



EC LEADER

A publication of the Evangelical Congregational Church



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FROM THE DESK

Bishop Bruce Hill

This is the January 2022 edition of the EC LEADER. I'm not sure if I should say, "Happy New Year!" or "Happy New Year?" I have recently found myself thinking about and reading Old Testament prophets, particularly the words of Jeremiah. Jeremiah is known as the 'weeping prophet,' and we are told his tears flowed from a broken heart. His ministry was during a politically, socially, morally, and spiritually chaotic era. The message the Lord entrusted to him was not an easy one. The people had turned away from God, worshipping idols and following the morals of their sinful neighbors. The book of Jeremiah is written prior to the destruction of Jerusalem while Lamentations was written after the city was destroyed in 586 B.C.

Jeremiah was faithful, he did what God had asked of him, and yet he experienced the battles, saw the destruction, and left his home for a foreign land. Listen to Jeremiah, God's man, the faithful prophet's heart in Lamentations 3:20; "I will never forget this awful time, as I grieve over my loss."

FROM THE DESK

continued...



Do you ever feel like Jeremiah? You're trying to do the Lord's will as best you can. You're not perfect, but you're faithful. And yet where does it get you? You're miserable, and it seems like nothing good ever happens anyway.

It has been noted that external problems produce internal distress. We all have problems, and every problem has the potential to overwhelm the soul. We feel helpless and hopeless when so much seems out of control.

No sooner has Jeremiah spoken his words of despair that he remembers at least the possibility of hope. He says in verse 21, **"Yet I still dare to hope."** Did you ever wonder if it's possible to hope in hopeless situations? Is it rational, is it healthy? To answer that we must see what, or who, our hope is in. Jeremiah's hope was not in himself or his family or friends or even in changing circumstances - it is in his remembering that...



"The faithful love of the Lord never ends! His mercies never cease. Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each morning. I say to myself, 'The Lord is my inheritance; therefore, I will hope in him.'"

Jeremiah can go on only through faith in the Lord. Other things may offer us hope, but we eventually realize that they give way to further disappointment. God will not fail us. The secret to enduring hope is found in what Jeremiah says in verse 24, "The Lord is my inheritance." He's saying, my situation stinks, but the Lord is all I need, "therefore, I will hope in him!" Jeremiah now expectantly looks for the Lord. His situation hasn't changed, but the Lord is there, he is faithful, and he will provide. I cannot predict what the new year will hold for each of us, but I am sure it is in the Lord's hands. Therefore, I will have hope, enduring hope, thankful hope.

In Christ's service,



Praise & Prayer

1. Pray for the Stationing Committee as they continue to work on pastoral / church assignments.
2. Ask the Lord to clearly show me how I can best serve him following my term as Bishop.
3. Pray for those, assesses and assessors, who are participating in our denomination's annual Pastoral Assessment Center, January 11-15.
4. Ask the Lord to bless my final months as Bishop of the EC Church; that I may finish well.
5. Pray for our pastors and churches as we continue to deal with the impact of Covid.
6. Praise the Lord for the friendship between Bishop-elect Randy and me as we work together for a smooth transition of denominational leadership.
7. Thank the Lord for our bi-vocational pastors as they balance full-time jobs with close to full-time ministry.
8. Praise the Lord that the Evangelical Congregational Church is made up of all kinds of people - lots of colors and languages - all around the world!
9. Praise the Lord for the opportunities to reach people with the Good News about Jesus over the Christmas season. Pray for opportunities to follow up on their interest.
10. Praise the Lord that he has blessed Gloria and me with 46 years of marriage (January 3).

