



Rest, Relax, Recharge

I was doing some work in the backyard the other evening when I sensed something. I don't know if it was some leaves on the ground, or the feel of the air, but it was unmistakable—fall is on the way! I realize not everyone looks forward to fall. Anything below 80 degrees and Gloria is cold. But fall is my favorite time of the year. The other year I took the Grip-Birkman test. It showed that the one thing that I must have is the ability to be outdoors. Yup; out of all the things it could have said I needed, it said the great outdoors. And you elected me Bishop! For me, the fall means archery hunting season. There's just something about being out in the woods during October and November. The air seems cleaner, the sky bluer; the sights and smells are simply amazing.

So why am I telling you that I need to be outdoors? I think it's to remind each of us that we need to take that time to do what refreshes us. Fall is the time when our churches' schedules resume with renewed excitement and responsibility. October means it's time for the National Ministry Team meeting, which in turn means every committee and commission needs to schedule a meeting so they have something to report to the NMT. I think I may actually have meetings about meetings! You know what those weeks are like; too much to do and too little time. What I'm telling myself and you is that while the work needs to get done, we must take time to relax.



Jesus' first miracle was at a wedding feast. When I've read that passage I've focused on the miracle; the launch of his ministry. But recently I read one commentator who took a different angle. Isn't it pretty amazing that the Savior of the world would take time to go to a wedding reception and celebrate this important event in the life of some friends? If there ever was anybody who had a lot to do to, it was Jesus. And yet, he took the time to go to the reception. We know that Jesus often went out to a quiet place to be alone and to spend time with his Father. Just prior to his feeding of the five thousand, we see Jesus' intent was to take the disciples to a place where they could rest for a while. If rest and quiet

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were important to Jesus, what makes us think we don't need it? I'm not asking this question only of you. Maybe you're good at this, I'm not.

So take some time this fall to take some walks, ride the bike, get out of the office and away from the meetings; find that place or activity that restores your soul and relax a little. Take some time by yourself. Take some time with your spouse and family. Just take some time. If you'd like to take a personal retreat, don't forget that Twin Pines Camp has a cabin reserved just for that purpose. However you do it, when you do it, is up to you.

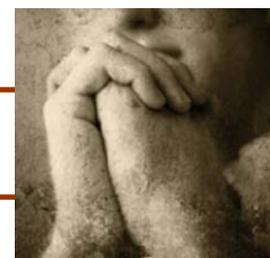
Ministry is not easy or for the faint of heart. So take some time to rest, relax, recharge, and enjoy some fresh air. And if you call Church Center maybe I'll be out hunting.

In Christ's service,



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Zoya'.

Bishop's TOP TEN Prayer & Praise Items



1. Pray for a productive fall season of committee and commission meetings.
2. Pray for the October National Ministry Team meeting. (It's the first time I'll attend one and I am to chair it. Yippee!)
3. Pray for pastors and churches, and the Stationing Committee, dealing with mid-year stationing.
4. Pray for the people in your neighborhood who are looking for answers and hope in these challenging economic times. (It wouldn't hurt either to talk to them about the hope you have as a follower of Jesus.)
5. Remember to pray for our church planting efforts; that the Lord would give strength, patience, and courage to pastors and laity involved in these missional ministries.
6. Praise the Lord for the growth taking place in the Evangelical Congregational Church around the world.
7. Praise the Lord for the team spirit that continues to grow between the Conference Ministers and Bishop.
8. Praise Him for the people in our churches who step up and volunteer their time and talents as churches re-launch many fall programs and activities.
9. Praise God for trusted colleagues who can ask each of us the questions we need to hear and hold us accountable to our calling.
10. Praise the Lord for His allowing us all to be involved in the building of His Kingdom.

News from Benefits Corporation /Compensation Committee

The EC Benefits Corporation has decided on Capital Blue Cross to provide our **group health insurance effective October 1, 2011**. Capital Blue Cross is aggressively pursuing the small group health insurance market and their plan designs and pricing were the best fit for the EC Church. One of the more attractive features of this plan is that EC pastors & missionaries outside of the Capital Blue Cross area will have the same plan benefits as those within the Capital Blue Cross service area. Blue Cross has a nationwide healthcare provider network that is serviced by different Blue Cross franchises across the country. All the franchises work together to cover as many members as possible within the Blue Cross nationwide network. There are some drawbacks with the new plan. Unfortunately, these drawbacks were unavoidable to minimize the rate increase.



We have also coupled a Health Reimbursement Account (HRA) with the new plan. An HRA is a funding vehicle utilized by the employer to share in the health insurance costs of their employees with the health insurer. To reduce the health insurance costs to employers, insurers offer high deductible plans and plans with co-insurance to push more costs back on the insured. Our new plan does have a high deductible and a co-insurance which lowered our renewal premium but requires the employer to assume more costs to provide employee healthcare. Each member (single or family) on the plan is responsible for the first \$500 of the deductible and none of the co-insurance, the plan has a \$2,000 single or \$4,000 family deductible and 80% co-insurance. Part of the premium billed to the churches is allocated for the funding of the healthcare costs the employer will pay which is the deductible above \$500 and the 80% co-insurance. And the employer will only pay for these costs if they are incurred by the employee. The EC Benefits Board understands that some of us will have high healthcare costs and some of us will not and the HRA funding allows the sharing of those costs across the denomination. The downside of an HRA is risk. If we have a bad plan year (i.e. high health insurance costs) rates billed to churches could be increased mid-year to fund a shortfall in the HRA.

