

EC LEADER

DECEMBER 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



From the Bishop:

The Gospel according to Luke tells us that one night there were shepherds who were watching their sheep in the countryside outside of Bethlehem. The night was just like every other night when "Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them." [Luke 2:9] The actual message of the angel, the good news, is that God is at work and has sent the Savior, the Messiah into the world. All the way back in the days after creation God was promising to offer salvation to the world through his Son, Jesus. The angel now identifies the Savior, the promised Messiah, the Christ, the Lord. The verifying sign that this message was true is in the sign that if the shepherds would go into Bethlehem and look they would find the "baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger." [Luke 2:12]

When the angel had completed his message, we read "**Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God.**" [Luke 2:13] That song included a blessing "...and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased." [Luke 2:14]

Today, as at the time of the angel's song, peace is in very short supply. Ever since Cain declared war on his brother Abel, and murdered him, the world has been plunged into chaos. There's not just wars and rumors of war; conflict is the condition of the human hearts. A member of an EC congregation said "it seems like our culture is addicted to anger." Ultimately, for all humans, we are at war with God. The Bible tells us that we are his enemies.

Into this crazy world comes an unexpected message, a message of peace through the Messiah. Peace, real peace, was possible because God was offering it to the world in Jesus. The gift of peace is Jesus, who said, "I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give isn't like the peace the world gives. So don't be troubled or afraid." [John 14:27]

But that Good News leaves each of us with a question: Is the angels' song my song? Do the people around me see me as a person of



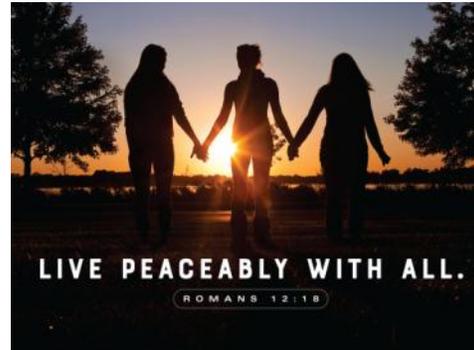
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peace, a message of peace? The peace that comes in Jesus is to be lived out, shared. David wrote “Work hard at living in peace with others.” [Psalm 34:14] Paul wrote “Do your part to live in peace with everyone, as much as possible.” [Romans 12:18] As we celebrate Christmas, my prayer is that each of us would experience the abiding peace that is Jesus and that we would share that peace with everyone around us. Peace.

In Christ's service,



Rev. Bruce D. Hill
Bishop



Bishop's Top 10 Prayer & Praise

1. Pray for family members who will be traveling during the Christmas season.
2. Pray for the Episcopal Nominating Committee as they seek nominations for the next bishop.
3. Ask the Lord to touch the hearts of those who will be attending special services in December.
4. Pray for missionaries as they serve the Lord and are separated from family during the holidays.
5. Pray for safe travels as Gloria and I attend the National Association of Evangelical's denominational executives retreat December 4-6.
6. Join me in praising God for the opportunities to meet with the members of the EC Church family.
7. As we quickly approach the end of another year, praise and thank the Lord for his care and provision even, or especially, through the difficult days.
8. Join me in praising God for pastors and lay leaders who serve Christ and his church by volunteering their time, talents, and expertise to our communities and committees.
9. I praise and thank the Lord for the many individuals who continue to remind me they are regularly praying for Gloria and me. We count on that!
10. Thank the Lord for the indescribable gift of his One and Only Son—Jesus!

News from the Executive Director

Effective January 1, 2020 the EC Benefits Corp Services fee will be increasing to \$125/yr, an increase of \$25. This is the first increase of the fee since 2010. The service fee offsets the cost of the annual financial audit, Directors & Officers Insurance and other operating costs of EC Benefits Corporation that more and more often includes professional fees as employee benefits become more complex. The pastoral compensation forms will be updated shortly. If your pastoral compensation forms are already completed a notation on the fee change is all that is necessary as this is a fee to the church and not compensation paid to the pastor. The treasurer's guide will have the correct amount that will be due by January 15, 2020.