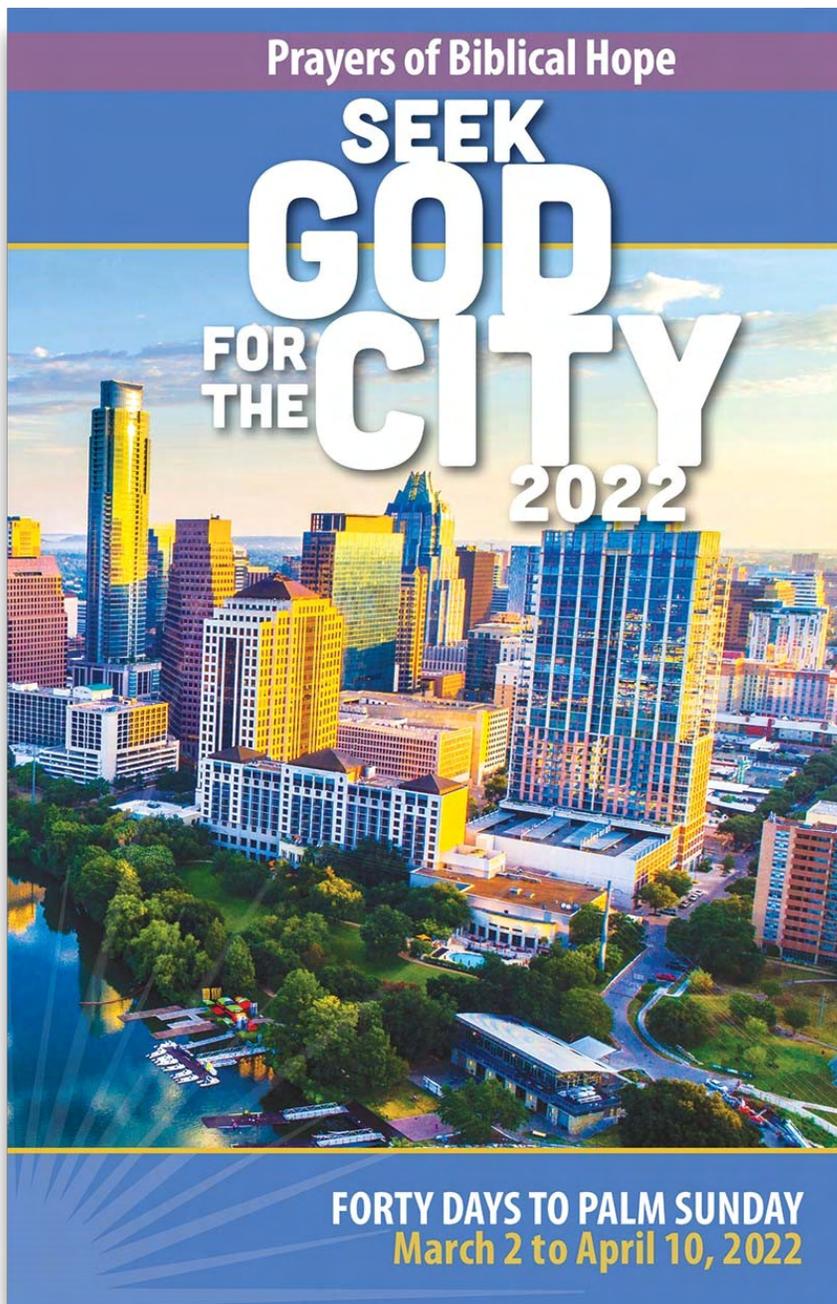


Bishop's Preaching Schedule

Many years, this is the space where we put in an announcement in the Leader reminding you that if you'd like to invite Bishop Bruce Hill to your church to preach sometime in the spring, now's the time to do that. With this spring being the last months of Bishop Hill's service as our bishop, this is the space where we tell you his preaching calendar is already **FULL**.

Remember, if you would like to invite Randy Sizemore, our next bishop, to preach at your church sometime following his consecration at National Conference 2022, please contact Jodi Earhart, Assistant to the Bishop, via email at jearhart@eccenter.com. Thank you!





GROW YOUR HOPE IN GOD'S GREAT PROMISES!

Seek God for the City 2022

is designed to mobilize many to pray with united, sustained vision for people of your community.

It's hard to pray beyond our own problems, especially in difficult times. But since God does great things in the midst of troubled times, now is actually the best time to pray beyond ourselves with expansive prayers of solid hope. We will either find God-given courage to pray great things, or we will find that our hope, along with our love, will grow cold.

