

# E. C. Leader

JUNE, 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.*



## *Reflections on the 7<sup>th</sup> National Conference*

There's a lot to unpack literally and figuratively after the sessions of National Conference end. It's three and half of the fastest days in my year. For me it was a full and very fulfilling time. From what I'm hearing it was more than a "mega-meeting." God did business with us and sent us out with greater clarity about the real business He has for us to do.

Our communion preacher Ramon Mendez helped us see ourselves in the mirror of truth. It's time to let our loving enthusiasm for Jesus and evangelism show through without restraint. By the Spirit dry bones can come to life as a mighty army.

Teacher Gene Wood drilled deep down into the bedrock of what real breakthrough requires. If we're to complete a turnaround to vital ministry we can't keep doing what we've always done. Local churches must resolve the power struggles that stand in the way of obeying God. Pastors must lead and all of us together must embrace taking Jesus to the world as our unstoppable passion.

Gene confronted us with the reality that the church in North America is largely broken. It's not working. Christ stands ready to fix us, but it won't happen without our full cooperation. God's provided a compelling vision of what we want to become. We can see our destination. What lies ahead is the need to lay out the trail that takes us there through initiatives like strategic planning. Then when that path is laid out, we must choose to walk it.

The Episcopal Address and report after report reminded us that while no one can turn things around alone and at once, the transformation does start with each of us. We must individually commit to becoming spiritually, physically, emotionally, and relationally healthy. Together then we can expand the existing islands of "wellness" until they merge into continents of revitalized and reproducing ministry that transforms lost people into fully devoted followers of Christ. I'm looking forward to making this next year's part of that journey with you.

For Him who died and rose for us,

*Bishop Kevin*

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Evangelical  
Congregational  
Church

## SOME POST CONFERENCE POST SCRIPTS...

- We'd like additional **feedback** from the delegates with regard to the inclusion of the break out sessions for small group discussion in place of the workshop format. Email your brief thoughts to [jeahart@eccenter.com](mailto:jeahart@eccenter.com)
- We're working on it. The **Episcopal Address** and the messages by **Gene Wood** were video taped. The Episcopal Address is now available on DVD. Gene Wood is available on CD Audio. Ordering information can be found in this issue of "The EC Leader." Electronic copies of the address and the accompanying PowerPoint have already been posted to our website.
- Messiah College has asked us to consider moving our **conference dates** up a week so that we'd start on the fourth Tuesday of May. We can retain our usual time slot for next year, but this will mean sharing the facility on Thursday and Friday with an additional group of over 2,000 people. We'll be evaluating our options and deciding as far in advance as possible if a change will be made.

## BISHOP'S TRAVELS:



JUNE	21	Lancaster, Faith AM
	28	Seneca 35 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration AM
JULY	5	Home
	10-12	Waldheim Campmeeting PM
	12	Slatington, Trinity AM
	19	Home
	26	Herndon Campmeeting AM & PM
AUGUST	2	Rosedale Campmeeting AM & PM

## BISHOP'S PRAYER LIST:

- † For the formation of the "Transformation - strategic planning team & chairperson Jeff Byerly
- † For the raising up of Church Planters and Church Restart pastors
- † For our churches to find ways to engage their communities with the gospel
- † For congregations to respond to the financial needs of our Global Ministries Commission in supporting our international churches and funding administrative costs
- † For wisdom, grace, and courage to meet and resolve several complex and challenging issues.



## ELECTION OF THE NEXT SUSQUEHANNA REGION CONFERENCE MINISTER:



A highlight of this year's National Conference was the first ballot election of the Rev. Dr. Gordon Lewis to be the next Conference Minister of the Susquehanna Region. Gordy and his wife Donna have served our Harrisburg Trinity congregation since 1990. His term of office begins after National Conference 2010. Remember the Lewis' and Trinity Church in this year of transition. Give thanks to the Lord for guiding us in the selection process.

## STATIONING UPDATE:

Nathanael Kennedy will serve as an Assistant Pastor (Part-time) at Emmaus (PA) St. Matthew's.



