

E. C. Leader

March, 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.



WATCH THE WEARIES

It seems like time to dust off an old resolution I kept several years back. “Resolved – never to read the morning newspaper until AFTER I’ve spent my quiet time with the Lord in the Bible and prayer.” The recent regime change has brought a surge of disconcerting headlines. The Freedom of Choice Act threatens to overturn remaining restraints on abortion on demand. Advocates for same sex marriage have found new allies. Permission’s been given for embryonic stem cell research and protections for the convictions of “faith based” organizations are being targeted.

I know these aren’t the only issues over which followers of Christ hold strong feelings. There is considerable disagreement between us on many matters. I find encouragement in renewed conversations about justice for the poor, creation care, and a yearning for peace. Nevertheless, there are reasons that make it tempting for evangelicals to curl up into the fetal position and hope it will all just go away. It’s far better to spend time on our knees obeying the standing command to pray “for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful lives in all godliness and holiness.” 1 Tim. 2:1-2.

First century Christ followers had none of the “advantages” we’ve been spoiled to expect. They had no vote and no voice in the public arena. Others “controlled the microphone,” most of whom were hostile to the Gospel. Yet the disciples turned their world upside down by loving Jesus and loving others. It was a grass roots revival based on a life to life witness in neighborhood communities and among families. They knew it was more a matter of rendering to God than to Caesar. It still is.

I’m not suggesting that we abandon advocacy or fail to use duties and privileges that come with living in a democracy. I’m appealing to keep the main thing the main thing. “Some trust in chariots and horses, but we trust in the name of our God.” Ps. 20:7 As Chuck Colson wrote, “The Kingdom of God doesn’t arrive on Air Force One.”

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Evangelical
Congregational
Church



The downcast needn't report for service, only those confident in the power of God. I've never looked at David's question in Ps. 11:3 as open ended. "When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do?" The answer is to rebuild them – see Isaiah 61:4. One stone at a time or brick by brick we set back in place by our personal example, what should never have been dismantled.

So be patient and persistent. Watch out for the wearies. Whatever you do don't quit. "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers." Gal. 6:9-10

Bishop Kevin

SPECIAL EVENTS

- April 15 – **National Conference registration forms are due!!**
 - April 20-23 – **Exponential – New Church Conference**, Orlando, FL. The largest gathering of church planting leaders in North America. www.exponentialconference.com
 - May 2, 2009 – Join us for **Disciple 2009 – Sustaining The Turnaround** by making discipling missional. Designed as follow up training to the "Discipling Others Seminar" this event will feature Mildred Minatrea, author of "Shaped by God's Heart" as the plenary session speaker. Several additional leaders from EC Churches and the Navigators involved in the Life2life discipling process will serve as workshop presenters. Trinity EC in Harrisburg, PA will be hosting this great commission oriented gathering. Registration brochure is available on the EC website, www.eccenter.com
 - **Pre-Conference Meetings – 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm; FOCUS: Health Insurance**
 - Monday, May 4th Winnebago, IL
 - Thursday, May 7th Arlington, Red Lion
 - Monday, May 11th Tallmadge, OH (Restart)
 - Tuesday, May 12th New Zion, Emlenton
 - Thursday, May 14th Bethany, Clayton
 - Monday, May 18th Trinity, Frackville
 - Tuesday, May 19th Bethany, California
- These events are FREE! No registration required! For all pastors & lay delegates!
- May 26-29 - **National Conference**
 - **Tuesday, May 26**
 - 11:00 am – Registration
 - 3:00 pm – School for Lay Delegates
 - 3:00 pm – Boot Camp for First Time Pastors
 - 7:00 pm – Service of the Lord's Supper
 - **Wednesday, May 27**
 - 10:15 – Episcopal Address



BISHOP'S TRAVELS:



APRIL		
5		Palm Sunday – Home
10		Good Friday
		7:00 AM Allentown YWCA/YMCA Breakfast
		NOON – Berks District Service – Shillington, St. Luke's
12		Easter Sunday – Home
18		Zion EC, Pitman, Sweetheart Banquet
26		W.O.R.D. Day

There are dates open periodically through the remainder of the year.

