

Evangelical Congregational Church

E.C. National News

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FALL 2017

OCTOBER MARKS 500TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE REFORMATION

On Sunday, October 29, churches around the world will celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. The day commemorates Martin Luther's posting his 95 Theses on the Castle church door in Wittenberg, Germany on October 31, 1517.

At the beginning of the century, most of Europe had been without a Bible they could read for about a thousand years. Common thought was that salvation could be earned. People worked at goodness, but had no assurance of salvation. It was, in fact, considered presumptuous to claim assurance.

Luther, a monk at the Black Monastery in Wittenberg, struggled with uncertainty. The writer of a *Britannica* article describes Luther's pre-conversion life:

Despite the most punctilious performance of the minutiae of the rule of his order, the most rigorous asceticism, he had hitherto failed to find peace of conscience, the assurance of acceptance in the sight of God, and he had been periodically harassed by doubts on the score of his personal salvation.

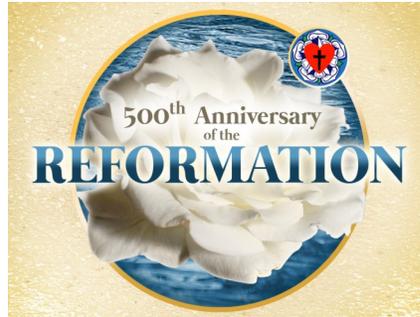
He describes Luther's temperament as "high-strung, emotional, impressionable, and liable to fits of depression. He had a sensitive conscience and a keen sense of sin." Efforts to abide by the rules of his order only intensified his guilt. With no real hope of heaven, he was terrified of death and shrieked with fear when caught in a thunderstorm and nearly struck by lightning.

During the winter of 1512 to 1513, Luther's spirit was awakened as he meditated on Romans 1:16-17:

For I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "But the righteous man shall live by faith."

He wrote of the experience: "I felt that I was altogether born again and had entered Paradise itself through open gates."

Luther's writing of the 95 Theses was largely in



protest of the selling and buying of indulgences. Individuals bought their way out of doing penance, hoped for remission of sins, or interceded for souls in purgatory, while the papal treasury grew. Luther sought to distinguish between true repentance and simply doing penance.

He and other reformers embraced the doctrines of *sola scriptura*, Scripture alone, or the

Bible as the final authority; and *sola fide*, faith alone, or justification by faith. The revolution of faith was intensified by the invention of the Gutenberg Press in the previous century, making possible the rapid distribution of God's Word.

Sources: "Why the Reformation Still Matters," Michael Reeves; "Sola Scriptura and Sola Fide," Guy Prentiss Waters: *Tabletalk*, October 2017.

Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 14, 1963.



BRENDA LONG RETIRES

Brenda Long, Administrative Assistant at Church Center in Myerstown, has been officially retired since October 1. She joined Church Center Staff in 1974 under Bishop Herbert Wittmaier. Her husband is Donald. She plans to continue working two days a week, usually Tuesday and Wednesday.

Cards of appreciation and congratulations may be sent to Church Center, Attention: Brenda Long.

Brenda, thank you for serving for 43 years and beyond!

From now on, please send communication to: office@eccenter.com.

(It is because of Brenda's work that the E.C. National News has an attractive appearance.—Ann)

REMEMBER THE PERSECUTED

The **International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church** will be observed on Sunday, November 5. Literature, a DVD, and promotional materials are available from Voice of the Martyrs. Go to www.persecution.com/IDOP or call 1-800-747-0085.

Voice of the Martyrs was founded in 1967 by Pastor Richard Wurmbrand of Romania and marks its 50th anniversary this year.



SEMINARY ANNOUNCES BANQUET

“Bridges Forward! Imagine New Horizons” is the theme for **Evangelical Seminary’s annual banquet** on Friday, November 3 at 5:45 p.m. Location is Eden Resort in Lancaster, PA. Cost is \$50, with discounts for students and alumni.

Speaker is Rev. Michael Sigman of Grace Community Church in Willow Street. RSVP at www.evangelical.edu/banquet or call 1-800-532-5775 by October 19.



MISSION MEALS ARE SLATED

The **Global Ministries Community** is sponsoring two meal events during October. The first is a luncheon for pastors and wives at 11:30 a.m. on Friday, the 20th at Evangelical Seminary.

On Saturday, the 21st, a 10:00 a.m. brunch will take place at Country Fare Restaurant, also in Myerstown. All interested persons are welcome.

Gatherings are intended to be informative and challenging. If planning to attend, contact ecglobal@eccenter.com as soon as possible.



LEARN HOW TO DO DINNER CHURCH

A workshop on how to do **Dinner Church** will be held from 9:00 to 4:30, Saturday, October 28 at Community EC Church, Sinking Spring, PA. The concept is designed to reach people who wouldn’t attend a Sunday morning service.

The day will conclude with a 5:00 to 6:30p.m. dinner experience. The meal is free to all who attend the workshop, but registration must be made at www.freshexpressions.org/event/dinner-church-encounter/. Cost is \$35. Questions may be addressed to Pastor Les Cool at 717-951-8433.



CAMP ECCO TO HOST YOUTH RETREAT

Young people from high school freshmen through age 25 are invited to a **retreat at Camp ECCO**, Carrollton, OH Friday through Sunday, October 21 to 22. To register, go to www.eventbrite.com/e/senior-camp-fall-retreat-2017-registration-37256861275. Questions may be directed to Bob McGinnis at 724-791-2519.



