



AUGUST 2014



**connect**

"We loved you so much that we shared with you not only God's Good News but our own lives, too."  
- 1 Thessalonians 2:8

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## From the Bishop

During our 2014 National Conference we focused on our theme: CONNECT developed from 1 Thessalonians 2:8 "We loved you so much that we shared with you not only God's Good News but our own lives, too." (NLTse) We respond to God's call to love him, to evangelize by living out the Good News, and disciple others as we CONNECT in life-to-life discipleship. As a denomination we define a disciple as "one who is seeking to pattern his/her life on the Savior's." It is a lifelong pursuit of following Jesus. The challenge is that we must form significant and lasting relationships to do that, and that is counter-cultural. We live in the digital age; everything needs to be fast. Our culture looks for a shortcut for everything. But neither evangelism nor discipleship happen that way; they take time, it means living in relationship, day in and day out, connecting with those around us as people, as friends. Evangelism is a dialogue, not a monologue. We need to be the church that connects with people relationally. Evangelism and discipleship go together; they cannot and are not to be separated. Alan Hirsch explains it this way "Discipleship is all about being drawn into the purposes of God. The Great Commission to 'make disciples' includes both making Christians and maturing Christians." The journey of discipleship does not begin when a person accepts Jesus as their Savior and Lord; it starts long before that as the Holy Spirit begins to draw them to himself. We have pledged as the Evangelical Congregational Church to establish disciple-making as the ultimate objective for all our ministries. To do that we must make the time to CONNECT.

When we stop and think about it, connecting with people was a huge part of Jesus' earthly ministry. His three years of ministry were spent in significant relationship with the people living around him; developing disciples. Too many people define discipleship as Bible study; you just need to learn the facts, the stories, the lessons; that's what God wants. Jesus calls his followers to learn the Bible, for certain, and the Bible, God's living Word tells us to "make disciples... Teach these new disciples to obey..." But discipleship is more than "head knowledge." Jesus wants followers who will allow His Holy Spirit to transform them and conform every aspect of their life to him and his will. He desires disciples who make disciples. Discipleship isn't a school or program, but a life of passion and purpose. It is personal investment into someone else's life. It is choosing to be seen, sincere, open and vulnerable; as a follower of Jesus living in sincere relationship with the people around you.



*(continued on page 2)*

## Bishop's Top Ten Prayer & Praise

1. Pray for Gloria and I as I travel around the Conference to preach and visit. Thank the Lord for my safety in a recent trip to Illinois. Pray for safety during my upcoming trip to Ohio and Kentucky. Pray for Gloria as she takes care of everything at home.
2. Pray for Chuck Campbell and new wife, Nettie, as he has begun his ministry as Great Lakes Conference Minister.
3. Pray for our camping ministries as they move toward the end of the summer season. Pray too for those who made a decision for Christ and their continued spiritual growth at home.
4. Ask the Lord to lead and guide in a number of our pastors and congregations who are facing challenging times.
5. Join me in praising God for the reports I continue to receive from local church boards and councils who are using the recent Episcopal Address for deeper discussion on the vision and plan for their church's ministries.
6. Pray for me as I begin to form the Transition Team who will work with me in making the Futures Initiative Covenant a reality in the life of the denomination.
7. Pray for our world; if there ever was a time for the church to be the church and impact our culture with the Good News about Jesus, this is it.
8. Praise God for the good stories we continue to hear of churches who are using the summer season to connect with their neighborhoods.
9. Thank the Lord for the ability to take some vacation time. Gloria and I spent a week at Bethany Beach and a few days at our son and daughter-in-law's deer farm.
10. Praise God for the many volunteers who make special summer outreach ministries like Vacation Bible School possible.



*(From the Bishop, continued from page 1)*

I can tell through my own personal experience that in my years growing up in the church and in ministry, I have been exposed to lots of evangelism and discipleship programs. The problem is I can't really remember any of them but I can still see the faces of the people who invested their lives in me. I can tell the names of individuals who poured faith into my life through authentic relationship. The summertime is a great opportunity to get out and spend time with people. It may be August, but there are still lots of beautiful days and evenings to spend with friends and neighbors sharing the Good News about Jesus and our lives too.