A couple of end of the year reminders:

- Pastor Compensation Forms should be returned to David King, Benefits Administrator by January 15, 2020
- Annual Statistical Report is due to Rev. Ken Wiest, Statistician, EC Church Center, 100 W. Park Ave., Myerstown, PA 17067 by January 25, 2020
- W-2 forms for employees (incl. pastors) and 1099-MISC forms for independent contractors are due by January 31, 2020 to the recipient and to the respective government agency.

Pastors are employees of the local church and should receive a W-2 with federal, state and local taxes withheld from every paycheck.

- The rates for the active pastor health insurance plan on January 1, 2020 (premium due December 15, 2019). The health insurance rates are:

Family	\$2,230
Employee w/child(ren)	\$1,690
Couple	\$1,790
Single	\$ 845

Please see the website, www.eccenter.com for additional information.

- HRA reimbursements **under the active pastors Capital Blue Cross plan** are due to PrimePay by December 29, 2019 for covered healthcare expenses incurred by September 30, 2019. This is a HRA rule regardless of the insurance carrier. Reimbursements received after December 29 will not be paid. No exceptions.

Highmark Freedom Blue Retiree Plan

The retiree Medicare supplemental plan, Highmark Freedom Blue, is increasing by \$11/month to \$245 per person per month, effective January 1, 2020, with minor changes in coverage levels.

As approved by the members of the EC Benefits Corporation at the May 2015 EC Benefits Annual Corporation Meeting, beginning in 2016 and annually through 2019, the E.C. Church contribution to the cost of the Medicare Supplemental premium will be reduced by 20% until, in 2020, the entire contribution by the E.C. Church has been eliminated. The retiree is responsible for the remaining portion of the premium not paid by the E.C. Church.

Cost Sharing Amounts for 2020 (single policy)

Year of Medicare Eligibility	Current	January 1, 2020
2005 or before	\$187.20	\$245.00
2006	\$198.80	\$245.00
2007	\$210.60	\$245.00
2008	\$222.30	\$245.00
2009 and after	\$234.00	\$245.00

For a husband and wife on Freedom Blue double the amount above.

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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 EC Benefits office for a Manna Fund application.

There are many Medicare Advantage plans available even some at no cost to the participant. However each plan will have positives and negatives in terms of participating providers and benefits provided. Please thoroughly investigate any Medicare Advantage plan before switching plans. If a retiree does not have the financial means to assume a larger portion of the Freedom Blue plan the Manna Fund is available to financially assist the retiree.

May you have a blessed holiday season celebrating the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ!

Kevin Henry	David King
Executive Director	Benefits Administrator
khenry@eccenter.com	dking@eccenter.com

