



DECEMBER 2020

EC LEADER



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Who We Are

“...you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God’s very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light”.

1 Peter 2:9



From the Bishop

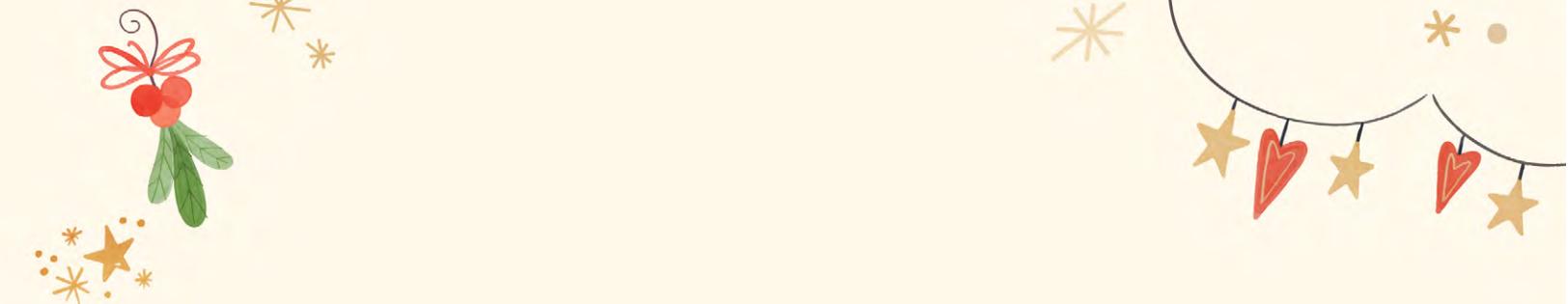


I’m beginning to think that every baby born in 2020 should receive some kind of special notice saying, “Life is hazardous.” This year, in particular, there is a lot in life that seems designed to destroy peace. Trouble seems to be at every turn. We have rediscovered that so many aspects of life are completely out of our control and we react in anger and fear. In too many lives there is a sense of emptiness and guilt that nothing can remove. Add to that our concerns about the future and our anxieties grow exponentially.

We have seemed to move far away from the angels’ first Christmas message of “...peace on earth.”

Our culture and world are powerless to restore peace to the troubled heart. The reason is quite simple – sin. When sin came into the world, it made us enemies of God. Before sin, Adam and Eve lived in perfect peace with God.





Remember the prophecy Micah gave about the birth of the Messiah, “You, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, are only a small village in Judah. Yet a ruler of Israel, one whose origins are from the distant past, will come from you ... And he will stand to lead his flock with the Lord’s strength, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God... And he will be the source of our peace.” [Micah 5:2,4,5 NLT]



The gospel is a gospel of peace. Jesus himself said, “I am leaving you with a gift – peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give isn’t like the peace the world gives. So, don’t be troubled or afraid.” [John 14:27 NLT] What a promise: calm within the believer’s heart even while the storms of life rage around us. This peace comes from our relationship with God through faith in Jesus. When the human heart, when your soul, comes to peace with God through the forgiveness and love expressed in Jesus, your outlook changes. To be right with God is the first step toward real peace.

That peace is then to be lived out. Once we experience it ourselves, peace should be evident in our own lives and relationships. David wrote “Work hard at living in peace with others.” [Psalm 34:14] Paul wrote “Do your part to live in peace with everyone, as much as possible.” [Romans 12:18] What is more precious than peace in our church, in our family, in our heart and mind? Jesus said in Matthew 20, if you aren’t at peace with someone it affects your worship; you need to quickly make peace. One of the most remarkable things we see about the early church in the book of Acts is the peace that is a part of their lives. Even when there were differences in opinions they were peacefully dealt with.



May each of us experience peace this Christmas season. The peace of Christ. Real peace. Peace of heart and mind and life.