In Christ's service,



## News from StoneRidge Retirement Living

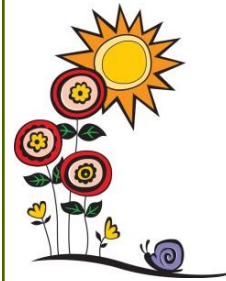


### STONERIDGE POPLAR RUN NOMINATED FOR CONSTRUCTION AWARD

StoneRidge Retirement Living staff and residents were pleased to hear the news that the new addition and renovation of the campus was nominated for a “best of construction” award by ABC Keystone (Association of Builders Contractors, Keystone Chapter). Wagman Construction, Inc. of York was the builder nominated for the “project of the year.” The addition of new spaces to the existing Poplar Run campus in Myerstown, PA includes a Main Street concept with storefronts for a general store, an ice cream parlor and gift shop. Spaces were created for a Chaplain’s office and a prayer room. Five new spacious apartments were added during this phase of construction. An additional phase, added soon afterward, includes a Wellness Center showcasing a performance theatre, pool and



spa, aerobic exercise room, a fully equipped fitness room and a golf simulator. With all these new amenities, residents and visitors are surely experiencing retirement living at its best. More details may be obtained by contacting StoneRidge Retirement Living at (717)866-3200.



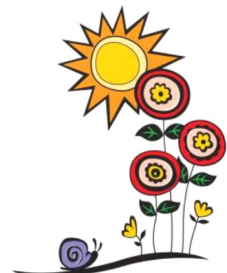
If you have not ordered your 2014 National Conference Journal do it now!

Call or email Brenda at 1-800-866-7581 or [blong@eccenter.com](mailto:blong@eccenter.com)

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Cost:  
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To: Members of the Evangelical Congregational Church National Conference  
From: **Bishop (Emeritus) Richard Kohl**  
Subject: Love and Appreciation

=====

1. My 80th Birthday card shower was an amazing experience for both me and Mary (and our Mailman). Your thoughtfulness brought more than 200 cards and personal messages from members and friends of the Conference throughout the month of June. I am filled with gratitude by your kindness.  
Some of the cards contained get well wishes, too. My knee replacement surgery was a success, my healing is continuing. Thank you for your good wishes and prayers.
2. Pastors, lay delegates and all in our churches are prayed for regularly. “May all who come behind you find you faithful!”
3. “What is the name of the last person you introduced to Jesus?”

## News from Evangelical

Evangelical Seminary's full schedule of fall classes is available at [www.evangelical.edu/schedules](http://www.evangelical.edu/schedules) — and there's still time to sign up to audit one of these classes or to apply to take a course for credit! For more information, contact Gwen Scheirer, Director of Admissions, at [gscheirer@evangelical.edu](mailto:gscheirer@evangelical.edu). Classes begin August 28th.

The Institute for Church Leadership is offering two classes this fall. Studying and Interpreting the Bible will be offered September 2-October 14 and Preaching will be offered October 28-December 9. Classes meet from 6:30 p.m. to 9:15 p.m. For more information and to register, please visit our website [www.evangelical.edu/lifelonglearning](http://www.evangelical.edu/lifelonglearning).

The Seminary's Alumni Council in conjunction with the Center for Lifelong Learning will present the 2014 Leadership Forum on September 25 in Dech Chapel. Our Marriage and Family Therapy faculty will discuss Healing Relationships in a Broken World. More information will be available on our website by mid-August.



The first Faith in the Marketplace event for the fall will be on September 22. Our speaker will be Greg Lesher, president of Lesher Mack Sales & Service, Inc. and Lesher Leasing, Inc. of Lebanon. The event will be held at StoneRidge: Theater on Main at Poplar Run, Myerstown at 7:00 a.m. To register, please visit our website at [www.evangelical.edu/faith-marketplace](http://www.evangelical.edu/faith-marketplace)

*Dr. Kyle Strobel*, Assistant Professor of Spiritual theology and Formation at Talbot School of Theology, will be our speaker at the 2014 Friends of Evangelical Banquet on October 17 at Calvary Church in Lancaster. Dr. Strobel is a dynamic and engaging speaker. Also, a prolific author, his third book will be publishing in October. Watch your mail in late August for your invitation.