RRBC ANNOUNCES RETREATS

The **women’s retreat**, Chick Fest, will be held at Rock River Bible Camp, Dixon, IL Friday through Sunday, October 20 to 22. The website advertises “accommodations in cozy, rustic cabins, tasty meals in the renowned dining hall, campfires, and activities especially for women.” To register, go to www.rockriverbible.org/site/camps-retreats/chick-fest/.

Young people from high school to college freshmen are invited to **BOND** (Build on New Determination) Weekend, Friday through Sunday, October 27 to 29. Veteran camper, Kenny Paoli, is dean. Cost is \$40. to register, go to www.rockriverbiblecamp.org/site/camps-retreats/bond/.

Phone numbers are 815-652-4410 or 815-652-3457.



PASTORS ARE INVITED TO SPECIAL EVENTS

“Why Are We Not Ourselves?” will be the focus of a **retreat for pastors and wives** Tuesday through Thursday, October 24 to 26 at Twin Pines Camp, Stroudsburg, PA. Dr. Tony Blair of Evangelical Seminary will be the presenter. Cost is \$180 for Aspen Lodge and \$156 for other housing. For more information or registration go to www.twinpines.org or call 570-639-2411.

The **Rural Home Missionary Association** is offering a one-day seminar to rural and small-town pastors, spouses, and leaders on Saturday, October 28 at Cedarville University in Ohio. Speakers Ron Klassen and Shawn McMullen will address Discipleship, Evangelism, Conflict, and Leadership. Register at, www.rhma.org/cedarville or call 866-263-2350. Cost is \$35 per person.

A workshop on **Biblical Exposition** will be held at Old North Church in Canfield, OH Wednesday through Friday, November 9 to 10. Focus is on the book of Judges. Speakers are James Seward of Toronto, Ontario, Jay Thomas of Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and host pastor, Nick Gatzke. Register at www.simeontrust.org before November 3. Cost is \$139 before October 27. Church phone is 330-533-6848.



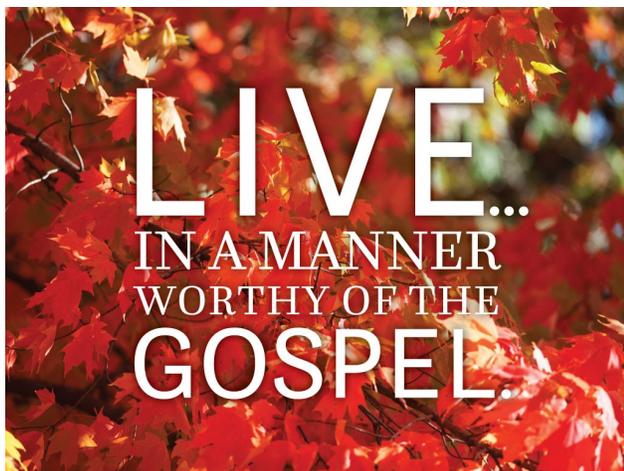
TWIN PINES PLANS BANQUET AND RETREATS

Twin Pines Camp, Stroudsburg, PA will have their annual banquet at 6:00 p.m., Tuesday, October 17 at the Good 'N' Plenty Restaurant in Smoketown. There is no charge for the meal. An offering to benefit the camp will be received. To make reservation, call 570-626-2411 or email linda@twinpines.org.

Fall retreats include:

- Family Getaway, October 6
- Couples Getaway, October 13-15
- Friends Getaway, October 20-22
- Pastors' Wives' Retreat, October 20-22
- Pastors and Spouses' Retreat, October 24-26
- Youth Retreat, November 3-5

Learn more at www.twinpines.org



FAMILY NEWS

Ordination

Rev. Wayne Houck, Senior Pastor at Royersford, PA Trinity, was ordained in his church on September 10. Wife is Christina. Associate Pastor, Rev. Ralph Owens, brought the message. Scripture reading was by Rev. Gary Kuehner, Lehigh Valley District Field Director. Participating in the laying on of hands were Bishop Bruce Hill, Ralph Owens, Gary Kuehner, and Rev. Jeff Byerly, Ministerial Development Associate.



Welcome Baby

Pastor Andrew and Amber Carr of Youngstown, OH, Wedgewood Park have a new son, **Easton Virgil Anderson Carr**, born August 16.



Remembering Loved Ones...

Nancy May Virtue, 73, a long-time member of Dixon, IL, Bethel, passed away on July 2. She was the wife of Jerry Virtue, a Lay Delegate and chairman of the Great Lakes Work Team. She accompanied him on many mission trips, most often to Mexico. She was a teacher at Faith Christian School in Grand Detour and a volunteer at Rock River Bible camp. Her home was in Hanover. In addition to her husband, she is survived by daughters, Suzanne and Kristin, and son, Richard.



Catharine R. Horst, 85, passed away on September 16. She was a resident of StoneRidge Towne Centre in Myerstown and a member of First EC Church in Lebanon, where she did children's ministry and worked in the kitchen. She was also a Girl Scout Leader. She is survived by daughters, Shirley (Church Center Finance Office), Debra, Susan, and Darlene. She was preceded in death by husband, Ralph.

Called Home to Heaven

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