In Christ’s Service,



Rev. Bruce D. Hill
Bishop

Bishop's Top 10 Prayer & Praise

1. You may have heard that Gloria and I both tested positive for COVID-19 in mid-October. Thank you for praying for us and praise the Lord that our symptoms were relatively mild. We are now both back to work and ministry.
2. Continue to pray for your pastor and local leaders as we all try to navigate how the pandemic continues to impact our lives and ministries, especially during the Christmas season.
3. Pray for our country as we continue to be impacted by the extreme levels of polarization and politicization.
4. Ask the Lord to bless families as we come together to celebrate the birth of Jesus, the greatest gift.
5. Lift up in prayer those who are dealing with the loss of loved ones during this holiday season.
6. Pray for me as I work on the theme and agenda for what will be a busy National Conference. (May 26-28, 2021)
7. Praise the Lord for opportunities to share the truth of the Good News of Jesus during this season.
8. Thank the Lord for the medical professionals who have worked so hard to take care of many of us this year.
9. Join me in praising God for pastors and lay leaders who continue to serve Christ and his church by volunteering their time, talents, and expertise.
10. Thank the Lord this is the last month of 2020 (it's been quite a year) and pray for the Lord's leading as we move into 2021.



News from the Executive Director

Please remember the EC Benefits service fee is \$125/yr. due by March 15, 2021. The service fee offsets the cost of the annual financial audit, Directors & Officers Insurance and other operating costs of EC Benefits Corporation that more and more often includes professional fees as employee benefits become more complex. The pastoral compensation forms are updated and posted on the website.

A couple of end of the year reminders:

Pastor Compensation Forms should be returned to David King, Benefits Administrator, by **January 15, 2021**.

Annual Statistical Report is due to the EC Church Center, 100 W Park Ave, Myerstown, PA 17067, by **January 25, 2021**.

W-2 forms for employees (incl. pastors) and 1099-NEC forms for independent contractors are due by **February 1, 2021** to the recipient and to the respective government agency. The 1099-NEC is a new form, replaces the 1099-MISC in most instances for churches, payments made during 2020, to be filled by **February 1, 2021**.

Pastors are employees of the local church and should receive a W-2 with federal, state and local taxes withheld from every paycheck.

The rates for the active pastor health insurance plan **will not increase** on January 1, 2021 (premium due **Dec. 15, 2020**). The health insurance rates are:

Family	\$2,230
Employee w/child(ren)	\$1,690
Couple	\$1,790
Single	\$845

Please see the website, www.eccenter.com for additional information.

HRA reimbursements **under the active pastors United Healthcare plan** are due to PrimePay by **December 29, 2020** for covered healthcare expenses incurred by September 30, 2020. This is an HRA rule regardless of the insurance carrier. **Reimbursements received after December 29 will not be paid. No exceptions.**

Highmark Freedom Blue Retiree Plan

The retiree Medicare supplemental plan, Highmark Freedom Blue, is increasing by \$4/month to \$249 per person per month, effective January 1, 2021 with minor changes in coverage levels.

As approved by the members of the EC Benefits Corporation at the May 2015 EC Benefits Annual Corporation Meeting, beginning in 2016 and annually through 2019, the E.C. Church contribution to the cost of the Medicare Supplemental premium will be reduced by 20% until, in 2020, the entire contribution by the E.C. Church has been eliminated. The retiree is responsible for the remaining portion of the premium not paid by the E.C. Church.

	2020	2021
2005 or before	\$245.00	\$249.00
2006	\$245.00	\$249.00
2007	\$245.00	\$249.00
2008	\$245.00	\$249.00
2009 and after	\$245.00	\$249.00

For a husband and wife on Freedom Blue, double the amounts above.

It is very important that the retiree does not fall behind on payments to Highmark Freedom Blue. If a retiree is having difficulty paying the monthly premium the Manna Fund is available for financial assistance. Please contact David King in the EC Benefits office for a Manna Fund application.

There are many Medicare Advantage plans available even some at no cost to the participant. However, each plan will have positives and negatives in terms of participating providers and benefits provided. Please thoroughly investigate any Medicare Advantage plan before switching plans. If a retiree does not have the financial means to assume a larger portion of the Freedom Blue plan, the Manna Fund is available to financially assist the retiree.

May you have a blessed holiday season celebrating the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ!

Kevin Henry
Executive Director

Dave King
Benefits Administrator

Kingdom Extension Community

WANTED



The Kingdom Extension Community is looking for Covid-related items to be included in the next Partners Newsletters. How have you leveraged the pandemic for Kingdom advancement? What resources have you found helpful? Your story and ideas might be an incentive for other congregations to go and do the same. If you have a story that fits this ministry niche, please forward your ideas and/or resources to Les Cool (717-951-8433 or revcool@ptd.net). Or send Les the name and contact information for the person he should speak with.

