

EC LEADER

OCTOBER 2019

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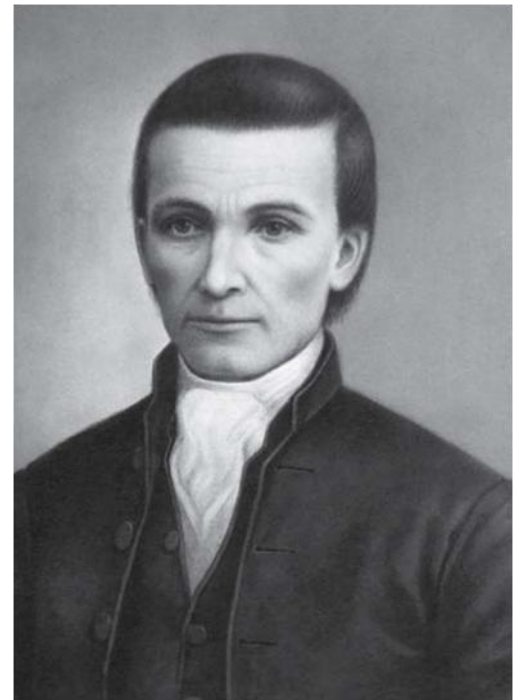
Who We Are

"... 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



Jacob Albright



From the Bishop:

EC DNA?

Recently, the course on the EC Church History & Polity was taught by Pastors Adam Roberts, Jeff Byerly, and myself. This course is a requirement along with the EC doctrine course, "EC Ethos," for those seeking EC credentials.

Our denomination traces its history back to the early 1800's and Jacob Albright, a farmer and tile-maker who accepted Jesus as his Savior and Lord. That step of faith led to God's call on his life as an itinerant preacher. Long story short—he was the founder of what we now recognize as the Evangelical Congregational Church. As I participated in the history portion of the course, Adam Roberts reminded us of what has been described as "the DNA of Jacob Albright."

- Passion to reach lost people
- Personal experience of salvation
- Hopelessness of dead religion
- Contextualization of the Gospel message
- Incarnational ministry
- Calling of people to ministry
- Unwavering resolve in spite of adversity

The dictionary describes DNA as "the fundamental and distinctive characteristics or qualities of someone or something, especially

when regarded as unchangeable." Now think about that description as it applies to the DNA of Jacob Albright and the EC Church. Look at that list as it applies to your life and the life of your congregation. These are fundamental, distinctive and unchangeable qualities of the Evangelical Congregational Church. I hope you can see the evidence of that DNA. Each of these qualities are just as vital to our ministries in the 21st Century as it was for Jacob Albright in the 18th Century.

I am thankful that I do see these characteristics in the life of our denomination and I pray we will continue to be people of the Gospel, the Good News; people who live out the Word of God and the DNA of Jacob Albright, making a difference in our neighborhoods and the world.



In Christ's service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bruce Hill".

Rev. Bruce D. Hill
Bishop

Bishops Top 10 Prayer & Praise

1. Join me in thanking the Lord for his hand on me and healing during my recent kidney stone surgery.
2. Pray for safety as I travel to Colorado in October for elk hunting.
3. Ask the Lord to guide the October meeting of the National Ministry Team.
4. Ask the Lord to lead as the new President of the National Association of Evangelicals is selected this month.
5. Pray for the congregations who are still involved in the stationing process.
6. Praise the Lord for the faithfulness and ministry of your pastor.
7. Praise God for the growth taking place in the Evangelical Congregational Church around the world.
8. Thank the Lord for the beauty of his creation as we see the changing from summer to fall.
9. Many churches celebrate World-Wide Communion in October—praise the Lord for all the Evangelical Congregational Churches around the world.
10. Praise God for his continued protection of Gloria and I as we spend lots of time on the road as I preach in our churches.



News from the Executive Director

The big news this month is health insurance and it was not a good year. All viable insurers were double digit increases with United Healthcare being the lowest increase at 21.5%. From what we could glean from other multiple employer groups our size, significant renewal increases this year were common. So it is unlikely that our claims experience or the utilization of healthcare services of our group was the main factor in driving the renewal increase. There appear to be macro or environmental factors that are driving the rate increase. Quotes were received from six insurers with a seventh insurer opting not to quote our group because they knew they would not be competitive.

