



Community

Evangelical Congregational Church



EC Leader

AUGUST 2015

from the Bishop

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Gloria and I have finally decided that it's time to replace her car. That means it's time to go car shopping. I hate car shopping. You know the questions: New, used or left-over? Does it have Bluetooth? Does it stream audio? It costs how much? (Is that the "no haggle" price, the "real time" price, or the "internet special"?) And how much is that piece of junk nice used car I drove in here really worth? What is the warranty? (I've always wondered about spending that much money to buy something that's brand new and one of the primary questions is "What happens when it breaks? If it's made correctly you shouldn't need a warranty should you?" It's supposed to be simpler now. Sure it is. You don't need a torn up Consumers Report magazine for research; they have a website. And so do a thousand other people and they all have an opinion about the vehicle you're interested in. It's all so much fun!

There is one aspect of car shopping I do enjoy—I've met a number of car salesmen, and while they aren't often at the top of the "most trusted people in America" list, I enjoy hearing their

stories. Not car stories—their stories. I ask a lot of questions when I'm car shopping; but they're more about the salesperson than the car. I don't really consider myself to be a true "car guy" even though I completely rebuilt my MGB roadster with a friend while I was the pastor of Bridgeville EC Church. In the course of this round of car shopping I've found former British car owners. I met a nice young man who had both Penn State and University of Kentucky decorations on his desk. (Penn State football. UK basketball. OK, he's half right.) I got to hear the story of another man who was born and raised in Elizabethtown, PA, graduated from Penn State with a degree in economics, served as a controller and Chief Financial Officer at a couple of companies for a total of 35 years and then, while playing golf, decided he wanted to do something different before he retired. I've seen pictures of their children and grandchildren; heard family stories. They've talked about where they go to church or why they don't go anymore. I'm not sure I'm doing this car shop-



ping thing right but I'm having a good time listening to people's stories of life.

I really hope you don't have to buy a car anytime soon but I do hope that when you are out in your community that you're traveling around with your ears open listening for the stories of life. Your waitress has a story; so does the clerk at the minimart, the lady at the bank, and everyone else you interact with. So in the middle of all the stuff you need to get done, take the time to listen, ask some questions, and get to know the individuals around you. Talk out your life story. You may also buy what you're looking for along the way.

In Christ's service,



Bishop's Top Ten Prayer & Praise



1. Pray for the Lord's leading as we seek applications for three Associate positions in our new denominational structure: Church Health, Kingdom Extension, and Ministerial Development. May the men of the Lord's choosing fill these important new leadership positions.
2. Ask the Lord to continue to bless the other preparation work that needs to take place during this conference year as we get ready to implement a new denominational structure on July 1, 2016.
3. Pray for the many children who made decisions to follow Jesus at one of our camping ministries. Pray that they will grow in their faith as they are disciplined through the ministry of their home church.
4. Ask the Lord to bless all the students, from kindergarten through graduate school, who will soon be starting a new school year. Pray, too, for the teachers and administrators who have such a powerful impact on the lives of students.
5. Pray for our many local congregations as they finalize plans for new ministries and programs for the fall season. May the Lord touch lives through the efforts of our pastors and people!
6. Praise the Lord that the United Methodist Senate has re-approved Evangelical Seminary for the training of United Methodist clergy. United Methodist students comprise approximately a quarter of the current student body.
7. Thank the Lord for being able to give and receive hospitality during the summer—picnics, nights out for ice cream, and just being able to spend time with friends; old and new.
8. Praise God for the men who have answered his call to pastoral service and will be ordained starting this month and stretching into October. May the Lord continue to bless them, their families, and their ministries.
9. Praise and thank the Lord for our denomination's strong commitment to uphold biblical standards for life even as we engage with a challenging culture. His Holy Spirit is our strength and encouragement—PTL!
10. Join with me in thanking the Lord for the many people who continue to support Gloria and me in prayer—we are so grateful! (And we're praying for you too.)