We are also offering two Capital Blue Cross dental insurance plans this year. One plan offers better benefits with an employee paid premium and the other plan has lesser benefits with no premium cost. **But we need at least five (5) individuals to enroll in the better plan with the monthly premium cost to be able to offer the free plan to everyone else. For a larger family the dental insurance plan with the enhanced benefits may be a better option than the free plan. Please review the plans carefully.** The dental plan is open to all employees eligible for the group health insurance plan. You do not have to be a member of the group health insurance plan. For example, if you are a full time assigned pastor but are receiving health insurance from your spouse's employer, you and your family are eligible for either dental insurance plan. **The cost of the dental plan is the responsibility of the pastor. The cost of the dental insurance premium can be deducted from your paycheck before taxes.**



The benefit plan designs (health and dental) are available on www.eccenter.com. Also five teleconferences have been scheduled to explain the benefits of the new health plan, the HRA and the dental plans. The sessions are scheduled for:

- Friday September 16 2:00pm – 4:00pm
- Wednesday September 21 10:00am – Noon
- Monday September 26 7:00pm – 9:00pm
- Thursday September 29 2:00pm – 4:00pm
- Wednesday October 5 10:00 – Noon

There are advantages and disadvantages to our new plan. Please review the information carefully and consider attending one of the information teleconferences.

The retiree Medicare supplemental plan will remain with Highmark Blue Shield. We do not have the final rates but we hope to soon and will release the new rates when available.

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News from Benefits Corporation /Compensation Committee continued...

Business use of cell phone reimbursement



The following guidance issued on September 16 brings to an end a long running saga on the proper treatment of business use of cell phones and reimbursement for business use of personnel cell phones. The following

paragraph was obtained from IRS Newswire issue IR-2011-93 (September 16, 2011):

“ . . . Under the guidance issued today, where employers provide cell phones to their employees or where employers reimburse employees for business use of their personal cell phones, tax-free treatment is available without burdensome recordkeeping requirements. The guidance does not apply to the provision of cell phones or reimbursement for cell-phone use that is not primarily busi-

ness related, as such arrangements are generally taxable.

Details are in the memo and in [Notice 2011-72](#), posted today on [IRS.gov](#)”

Churches that reimburse pastors for business use of personal cell phones are now allowed to reimburse pastors for that usage without any tax impact. There should be a written church policy on how much a pastor will be reimbursed and how the church has determined that amount. The guidance does not allow for excess reimbursement. Excess reimbursement, reimbursement that is above the cost of business use, is still taxable income. Unfortunately, with cell phone plan pricing and options it can be difficult to calculate what is appropriate reimbursement. A review of three or so months of cell phone bills should provide a reasonable reimbursement amount.

clergy appreciation month

The New Testament honors vocational ministry as one of God's highest callings. First Thessalonians 5:13-14 asks church members *“to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work.”* Ephesians 4:11-12 says God gave the Church pastors and other ministry leaders *“to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.”*

Pastors are God's gifts to His people and are worthy of recognition for their willing and faithful service.

Clergy Appreciation Month is an opportunity for local congregations to give thanks to God for their pastors. It is a time to demonstrate to their pastors genuine appreciation for their service. It is a time to esteem the role of the vocational Christian ministers who provide churches with spiritual direction. It is a time to stress the need for others to answer God's call to full-time ministry.

When the Apostle Paul remembered with joy the people in the church at Philippi he spoke of their *“partnership in the gospel* (Philippians 1:5).” Ministry is a partnership of ministers and lay people—each helping the other to be effective in witness and work for Christ. The church cannot function effectively unless both do their part to build up each other. When churches honor their pastor, they strengthen the team God has put together to serve Him in their community. By showing appreciation they return some of the love, concern and ministry their pastor has given to them.

Use your imagination and do something that will genuinely honor those God has called to lead ministry in your church.



Great Lakes Region Local Conference Dates—2011

Afolkey, Grace — Tuesday, October 18
Akron, Cottage Grove — Wednesday, October 12
Akron, First — Monday, November 21
Bethany Crossroads — Tuesday, November 15
Canton, First — Tuesday, December 13
Cedarville, Emmanuel — Wednesday, October 19
Chicago, Kimball Avenue — Sunday, October 16
Clarion, Riverhill — Wednesday, November 16
Clarks Mills, Countryside — Monday, November 7
Delightful — Thursday, November 10
Dixon, Bethel — Thursday, October 20

Dixon, St. James — Friday, October 21
Emlenton, New Zion — Tuesday, October 25
Fern, Trinity — Thursday, November 17
Highland Park, Maranatha — Sunday, January 1, 2012
Hooppole — Monday, October 31
Knox, Grace — Wednesday, October 5
Seneca — Monday, October 24
Transfer, Lakeside — Tuesday, November 8
Winnebago — Monday, October 17 &
Tuesday, November 1



News from Evangelical



The new academic year began with special joy as **Dr. David Dorsey** delivered the Wittmaier-Sailer Lecture and was named Distinguished Professor of Old Testament. More than \$33,000 has already been committed to fund an endowed scholarship in Dr. Dorsey's name.

calling 717-866-5775, ext. 2116, by September 22.