The 2022 edition of Seek God for the City is designed to re-ignite desires for Christ that may have gone dormant, so that our hope in Christ and His kingdom will rise again. The forty days from March 2 to Palm Sunday, April 10, makes an ideal time to venture into a season of sustained, hope-filled prayer.

The use of this prayer guide:

- Strengthens what you are already doing.
- Unites prayer throughout your church.
- Helps people learn to pray for what matters most by directing attention toward what God is doing in the lives of people throughout your community.
- Builds the confidence of everyday believers to help them pray with clarity, authority and relevance as they learn to pray in keeping with scripture.
- Opens a great way to pray toward Easter.

In addition to the booklet, which can be ordered in quantity (www.waymakers.com), there is an app that makes it possible to help many to keep praying in the midst of busy lifestyles, and a Spanish version of the complete booklet in PDF to download.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR NEWS

KEVIN HENRY

Due Dates

Disability Payment
\$100.00 due January 15

Pastors Compensation Forms
due January 15

Annual Statistical Reports
due January 25

Workers Compensation
Insurance Information
due 30 days after receipt

+ The 2022 IRS mileage reimbursement rate has not been released as of the printing of this edition.

+ Active pastor health insurance premiums will increase 3% from the 2021 rates.

Single	\$870
Couple	\$1,844
Employee & Child(ren)	\$1,741
Family	\$2,297

The first payment of the new year was due December 15, 2021.

Please see www.eccenter.com for the current rates.

+ The deadline to submit HRA reimbursements for the July 21 – December 2021 plan year is March 31, 2022. This is a federally mandated deadline that cannot be changed.

+ Church contributions to the 403(b) pension plan will increase on January 1 to \$340 for full-time pastors and \$170 for part-time pastors.

+ EC Benefits Corp services fee is \$125, payable on April 15, 2022.

+ W-2s and 1099-NEC (Non-employee Compensation) forms are due to the recipients by January 31, 2022, and also to the respective Federal, State or Local taxing authorities by January 31, 2022. All full-time and part-time pastors should receive a W-2 from their church. The 1099-NEC is a new form, replacing the 1099-MISC in most instances for churches for payments made during 2021; to be filed by January 31, 2022.

As always, please email:

David King
Benefits Administrator
dking@eccenter.com

Kevin Henry
Executive Director
khenry@eccenter.com

with any questions
or call
717-866-7581

+ Remember to add the following phrase (or something close to it) to all tax deductible giving receipts issued by a church or ministry: ***“No goods or services were exchanged for these contributions, or they consisted of an intangible religious benefit.”*** All year-end contributions to a church must be received at the church on December 31 or have a postmark of December 31 or earlier. Electronic giving adds a layer of complexity to the year-end giving deadlines. There are extra entities involved (e.g., credit card processors, banks and internet gateways) in the processing of an electronic charitable contribution that churches and donors cannot control. The amount of time from the donor making a contribution until the church receives the funds can be a couple of days to a week or more. Church treasurers should carefully review the processing statements received to note what day a contribution was processed.

IRS guidance states that contributions made by credit card in 2021 are considered 2021 contributions regardless if the donor does not make a payment on the credit card until 2022, or with normal credit card processing times the church does not receive the funds until 2022. The same is true for donations made via an ACH transfer. A donor that initiates an ACH transaction in 2021 with the funds debited from the donor's bank account should be counted as a 2021 donation, even though the church will not receive the funds until 2022 with normal bank processing times.



Rev. Abraham Powell, Bishop, ECC Liberia, in the much needed, new ministry vehicle purchased with help from the generosity of supporters in the ECC USA. He's SO HAPPY! ...he said, "I can't believe my eyes!"

FROM THE DESK Rev. J. Ted Rathman, Global Ministries Associate

In July 2018, when I assumed the role of Global Ministries Associate, I remember thinking and praying a lot about where God wanted to lead the GMC going forward. In January 2021 we launched Member Care Teams in order to ensure we were doing our best for our missionaries as a sending denomination in regard to their spiritual, emotional, physical, and financial care. I am grateful to the Lord for how He has brought gifted and caring people to serve on the MCT, and how our missionaries have responded to these new initiatives.