2015 National Conference Journal

If you have not already done so...now is the time to place your order for the **2015 National Conference Journal**. The journal should be completed and ready for pickup by August 10th.

We are again offering a three-ring binder (\$7.00 ea.); section dividers (\$4.00 ea.); printed contents (\$14.00 ea.); additional CD—WORD format (\$5.00 ea.) and a name & address directory (\$5.00 ea.).

PLEASE TAKE NOTE: Each church will receive one (1) copy of the Journal on CD FREE of charge.

Contact Brenda (blong@eccenter.com or 717-866-7581) at the EC Church Center to place your order.

Three New Associate Positions

One of the most important beginning steps in our denomination restructuring plan is to have the right people in the right positions. We are beginning that process with a call for applicants for three new Associate positions.

As you may recall, beginning on July 1, 2016 we will replace our current five “commissions” with five “disciple-making resource communities.”

The new communities are:

- Church Health
- Global Ministries
- Kingdom Extension
- Ministerial Development
- Missional Alignment

Four of the communities will be led by Associates; Missional Alignment will be led by the Bishop.

The Associate will assume the primary role of encouraging and re-sourcing local churches as well as leading the disciple-making resource communities. Associates are part-time compensated positions.

In addition we are seeking applications for the position of Executive Director. This is a full-time position. The Executive Director shall provide administrative and financial leadership to the denomination.

If you are interested in applying for one of these positions please email Jodi Earhart, Administrative Assistant to the Bishop, at jearhart@eccenter.com. She will then send a complete packet of material to you including the appropriate application. **All applications must be returned to EC Church Center no later than August 31, 2015.**



A Missional Holiness Conference “Fanning the Flames of a 21st Century Holiness Revival” will be held at Calvary Wesleyan Church in Bethlehem, PA. The conference is

Sunday evening, October 25 through Tuesday evening, October 27. The main speakers are Dr. Stan Toler and Rev. Anita Eastlack. In addition there will also be interesting and informative seminars on Monday and Tuesday. All of the information is available at www.missionalholiness.org. On the website you can find complete information about the conference, register and reserve your hotel at a special rate. This is the church’s fifth year for the conference, but the first time they are extending the invitation beyond The Wesleyan Church. Pastors, local church leaders, missionaries and denominational leaders have attended and have reported the benefit they received from the conference.



On June 26, the Supreme Court handed down a decision allowing for same-sex marriage across the country. This decision will have far-reaching implications on churches, other ministries and the nation. This is not something we can ignore and hope it goes away—we encourage every local church leadership team to review and adjust your church policies and facility guidelines or perhaps write and officially adopt some for the very first time.

We are aware of two resources that can be very helpful to you. Both contain sample church bylaw language, sample wedding and facility use policies, as well as employee information. Both resources are .pdf files which can be downloaded for free.

- The Alliance Defending Freedom’s “Protecting Your Ministry” legal guide is a quality resource for churches and other ministries and organizations. Their website is www.adflegal.org.
- The Christian Legal Society has published a document with recommendations for churches to protect themselves from litigation. It can be found at www.clsnet.org.

News from Global Ministries

Help Liberia Bike Tour Update:

Where?

Those of you who have been following the blog know that Steve and I are back in Pennsylvania. We fell short of our distance goal (St. Louis, 2,700 miles) by about 1,500 miles.

Why?

Steve began struggling with the climbs in Montana—and his endurance continued to decline through Wyoming and into Colorado. After visiting a medical clinic in Walden, CO and blood tests in Steamboat Springs, CO, it was determined that he was suffering from high altitude sickness. Doctors' orders were to seek significantly lower altitude immediately, as his body was not adapting, and the risk of serious injury was high to lung and brain if he should continue. Prayerfully, it seemed the best decision would be for both of us to abandon the tour and make our way

back east. This is what we did, arriving back home on Friday evening, July 10th. As of this update (7/20), Steve is gaining strength, but not yet fully recovered.

What?

