

E. C. Leader

AUGUST, 2009

Our Vision

The Evangelical Congregational Church will be a dynamic movement of God that is led by pastors and laity who have a burning passion for God and a missionary zeal to reach the lost. We will creatively obey the Great Commission by transforming plateaued and declining churches into healthy, disciple-making churches that are committed to evangelizing the communities to which God has called them. Healthy churches will reproduce themselves by planting churches in least-reached communities. Interdependence will be the distinguishing mark of the Evangelical Congregational Church as local churches network with one another and ministries beyond the E.C. family to proclaim the Gospel to the world.



Strategic Planning

"A prudent man gives thought to his steps." Proverbs 14:15b

The roster is nearly complete and preparations well underway for the first meeting of the "Transformation" Strategic Planning team on September 26. A capable and diverse group of leaders has been called together from across the National Conference. We have prayerfully invited representatives from all of our regions consisting of men and women, young and old, clergy and laity to seek God's will together. Appreciative of our past, aware of our present, and anticipating our future, this group will be meeting over the eight months to discover all we can about the "plan" the Lord already has for our church over the next 3-5 years.

Pastor Jeff Byerly will be chairing this initiative. The basic process will begin with a series of all day meetings of 25-30 people serving as a "Forecast Group," clarifying our vision and purpose. As we assess the gap between "where we are" and "where we want to be" the team will be pared down to a "Development Group" of 12-15 that will create an implementation plan of prioritized action steps. In both fall and spring District Ministry teams will be gathered to provide insight, input, and ownership to the shaping of the design. The goal is present the plan to the National Ministry Team in March of 2010 so that it may be refined and recommended to the National Conference of that year for final approval.

From the resulting plan our leadership personnel, commissions, committees, and congregations will be able to draw direction and focus to guide our quest to become an increasingly missional movement – making authentic disciples and planting healthy churches. We will have the next "blueprint" to build from as we continue to follow Jesus as a family of faith.

Prayer has and will be supporting this effort from start to finish. Our Prayer Mobilization Team, led by Pastor Terry Jacobs will be recruiting and resourcing intercessors to "cover" the planning process. Periodic updates will be shared to inform those who are praying. Opportunities will be provided for the prayer team to speak into the planning sessions. If you're willing to make a special commitment to pray for the planning process let us know by emailing blong@eccenter.com or calling 800-866-7581.

Well laid plans don't displace faith in God's providence. They strengthen dependence upon it by reaching God's best. "If it is the Lord's will, we will do this or that." James 4:15 I look forward to learning His will for the E.C. Church and pursuing it with you.

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In Christ,
Bishop Kevin

ANNOUNCEMENTS & REMINDERS...

- Pastor Harry Dow has been appointed to chair our Bi-vocational Ministry work group.
- Men At The Cross will be holding a two day conference in Harrisburg, September 11 & 12. Groups from several of our churches are participating. Contact Wayne Houck for additional information. 610-716-5603 or whouck11@comcast.net

BISHOP'S TRAVELS...



SEPTEMBER	6	Rock, PA	Manbeck's Zion EC
	13	Schuylkill Haven, PA	Grace EC
	14-16	Twin Pines Bible Conference	
	20	Akron, OH	Cottage Grove EC
	21-22	National CRC Retreat – Camp ECCO	
	26	Strategic Planning Team, Myerstown, PA	
	27	Mohnton, PA	Zion EC
	29-30	Stationing Committee Retreat – Twin Pines	

Bishop Kevin looks forward to the opportunity to visit and preach in all of our churches. If you would like to schedule a 2010 date for him to share with your congregation email jeahart@eccenter.com

BISHOP'S PRAYER LIST...

- † For the “Transformation - strategic planning process. Pray that God will prepare the hearts and minds of the team. Ask Him to provide clarity, unity, and certainty to the discussions and decisions.
- † For the making and sending of disciples through our churches. Pray that we live Christ-like lives in our communities and among our neighbors.
- † For the Church Planting Commission as it prepares its 2010 budget and evaluates the potential for “new works” in planting and revitalization. Call upon the Lord to raise up more church planters and lead churches to plant churches.
- † For fruit to come from the seeds planted in summer ministries like camping, camp meeting, vacation bible schools, and other creative outreach efforts.
- † For individuals and ministries that are feeling the impact of the recession. May the Lord turn adversity into the unexpected kingdom opportunity.
- † For the Evangelism and Discipleship Class I'll be teaching at ETS this fall.



DENOMINATIONAL STORE...

Call the Church Center (1-800-866-7581) or email (blong@eccenter.com) to place your order for the following:

- The **2009 National Conference Journal** will be available soon. IF you have not already placed your order to it today. The cost is:
 - Binder w/cover & spine insert \$7.00
 - Section Dividers \$3.50
 - Printed Contents \$12.00
 - Additional CD - WORD format \$5.00(One (1) copy of the Conference Journal on CD will be sent to each church FREE of charge.)