*Register for*  
**CLASSES**



The Rural Home Missionary Association (RHMA) will be offering a Lancaster, PA **"Small-Town Pastors' Conference"**, September 29th through October 1st, at Calvary Church, Lancaster. This year's conference is titled "Weathering the Storms."

I want to encourage you to check out the brochure for the conference at <http://rhma.org/index.php/conferences>.

I strongly encourage you to consider attending this continuing education conference. At past conferences I have greatly appreciated the quality and practicality of the plenary sessions and workshops and have been encouraged by the fellowship with other pastors. The cost is reasonable, the instruction is beneficial, and the fellowship is encouraging. Feel free to contact me with any questions ([revjifp@comcast.net](mailto:revjifp@comcast.net)).

For those in the Great Lakes Region, a conference will be held in Morton, IL April 27-29, 2015. A one day conference is planned for Taylor University, Upland, IN October 25, 2014. information on these conferences is available on their website.

Jim Price for the Church Health Commission



## A Day Apart for Pastors

The role of a pastor is a high calling, but a challenging one to live out day after day. The pastor is called to exercise responsibility for the care of souls in a busy church. But when does the pastor attend to the needs of his own soul? A pastor's role is demanding and often lonely. That is why two pastors are developing a ministry of soul care and companionship for spiritual leaders.

Eldon Fry and Phil Thorne have been friends for nearly twenty years, but not until recently, after stepping down from their own heavy pastoral responsibilities, have they been able to focus on their mutual passion to help leaders live healthier, more soulful lives—and to minister out of a deep and growing intimacy with our heavenly Father. Sounds so basic, doesn't it? But you know how hard it is to care for your own soul in a ministry of caring for others, and to minister out of a deep place of communion with God.



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minister out of a deep and growing intimacy with our heavenly Father. Sounds so basic, doesn't it? But you know how hard it is to care for your own soul in a ministry of caring for others, and to minister out of a deep place of communion with God.

So they are inviting pastors to take “A Day Apart” every month with them, beginning in September and lasting through May. Join a handful of other pastors as they attend to the needs of your souls and develop life-changing disciplines that will enable you to slow down and enjoy God's beautiful, life-giving presence. These “Days Apart” will be a cross between a personal Sabbath, a small group experience in spiritual guidance and a seminar in spiritual theology and formation. There will be readings to complete before the day, and on the day there will be times in solitude and times together. The intention is to ‘be real’ and ‘go deep’ - and to be honest spiritual companions on a journey of genuine spiritual formation. Here are the themes planned for each “Day Apart”:

September	<i>Invitation to a Journey: Telling Our Stories</i>
October	<i>Intimacy with the Almighty: Silence, Solitude, and Sabbath</i>
November	<i>Sacred Reading: Hearing the Word as a Word for Me</i>

December	<i>An advent Liturgy: He became like us so we could become like Him</i>
January	<i>Practicing the Presence of God: Seeing God in All Things</i>
February	<i>The Inward Journey I: Purgation, or Putting Off the Old Man</i>
March	<i>The Inward Journey II: Listening to Our Lives</i>
April	<i>Life Together: Spiritual Companions, Spiritual Guidance</i>
May	<i>The Journey Outward: What does ministry have to do with it?</i>

The cost of these nine day-long retreats will be \$750, that's a little more than \$80 a month, hopefully a price you and your church can afford. One half will be due at the beginning of the program, and one half in January. They are anticipating three groups of eight pastors each, meeting at a retreat location on the first or fourth Monday, Wednesday or Thursday of each month. Final dates and places will be chosen based upon response to this invitation.

If you are interested in joining, or exploring the possibility, simply email [eldonfry@comcast.net](mailto:eldonfry@comcast.net). Those who respond will receive a follow-up questionnaire and about preferred dates and places. And feel free to ask any questions you desire.

**Eldon Fry, D.Min.** has recently retired from 22 years as College Pastor of Messiah College, having served as Senior Pastor of three growing churches. With a Doctor of Ministry in Pastoral Counseling, and training in Spiritual Direction from Kairos School of Spiritual Formation, he founded his own ministry of spiritual direction called Open Hands, which is offering this program.

