

E. C. Leader

OCTOBER, 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.



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“Stepping Out”

The first meeting of our “Transformation” Strategic Planning Team took place on September 26 at Zion EC in Myerstown, PA. It was an exciting day of laying the foundation for the process of getting everyone “on the same page.” Those objectives were achieved and while the page we’re on is a broad one – reflecting the varied perspectives, priorities, and passions of the group members – one reality was apparent to all. Once again we stand at a crucial intersection as a denomination. We cannot remain as we are if we are to align ourselves with the purpose and plans of God. Our future as a movement of God is being determined by the decisions we are making and the directions we are taking today.

We’re asking Christ to change us. Will we allow Him? It’s a faith journey we’ve started upon. Like Abraham our intent is to follow the Lord “to the land that [He] will show us.” Genesis 12:1 We are leaving it to God to reveal His destination for us. This means walking in Abraham’s footsteps who “obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going.” We’re underway, content to finish our trip wherever the Spirit of God chooses to take us.

Are you on board? Will you accompany the team in its search? A series of District based meetings will take place in October and November. The District Ministry Teams composed of the pastor(s), Lay Delegate, and a second lay leader from each congregation are asked to attend one of those sessions. Participants will take part in the assessment of our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The planning team wants to listen to what God has been laying on your heart for the E.C. Church.

There’s also a place for hundreds, if not thousands more to come along to the journey in prayer. We encourage as many as possible to intercede for the planning initiative. Members of the Prayer Mobilization group will be joining us on site at many of the meetings. If you’re not there in person, attend in spirit by asking the Lord to be present and presiding at every stage in the planning process. It’s His plan we need not our own. Call on Him to shake and shape every meeting so that it’s His path we find.

We’ve taken another step toward becoming a movement. Cry out to the Lord to keep us in motion. It’s His momentum we need.

Seeking Him,
Bishop Kevin

ANNOUNCEMENTS ...

- **NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2010**

- **Theme:** “A New Thing: our future as a movement of God”

“See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland.” Isaiah 43:19

- **Speaker:** Tom Clegg Topic: “Missing in America”
- **Remember the change of date: May 25-28 at Messiah College**



National Conference

- **Scholarships are still available for churches interested in Intentional Disciplemaking Coaching with *The Navigators*.** If cost is the major barrier to your congregation’s moving forward with this essential training – let’s talk! Contact Bishop Leibensperger.
- **Thinking of retiring?** Pastor’s who are contemplating retirement in 2010 are reminded to communicate in writing their intention to do so to their Conference Minister no later than January 1. Early notification helps insure that the Benefits Corporation can complete all of its work in a timely fashion. It also enables a congregation to begin preliminary work in preparation for the stationing process.



- **Save the dates** – we’re in the process of finalizing some “Turnaround Church” training with Gene Wood, our 2009 National Conference speaker for our Disciple 2010 Event. Tentatively we are considering session for pastors on April 29-30, followed by a workshop for all church leaders on May 1, 2010.

BISHOP'S TRAVELS...

NOVEMBER	1	New Direction Church, Tallmadge, OH
	8	Grace Church, East Petersburg (AM) Ordination Service for Mark Brownson, Shamokin (PM)
	14	Strategic Planning District Meeting, Lenhartsville
	15	Ebenezer Church, Williamstown
	21	Strategic Planning District Meeting, Ephrata
	22	Zion Church, Allentown



BISHOP'S PRAYER LIST...

- † For the **District Meeting** phase of the Strategic Planning process. Ask that we will respond fully and openly to God's direction. Pray for humility, unity, and a readiness to allow the Lord to cleanse and change our hearts and minds.
- † For the **National Ministry Team meeting** on October 28 and specifically for wisdom in finding solutions to challenging and complex questions. The Church Planting and Global Ministries 2010 budgets will also be presented for approval.
- † For the work of our **commissions** on Evangelism and Discipleship, Church Planting, Church Health, and Leadership.
- † For the Lord to call out additional church planters and to prompt churches to get involved in church planting.
- † For the **Church Center Staff** as they adjust duties and roles during Jodi Earhart's maternity leave. Pray for David, Jodi, and the baby as they become a new family. (Due date is November 8.) Give thanks that Office Manager, Brenda Long's post surgical biopsy came back cancer free. Remember Brenda as she starts precautionary radiation treatments.
- † For my own **healing** of a mild case of sleep apnea along with making a successful adjustment to the nightly use of a C-PAP unit.
- † Praise and thanks to the Lord for His constant goodness. Rejoice in the faithfulness of His people as they continue to joyfully and sacrificially serve in unusual times.

DENOMINATIONAL STORE...

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

- **2009 PICTORIAL DIRECTORY** is available. For **\$5.00** you can have an up-to-date pictorial directory of the pastors and leadership of the E.C. Church. The pictures were taken at the 2009 National Conference. Contact the EC Church Center.



For those who love to mark their calendars in advance, the Christian Education Committee would like to make you aware of 2010's in-service opportunities – a letter will follow by the end of the year with more details:

PASTORS' IN-SERVICE DATES FOR 2010

9:00 am to 2:00 pm

Guest Speaker: Dave Coryell of Christian Endeavor
Reedsville, Bethesda – Thurs., Feb. 11th
Mohn's Hill – Thurs., Feb. 18th
Cedarville, IL – Tues, Mar. 2nd
Knox, Grace – Mon., Mar. 8th
Willow Street, Grace Community – Sat., Mar. 13th

NEWS FROM BENEFITS AND COMPENSATION...