Social Media and Online Presence – Workshop and Discussion



Is your church ministry online? Which social media platforms do you use? Do you have a strategy for your social media and online presence? The Kingdom Extension Community invites you to join your ministry peers for two back-to-back workshops and discussion.



The first will address how to plan and maintain a marketing and communication plan on social media. Attention will also be given to community building and how to increase engagement online.

The second will focus on creating engaging video content. Move your videos from bland and basic to engaging and beautiful using (mostly) equipment you already have. These little changes can make a big difference. Q&A discussion.

The two sessions will be led by Amanda Sigman (Content Marketing Associate at Kinectiv) and Addison Roberts (Online Pastor, GCCWS). Each brings their training, skill set, and experience to the table to provide insights, instruction, and direction for improving what you are already doing.

Meeting at Grace Community Church, Willow Street, on January 9, 2021 (10:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.; lunch included). The cost is \$20 per person (includes lunch). Please forward payment (checks payable to “EC Church,” marked “Media & Online Workshop,” should be sent to EC Center; Attn: Pat Wolfe; 100 W. Park Avenue; Myerstown, PA 17067) by **December 28**.

Questions? Contact Les Cool: 717-951-8433 or revcool@ptd.net.

The Art of Conversation



Conversation! When was the last time you started a 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-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 they will happen. Resources and ideas will address starting conversations, redirecting conversations, and leaving space for future conversations.

Let's talk about how this workshop might fit the needs of your church family (717-951-8433 or revcool@ptd.net). And when a workshop would fit your schedule.

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.

Let's talk about how this workshop might fit the needs of your church family (717-951-8433 or revcool@ptd.net). And when a workshop would fit your schedule.



BUILD SHOEBOXES ONLINE



*A contactless way to
prepare shoebox gifts!*

- Select gifts
- Attach notes and photos
- Set online goals
- We pack your gifts for you!

Samaritan's Purse partners with local churches globally to deliver gift-filled shoeboxes to children. Each one is an opportunity to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ!



Scan the QR code, or visit:

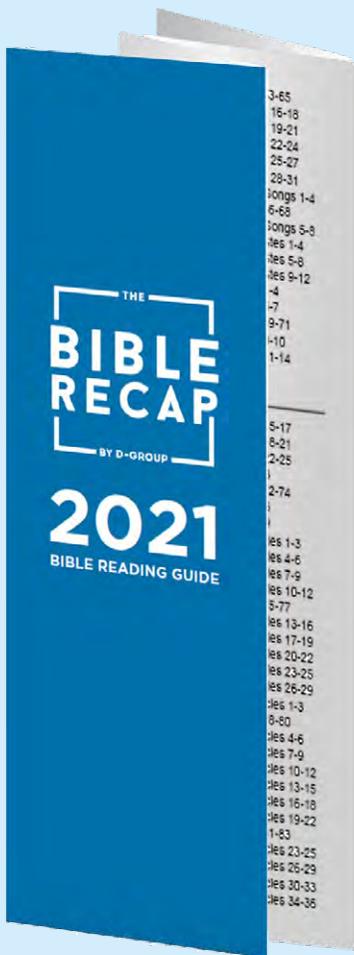
samaritanpurse.org/buildonline



Operation Christmas Child® is a project of Samaritan's Purse®.
Franklin Graham, President | 1-800-353-5949 | samaritanpurse.org
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Don't put this off, Order yours TODAY!



For decades, churches across the nation have used the NAE's Bible Reading Guide to help their members make God's Word part of their every day lives.

The 2021 Bible Reading Guide features a checklist of daily Scriptures that coincides with an 8-minute, daily podcast. The Bible Recap podcast (TheBibleRecap.com) summarizes and explains each day's reading, and is created to empower and encourage readers every day!

The 2021 guide offers:

- > Daily readings in chronological order;
- > Compact design to fit inside even the smallest Bibles; and
- > Packages of 50, 250 or 500 copies, discounted accordingly.

Now scheduling preaching dates

Bishop Bruce is planning his preaching / speaking calendar for 2021. If you need to invite him in order to spare him of having to invite himself, now is the best time to contact Church Center. No church is too big or too small for him to schedule a Sunday, but it is first-come-first-serve. So as you plan your congregation's 2021 church service schedule, see when it would be good to have the bishop come preach. If you'd like to schedule a date, please email your requested date(s) to Jodi Earhart, Assistant to the Bishop, jeahart@eccenter.com, and she will work with him in developing his schedule for 2021. He hopes to see you soon!