Email jeahart@eccenter.com to inquire about availability.

BISHOP'S PRAYER LIST:

- † For the work of the Stationing Committee as it moves forward.
- † For time that will be set aside in early April for personal retreat and to work on the Episcopal Address and goal setting.
- † For plans to launch a new strategic planning process at the seasons of National Conference. Pray also for the selection of a chairperson and team members.
- † For keeping the balance between family priorities and denominational expectations.
- † For strong support of the **Disciple 2009** event on May 2.
- † Praise for safety in travel and the blessing of time ministering in local churches. Rejoice for those being brought to Christ through creative outreach & disciple making.



NEWS FROM THE BENEFITS CORPORATION AND THE COMPENSATION COMMITTEE

Staying To Close

During a short devotion I heard recently, the minister told the story of the young man who fell off his bed. When he was asked how he could have fallen off the bed, his reply was that he guessed he "stayed too close to where I got in." There are all kinds of spiritual implications that can be derived from that statement but there are also some great financial lessons that can be learned from "staying too close to where you got in."

First of all, continuing to make the same contribution to your retirement account that you made when you first started working is "staying too close to where you got in." As your income increases, you should increase your retirement and savings account. Also, as the children begin to leave the household and additional money is freed up, you should increase your contributions.



Secondly, the same investment allocation that worked for you when you started your retirement account may not be the best option for you today. Generally, a 30-year old is not going to have the same investment strategy as a 45-year old or a 60-year old. "Staying too close to where you got in" may be causing you to take excessive risk in your investment strategy.

Thirdly, have you checked your beneficiaries lately? If you have not updated your beneficiaries from the time you got into the retirement plan, you should re-evaluate who is entitled to receive your account in the event of your death. "Staying too close to where you got in" could cause your account, at your death, to pass to someone that you no longer wish to receive the account.

There are countless other examples that could be given. Suffice it to say, we live in an ever changing world, especially when it comes to finances. In this fast-paced environment, little comfort can be gained from "staying too close to where we got in."

("In The Know Newsletter", March 9, 2009, Art Rhodes, Editor. Church of God Benefits Board, Cleveland, TN)

New Funds added to our 403(b) Pension Fund

The Benefit's Corporation's Board of Trustees approved the addition of the following two funds to our 403(b) Pension Plan portfolio: PIMCO Real Return Fund and Evergreen Precious Metals Fund. PIMCO is a "Treasury Inflation Protection Fund" and Evergreen is a specialty fund dealing in gold, silver and other precious metals. We tentatively have May 1st as the date that Prudential will have our account ready to accept contributions in these two funds, but this is subject to change. The Board of Trustees strongly encourages any Pension plan participant to consult with our Wachovia Representative, Jennifer Buehler, before making any changes in their choice of funds within their own pension account. Jennifer will again be at National Conference to answer any of your questions.

ALLONE Health/Wellness program is now into its 2nd month. We encourage our AETNA health insurance participants and any others who have enrolled in ALLONE to go online at www.myallonehealth.com and complete the Health Risk Assessment

(HRA). The responses back from those who have completed their HRA and taken the first call from their health coach have been very positive. Remember, plan participants who complete the HRA will receive a \$25 gift card. Another \$75 gift card will be awarded upon seeing your doctor and having the physical form completed and taking 2 calls from your health coach. The deadline for the \$25 card is June 30, 2009. The deadline for the \$75 card is December 31, 2009. Again, our long-term goal is to have healthier pastors and pastors' wives. You will see a lot of ALLONE at National Conference!