## DENOMINATIONAL STORE:

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

- The **2009 National Conference Journal** will be available by the end of July. IF you have not already placed your order to it today. The cost is:
  - Binder w/cover & spine insert \$7.00
  - Section Dividers \$3.50
  - Printed Contents \$12.00
  - Additional CD - WORD format \$5.00(One (1) copy of the Conference Journal on CD will be sent to each church FREE of charge.)
- The DVD of Bishop Leibensperger's **2009 Episcopal Address** is available. Cost: \$2.00 The transcript and power point presentation are available on the EC website ([www.eccenter.com](http://www.eccenter.com))
- The 4-CD audio set of Gene Wood's sessions at the National Conference. Cost: \$6.00 This will also be available on the EC website in the near future.

*Congratulations to VA Chaplain Julianna Lesher who authored four of the booklets being published by the American Bible Society for use as a devotional tool for veterans and those with spinal injuries in a series entitled "God Understands."*

*Attention parents of college students - Huntington University, Indiana offers a special scholarship aid to students who are members of an E.C. Church. Contact [admissions@huntington.edu](mailto:admissions@huntington.edu)*

## NEWS FROM BENEFITS AND COMPENSATION:

### 2009 National Conference Pastoral Compensation Report Summary:

- Approved minimum pastoral salary increase of 1%
- 2010 Church (employer) Pension contribution to pastor's 403b account will be \$150 (full-time) and \$75 (part-time)

NOTE: The 2010 Pastoral Compensation forms and the 2010 Health Insurance Premium chart will be posted by September 1 on the EC Church website:

[www.eccenter.com](http://www.eccenter.com)

### ALLONE - June 30 deadline:

For those eligible to participate in the ALLOne Wellness program, June 30, 2009 is the deadline to complete the online Health Risk Assessment (HRA) and receive the \$25 VISA gift card from the Benefits Corporation. At this time, over 60 of our 135 participants listed on our census have completed their HRA and most have received their \$25 gift card. To take your HRA, go to [www.myallonehealth.com](http://www.myallonehealth.com) and register using the password that was mailed to you. (If you do not know your password, contact Ken Wiest.) The Health Risk Assessment will be available online after June 30<sup>th</sup>, but that is the deadline to receive the gift card.

December 31, 2009 is the deadline to receive the \$75 gift card. At National Conference, 3 of our participants received their \$75 VISA cards. To receive the \$75, you must complete 2 coaching calls with your ALLOne health coach and to have your doctor complete and submit the medical form to ALLOne by December 31.



### National Conference Walking Contest:

Our first NC walking contest was won by the pastors who competed against everyone else in attendance at National Conference. From Wednesday morning through Thursday evening, we had over 225 record their steps, using the pedometers provided by ALLOne Health Management. The top walker was Rev. Jeff Schell, pastor at Manheim, PA Trinity, who walked 32,531 steps. Trent Stehr, Lay Delegate for Bethlehem, PA Emmanuel, was the top walker for the lay people, walking 27,529 steps. The "Dirty Shoe"

award to the pastors for 2009 will be housed at Church Center. Our thanks to all those who participated. We hope you will continue to walk and record your steps.

### Taking Social Security Benefits Early - New Calculator Available:

One of the biggest decisions facing retirees today is whether they should start drawing their Social Security benefits prior to reaching full "retirement age." While you are permitted to begin Social Security benefits after reaching age 62, you will receive a lesser amount than if you wait until your full retirement age. For example, if your retirement age is 65 and you start drawing benefits at 62, you would face a monthly reduction of 20% in your check. If on the other hand your retirement age is 67 and you begin benefits at 62, your monthly check from Social Security would be reduced by 30%.



The question remains as to whether or not a person should consider taking Social Security benefits "early." The potential retiree must first make some immediate financial decisions. Can you survive off of the reduced Social Security amount? By drawing benefits early, the "retiree" must realize that the amount that he can "earn" will be limited. If you are under full retirement age for the entire year, Social Security will deduct \$1 from your benefit payments for every \$2 you earn above the annual limit. For 2009, that limit is \$14,160.



So by drawing benefits early, you limit the amount that you can earn.