Health Insurance rates (per month)

	Current	January 1, 2020
Single	\$ 704	\$ 845
Couple	\$1,489	\$1,790
Employer & Child(ren)	\$1,408	\$1,690
Family	\$1,928	\$2,230

(the new rates are posted on www.eccenter.com)

Thanks to everyone for responding to the email inquiries I sent out on prescription and provider inclusion and for completing the Highmark applications. That information was very helpful to the EC Benefits Trustees in their decision making process. It is understood that there will be some troubles going forward causing changes to prescriptions and physicians. Our apologies for the anticipated problems and if there was a cost effective way to avoid those problems we would have gone that direction. The rate increases from Capital Blue Cross and Highmark Blue Shield were 60% and 80% respectively.

The new plan from United Healthcare (UHC) will have overall slightly less benefits than the former Capital Blue Cross (CBC) plan. There are enough differences in the plans (UHC vs CBC) to not be able to give a concise listing of all of the differences. Most participants will experience higher prescription co-pays and higher physician co-pays. However, the HRA with Prime-Pay will continue at the same reimbursement levels at \$500 for covered medical services, \$1,800 for prescriptions and \$1,800 for outpatient therapy services.

Additional information will be forthcoming to the participants on the health insurance plan concerning ID cards, coverage limits and such. Our health insurance broker, PowerKunkle, is working diligently on the UHC enrollment. UHC utilizes technology differently than CBC and participants are encouraged to set up an online account with UHC and download their app to assist with the management of your healthcare coverage. Also, it might be beneficial to begin using the Good Rx app (as advertised on TV). Our UHC rep did not discourage the use of the Good Rx app. There are times when not using health insurance to purchase a prescription is less costly.

If you are an EC Pastor below Medicare Eligibility age and not on the EC group health insurance plan you must complete a Health Insurance Election Not to Enroll form that is available on the website, <http://www.eccenter.com/Left/Member-login/Benefits-Information/Health-Insurance.aspx>. The form must be completed each year by December 15. Please return the completed form to Dave King. The form may be mailed, faxed 717-866-7583 or returned electronically, dking@eccenter.com. If you are returning the form electronically please do not include your social security number.

News from the Executive Director (continued)

Highmark Senior Blue Renewal

The rates for the Highmark Freedom Blue plan are not final but anticipated to increase by \$10-12/month to \$244-\$246/month per person with minor changes in benefits. The change will be effective on January 1, 2020 to be paid by December 15, 2019. Beginning January 1, 2020 retirees will be responsible for 100% of the premium. Final rates will be announced as soon as they are available.

Cost Sharing Amounts for 2020 (single policy)

Year of Medicare Eligibility	Current	January 1, 2020
2005 or before	\$187.20	\$244-246
2006	\$198.80	\$244-246
2007	\$210.60	\$244-246
2008	\$222.30	\$244.246

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 Benefits office for a Manna Fund application.

The 2020 Pastoral Compensation Forms will be available on the Church Center website no later than October 1, 2019. Expect the Social Security Administration to release the 2020 COLA in late October 2019, if we are lucky. Early estimates from various internet bloggers is for a 1.70% COLA for 2020. However, we have all felt the price increases at the grocery store and in energy prices. Please be respectful and honoring of the job your pastor is offering and offer as much of an annual salary increase as is possible. In addition, the National Conference adopted the statement: "Churches that are financially able are encouraged to give either a larger percentage increase or to consider an additional increase as a merit raise in salary for each pastor. This merit raise would be in addition to the approved percentage salary increase."

Please contact Dave King, dking@eccenter.com or myself, Kevin Henry, khenry@eccenter.com, 1-800-866-7581, with any questions or problems.



Bless your Pastor and Staff



Evangelical
Congregational
Church

The Evangelical Congregational Church is partnering with the National Association of Evangelicals for their national **Bless Your Pastor and Staff** campaign, <https://blessyourpastor.org/resources/leaders/>. EC Church lay leadership is encouraged to follow the link above and download to watch the introductory video and download the toolkit for churches. All of the information, graphics and resources on this page are free. You may use some of the material or you may use none of it. Please use whatever material would best fit your church. Please take special note of step 5 on the "5 Simple Steps to Bless Your Pastor" page of the toolkit for churches.