2010 IRS MILEAGE RATE will not be released until mid-to-late November. When announced, we will make the information available on the website and by email.

COMPLIANCE MAILING: All Aetna health insurance participants and all retired pastors, wives and widows who are Highmark health insurance participants have or will be receiving their annual compliance information mailing as required of the Benefits Corporation by the federal government. For questions regarding the information that you receive, please contact the Benefits-Compensation Administrator, Ken Wiest.



REMINDER Pastor's Compensation forms: Pastors and Lay Delegates, please remember that copies of your Pastor's Compensation forms are to be sent to Ken Wiest, Benefits-Compensation Administrator, when the 2010 salary has been approved by the Local Conference. [Mailing instructions are included on each form.] Copies of the Parsonage Review Form, if applicable, are to be sent to the Conference Minister, upon completion of the parsonage review.

NO SOCIAL SECURITY RECIPIENT INCREASE FOR 2010: On October 15, the trustees that oversee the Social Security Administration confirmed that there will be no COLA (cost of living adjustment) for Social Security recipients for 2010. The Cost of Living Adjustment is based primarily on the inflation rate. The United States has a negative inflation rate in 2009, therefore no COLA increase for Social Security in 2010. This marks the first time that seniors haven't received an increase since the adjustment process was adopted in 1975.



Long-Term Care Coverage - Is It Necessary?

A national debate is currently raging over health care reform. However, one of the interesting components that has been almost totally absent from that debate is the subject of long-term care. Regardless of the eventual outcome of the health care issue, it seems pretty obvious that long-

term care is still going to remain an issue for the foreseeable future.

The statistics are startling. More than two-thirds of Americans age 65 and older are going to need long-term care - medical and nursing services that go beyond doctor's visits or treatment for specific illnesses, whether that care is provided in the home, an assisted-living facility, or in a nursing home. And that care can be overly expensive. A private room in a nursing home averaged more than \$212 a day last year - or more than \$77,000 for the year. The final disturbing number is that a senior that requires long-term care, generally needs care for an average of three years.



Many seniors - and the families - wrongfully assume that Medicare will provide for long-term care if such is needed. However, Medicare covers no more than 100 days of extended care for those seniors over 65 years of age. While Medicaid does cover long-term care, to qualify for Medicaid you have to be severely impoverished, with less than \$2000 in assets in most states, to qualify. And if you do qualify for Medicaid, it typically only covers nursing home care, and not care provided at home or in an assisted-living facility.



Most people, therefore, are left with no other option than purchasing a long-term care insurance policy. These policies can range from several thousand dollars per year into the tens of thousand dollars, depending upon your age and your general health conditions, including pre-existing conditions. Most people, with any assets at all, should consider purchasing a long-term care insurance policy when they are in their late 50s or early 60s and while they are still in good health.

The cost of the policy will depend upon how much coverage you purchase, with policies generally coming in "full" coverage or a certain amount per day (such as \$150 per day). You should read very carefully the insurance company's definition of "full" coverage.

Most of the time your definition of "full" coverage and their definition will be substantially different. Also, you should pay close attention to the deductible period, generally based upon a time period of 30 to 180 days. That provision means that the policy will not kick in and start coverage until you have paid, out of pocket, for the first 30 days or whatever time is set as the deductible period. Most policies have a 90-day deductible period.

Different features of the long-term care policy will determine the cost. However, a 65-year-old in good

health should be able to find a policy for an annual premium in the range of \$3500-\$5000. While that seems astronomical, it would cost that much to stay in a nursing home for about 20 days. When you make that comparison, the long-term care insurance seems like a bargain.

(from "In the Know Newsletter" Art Rhodes, editor, Church of God, Cleveland, TN, 10-12-09)



NEWS FROM THE GLOBAL MINISTRIES COMMISSION...

- **DVD available:** GMC has produced an 8 minute presentation of Randy's article, "The Roots, Fruit, and Future of the GMC". Contact the GMC office for your copy or access it on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8KVUya7mAS8>
- **Mission Mobilizers Needed:** GMC is looking for a few good Women, Men or couples to work directly with Randy to help re-vitalize the mission movement in the EC Church. See the ministry description at ecglobal.org under resources/downloads.
- **Randy's speaking schedule:**

November	1	St. John's, Allentown
	8	Grace, Millersville
	15	Trinity, Terre Hill
	22	Grace, Schuylkill Haven
	29	Grace, Columbia



Available Sundays in 2009: December 13 & 20. Now scheduling for 2010.
Contact Randy 717-866-7584 or rsizemore@eccenter.com



Christ Church, Allentown, has a Pulpit, Communion Table, US Flag and Christian Flag (with stands) and 4 Pulpit chairs (2 with arms/2 without arms) available at no charge to anyone who might be interested and would be able to pick them up. Contact Dick Reigle at 610-434-1652 or christecchurch@verizon.net

Community @ New Direction EC Church, Tallmadge, OH has 20 pews for sale. They are each 13 feet, 6 ~ long, solid oak with a varnished medium oak finish and upholstered with a padded burgundy covering on the seat and backs. The pews have book holders, communion cup holders and note holders on the rear. Contact Tim Ream at 330-285-7890 or pastortim226@att.net