Metropolitan Life Insurance Company has developed a three question test to determine whether you should start collecting Social Security early. This tool, which can be found at [www.metlife.com/fileassets/sscalc](http://www.metlife.com/fileassets/sscalc), is a quick way to determine your breakeven point. The Met Life calculator points out that the potential retiree should consider the long-term impact of reducing his or her monthly payments by 20-30%.

Again, the decision is not easy, but generally it is suggested that you not start drawing your Social Security benefits until you reach full retirement age

IF you are still working. Taking reduced benefits and potentially having those benefits reduced further because of the earnings limit is not worth it financially. To learn more about your Social Security benefits, please visit the Social Security Administration's official website at [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov).

As a side note, no matter when you begin receiving your Social Security retirement check,

Medicare benefits are only available after reaching your 65<sup>th</sup> birthday.

(From "In the Know Newsletter", Benefits Board, Church of God, TN, May 18, 2009)

### New E-mail:

Jennifer Buehler, Wachovia - Wells Fargo Securities advisor. Please note Jennifer's new email: [Jennifer.buehler@wellsfargoadvisors.com](mailto:Jennifer.buehler@wellsfargoadvisors.com)

## NEWS FROM TWINPINES:

Summer camp is underway, but we still have room for campers. Be sure to call camp today and register for a great week of camp. There are discounts available. The C.A.M.P. program is a great way to get a discount on camp. Please don't allow any kid to miss out on an opportunity to enjoy a week of camp and learn more about Jesus!

### Assistant Director Position Announced

Twin Pines is beginning the process of hiring an assistant director. Applications and job descriptions are available by calling the Twin Pines office at 570-629-2411 or by emailing the Executive Director, Shawn Fetterhoff at [shawn@twinpines.org](mailto:shawn@twinpines.org). Applications will be accepted until August 1<sup>st</sup> with interviews to follow. The position will begin on October 1, 2009.



## FROM ETS:

The Center for Leadership Impact is on the web! Check us out and register for upcoming events at [www.center4li.org](http://www.center4li.org). The Center for Leadership Impact is an initiative of Evangelical Theological Seminary and grows out of her desire to serve the Body of Christ in developing men and women for ministry, and in ministry. Our vision is to provide practical ministry tools for those Christian leaders engaged in the lifelong pursuit of leadership.



Need a fax machine? Evangelical Theological Seminary has two working fax machines; one is a Sharp UX-8700 with one print cartridge and the second is a Panasonic KX-FL501 (no extra printer cartridges). Both machines are free (although a donation to the Student Scholarship Fund would be appreciated) and available for immediate pick up. Please contact Kevin Henry, VP of Finance and Operations, 1-800-532-5775 or [khenry@evangelical.edu](mailto:khenry@evangelical.edu).

Dear E.C. Church family,

We'd like to take this opportunity to thank you again for your generous gift, our trip to Disney World. We loved our experience, as it was our first time there. We flew down to Orlando in March during Katie's spring break week. It was a welcome time of relaxation and fun for our family☺. Some of our highlights included:

1. The airplane ride -- probably Amanda's favorite part of the trip, despite the fact that we visited four different theme parks in Disney World.
2. EPCOT-- a family favorite, especially Dad's, who really enjoyed the world tour (as if he hasn't done enough traveling in his lifetime☺).
3. Our (Katie and Carolyn) highlight was the gorgeous and extremely comfortable resort, complete with pool, fitness center, our own suite, and in walking distance of Downtown Disney and all the shopping!☺
4. Delicious meals out to eat at all different kinds of places (No cooking and cleaning up for mom!).



5. And last, but definitely not least, especially in Lydia's book, meeting the chipmunks, Chip and Dale. She thought they were the cutest thing and could not stop smiling.

These are just a few of our many memories, all captured by Katie's constant obsession with photography. She ended up with over 400 pictures (She'd love to show you them sometime, but the rest of us are sick of them! Haha).



So, thank you again for your gift! It means the world to our family and we will always remember your kindness!

Love,

The Sigmans

Mike & Jenny, Katie, Carolyn, Amanda, & Lydia