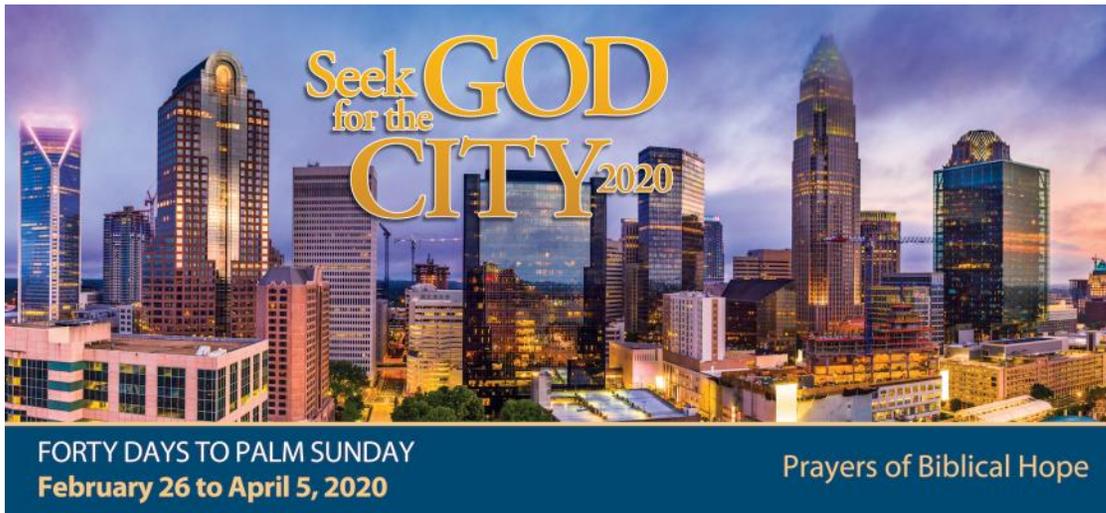


THE NOMINATION OF A NEW BISHOP IS UNDERWAY

The Episcopal Nominating Committee held its first meeting on November 6th at the Church Center. The committee is tasked with, "...identifying the person(s) of God's choosing..." to be called to the position of Bishop of the Evangelical Congregational Church. The committee receives, vets, solicits, and interviews itinerant elders of the denomination which have been nominated by their fellow National Conference members. Letters requesting those nominations have been sent to each National Conference member. **The deadline for submission of those nominations—accepted only in writing and via USPS—is December 2, 2019.** Submissions submitted with a postmark beyond the December 2, 2019 date will not be considered. Submissions should be sent to: Episcopal Nominating Committee, c/o Rev. Wayne Houck, Secretary, 66 S. Limerick Rd., Royersford, PA 19468.

As you can imagine, the work of the committee is not only an administrative one, but, it is also a contemplative one. Each member of the committee has been called to this task and has been urged to seek the Lord's direction for the future of the denomination. Please join us in prayer for the next Bishop, and be in prayer for those who are serving in the completion of this important committee work: Reverend Kenneth Ogden, Mrs. Glenda Dunbar, Reverend John Friedlund, Reverend Wayne Houck, Reverend James Price, Reverend Ted Rathman, Reverend Cameron Smith, Mrs. Jodi Earhart, and Mr. Kevin Henry.

PEACE PEACE PEACE



Seek God for the City is designed to mobilize many to pray with united, sustained vision for people of your community. The daily prayers are all new and different from last year's prayer guide.

It's hard to pray beyond our own problems, especially in difficult times. But since God does great things in the midst of troubled times, now is actually the best time to pray beyond ourselves with expansive prayers of solid hope. We will either find God-given courage to pray great things, or we will find our hope, along with our love, will grow old.

This 2020 edition of *Seek God for the City* is designed to re-ignite desires for Christ that may have gone dormant, so that our hope in Christ and His kingdom will rise again.

We will Seek God in two simple ways: First, we will seek God's face and then we will seek His kingdom. And as we come to God, seeking His face, then He comes to us bringing His kingdom. These are prayers you don't want to pray alone. Invite your whole congregation to pray along with you. Even better, think about joining your prayers with a few other churches in your community.

The forty days to Palm Sunday makes an ideal time to venture into a season of sustained, hope-filled prayer. Dated February 26-April 5, 2020. Pray powerful prayers of biblical hope for the people of your community. This 64-page prayer guide makes it easy for you to pray rich, biblical prayers for spiritual awakening throughout your community. They also have an app available that makes it possible to help many to keep their prayers rolling in the midst of busy lifestyles and schedules.

Some helpful features of Seek God For The City 2020

- **Strengthens what you are already doing.** No complicated program to organize or meetings to schedule.
- **Unites prayer throughout your church.** An attractive, easy-to-use tool that can help unite prayers between many churches throughout an entire community.
- **Lifts prayer from private or trivial matters.** Helps your people learn to pray for what matters most by directing attention toward what God is doing in the lives of people throughout your community.
- **Builds the confidence of everyday believers** to help them pray with clarity, authority and relevance as they learn to pray in keeping with scripture. Involves everyone in your church family, not just a "prayerful elite."
- **Opens a great way to pray toward Easter.** For those of liturgical streams, it augments the Lenten season with a marvelous blend of repentance and intercessory hope. Those of other streams find that it lifts attention toward Christ's visitation at Palm Sunday. The calendar concludes on Palm Sunday, leaving everyone prepared for Easter week without crowding the schedule with extra activity.