**Phil Thorne, Ph.D.** just recently stepped down after 21 years as Senior Pastor of West Shore Evangelical Free Church in Mechanicsburg, with the hope of investing the last years of his ministry life encouraging, equipping and teaching pastors and other Christian leaders.

## News from Benefits Corporation

The EC Benefits Trustees received the preliminary 2015 health insurance increase and the increase was lower than anticipated. Please keep in mind that while our preliminary rate increase is lower than anticipated, the overall employer group health insurance market is experiencing rate increases of 20%, 30% and even 40% or more. The single digit rate increase we received is abnormal for this year and we are very thankful for it. The trustees understand that any health insurance rate increase will be detrimental to the local church. On the positive side the healthy cushion in the HRA is allowing us some flexibility in the plan design and rates. Our insurance broker is soliciting rates from other insurance carriers and I cannot speculate on the rate increase at this time. When the renewal rate is received and reviewed by the EC Benefits Corporation Board of Trustees, information to the churches will be released as soon as possible.

There was an email sent out to the active pastors on the Highmark health insurance from David King with information and instructions on using PrimePay. Please review that email if you have any ques-

tions with PrimePay if you have any questions with PrimePay or if you have never used PrimePay. PrimePay is only for the active pastors on the Highmark PPO plan.

The 2015 Pastoral Compensation Forms will be available when the Social Security Administration releases the annual Social Security COLA increase. Normally the COLA increase is released in early October. Most internet bloggers are predicting a COLA increase of less than 2% for 2015. please refer to the compensation committee report from the National Conference for other pastoral salary and benefit information and recommendations. Remember that the local conference should approve a pastor's housing allowance or parsonage furnishings allowance prior to December 31, 2014.

Please contact Dave King, Benefits Administrator, [dking@eccenter.com](mailto:dking@eccenter.com) or myself, [khenry@eccenter.com](mailto:khenry@eccenter.com) or 1-800-866-7581 with any questions or problems.

Kevin Henry

**Why another workshop?** This is an exciting new approach that addresses a crucial & strategic need in the church. It is a joint project of The Navigators and 3DM (3 Dimensional Ministry).

We invite you to this practical, inspiring workshop designed to enhance the development of disciples in our current cultural context who impact the world for Jesus Christ. It will be October 24-25, 2014 at the Columbia Presbyterian Church, Columbia, Maryland.

More and more people are realizing we are in the midst of a discipleship crisis in the United States which is largely responsible for the *declining state* of the American church. At the same time, there is a wave of excitement about the current missional movement that *engages pre-believers outside the walls* of the church. This movement has been bubbling up in the last few years and many people hope it will stop the bleeding of the declining church. The fundamental issue, however, is that unless we are able to disciple people well like Jesus did, any missional movement is *unsustainable*.

If you are interested in seeing some different approaches to discipleship and mission, this workshop is a great place for you and your team. The 2-day workshop will run from about 8:30 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. The workshop location is in Columbia, MD, just west of Baltimore, and a little south of I-70.

To register to the 3DM website: <http://3dmovements.com>. Click on the "Workshops" menu item. On next page scroll down to select "Discipleship & Mission", then select the "Register Now" option under the Oct. 24-25 dates.

John Radcliffe, [john.radcliffe@navspa.org](mailto:john.radcliffe@navspa.org); 717-715-2565

**E.C. Church Center**  
**100 West Park Avenue**  
**Myerstown, PA 17067**

Phone: 717-866-7581  
 E-mail: [eccenter@eccenter.com](mailto:eccenter@eccenter.com)

**We're on the Web**  
[www.eccenter.com](http://www.eccenter.com)

We've attached calendars for August and September and will attach subsequent calendars in the future issues so you can keep up-to-date with what is happening in the EC denomination. These calendars are also available on the EC website

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

If there is an event you would like to have included on the calendar please contact Brenda at

[blong@eccenter.com](mailto:blong@eccenter.com)

or call 717-866-7581.



