

Evangelical Congregational Church



E.C. National News

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SPRING, 2009



Mike Sigman inaugurated at ETS

Rev. Michael Sigman became the sixth President of Evangelical Theological Seminary during a Wednesday, April 29 Inaugural Convocation in the Dech Memorial

Chapel. Former Presidents and representatives of the Board of Trustees, administration, faculty, and student body participated. Spokesmen from other academic institutions, as well as former Bishops of the E.C. Church and leaders from other denominations added words of commendation.

The Investiture was conducted by Bishop Kevin Leibensperger. Dr. William Worley, Chair of the Board of Trustees, presented the Medallion, and Bishop Emeritus, Dr. John Moyer led the Dedicatory Prayer.

Mike's home church is Bethel E.C. of Conestoga, PA. He is a graduate of Lebanon Valley College. His association with ETS began when he enrolled as a Master of Divinity student in 1983. After graduation, he joined the Alumni Council and served with them until he was elected to the Board of Trustees in 1990. He continued with them until 2008.

Mike married Jenny in 1986, and a few weeks later, began the task of planting Rosedale Community Church, Baltimore, MD. He was pastor there until 1999, when he became Bishop of the E.C. Church.

A year ago, soon after Mike was appointed Vice-President for Continuing Education, an unexpected vacancy in the office of President put him in the position of Acting President. He was soon approached by the Search Committee to serve as President.

The Sigmans live in Ronks, PA with daughters, Katie, Carolyn, Amanda, and Lydia.



Camp ECCO to celebrate 50th Anniversary

Camp ECCO (Evangelical Congregational Camp Organization), Carrollton, Ohio will celebrate its 50th anniversary with a week-end of activity Friday through Sunday, June 26 to 28. Opening event will be a golf outing at Carroll Meadows Golf



Club. Contact Glenn Hansen at norwiss5@sbcglobal.net. A ceremony and campfire by the lake, games and sports, praise and sharing, concerts and relaxing will be included. Breakfast and a brief Sunday morning service will be offered to those who stay over on Saturday. Registration for golf and meals must be received by June 19. Contact Julie Beltz at julieb51@ssnet.com.

During recent months, much volunteer labor went into renovating the bathroom in the girls' dorm. More volunteers will gather during the Revamp Camp Week, June 21-25.

Mark Cicchinelli recently arrived to serve as Caretaker and Director. He comes from the Pine Brook Conference and Retreat Center, Stroudsburg, PA. He is joined by wife Peggy and sons, Philip and James.

Camp ECCO has ministered to young people from Ohio and western Pennsylvania since 1959.



Pastor Lewis does double duty

Rev. Christopher Lewis pastors Bethany E.C. Church of rural Knox, PA. Three years ago, to his surprise he also became pastor of nearby Salem Reformed (United Church of Christ).

"I was out mowing my yard one evening in June," recalls Chris, "when a neighbor Mike stopped by and asked if I had time to talk."

Mike explained that their pastor was no longer able to minister because of ill health. Lay speakers had been filling in, but attendance was dwindling. The consistory had just started the pastoral search process and discussed hiring a six-month interim. Chris' name had come up. Mike asked if Chris would consider it.

"I said I would," Chris remembers, "but I thought there was no way I could handle the responsibility. We were in the middle of building our house, and my wife, Becky, and I were doing most of the work; but as I prayed about it, I felt led to explore the possibility."

Chris called Mike and told him he would have to talk to his Conference Minister and Bethany's Official Board. Both gave permission to pursue.

Chris submitted belief and policy statements to the consistory. They felt that they and Chris could be compatible and arranged for an interview. There were many questions on both sides, and differences were "hashed out." An advantage was that worship and Sunday School were already on opposite schedules in the two churches.

Chris then shared his testimony and preached a trial sermon on a Sunday morning. After the service, the congregation

voted to hire him as a six-month interim, and he was informed that afternoon.

Then, Bethany called a special board meeting. "I was wondering what I was getting myself into. I was hoping the board might not want me to do it," Chris admits. "But as I explained what had transpired and how it could work, they totally surprised me with a unanimous yes. The board felt that this was an outreach to our community and a positive thing to do for the Kingdom of God.

"I needed to step out in faith and do what God was calling me to — even though I couldn't see how I would have time to complete our house."

Chris began his duties at Salem the last Sunday of July. At first, he preached on Sunday, had one day of visitation per week, and attended consistory meetings. Eventually, he devoted half the week to each church.

A few months later, when he asked the search committee about their progress, he was met with silence. Then, someone spoke up: "We were hoping you would continue."

"I must admit I had grown to love the people, and they were hungry for the Word of God," says Chris. Bethany's board was concerned about Chris taking on too much, but once again, gave their approval. So... he continues to pastor both churches, giving God credit for the strength and ability.

And — the house was finished! He and Becky live there with children Blake, Heath, and Sadie.



Pastors complete studies

Rev. Keith Blank, who is doing revitalization work in Sunbury, PA recently received a Doctor of Ministries degree from Gordon-Conwell Seminary in South Hamilton, MA. Wife is Danette.



Pastor Mark Inman (wife is Jeannette) of Conestoga, PA Bethel and **Pastor Gary Morrell** (wife is Suzanne), who was just appointed to Allentown, PA Zion, have completed the Local Preacher's Course of Study. The program requires completion of 16 courses. The two were recognized in a service of consecration at ETS on May 19.



Family News

Weddings

Jim Farr of Papua New Guinea married fellow missionary, **Joan Henry**, on February 21. The two serve with Wycliffe Bible Translators.



Mark Reigle, son of Pastor Dick and Becky Reigle of Allentown, PA Christ, married **Kara Behringer** on May 9. The wedding took place at Akron, OH First, and the father of the groom officiated.

Remembering Loved Ones



Joyce Voegeli, wife of Donavon Voegeli, who has done much denominational work, passed away on January 29. She was a member of the former United Evangelical Church, Tallmadge, OH and the mother of three daughters.

Mary Brown, mother of Great Lakes Conference Minister, Rev. Gary Brown, passed away on March 4 in Warsaw, IN. She is also survived by husband Bill and two daughters. She was a tax consultant for several of our pastors.

Anne Swartz, wife of the late Rev. Paul Swartz, passed away on March 11. A memorial service was held in Selinsgrove, PA. She is survived by three daughters.

Dr. Fred Roland, M.D., who served a number of years as Lay Delegate from Emmaus, PA St. Matthew's, passed away on March 29. He is survived by wife Jeanne and five children. His brother, David, is our denominational attorney.

Eleanor Miles, wife of the late Rev. Richard Miles, passed away on April 14. She was a member of Allentown, PA Seibert. She is survived by a daughter and a son.

Marc Waldman, son of Caribbean missionaries Brad and Maxine Waldman, passed away unexpectedly on March 16. He is also survived by his fiancée, Maureen Perry, and a brother, Matthew.

Esther Samuels, wife of retired pastor, Rev. H. Robert Samuels, passed away on April 19. She is also survived by five children. A memorial service was held at Wiconisco, PA Faith.

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