NEWS FROM THE GLOBAL MINISTRIES COMMISSION

1. Congratulations to **Chris Bowers**, EC missionary serving with Wycliffe as a pilot/mechanic in Papua New Guinea, on his marriage to fellow missionary teacher Debra Stuart, also serving in Ukarumpa, PNG. Debra is originally from Australia. Their wedding date is April 4, 2009.
2. **Randy's speaking schedule:**

April	1		Knox Grace EC Mission Conference
	5	10:15 am	St. Paul's EC, Reamstown
	13-21		Trip to Mexico for Annual Conference meetings
	25	8:00-12:00	World Out Reach Day
	26	10:30 am	Grace EC, Ephrata
	26	2:00-5:00 pm	World Out Reach Day
3. Please pray for the sale of the Sizemore's home in Lykens, PA so they can re-locate closer to the Myerstown area.
4. **DATE CHANGE:** The Ohio/Western PA Worldfest date has changed from September 26 to **September 19, 2009.**



EVANGELICAL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

The following letter was released by ETS concerning Dr. James L. Schwenk on February 13, 2009:

Effective December 31, 2008, Dr. James L. Schwenk has resigned from his position as Professor of Church History and Dean of Dech Chapel. Jim has faithfully served Evangelical since 1998, and his presence will be missed by faculty and students in the seminary community. While no longer a permanent member of the faculty, he will continue teaching church history as an adjunct professor during the spring semester and in the coming years as his schedule allows.

Jim made this decision in order to accept a full-time position with the Mount Hop Estate and Pennsylvania Renaissance Faire. He has also taken a part-time pastoral appointment at Grace Evangelical Congregational Church in Columbia, where he served prior to joining the faculty at Evangelical. While significantly different from the world of academia (and from each other), Jim is excited about these opportunities and sees the potential to use his natural abilities and gifts for God's glory.

The administration and faculty honored Jim and Lore at a dinner gathering at Country Fare Restaurant on February 2. In appreciation for his years of service at Evangelical, Jim was presented with a beautiful engraved clock. A restaurant gift certificate was also given for the entire family to enjoy when in the Lancaster area.

In Christ,
John V. Tornfelt, Ed.D.
Vice President for Academic Affairs

REMINDER:
National Conference Registrations are due April 15th. You can find the forms and registration information on the EC website at www.eccenter.com

The 2008 DISCIPLINE is available online at the EC website, www.eccenter.com. The printed copy of the DISCIPLINE and the ABRIDGED DISCIPLINE will be available at the National Conference.

NEWS FROM TWIN PINES

For Ladies Only

Twin Pines is pleased to announce the Twin Pines For Ladies Only Retreat to be held May 12-14, 2009. This will be a great time of fellowship with other Christian women and also a great gift idea for mom, grandma, or aunt. Give a special woman in your life a gift certificate for a great mid-week retreat at Twin Pines! For more information on the retreat or a gift certificate, please call the camp office at 570-629-2411 or email shawn@twinpines.org.



Spring Spruce-Up

Are you looking for an opportunity to perform some Christian service as well as enjoy fellowship with others at the same time? The Twin Pines Spring Spruce-Up retreat is scheduled for May 5-7, 2009. Volunteers come to Twin Pines to help clean up from the winter and prepare for the upcoming summer season. If you can trim bushes, rake pine cones, paint, or are just able to follow directions, all skill levels are encouraged to come to this great mid-week retreat to assist the ministry of Twin Pines. There is not cost for this event, and meals and housing are provided. Chances are you will even leave with a good laugh or two! For more information call the camp office at 570-629-2411 or email the Volunteer Coordinator, Jim Shields at jim@twinpines.org

Summer Camp

Now is the time to register for summer camp at Twin Pines. There are camps for kids and adults of all ages. If you like the outdoors, you may want to try the On The Edge program or the Green Scene program. For fathers and sons there is Dads 'n Lads camp, and for moms and daughters there is Moms 'n Gals camp. Both programs are only half a week and provide a great opportunity for parents to connect with their kids. For the whole family Twin Pines offers Family Frolic, with activities for every member of the family. Another opportunity for adults is Adult Camp, a special week for spiritual renewal, fun, fellowship, and interaction with other adults and the Twin Pines' summer staff. Twin Pines also offers a wide variety of programs for kids of all ages. If you are unsure of what camp you would like to attend, take a look at the summer camp schedule on the Twin Pines website, www.twinpines.org.