Walt Mueller, founder and president of the Center for Parent/Youth Understanding, will discuss "Engaging the Soul of Youth Culture" at **Evangelical's November 1 Fall Forum**. Check the details and make online registration at www.evangelical.edu.



Faith in the Marketplace starts its seventh season on September 29, when Scott Heintzleman, a CPA and Partner with Mckonley Asbury, LLP, speaks on "The Power of One." Cost for the 7:00-8:30 a.m. breakfast event is \$20. Registration can be done online at www.center4li.org or by contacting mmoury@evangelical.edu or



Dr. Anthony Blair will be installed as Evangelical's seventh president on Friday evening, September 30, in Dech Chapel.



Be part of **A BRIGHT HOPE** when the annual Friends of Evangelical Banquet takes place at Calvary Church, Lancaster, on Friday, October 21. Guest speaker is Gordon MacDonald, veteran pastor, author, and recently appointed chancellor of Denver Seminary. Call Marsha Conley at 717-866-5775, ext. 2130 or email mconley@evangelical.edu to reserve your place by October 12.



Leadership Contact's second fall course, "Preaching I," runs for seven Tuesday evenings from October 25 through December 6. Registration deadline is October 18, and information is available at www.center4li.org.



News from Global Ministries



MISSION LEADERS BRUNCH

The Global Ministries Commission is constantly working on improving the ways we keep our local churches informed and engaged in the Great Commission. This Fall we are introducing a Mission Leaders' Brunch. These informational gatherings will be scheduled for each region's local church mission leaders/pastors and will give us an opportunity to inform, update and educate our local churches on the exciting things God is doing through the EC Church both here and abroad. ***Our first Mis-***

sion Leader Brunch is scheduled for the Susquehanna Region on November 15, 2011 at 10:00 AM at Dutchway Restaurant in Myerstown, PA. Each person will pay for their own meal. Please RSVP to the GMC office by November 1.



News from Twin Pines

Celebration Banquet

We request the honor of your presence!

The Twin Pines staff and Board of Directors cordially invite you to come hear what God has been doing through the ministry of Twin Pines this year. Our annual Celebration Banquet will be held Tuesday, October 18, 2011, at Good n' Plenty Restaurant, Smoketown, PA. Doors will open at 6 p.m. and dinner will be served at 6:30 p.m.

Reservations are required and a love offering will be taken to benefit the ministry of Twin Pines. Please call or email Twin Pines to make your reservation: 570-629-2411 or banquet@twinpines.org. Please RSVP by October 11th. Come and share in the celebration!



Twin Pines Sponsored Youth Retreat

Summer Camp is so much fun you should be able to enjoy it more than one week every summer.

This year YOU CAN! Join your friends, the summer staff, and directors for a weekend of fun and activities just like you experienced at summer camp!



The Flyin' High Retreat and the Senior High Retreat will be held November 11-13, 2011. Registration will begin at 7 p.m. Friday, November 11th. The Retreat will conclude at 1 p.m. Sunday, November 13th. The cost is \$99.00. Don't miss this!

All you are welcome, attendance at summer camp is not required. For more information visit our website, www.twinpines.org or call Shawn at 570-629-2411.



FALL FAMILY MISSION RALLY: OCTOBER 14-15, 2011
Salem EC Church: Lenhartsville, PA

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 14

Pastors' Appreciation Luncheon 11:30-2:30

Missionaries David & Conce Roof

El Retiro Representative Mr. Juan Porto

DGM Randy Sizemore

Appreciation gift for each pastor attending

Pastors' wives are invited!!

RSVP to GMC office by **September 30**: ecglobal@eccenter.com or 717-866-7584

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 15

MISSION SESSIONS FOR ALL AGES 8:30-3:00

Children's program K-5th grade

Youth program 6th-8th grade

Adult program

Missionaries: Dave & Conce Roof, Joe Toy, Kitty Miller, El Retiro- Juan Porto

DGM Randy Sizemore

RSVP to GMC office by **September 30**: ecglobal@eccenter.com or 717-866-7584

Cost: We are requesting a donation of \$3.00 per child and \$5.00 per adult to cover lunch expenses

Project:

The youth will be stuffing Christmas stockings for missionary Joe Toy. You can help by bringing some of the following items:

BOYS:

Games
Cars/trucks
Trading cards
Handballs
Socks
Watches

GIRLS:

Butterfly clips
Jewelry
Watches
Jump ropes
Coin purse
Socks

ALL KIDS:

Candy
Puzzles
Small games
Pencils
Crayons
Stickers