October 13, 2019 is Pastor Appreciation Day however the Bless Your Pastor and Staff initiative is not restricted to one day or one month. The National Conference is encouraging churches find a fall 2019 weekend in their church's calendar to honor their pastor(s) and staff. If fall 2019 does not work then winter 2020 is good too. The Bless Your Pastor and Staff initiative is more than a Sunday morning event, it is designed to develop a year round culture of blessing your pastor(s) and staff by everyone in the church. One of the free resources is a list of 50 Creative Ways to Bless Your Pastor. I'm fairly certain that just about every person in the church is capable of using one of those 50 ways to bless their pastor.

Thanks for undertaking this very worthwhile initiative and please contact me with any questions (717)628-2171 or khenry@eccenter.com.

Kevin Henry
Executive Director





Thank You Pastors!

October is celebrated as Pastor Appreciation Month in our denomination. It is an opportunity for local congregations to celebrate and thank God for the life and ministry of your pastor(s)! It's a great idea and we hope that every EC congregation will make a special effort to appreciate and celebrate their pastor(s) sometime during the month, or maybe even all month long! You can find ideas and resources in the "Bless Your Pastor" article in this issue of the EC LEADER.

One translation of the Bible tells us they are worthy of "double honor." (1 Timothy 5:17) Praise the Lord for men who respond to the call of God and serve as your pastor. Some serve full-time, others serve bi-vocationally; but each one shares their calling, their gifts and graces, with the church and community. During this Pastor Appreciation Month the staff of EC Church Center would like to express our appreciation for the pastors of our denomination. So thank you, Pastors, for all you do!

The Church Center Staff



The annual **RETIREE RECOGNITION DAY** will be held on Monday, October 28th, at 12:00 noon at StoneRidge, Poplar Run Campus. This annual event honors the retired pastors, spouses and the widows of retired ministers.

After a delicious meal (choice of chicken or beef) and wonderful fellowship with friends and ministry colleagues, they will be blessed with a special program.

Reservations need to be made by October 16th to Keith Miller, 510 W. Lincoln Ave., Myerstown, PA 17067.

Global Ministries Community

- **CORRECTION**—Seems that I (Pat Strain) really goofed on the Wycliffe emails. Sorry! The correct emails for Chris Bowers and the Wilsons are listed below. Please disregard what was listed in last month's EC Leader.

Chris Bowers—chris_bowers@wycliffe.org

Kathy Wilson—Kathy_wilson@sil.org

Jonathan Wilson—jonathan_wilson@sil.org

- **Joe Toy** will be going to England from the 4th—14th this month for the NFL London games. He asks for prayer coverage as they reach out to those attending these football games.
- **Praise!** Many thanks to all of you who participated in raising funds for our VBS-Japan project. As of September, we have met and exceeded our goal of \$10,000. Thank you so much!
- **Joe Toy** will be doing the Christmas stocking project again this year. If you or your church would like to participate, go to Joe's website, www.oamphilly.org, for information on how to make the stockings and what to put in them. If you are participating, please contact Joe at Oamphilly@aol.com and let him know. He needs all stockings by November 30th.
- **Praise** that none of our EC folks in Florida suffered damage from Hurricane Dorian last month. **Dan & Melinda Moury, Jamie & Anita Farr, Jim & Joan Farr, Wes & Mary Reimer and Rev. David & Elaine Hornberger** initially were right in the storm's path, but it veered north instead of slamming into the coast. They had high winds and heavy rain, but no damage to homes and property.
- **Dr. Juliana Leshner**, National Director of Veteran Affairs Chaplaincy, will be the guest speaker at Evangelical Seminary's banquet on Thursday evening, October 10th at Eden Resorts. Juliana was appointed to this two-year position at the beginning of this year. She is in charge of all of the US military chaplains, a daunting responsibility. Please keep her in prayer as she strives to meet the heavy demands of her position. (NOTE: If you want to know more about the banquet, go to Evan-

gelical's website, www.evangelical.edu, or call 717-866-5775.)

- Retired missionary **Janet Baker** has been having some serious health issues. Please keep her in prayer. You can drop a note of encouragement to her at: Apt 315, 609 N 12th St, Lebanon, PA 17046 or email to yawnie-baker@yahoo.com.
- **Jim & Janet Stahl** were in Jamaica in late August/early September, leading a Bible Story telling workshop among people there. Many folks struggle with illiteracy, so even though they go to church, they can't read or don't own a Bible. Being able to hear God's Word through the stories and parables from scripture helps them to understand His Word better.