Summer Staff

Twin Pines is currently in search of young people interested in Christian service. There are opportunities for summer staff available. If you or someone you know may be interested in serving on summer staff in 2009, please contact Shawn Fetterhoff at shawn@twinpines.org. Applications are also available at www.twinpines.org on the resource page. If you are looking for a life changing service experience, don't hesitate to apply today!

Summer Volunteers

Are you looking for an opportunity to volunteer this summer? Are you 21 or older and willing to help in the kitchen or on maintenance? If you answered yes to these questions, you may be interested in signing up to volunteer for a week at Twin Pines this summer. If interested in volunteering, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator, Jim Shields at jim@twinpines.org.

Retirement Dinner Announced

Rev. James Shields will retire after National Conference this year. Twin Pines and the Twin Pines Board of Directors would like to invite you to an evening of celebration of Jim's many years of Christian service as a pastor and Executive Director of Twin Pines. On Monday, May 11, 2009, there will be a banquet in his honor at Good 'n Plenty Restaurant in Smoketown, PA. The doors will open at 6 pm and dinner will be served a 6:30 pm. Reservations are required and are limited to 400 people. The price is \$30.00 per person and the deadline for reservations is April 15th. The price of the dinner includes a donation to a retirement gift. Additional donations can be made. All reservations are being accepted at Twin Pines and checks should be made payable to Twin Pines and have the word "Retirement" in the note field. Payment is required to hold you reservation. For any questions please contact Shawn at shawn@twinpines.org or 570-629-2411.



E-mail Address Change



Dr. & Mrs. James Schwenk - booksnbears@comcast.net

NEWS FROM THE CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Due to lack of use and need to use the space more effectively the Christian Ed (CE) Committee will be purging the Resource Library. If you know of any resources that you would like to have you may come to Church Center in Myerstown and pick it up or have it shipped to you at your own expense. All material is available on a first come, first serve basis. All materials remaining by National Conference will be taken to the CE table and given, as well, on a first come, first serve basis.

In lieu of the resource library in the near future the CE Committee will be starting a resource blog where you will be able to write product reviews or pose questions about material you may be interested in. If you have any questions about the acquisition of resource library materials please contact a member of the CE Committee.

Mark Brooks mdbrooks@bethesdaec.org
Mike Snedeker mike@communityec.org
Charles Walker california@dejazzd.com
Lewie Bennett lewiebennett@yahoo.com
Steve Holubec psteve79@dejazzd.com



CALL TO CHURCHES TO OPEN THEIR DOORS



A York County church has been hosting Noontime Prayer Meetings since Wednesday, January 7, 2009. St. David's E.C. Church, 2411 Oakland Road in Dover has opened its doors every Wednesday from Noon to 1:00 p.m. to pray specifically for the Lord to send revival to America as well as pray for those who have yet to become a follower of Jesus Christ. This is open to the entire community as believers from several denominations have been gathering each Wednesday for this prayer meeting.

The prayer meeting will follow the pattern of Noontime prayer meetings from 1857 – a time period in church history known as the Third Great Awakening. These meetings will not consist of any preaching of the Word of God and no theological discussion or debate will take place – only prayer for revival and the lost will happen.

It is the hope of the prayer meeting leader that other churches in Dover, York County, and this nation, will open their doors at Noontime for similar meetings. This will give people the opportunity to go to churches close to their places of employment to pray during the lunch hour. The current spiritual and economic conditions in America are similar to those in 1857 when historians estimate that as many as 50,000 people a week came into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as a result of the Noontime prayer meetings.

Any questions may be directed to the church office at 717-764-0033 or send an email to noontimeprayer09@yahoo.com