Global Ministries Community

- Congratulations to **Rev. Yoriyoshi Abe**, who was formally ordained as a pastor in the EC Church of Japan last month. Bishop Emeritus Rev. Michael Sigman was there as well to participate in the service. Pastor Mike was Yoriyoshi's mentor while he (Yoriyoshi) was a student at Evangelical Seminary in Myerstown and involved in ministry at Grace Community Church in Willow Street, PA.
- Keep **Chris & Debbie Bowers** in prayer as they finish their six months of home assignment in the eastern USA and also Australia, to return with their daughters to their home state of Washington. The Bowers will return after the holidays. Pray that they will be able to adjust quickly back to their busy routines at work and home.
- **Rev. Ken Sears** will also be finishing his home assignment this month. He will leave in mid-December to fly to Texas in order to spend the holidays with his family there, and then leave mid-January to return to Ukraine. Please keep him in prayer for safety and good health while traveling.
- Congratulations to **Yoriyoshi and Emiko Abe**, who are expecting their second child in early March! Daughter Kanae, who is two this month, is looking forward to being a big sister. Best wishes to all!
- **BJ Whitaker** had the opportunity to speak at an all-church youth event in Tenerife, Canary Islands in October. Afterwards, a young man came up to tell him that God had spoken to him through BJ's words. Praise the Lord!
- **Ed and Val Schubert** finished their furlough at the end of last month and have returned to Honduras. Please keep them in prayer for safety and especially for Val, good health.
- **Beth Grimm** will be spending most of the month of January in Guatemala, testing MK students and developing learning plans for those with learning disabilities. Please keep her in prayer for safe travels and good health during the three weeks she is in country.



The Bishop has a number of open Sundays in the first half of 2020. If you haven't had him to preach at your church recently, why not give Jodi Earhart, Assistant to the Bishop, a call or an email and invite Bruce to preach. No church is too big or too small for him to schedule a Sunday but it is first-come-first-served and you need to invite him. So as you plan your congregation's 2020 church service schedule see when it would be good to have the Bishop come preach. He enjoys meeting new friends, is a pretty good preacher, and is even willing to wear socks and a tie if necessary. If you'd like to schedule a date, please call 717-866-7581 or email your requested date (s) to jeahart@eccenter.com, and Jodi will work with him in developing his schedule for 2020. He hopes to see you soon!

Kingdom Extension Community

Item #1

Fresh Expressions National Gathering 2020

- Wednesday, April 1, 2020, 9:00 AM—Friday, April 3, 2020, 12:30 PM
- Heritage Fellowship Church, 2501 Fox Mill road, Reston, VA 20191
- Cost... \$149/person
- Register... <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/fresh-expressions-national-gathering-2020-tickets-67103346917>

Description

This is a moment of hopeful opportunity for the Church in America. Perhaps you feel the pain of a dwindling congregation or denomination. Perhaps this makes you concerned for the future. But we have evidence that God is at work future-fitting the church. We see the unfolding of Present Future Church that is breathing life and hope into existing congregations and the neighborhoods and networks around them.

This gathering will reconnect you with hope for the Church.

- Hope for facing tomorrow's difficulties with 2,000 years of missionary experience
- Hope from practitioners who have blended new and inherited forms of Church

Three days of immersive learning, expert advice and missional inspiration, including:

- Introductory training for people who are new to fresh expressions
- Advanced, strategic training for those who have already begun to pioneer new expressions of Church
- Immersive experiences that model what a fresh expression can look like
- Peer-level meetups to learn from others who have similar needs
- And much more!

Join us and catch the vision for a church that is filled with hope and anticipation as we journey into the mission landscape where God's Spirit beckons us.