Even though we were unable to meet our mileage goal, with your help, I pray that we will be able to meet the financial goal of \$20,000 to help our Ebola Response Team in Liberia win the battle against that deadly virus. I am encouraged by some recent correspondence received from some of our churches:

Pastor Martinez texts—
"Sad that you guys have to cut your trip short. It was still a success. August 22nd, Bethany Ashland is having a yard sale/bake sale/car wash to benefit your trip. We are still going forward with this."

Pastor Schell emailed—
"We have been raising funds at Trinity Manheim to help Liberia. Each Sunday our kids and families have been bringing their coins and filling a bike

bag on a bike I have inside the front door of the church. Our goal is 10 cents per mile X 2700 miles or \$270. Currently we have \$105 collected and one of our members is going to match what is donated, so we will be sending at least \$210 in the near future."

As of July 16th, Shirley Long from Church Center indicated the amount raised is \$3,909.00. That's almost a fifth of the way toward our financial goal. As a group, or individually, we encourage you to continue your support in a committed and creative manner through the end of August.

Update: Steve and I rode 52 miles through the Oley Valley yesterday. Steve said that though his lungs are not "fully functional", it was a much stronger/healthier ride than experienced in Colorado last week. We are encouraged!

Ralph and Steve



News from Twin Pines

Family Life's The Art of Marriage Retreat



Twin Pines is hosting this marriage retreat again this year over the weekend of October 2-4. This is a great weekend for married couples to get away and focus on their marriage. In Family Life's "Art of Marriage," couples will discover that "marriage, the way God intended it to be, is a true art form." The retreat will weave together expert teaching, real-life stories, humorous vignettes, and more to portray both the challenges and beauty of God's design."

For more information, contact Andy at Twin Pines (Phone: 570-629-2411 or email at andy@twinpines.org). Register online at www.tpartofmarriage.eventbrite.com or download the brochure and registration form from our Facebook page or website (www.twinpines.org).

Twin Pines' Junior & Senior High Retreat

Summer camp is coming to November again this year! For those campers who want to experience the fun and games of summer camp again, this is the retreat for them! The Summer Staff and Program Directors are offering this retreat to anyone in grades 6-12 to get away from the distractions of school and media to focus on their faith. The dates for the retreat are November 6-8. Register online at www.tpjrshigh.eventbrite.com or download the brochure with registration form from our Facebook page or website (www.twinpines.org).

For more information, contact Andy at Twin Pines (Phone: 570-629-2411 or e-mail at andy@twinpines.org).



Twin Pines' 22nd Annual Golf Classic

You are invited to participate in this year's annual golf classic which will be held in the Pocono Mountains, where you will be surrounded by the majesty of God's creation!

Join us on Friday, September 18th and Saturday, September 19th for two wonderful days of golf, fellowship, and raising funds for the vital camping ministry of Twin Pines.

For more information, contact Shawn at Twin Pines (Phone: 570-629-2411 or email shawn@twinpines.org). You can register using the brochure, which can be found on our Facebook page or on our website (www.twinpines.org).



Ministers' Retreat

Ministers are invited to attend this special retreat taking place on October 6-8. This will be a special time for ministers to relax and enjoy time in the beauty of the Pocono Mountains. More details will be arriving shortly!

Fall Foliage 5K and Family Festival

Twin Pines will once again be hosting a 5K this year on Saturday, October 3. Throughout the day, there will also be a Family Festival with hayrides, pumpkin carving, and more! Come out and run the 5K and then enjoy the rest of the day with your family!

For more information, contact the Twin Pines office at 570-629-2411.