Another area that has burdened me involves the support, connection, and partnership of our international brothers and sisters with us in the USA and the global EC Church. In 2022 as I, Lord willing, complete at least one visit to each country, the GMC will seek to bring a focus to how the EC Church USA can be better connected and united in our efforts to "Know Christ and Make Him Known" with our brothers and sisters in our EC churches around the world. This year the invitation is for you to join the GMC in focusing on the work God is doing, and how we can be participants in His redemptive story all over creation. Will you join us?

And, like Rev. Abraham Powell, the Bishop of the ECC Liberia, celebrate with the blessing of being able to provide a much-needed vehicle to be able to reach remote communities and bring the life-saving message of Jesus Christ to the people!

Ted Rathman



Ministerial Development Community News

Institute for Church Leadership Schedule

Theology 2

Tuesdays, February 1 – March 15, 6:30-9:15 p.m.
Instructor: Rev. Kirk R. Marks, MDiv

Course Description: The purpose of this course is to equip students to understand God's working through His Son Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the church. Students will have the opportunity to use and develop the basic tools for thinking theologically and contextually. Discussion topics will include the person and work of Christ, the nature of the gospel, sin and salvation, apostasy, heaven and hell, missionality and the church, baptism, and the Lord's Supper.

Church Health

Tuesdays, March 29 – May 10, 6:30-9:15 p.m.
Instructor: Rev. Jeff Byerly, MDiv, ThD

Course Description: In this course the student learns the many components that make up healthy congregational life. Because congregations are collectively unique from other organizations, it can be difficult to navigate the many-faceted system of congregational life in effective ways. From managing conflicts among volunteer workers to the decision-making processes of councils and boards, we are confronted with dynamics which are unique to the church. Healthy practices and solutions are essential for helping a congregation influence its internal and external environments. When a pastor can help his congregation to assess its own health or illness, changes can be made that will promote healthier interaction and life within the culture of the congregational setting.

For more information, please contact Joel Kime at joel.kime@evangelical.edu.

Helping
Leaders to
Fit &
Flourish



Kingdom Extension

Community News

Pastors and Team Leaders . . . contact Les Cool at 717-951-8433 or revlescool@gmail.com to arrange for a training event.

The Art of Neighboring: Connecting with our Local Communities

This hands-on workshop is designed to help you explore how to identify points of intersection between the DNA of your church and that of the surrounding community. With these insights, participants will examine ways to build missional “bridges” between church and community. The aim of the interactive sessions will be for each church represented to generate action steps to build relationships and ministries with your neighbors.

Three teaching sessions (Who are we? Who are they? What bridges can be created between us?) are followed by hands-on workshops (church teams actually processing the material that was shared). The final session is designed to leave each church team with solid plans and action steps toward missional connections with their communities.

Preparing New Leaders and Developing Your Team

Most days you just need somebody to do that thing or to serve in that role. Why? The job must get done. Or at least, that’s the theory.

But the reality is that the right person in the right role for the right reason will not only get the job done; they will also thrive. That means they will continue to serve long after the job is done.

How do you know who is best for which role? You start with helping your leaders, potential and existing, identify their spiritual gifts and personality. Add gift development, and they are ready to deploy into long-term ministry roles.

A Leadership Grip or Grip-Birkman workshop would provide insights on building a better church leadership team, as well as help you equip your congregation, for powerful ministries. And save someone from burnout!



Small Talk and Witness

Small talk! When was the last time small talk led to a more significant conversation? With a stranger? Smooth? Awkward? When was the last time a conversation included Jesus?

As Christians, we get to talk about Jesus. Sharing Jesus usually starts with a conversation and a relationship and trust. Consider developing new conversational skills.

This 2- or 3-hour workshop is a conversation about conversations. There is an art to making space for conversations. Discover resources, develop ideas, and practice the art of moving from “hello” to something deeper, even gospel focused. Deciding to be prepared usually guarantees that will happen. Resources and ideas will address starting conversations, redirecting conversations, and leaving space for future conversations.