## News from Global Ministries

- The 2014-2015 Mission Minded Kids lessons about Liberia are now available. Go to the denominational website, [www.eccenter.com](http://www.eccenter.com) and look for the link on the right hand side of the main page.
- *Brian, Missy, Hannah and Micah Wagner* will be returning to Rift Valley Academy in Kijabe, Kenya early this month. Their year of furlough is finished and they are eager to return to "home." Oldest daughter *Rachel* remains in the USA to begin her second year at Millersville University.
- *Ed, Val and Cheynece Schubert* will be returning to Honduras at the end of August after a summer in the USA to visit friends, family and supporters. They leave behind sons *Wes and AJ*, who will remain in the USA for their higher education.
- *Nick and Lisa Lakatos* will no longer be missionaries with Global Ministries as of the end of August. For personal and financial reasons, they will not be returning to Mexico with OMS this fall. A letter has been sent by email to all EC churches. Please keep the Lakatos family in prayer during this time of transition.

Dear EC family,

We have discovered from a letter received from one of our church leaders in Liberia, Africa that our brothers and sisters are living through a heartbreaking experience as the Ebola virus ravages their country. Many individuals and EC churches have responded to their need by giving a special offering. The EC Church USA has sent nearly \$15,000 in support. Thank you! Randy Sizemore, Director of Global Ministries, and I have decided to reallocate the VBS project funds for a youth camp in Liberia to the relief effort and, in a step of faith have authorized \$10,000 to be sent immediately to help with those efforts. If you or your congregation would like to support this effort and encourage our brothers and sisters in Christ with additional financial gifts please mark your check with GMC World Emergency Fund.

Financial support is important, but we realize that the lives of our church leaders and the members of our churches are quite literally in the Lord's hands. Therefore, **as Bishop, I am calling on all of our churches to set aside extra time during your worship service on Sunday, August 17 to lift up our brothers and sisters in prayer.** We know the Lord hears our prayers, we know too that it is important for us to intercede for those in need. Please join me now, and on August 17 as we ask the Lord to bless and strengthen those who are so deeply affected by this terrible disease which affects every aspect of their lives.

In Christ's service,





# August 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					<b>1</b> Day of Prayer for The EC Church	<b>2</b> Twin Pines Summer Staff Sing
<b>3</b> Day of Prayer for Church Planting	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>
ROSEDALE CAMPMEETING						
<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> Benefits Seminar— Lakeside, Transfer	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> Church Pension Contribution due Health Insurance Premium due	<b>16</b>
<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> StoneRidge Retirement Living Board Meeting	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>

**Ministry Funds to:**  
E.C. Church  
100 W. Park Ave.  
Myerstown, PA 17067

**Insurance/Pension Payments to:**  
Benefits Corporation  
100 W. Park Ave.  
Myerstown, PA 17067

**Manna Fund to:**  
Benefits Corporation  
100 W. Park Ave.  
Myerstown, PA 17067  
(designate *Manna Fund*)

**Twin Pines Offering to:**  
Twin Pines Camp  
3000 Twin Pines Camp Road  
Stroudsburg, PA 18360

# September 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	<b>1</b> LABOR DAY Church Center Closed	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> Benefits Corp. Mtg.	<b>5</b> Day of Prayer for The EC Church	<b>6</b>
<b>7</b> Day of Prayer for Church Planting	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> Fall Convocation	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>
	Twin Pines Bible Conference					
<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> Church Pension Contribution due Health Ins Premium due Estimated Tax Payment due	<b>16</b> Evangelism & Discipleship Com- mission Mtg.	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>
	Twin Pines Fall Fix-Up					
<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>
	Supervisory Retreat					
	National Conference CRC Retreat					
<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> Leadership Commission Mtg.	<b>30</b>				

**Ministry Funds to:**  
E.C. Church  
100 W. Park Ave.  
Myerstown, PA 17067

**Insurance/Pension Payments to:**  
Benefits Corporation  
100 W. Park Ave.  
Myerstown, PA 17067  
(designate Church—4th Quarter/Pastor)

**Medical/Pension Payments to:**  
Benefits Corporation  
100 W. Park Ave.  
Myerstown, PA 17067