News from Benefits Corporation



The EC Benefits Trustees received the preliminary **2016 health insurance** increase and the increase was much higher than anticipated. However, our insurance broker is soliciting rates from other insurance carriers and I cannot speculate on what the final rate increase will be. On the positive side the healthy cushion in the HRA is allowing us some flexibility in the plan design and rates. The intent of the Benefits Trustees is to pass along as low of a rate increase as possible to the churches and use some of the cushion in the HRA to absorb the remainder of the increase. It is hoped, not promised, that the rate increase to the churches will be in the low single digits. 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. The amount of the preliminary rate increase shocked the trustees but it was not unexpected. Unfortunately, Highmark will not release claim information to us because we are a small plan, under 100 participants. Our only options are to change benefit levels and shop our

business to other insurance carriers. The same pressures that the EC health insurance plan has faced for many years are continuing; an average age of plan participants is now in the mid to late 50s and the need for a plan that maintains a consistent benefit level from New Jersey to Illinois limits the health plan options. The EC Benefits Trustees are willing to hear any input you have on the future and benefit level of the EC health insurance plan; a listing of the trustees are included in the conference journal.

Multiple notices have been sent reminding health plan participants about the availability of the **Healthcare Reimbursement Account (HRA)**. Reimbursement for covered health care expenses above the annual limit of \$500, including co-pays, is available through the HRA. And the HRA will reimburse for prescription drug costs above \$1,800/yr. Instructions and forms for HRA reimbursements are available on the website or call Dave King or Kevin Henry at the Church Center and we will walk you through the process.

The **2016 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 2016. 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, 2015. Please contact Dave King, dking@eccenter.com or myself, khenry@eccenter.com or 1-800-866-7581 with any questions or problems.

Kevin Henry
Controller



You are invited to attend the 2015 National Conference Ordination Services

The ordination of *Rev. Michael E. Campbell*
Faith Evangelical Congregational Church ~ Bair
York, Pennsylvania
Sunday, August 23, 4:00 p.m.



The ordination of *Rev. Kyle R. Roth*
Faith Evangelical Congregational Church ~ Williams Valley
Wiconisco, Pennsylvania
Sunday, August 30, 4:00 p.m.



The ordination of *Rev. Bradley D. Hatter*
Peifer's Evangelical Congregational Church ~ Mandata
Herndon, Pennsylvania
Sunday, September 27, 4:00 p.m.



The ordination of *Rev. Kenneth B. Kalisz*
Hope Community Evangelical Congregational Church
Fogelsville, Pennsylvania
Sunday, October 11, 4:00 p.m.



The ordination of *Rev. Keith A. Blank*
Trinity Evangelical Congregational Church
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
Sunday, October 18, 4:00 p.m.

Evangelical Congregational Church

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

Phone: 717-866-7581

Web: www.eccenter.com

Email: eccenter@eccenter.com



The Church Center will be closed on Fridays starting
with Friday, July 3rd through
September 8th.



LEADERSHIP FORUM

Featuring Reggie McNeal

Tuesday, October 13, 2015

Evangelical Seminary, Myerstown

Sponsored jointly by the Evangelical Seminary

and

E.C. Leadership Commission

More information will be available soon!



August 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
30 Rev. Kyle Roth Ordination	31					1
2 Day of Prayer for Church Plant- ing Rosedale Camp- meeting	3	4	5	6	7 Church Ctr. Closed	8
9	10	11 Affiliate Funding Committee	12 Episcopacy Committee	13 Finance Com- mittee	14 Church Ctr. Closed	15 Church Pension Contribution due Health Insurance Premium due
16	17	18	19	20	21 Church Ctr. Closed	22
23 Rev. Michael Campbell Ordination	24	25	26	27	28 Church Ctr. Closed	29

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

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

Manna Fund to:
Benefits Corporation
100 W. Park Ave.
Myerstown, PA 17067

September 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4 Day of Prayer for the EC Church Church Center Closed	5
6 Day of Prayer for Church Planting	7 LABOR DAY Church Center Closed	8 Evangelical Seminary Fall Convocation	9	10	11	12
13	14	15 Church Pension Due Health Ins. Due Estimated Tax Due	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27 Rev. Bradley Hatter Ordination	28 Leadership Commission Mtg.	29 Evan & Discipleship Mtg.	30			Bible Conference at Twin Pines

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

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

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