WORD In Action - A One-Day Work Camp Experience

Life Builders Work Camp Ministry and The WORD FM Christian Radio station are coordinating two one-day work camp opportunities. These “WORD In Action” days are great for people from your church to invest a Saturday to help those who are in need. The first experience is September 26, 2009 in the East Stroudsburg, PA area. The second is October 3, 2009 in Lebanon, PA. For more information on an impacting way to serve people, go to www.theworkcamppeople.org.



Coaching is becoming a part of how we maintain health. Many of us now have an ALLOne coach. This is a good thing – but not the focus here.

Our Bishop, Kevin Leibensperger, as well as Les Cool have been coached by Tom Clegg for about a year now. Ask them how much they value the experience. Note that they are both moving into year two with Tom as their coach. Terry Jacobs has also contracted with Tom as his coach.

Some participated in a two day training event called Transmissional Coaching. Dr. Tim Roehl led 22 of us through this on July 10 & 11. The feedback has been so positive that we are talking about repeating this event.

A few of the people who attended this event will go on to be trained as coaches so that we can begin to bring coaching to pastors and lay people throughout the EC world. One day we will be able to come alongside anyone who wants to be all that God created them to be and to do all that God calls them to do. We want to see each person reach their maximum potential.

Conference Ministers Fred Moury, Gary Brown and Bruce Wagner as well as Les Cool and Scott Carr participated in training to gain the ability to coach people with a unique tool called the Grip Birkman Blueprint. Dr. Roehl refers to this tool as “The DiSC on steroids.” It is a wonderful tool by which one may make a godly estimation of how God has wired them and those around them and how they can be His team.

All of this may seem a little sketchy right now. There will be more to come!

NEWS FROM BENEFITS AND COMPENSATION...

2010 Health Insurance Rates

The Benefits Corporation's Board of Trustees has approved the renewal of our health insurance plan with AETNA for 2010 for our active pastors, Global Ministries Commission personnel, employees of the National Conference and Evangelical Theological Seminary. This year's rate increase is 8.5%. In light of the state of our economy and the national trends this year for health insurance renewals of 15-20%, this is a phenomenally low increase. The plan benefits, co-pays, and out-of-pocket expenses all remain the same; there are no changes to any of our coverage.



Why the low increase?

First, our claims for the past year showed significant reductions in the number of hospital admissions, the length of stay for those admissions and emergency room visits. We had increases in outpatient surgeries, office visits and generic drug use. These are all trends that insurance companies like to see and are reflected in our low renewal increase. Secondly, AETNA reduced our increase by a full percentage point because of our outstanding enrollment and commitment to the ALLONE wellness program in just the first six months. There hasn't been enough time yet to show any actual improvements in the overall wellness of our participants, but AETNA still took 1% off the renewal, bring it down to the 8.5%.

Our representative from Corporate Synergies, Candy Ruggieri, received an initial 13% increase as our first quote from AETNA. She then asked them to re-consider our claims history, which resulted in a reduction to 9.5% increase. She followed up with submitting our enrollment statistics for ALLONE, and AETNA returned a final 8.5% increase. In addition to AETNA, Candy submitted our census to the following: Capitol Blue Cross, Highmark, Geisinger, Cigna, United Health, and Health America. Only Highmark and Capitol submitted rate quotes back. Highmark's was 48% and Capitol was 25% higher than our 2009 AETNA rates. Our appreciation to Candy for her work on behalf of the E.C. Church.

The 2010 health insurance premium chart showing the monthly premium for a single, couple, family and parent/child will be available on the E.C. Church website (www.eccenter.com) by August 30.

The chart will also include the optional premium co-pay for those participants who are paying a part of their premium. The 2010 rates are effective January 1, 2010, but will begin with the payment due on December 15, 2009 to the Benefits Corporation. For questions regarding the health insurance premium chart, please contact Rev. Ken Wiest, Benefits-Compensation Administrator. For questions regarding our AETNA renewal, please contact Becky Reigle, President of the Benefits Corporation.

2010 Pastoral Compensation Forms

The 2010 pastoral compensation forms and instructions will be available by August 30 on the E.C. Church website.

ALLOne Wellness program

Enrollment in the ALLOne program is still open. Those eligible participants who enroll in ALLOne, take the Health Risk Assessment, have the physician's form completed by their doctor and take 2 coaching calls from their health coach by December 31, 2009, are still eligible to receive the \$75 VISA gift card. We hope that those who have already enrolled are taking the follow-up calls and following the suggestions of their health coach. As we have experienced in this our first year with ALLOne, getting our participants and their families healthier is one way in which we can help reduce our health insurance expense for our churches, National Conference, Global Ministries and Evangelical Theological Seminary.