Please Remember

January 1 is an important date for lots of reasons. One of the reasons is that according to our National Conference Rules, pastors are to notify the Bishop or Jeff Byerly, Ministerial Development Associate, in writing if they are requesting a change in their status due to retirement or superannuation.

January 1 is also the deadline for pastors and congregations who are requesting a change in their stationing assignment. In this case, all requests for a change in stationing must be made in writing to the Bishop. This is vital for the Stationing Committee as they meet in January to begin their work of identifying pastors and congregations who can fit and flourish in ministry.

If you have questions about either of these issues, please contact the Bishop at Church Center.

What's happening at Twin Pines Camp to start off 2021?

Winter Thaw 2021



Youth Retreat planned by Twin Pines for church youth groups and individuals. Youth Groups can come and Twin Pines takes care of all the retreat programming. Individuals can come Winter Thaw-C and Twin Pines will supply cabin counselors. For more information about these retreat weekends, go to bit.ly/2021WT.

Winter Thaw-A: January 15-17
Speaker: Rev. Steve Holubec

Winter Thaw-B: January 29-31
Speaker: Eli Tyler

Winter Thaw-C: February 12-14
Speaker: Rev. Matt Stoltzfus

Winter Thaw-D: February 26-28
Speaker: Rev. Rob Valentine

Spring Craft Retreat – March 18-21



Enjoy a laid-back weekend of fellowship and Bible study while working on your own crafts. There will also be a special craft for all to learn.

Men's Retreat Weekend – March 26-28



A weekend for men to get together and focus on strengthening their relationship and discipleship with Jesus. Men will be challenged as they hear God's Word from the featured speaker.



Spring Fling Children Retreat – April 23-25



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

Spring Spruce-Up – May 4-6



Volunteer for a mid-week event to help the ministry “spruce-up” camp and prepare for summer ministry!

For Ladies Only Retreat – May 11-13



An exciting mid-week retreat “for ladies only.” Come enjoy fellowship, worship, and in-depth Bible learning as the retreat looks at what it means to be a woman of God.

Now Available for Download



2021 Summer Camp Schedule

Week	Date	Camp	Camp Code	Age by Grade	Availability	Speaker
Week 1	6/25-27	Alpha Camp	101	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 2	7/2-4	Beta Camp	102	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 3	7/9-11	Gamma Camp	103	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 4	7/16-18	Delta Camp	104	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 5	7/23-25	Epsilon Camp	105	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 6	7/30-31	Zeta Camp	106	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 7	8/6-8	Eta Camp	107	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 8	8/13-15	Theta Camp	108	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 9	8/20-22	Iota Camp	109	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 10	8/27-29	Kappa Camp	110	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 11	9/3-5	Lambda Camp	111	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 12	9/10-12	Mu Camp	112	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 13	9/17-19	Nu Camp	113	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 14	9/24-26	Xi Camp	114	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 15	10/1-3	Omicron Camp	115	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 16	10/8-10	Pi Camp	116	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 17	10/15-17	Rho Camp	117	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 18	10/22-24	Sigma Camp	118	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 19	10/29-31	Tau Camp	119	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 20	11/5-7	Upsilon Camp	120	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 21	11/12-14	Phi Camp	121	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 22	11/19-21	Chi Camp	122	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 23	11/26-28	Psi Camp	123	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 24	12/3-5	Omega Camp	124	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 25	12/10-12	Alpha Camp	125	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 26	12/17-19	Beta Camp	126	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 27	12/24-26	Gamma Camp	127	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 28	12/31-1/2	Delta Camp	128	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 29	1/7-9	Epsilon Camp	129	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 30	1/14-16	Zeta Camp	130	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 31	1/21-23	Eta Camp	131	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 32	1/28-30	Theta Camp	132	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 33	2/4-6	Iota Camp	133	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 34	2/11-13	Kappa Camp	134	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 35	2/18-20	Lambda Camp	135	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 36	2/25-27	Mu Camp	136	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 37	3/4-6	Nu Camp	137	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 38	3/11-13	Omicron Camp	138	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 39	3/18-20	Pi Camp	139	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 40	3/25-27	Rho Camp	140	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 41	4/1-3	Sigma Camp	141	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 42	4/8-10	Tau Camp	142	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 43	4/15-17	Upsilon Camp	143	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 44	4/22-24	Phi Camp	144	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 45	4/29-30	Chi Camp	145	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 46	5/6-7	Psi Camp	146	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 47	5/13-14	Omega Camp	147	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 48	5/20-21	Alpha Camp	148	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 49	5/27-28	Beta Camp	149	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 50	6/3-4	Gamma Camp	150	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 51	6/10-11	Delta Camp	151	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 52	6/17-18	Epsilon Camp	152	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 53	6/24-25	Zeta Camp	153	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 54	7/1-2	Eta Camp	154	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 55	7/8-9	Theta Camp	155	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 56	7/15-16	Iota Camp	156	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 57	7/22-23	Kappa Camp	157	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 58	7/29-30	Lambda Camp	158	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 59	8/5-6	Mu Camp	159	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 60	8/12-13	Nu Camp	160	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 61	8/19-20	Omicron Camp	161	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 62	8/26-27	Pi Camp	162	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 63	9/2-3	Rho Camp	163	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 64	9/9-10	Sigma Camp	164	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 65	9/16-17	Tau Camp	165	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 66	9/23-24	Upsilon Camp	166	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 67	9/30-10/1	Phi Camp	167	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 68	10/7-8	Chi Camp	168	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 69	10/14-15	Psi Camp	169	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 70	10/21-22	Omega Camp	170	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 71	10/28-29	Alpha Camp	171	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 72	11/4-5	Beta Camp	172	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 73	11/11-12	Gamma Camp	173	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 74	11/18-19	Delta Camp	174	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 75	11/25-26	Epsilon Camp	175	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 76	12/2-3	Zeta Camp	176	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 77	12/9-10	Eta Camp	177	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 78	12/16-17	Theta Camp	178	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 79	12/23-24	Iota Camp	179	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec
Week 80	12/30-31	Kappa Camp	180	10-12	Open	Rev. Steve Holubec

