spiritual descendents of the “Pilgrims,” the pioneering band that settled at Plymouth, Congregationalists take special pride that our national Thanksgiving Day is based on an episode in our denominational history.

Thanksgiving is a good time to reacquaint ourselves with who these first American Congregationalists were, and why they came on their “errand into the wilderness.” (The term *Pilgrims* was applied to this group only much later. Originally they were known as the “first comers.”)

Most immigrants to these shores came hoping to better themselves economically. But the Pilgrims left the comforts of civilization to settle in an untamed wilderness solely to be able to serve God without hindrance. Their purity and spiritual fervor are hard to find today.

This is an extract from a letter Pastor John Robinson and Elder William Brewster wrote to Sir Edwin Sandys, a sympathetic member of the English nobility. They wrote it in Holland in 1617 as they were seeking support for their proposed settlement in the New World. They list the reasons why they believe their endeavor had a good chance of success.

1. We verily believe and trust the Lord is with us, unto whom and whose service we have given ourselves in many trials;

and that He will graciously prosper our endeavors according to the simplicity of our hearts therein.

2. We are well weaned from the delicate milk of our mother country, and inured to the difficulties of a strange and hard land, which yet in a great part we have by patience overcome.

3. The people are, for the body of them, industrious and frugal, we think we may safely say, as any company of people in the world.

4. We are knit together as a body in the most strict and sacred bond and covenant of the Lord, of the violation thereof we make great conscience, and by virtue thereof we do hold ourselves straitly tied to all care of each other’s good and of the whole, by every one and so mutually.

5. Lastly, it is not with us as other men, whom small things can discourage, or small discontentments cause to wish themselves at home again.

To read such a passage is a humbling experience. We feel shallow by comparison when we see the depth of these Congregationalists’ devotion to God and the seriousness with which they took their mutual obligations as members of one

church body. May our remembrance of their devotion and commitment give us a determination to be heirs of the Pilgrims in spirit, as well as in name.



*The Mayflower II, Plymouth, Massachusetts.
Photo by Richard Leonard.*

Promotions to Glory



Dr. Ted Engstrom, 1916-2006

by Rev. A. Barry Jones, Pacific Southwest Area Representative

On July 14, 2006 Dr. Theodore W. "Ted" Engstrom, a true "Son of Barnabas," was promoted to glory. Respected as a leader of several evangelical ministries, he is most often recognized as President of World Vision. He wrote more than 55 books, including the still-popular *Managing Your Time* (Zondervan, 1967).

Dr. Engstrom was a friend and supporter of the CCCC, serving on several committees and speaking at Conference gatherings. He was a wise encourager and mentor to many. As head of a Christian organization he was known as a "friend-raiser" rather than a "fund-raiser."

Dr. Engstrom attended Lake Avenue Congregational Church, Pasadena, California, a CCCC church, for more than four decades. His memorial service there was a gathering of "who's who" in evangelical circles.

Many speakers, known for their own ministries, paid tribute to this man of God who had befriended, counseled and encouraged them. They told how Dr. Engstrom's godly life and example were sustained into the closing years of his life. His constant reminder to all who shared burdens with him was a phrase from 1 John 3:20, "God is greater . . ."

Farewell, good friend. We have been greatly blessed by your life, your wisdom and above all, your love for Christ and the church.

Changes and Opportunities

Pastoral Changes:

Greeley CO	St. Paul's Congregational Church* called Jim Kallenberg*
Belleville IL	Hope Church called Jay Krumeich
Cheney WA	Cheney Community Church (NAE) called Jeff Brinkman
Wilton WI	Faith Congregational Church* called Bruce Jenkins*
West Valley NY	Riceville Community Church (Part time) called David Bevington

Pastoral Openings:

Biola CA	Biola Congregational Church*
Ripon CA	First Congregational Church*
Longmont CO	Christ Congregational Church*
Middletown IN	Sulphur Springs Christian Church (UCC)
Garner IA	Zion Evangelical & Reformed Church*
Grinnell IA	Newburg-Chester Congregational*
Parkersburg IA	First Congregational*
Carthage ME	Carthage Union Church* (Part time)
Boxford MA	First Church Congregational*
Eureka MI	Eureka Christian Church*
Flint MI	Cross Church*
Honor MI	Honor Congregational Church*
Muskegon MI	Orchard View Congregational*
Avon MN	Avon Community Church*
Holdingford MN	Community Country Church*
Lake Elmo MN	St. Lucas Community Church*
Laurel MT	First Congregational Church*
Scottsbluff NE	Emmanuel Congregational Church*
Inwood NY	Community Bible Church* (Part time)
Lake View NY	Lake View Congregational Church*
Vermilion OH	Vermilion Evang & Reformed Church*
Bernville PA	St. Thomas UCC
Fredonia PA	Christ Community Church* (Part time)
Loysburg PA	St John's Reformed Church+
Disputanta VA	Bethlehem Congregational Church* (Part time)

* = Conference member

+ = In process

DO YOU HAVE IT ON YOUR CALENDAR YET?

Plan to come to the 59th Annual Meeting of the Conservative Congregational Christian Conference

Crowne Plaza Anaheim Resort
Garden Grove, California
July 16-19, 2007

***Great Fellowship, Great Teaching,
Great Worship, Great Fun!***

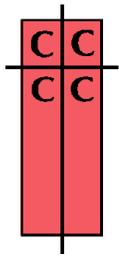
Health Tips

Kitchen Safety

Cooking fires are the number one cause of home fires and home fire injuries. Kids and pets should be at least 3 feet away from the stove when food is cooking. Keep dish towels, curtains or paper at least 3 feet away from the stove. Turn pot handles toward the back of the stove when cooking. Wear short or tight fitting sleeves when cooking. Keep surfaces clean from grease buildup. Kitchen fires should be smothered, generally, to extinguish. Check the kitchen before leaving the house or going to bed. Clean cobwebs and dust from your installed smoke detector, check it monthly with the test button, replace the battery every fall and spring.

Source: www.usfa.fema.gov and www.nfpa.org

by Betty Mitchell, RN, Parish Nurse
Emmanuel Bethel Church
Royal Oak, MI



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Family Conference Apparel

“Ever since I first heard of your strong faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for Christians everywhere, I have never stopped thanking God for you. I pray for you constantly” Ephes. 1:15-16

Long Sleeve Denim Shirt

Men’s & Ladies Sizes Small - 1XL **\$27.00**
 Sizes 2XL & up **\$29.00**

Golf Polo Shirt

Men’s & Ladies Sizes Small - 1XL **\$27.00**
 Sizes 2XL & up **\$29.00**

2006 Annual Family Conference Shirt

Theme Tee Shirts Green & White - **\$10.00**

Coffee/Tea Mug, Burgundy over White - **\$5.00**

Bible/Book Bag, Red or Blue - **\$10.00**

Baseball Cap with CCCC Logo - **\$10.00**

All items have our CCCC Logo, please call Gayle for colors & sizes.

How are you going to say thank you to your pastor and church staff? - May I suggest?



Remember, when ordering from Foresee Publications, you’re contributing to the Conference.

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