Global Ministries will host a brunch for the Susquehanna Region on Thursday, October 24th at Trinity EC Church, Lititz, PA. The brunch will be from 10-noon. There is no charge, but donations to help cover the food costs would be appreciated. Missionaries Rev. Ken Sears and Brian & Missy Wagner will be sharing about their work, and Rev. Ted Rathman, GMA, will share updates on the Global Ministries Community.

Reservations are required. Please call 717-866-7584 or email to ecglobal@eccenter.com by October 8th so we can give the cooks an accurate count.

Thanks so much and we hope to see you there!

Kingdom Extension Community

The Art of Neighboring: Connecting with our Local Communities:

The Kingdom Extension Community would like to partner with your church or your district to provide a hands-on workshop 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?); each followed by a hands-on workshop (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.

Workshop attendees have said: “...very practical and applicable to a variety of congregational settings....For our ministry team, it was a day well spent.” (Ken Nafziger) “...we were able to gather a group of people from our church to attend an Art of Neighboring seminar....a valuable source of information and inspiration....The Saturday we gave to attend was time well spent!” (Tim Seiger) “I and five other members of my church attended the Art of Neighboring workshop....good information as well as time for setting goals and developing plans....My group left with a group of six to seven ideas that we can implement over the coming year.” (Pat Strain)

Useful Websites for Church and Kingdom Extension

Fresh Expressions US

<https://freshexpressionsus.org/>

A Fresh Expression is a form of church for our changing culture, established primarily for the benefit of those who are not yet part of any church. Fresh Expressions is an international movement of missionary disciples cultivating new kinds of church alongside existing congregations to more effectively engage our growing post-Christian society.

Missio Alliance

<https://www.missioalliance.org/>

Coming together under a common commitment to provide a place to address what faithfulness to Christ and His mission look like for the churches of North America in the face of several new cultural challenges, Missio Alliance is committed to working together on doctrinal and cultural issues that impact the church and the expansion of the Kingdom of God.

Exponential

<https://exponential.org/>

Exponential is an event and a fellowship of Kingdom ministry practitioners. An annual event and several regional events feature hundreds of speakers and workshops targeted to Kingdom expansion and the needs of church planters. The Exponential website is a one-stop shopping destination for information and resources for church planting, church growth, and Kingdom expansion. The list of sponsors is actually a collection of links to resource websites stocked with ministry goodies for every pastor.

Operation Christmas Child Resources



Many of our congregations collect shoeboxes filled with small gifts to be distributed to children in villages all around the world. Did you know that Operation Christmas Child (OCC) can help you, as church leaders, to encourage the people of your congregation participate in supporting this caring ministry? OCC can provide a number of free materials to your church, while supplies last!

Operation Christmas Child is most well known for collecting shoeboxes full of gifts for children in orphanages and other at-risk areas. Yet, the shoeboxes are not an end to themselves—they are a tool, an illustration of the Good News and great joy for all people. As OCC says, “The amazing journey of a shoebox gift begins with you and results in evangelism, discipleship, and multiplication.”

Getting your church or group excited about Operation Christmas Child has never been easier than with colorful—and FREE—materials. You can order bulletin inserts, prayer guide bookmarks, brochures on how to pack a shoebox, a complete promotional kit that contains a sample of other available resources, plus many more great items. Simply go to www.samaritanspurse.org and chose the link for Operation Christmas Child free resources.

Invite the Bishop to Preach:

The bishop has a few open Sundays in his preaching calendar for 2020. If you would like to invite him, 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 served. So as you plan your congregation's 2020 service schedule see when it would be good to have the Bishop come preach. To schedule a date please email your requested date(s) to his Administrative Assistant, jeahart@eccenter.com and she will work with him in developing his schedule for 2020. He hopes to see you soon!

We Need New Pictures

We would like some new pictures for the main page of our website www.eccenter.com. Do you have any pictures you can send us? Pictures of your church building exterior or interior, activities, events, community outreach, mission trips, etc. We will not identify any person or place in the pictures, however please be mindful of who is in the photos, i.e. if that individual would not want their picture posted or is in the witness protection program. Only send us pictures that you own the copyright, the pictures are no larger than 300x300 dpi and no more than three (3) pictures from any one church. All pictures received will be reviewed by those that have an eye for what makes a good website photo so not every picture received will be posted. Please send your pictures to blong@eccenter.com or send a link to your preferred online file sharing services; Dropbox, Google Drive, MS Onedrive, iDrive, etc.