Coaching Toward a New Tomorrow

Great ideas sometimes need coaching support in order for you to hit the target. Coaching keeps you on task, enables you to play at the top of your game. Coaching enables you to achieve more.

The KEC would like to partner with you to make sure your next great idea becomes your next ministry success. The KEC would like to help pay for up to six months of coaching attached to training and a new ministry that is missional or Kingdom focused. That is, we would like to pay for coaching designed to help you make use of new learning that moves you and your church family out of the building to develop a ministry not attached to what happens in your sanctuary.

What might that look like? A church plant. A dinner church. A fresh expression of church. This is about creating a ministry that didn’t exist for people not yet reached.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT



Winter Thaw 2022 Individual

Teens are welcome to attend Winter Thaw the weekend of February 11-13, 2022, even if they don't have a youth group with whom they regularly meet. Teens will experience Winter Thaw 2022 just like any other teenager. And Twin Pines will provide staff to supervise those attending without a youth group.

Register by January 2, 2022, and save \$30.00, plus receive a free Winter Thaw t-shirt. More information and the registration form is available at bit.ly/WT2022.



2022 Summer Camp Schedule

Week	Dates	Camp	Camp Code	Age by Grade Completed	Director
Week 1	6/19-25	Adult Camp	AC	Varied	Rev. Paul Miller/ Rev. Dr. Gordon Lewis
Week 2	6/26-7/2	Elementary Igniters 1	EI 1	2-5	Rev. Rob Valentine/ Amy McKelvey
		Lotsa Love 1	LL 1	Varied	Stacie Boose/Jeff Tankred
Week 3	7/3-7/9	Lotsa Love 2	LL 2	Varied	Rev. Tanner Cosgrave/Natalie Wagner
		Family Camp	FC	Varied	TBA
Week 3	7/3-7/6 or 7/6-7/9	1/2 Week Family Camp	FC 2	Varied	TBA
		Junior High Journey 1	JHJ1	5-8	Micavla Brodich/TBA
Week 4	7/10-16	On the Edge 2	OTE 2	5-8	Jason Price/TBA
		On the Edge 3	OTE 3	9-12	Jason Price/TBA
		Martial Arts 1	MA 1	2-5	Josh Carr/Christian Carr
		Martial Arts 2	MA 2	6-9	Josh Carr/Christian Carr
	7/10-13	Father n' Son	FnS	Varied	Scott Kimbel
	7/13-16	My First Camp	MFC	1 st or first-time 2 nd graders	Kolleen Long/Pam Bogoniowski
Week 5	07/17-23	Lotsa Love 3	LL 3	Varied	Hannah Carr/Tim Carr
		Elementary Igniters 2	EI 2	2-5	Markie Ribera/Meghan Kondisko
Week 6	07/24-30	On the Edge 1	OTE 1	305	Steve Metzgar/ Steve Badorf
		Senior High Stuff	SHS	9-12	Leadership Team
Week 7	7/31-8/6	Elementary Igniters 3	EI3	2-5	Rev. Steve Holubec/TBA
		Moms 'n' Gals	MnG	Varied	Cindy Raszar/Cheryl Klopp
Week 8	8/7-13	Junior High Journey 2	JHJ 2	5-8	Rev. Jeff Mervine/Kayla Mervine
		Lotsa Love 4	LL 4	Varied	Beth Kimbel/Kristen Eannone
Weeks 7 & 8	7/31-13	Staff in Training Program(SIT)	SIT	Actual age 14-17	Shawn Fetterhoff/Rev. Dr. Sam Yeager
	By Arrangement	Staff in Training 2	SIT2	After completion of SIT	Shawn Fetterhoff



3000 Twin Pines Camp Road | Stroudsburg, PA 18360 570-629-2411

Check it out at bit.ly/2022SummerSchedule

Start now to plan a Spring retreat.

- Men's Group
- Sunday School Class
- Women's Group
- Church Board or Council
- Youth Ministry
- Bible Study Group
- Children's Ministry

Contact Twin Pines Camp soon to reserve your retreat dates.