3000 Twin Pines Camp Road | Stonyburg, PA 18960 | 570-629-2411

bit.ly/2021SummerSchedule



Evangelical Congregational Church

100 West Park Avenue
Myerstown, PA 17067
717-866-7581
www.eccenter.com



Who We Are

“...you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God’s very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light”.

1 Peter 2:9

JODI EARHART • KEVIN HENRY • BISHOP BRUCE HILL •
DAVID KING • SHIRLEY LONG • REV. TED RATHMAN •
PATRICIA STRAIN • PATRICIA WOLFE • ABIGAIL ZIMMERMAN

December 2020

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Ministry Funds to: E. C. Church 100 W. Park Ave. Myerstown, PA 17067	Insurance Payments to: Benefits Corp. 100 W. Park Ave. Myerstown, PA 17067	1	2	3	4 Day of Prayer for the E.C. Church	5
6 Day of Prayer for Kingdom Extension SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT	7	8	9	10 CNT Tactical Mtg.	11	12
13 THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT	14	15 Health Insurance Due Loan & Investment Mtg.	16 E.C. Leader Deadline	17	18	19
20 Christmas Missionary Offering FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT	21	22	23	24 CHRISTMAS EVE CHURCH CENTER CLOSED	25 CHRISTMAS DAY CHURCH CENTER CLOSED	26
27	28	29 HRA Reimbursement due to Prime Pay	30	31 CHURCH CENTER CLOSED	Christmas Missionary Offering to: E. C. Church 100 W. Park Ave. Myerstown, PA 17067 (designate: Christmas Missionary Offering)	

Merry Christmas



January 2021

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1 NEW YEAR'S DAY CHURCH CENTER CLOSED Stationing Request Deadline Day of Prayer for the E.C. Church	2
3 Day of Prayer for Kingdom Extension	4	5	6 EPIPHANY	7	8	9
10	11	12 PAC Assessor Training	13	14	15 Health Insurance Due Pastoral Compensation Forms Due Twin Pines Winter Thaw-A	16
	Stationing Retreat		Pastoral Assessment Center			
17 Twin Pines Winter Thaw-A	18 Prayer Mobilization Team Mtg.	19	20 E.C. Leader Deadline	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31 Twin Pines Winter Thaw-B	2020 Annual Reports Due				Twin Pines Winter Thaw-B	