ALLONE Customer Service Change

Starting Monday, August 17th, ALLONE Health participants will be asked to verbally identify their group or employer when they call the Customer Service line at 1-866-430-2551 or speak with their Health Coach.

ALLONE will use this information to customize the menu of services available to us and ensure we are offered all of the appropriate options for the services we have selected in our plan. When asked, our group name is "E.C. Church Benefits Corporation."

NEWS FROM THE GLOBAL MINISTRIES COMMISSION...

1. World Fest '09 *"A Time to... Refocus, Re-grow, Rebuild"*

8:00 am – 3:00 pm

8:00 AM Continental Breakfast & Registration

Featuring Director Randy Sizemore

- **Lakeside E.C. Church**, 3203 North Hermitage Road, Transfer, PA
September 12, 2009
 - Missionaries: Nick & Lisa Lakatos
 - RSVP: Lakeside EC Church – (724)962-4222 or lakesidechurch@yahoo.com
 - A specific event for those of high school and college age is being planned for Friday evening, September 11th... stay tuned for more details!
- **Emmanuel E.C. Church**, 175 North Cedar Street, Cedarville, IL
September 19, 2009
 - Missionaries: Nick & Lisa Lakatos
 - RSVP: Emmanuel EC Church – (815)563-4315 or clasco@cedarec.org
 - A specific event for those of high school and college age is being planned for Friday evening, September 11th... stay tuned for more details!
- **Evangelical Theological Seminary**, Myerstown
October 10, 2009
 - Missionaries: Brian & Missy Wagner; Ron Anderson; Dan & Melinda Moury
 - RSVP: Global Ministries Office – (800)866-7584 or ecglobal@eccenter.com
 - A specific event for those of high school and college age is being planned for Friday evening, September 11th... stay tuned for more details!
 - All pastors are invited to a special Friday afternoon session of this program on October 9th beginning with lunch at 12:00 and concluding by 3:00 pm at **Zion E.C. Church**, 25 South College Street, Myerstown, PA.



2. Reminder of Global Ministries Commission meeting October 6-7, 2009 at Church Center.

3. Pastors, Mission Reps & Lay Delegates...

Watch for a letter regarding a budget request from Randy Sizemore arriving the first week of September 2009.

4. Randy's speaking schedule:

September	6	available
	11-12	World Fest at Lakeside EC
	13	Seneca EC (visit)
	18-19	World Fest at Cedarville EC, IL
	20	Calvary EC, Hooppole, IL
	22	Leadership Contact class at ETS
	27	Williams Valley Faith EC, Wiconisco, PA
	29	Leadership Contact class at ETS



Available Sundays in 2009: September 6, October 4, December 13 & 20. Contact Randy.

NEWS FROM THE CENTER FOR LEADERSHIP IMPACT...

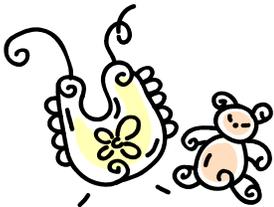
- **Leaders of Impact Pastoral Cohorts** are filling up quickly! Register today to get your name on the list, and take advantage of a \$100 EC pastor discount.
- **Gordon MacDonald** is coming to ETS on October 29. He will be speaking on *The Changing Face of Ministry: Engaging All Ages in the Mission of the Church*. Don't miss out!
- **Leadership Contact** is now open for registrations. This semester's classes include *Missions and Gospels*.
- **Faith in the Marketplace** is gearing up for a full fall schedule, including Beth Bostwick of Masterpiece Marketing on September 24, and Dr. Scott Harrison of CURE International on November 12.
- For more information on any of these events, or online registration visit www.center4li.org or contact Katie Willey at kwilley@evangelical.edu



CHURCH CENTER STAFFING CHANGES...

Congratulations to David and Jodi Earhart who are expecting the arrival of their first child in early November. As a result, Jodi, who has served as one of our Administrative Assistants will be taking maternity leave from the end of October 2009 through the beginning of January 2010.

Currently our plan is for Jodi to return on a part time basis next year. In God's timing this provides us with an opportunity to streamline and realign the Church Center workforce for greater efficiency and economy. We ask your patience and prayers as we make the transition!



Fall Young Adult Service Camp - *A great way to build bonds and strengthen a young adult ministry at your church*

Many churches are seeking ways to start or offer ministry activities for young adults. Life Builders Work Camp Ministries (a ministry of Christian Endeavor-Mid Atlantic) offers a work camp experience for those who have graduated from High School and are under age 24. This Fall Young Adult Service Camp will be held October 22-25, 2009 at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center in western PA. One of the various projects includes framing a building. People with various skill levels are welcome, as work coordinators are available on site to guide the numerous projects. For more information and registration paperwork, go to www.theworkcamppeople.org.