Call 570-629-2411 and speak with Doug Lockard, the Guest Services Coordinator, to find out available dates and retreat rates.

Adult Retreat - April 1-3, 2022

Get away to the mountains for a weekend and enjoy a time away from the usual daily interruptions. More details in the coming months. Reserve the dates now to attend.

Spring Fling Children's Retreat - April 22-24, 2022

A weekend retreat focused on those currently in grades 3-5. Enjoy Twin Pines in the spring and get ready for the summer. Participating groups must provide chaperones for the weekend.

JANUARY 2022

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY						
Ministry Fund to: E.C. Church Center 100 W. Park Ave. Myerstown, PA 17067						Insurance Payment to: Benefits Corporation 100 W. Park Ave. Myerstown, PA 17067						1 NEW YEAR'S DAY Stationing Request Deadline
2 EPIPHANY SUNDAY <i>Day of Prayer for Kingdom Extension</i> White	3 Church Center Closed	4	5	6 EPIPHANY	7 <i>Day of Prayer for the E.C. Church</i>	8						
9 White	10 Stationing Retreat	11 PAC Training	12	13	14 Health Insurance Due Pastoral Compensation Forms Due	15 Twin Pines Winter Thaw-A						
16 Green Twin Pines Winter Thaw-A	17 MLK Jr. Day	18	19	20 EC Leader deadline	21	22						
23 Green	24	25 2021 Annual Reports Due	26	27	28	29						
30 Green Twin Pines Winter Thaw-B	31	Pastoral Assessment Center					Twin Pines Winter Thaw-B					

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Ministry Fund to: E.C. Church Center 100 W. Park Ave. Myerstown, PA 17067		Insurance Payment: Benefits Corporation 100 W. Park Ave. Myerstown, PA 17067		1	2	3
6 <i>Day of Prayer for Kingdom Extension</i> Green	7	8	9	10	11	12 Twin Pines Winter Thaw-C
13 <i>Church Planting Offering</i> Green Twin Pines Winter Thaw-C	14 VALENTINE'S DAY	15 Benefits Corporation Mtg. Health Insurance Due	16	17	18	19
20 Green EC Leader deadline	21 PRESIDENTS' DAY	22	23 Church Health Community Mtg.	24	25	26 Twin Pines Winter Thaw-D
27 White Twin Pines Winter Thaw-D	28	Church Planting Offering to: E. C. Church Center 100 W. Park Ave. Myerstown, PA 17067 (designate-Church Planting Offering)				

FEBRUARY 2022



Know Him Better Love Him More

"We can be sure that we know him if we obey his commandments...Those who obey God's word truly show how completely they love him."
1 John 2:3,5

Evangelical Congregational Church Center
100 West Park Avenue, Myerstown, PA 17067
717-866-7581

office@eccenter.com / www.eccenter.com
Office Hours: Monday - Friday
8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

EC LEADER

Contributors

Bishop Bruce Hill
Kevin Henry
Rev. J. Ted Rathman
Rev. Joel Kime
Rev. Les Cool
Rev. Dr. Samuel Yeager

Denise Jaramillo
Editor/Art Design
NC Administrative Assistant

STAFF

Rev. Bruce Hill - Bishop
bhill@eccenter.com

Jodi Earhart - Assistant to the Bishop
jearhart@eccenter.com

Kevin Henry - Executive Director
khenry@eccenter.com

David King - Benefits Administrator
dking@eccenter.com

Denise Jaramillo - NC & GMC Admin Assistant;
djaramillo@eccenter.com

Shirley Long - Business Office Specialist
slong@eccenter.com

Abigail Zimmerman - Business Office
Specialist; azimmerman@eccenter.com

Associates

Rev. Gary Kuehner - Church Health
gkuehner@eccenter.com

Rev. J. Ted Rathman - Global Ministries
pastorted@graceecchurch.org

Rev. Jeffrey Byerly - Ministerial Development;
jgbyerly@bethesdaec.org

Rev. Leslie Cool - Kingdom Extension
revlescool@gmail.com