What's happening at Twin Pines Camp this Fall?

Fall Fix-Up—October 1-3



Help camp to “batten down the hatches” for winter, complete special projects and extensive cleanup after summer camp has concluded! The various projects are both indoor and outdoor in nature. No need to attend every day. Please register by calling the office or send an email to linda@twinpines.org

October Getaway Weekends—October



Getaway for relaxation, relationship building, enjoying nature, and spend time with God. Housing, breakfast and spiritual guidance materials are provided in the weekend rate. You can choose getaways for Family, Couples or a gathering of your Friends.

Celebration Banquet—October 15



Join us for a special evening as we celebrate how God has blessed and used the Ministry of Twin Pines the past year. The banquet is free; however, there is the collection of a free-will offering to support the ministry of Twin Pines Camp.

Good 'n' Plenty Restaurant, Smoketown, PA

- Doors open at 6:00 pm

- Meal served at 6:30 pm

RSVP by calling the office or send an email to

linda@twinpines.org

Jr/Sr High Fall Retreat—November 1-3



This weekend for youth in grades 6-12 is like a mini week of summer camp. Campers get to participate in many of their favorite camp activities, and reunite with camp friends! They will explore their faith in Jesus Christ through group discussion and Bible study. Twin Pines provides staff for this retreat.

2020 Events & Dates

Mark your calendars now for the following Events in 2020.

Jan. 17-19	Winter Thaw-A
Jan. 31-Feb. 2	Winter Thaw-B
Feb. 14-16	Winter Thaw-C
Mar. 19-22	Craft Retreat
Mar. 27-29	Men's Weekend
Apr. 24-26	Spring Fling: Children Retreat
May 6-8	Spring Spruce-Up
May 13-15	For Ladies Only Retreat
Aug. 1	Summer Staff Sing
Oct. 2-4	Fall Fix-Up
Oct. 13	Celebration Banquet
Oct. 23-25	Women's Weekend
Nov. 7-9	Jr./Sr. High Fall Retreat



**TWIN
PINES**
CAMP, CONFERENCE
& RETREAT CENTER
www.twinpines.org

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



You are invited to attend the 2019 National Conference Ordination Services

The ordination of **Rev. Michael G. Knapp**
Zion (Clarks Valley) Evangelical Congregational Church
Dauphin, Pennsylvania
Sunday, October 13, 4:00 p.m.

The ordination of **Marisel Mieses**
Buenas Nuevas Evangelical Congregational Church
Hazleton, Pennsylvania
Sunday, November 3, 1:00 p.m.



October 2019

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 Global Ministries Community Mtg 1st Appt Orientation	2 Ministerial Development Community Mtg	3 ETS Board Mtg	4 Fresh Expressions Vision Day	5
6 Day of Prayer for Kingdom Extension	7 Episcopacy Committee Mtg	8	9 Conference Network Team Mtg	10 National Ministry Team Mtg Friends of Evangelical Banquet	11	12
13 Michael Knapp Ordination	14 Prayer Mobilization Team	15 Health Insurance Due Twin Pines Celebration Banquet	16	17	18	19
20	21 Info for the November EC Leader is due	22	23	24 GMC Brunch	25	26
27	28 Retired Pastors Banquet	29	30	31		

Ministry Funds to:
EC Church
100 W. Park Ave.
Myerstown, PA 17067

Insurance Payments to:
Benefits Corp.
100 W. Park Ave.
Myerstown, PA 17067

November 2019

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1 Day of Prayer for the E.C. Church	2
3 Marisel Mises Ordination Day of Prayer for Kingdom Extension	4	5 ELECTION DAY	6	7	8	9
10	11 Prayer Mobilization Team	12 StoneRidge Board Mtg	13	14	15 Health Insurance Due	16
17	18 Info for the December EC Leader is due	19	20	21	22	23
24 THANKSGIVING SUNDAY Thankoffering (voluntary)	25 Retired Pastors Banquet	26	27	28 THANKSGIVING DAY Church Center Closed	29 Church Center Closed	30

Ministry Funds to:
EC Church
100 W. Park Ave.
Myerstown, PA 17067

Thankoffering (Voluntary) to:
EC Church
100 W. Park Ave.
Myerstown, PA 17067
(designate: Thankoffering)

Insurance Payments to:
Benefits Corp.
100 W. Park Ave.
Myerstown, PA 17067