Item #2

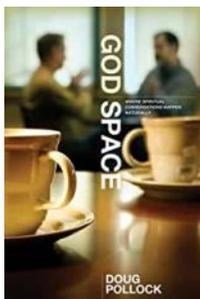
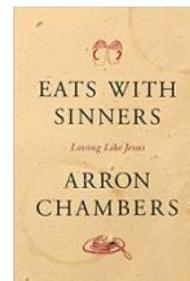
Good Reads that Prompt Kingdom Thinking

The following books are worth reading! They turn our attention toward our mission, "go and make disciples." These books are of greatest value when read with others—allowing the read to guide conversations which might become action.

Eats with Sinners: reading Hungry People Like Jesus Did

By Arron Chambers

- Notes that Jesus ate with real people.
- Discusses the power of eating together.
- Provides recipes.
- Challenges why we do what we do.



God Space: Where Spiritual Conversations Happen Naturally

By Doug Pollock

- Helps us think through how we speak with the unsaved.
- Discusses how to make these conversations take place.
- Great illustrations to consider.
- Humorous.

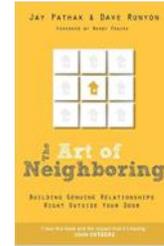
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Kingdom Extension Community

The Art of Neighboring: Building Genuine Relationships Right Outside Your Door

By Pathak & Runyan

We used to KNOW our neighbors.
Now we “might” know their names.
And we live radically different lives.
So—how do we connect?
This is a journey toward a plan.



Item #3

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 or 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?) are followed by hands-on workshops (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)

Contact Les Cool (717-951-8433 or revcool@ptd.net) for more information or to schedule an event for your church, district, or community (local congregations).





Looking to 2020



Tentative 2020 Summer Camp Schedule

	Dates	Camp	Camp Code	Age by Grade Completed	Director
Week 1	6/14-20	Adult Camp	AC	Varied	Rev. Paul Miller/ Rev. Gordon Lewis
Week 2	6/21-6/27	Elementary Igniters 1	EI 1	2-5	Rev. Rob Valentine/Amy McKelvey
		Science Camp	SC	5-9	Katie Logan/Hannah Smith
		Lotsa Love 1	LL 1	Varied	Stacie Boose/TBA
Week 3	6/28-7/4	Lotsa Love 2	LL 2	Varied	Tanner Cosgrave/Hannah Carr
		Family Camp	FC	Varied	Rachel Carpenter/Angela Hess
	6/28-7/1 or 7/1 -7/4	½ Week Family Camp	FC 2	Varied	Rachel Carpenter/Angela Hess
	6/28-7/1	Cook It Camp	CiC	5-8	Shay Steinman/TBA
	7/2-7/4	Young Adult Camp	YAC	18-25	TBA
Week 4	7/5-11	Junior High Journey 1	JHJ1	5-8	Rev. Jeff Berger/Kelly Beck
		On the Edge 1	OTE 1	305	Steve Metzgar
		On the Edge 2	OTE 2	5-8	Matt Logan
		On the Edge 3	OTE 3	9-12	Matt Logan
		Martial Arts 1	MA 1	2-5	Rev. Kirk Wolfe
		Martial Arts 2	MA 2	6-9	Rev. Kirk Wolfe
	7/8-11	My First Camp	MFC	1 st or first time 2 nd graders	Kolleen Long/Pam Bogoniewski
7/8-11	Father n'Son	FnS	Varied	TBA	
Week 5	07/12-18	CSI Camp	CSI	6-10	Rev. Kirk Wolfe
	07/12-18	Lotsa Love 3	LL 2	Varied	Josh Carr/Tim Carr
	07/12-18	Elementary Igniters 2	EI 2	2-5	Lois Matarazzi/Markie Rivera
Week 6	07/19-25	Senior High Stuff	SHS	9-12	Leadership Team
Week 7	7/26-8/1	Elementary Igniters 3	EI3	2-5	TBA
	7/26-7/29	Boys Camp	BC	2-5	Daniel Lindenmuth/David Lindenmuth
	7/29-8/1	Moms 'n' Gals	MnG	Varied	Cindy Raezer/Cheryl Klopp
Week 8	8/2-8/8	Junior High Journey 2	JHJ 2	5-8	Jeff Merwine/Kayla Heydt
		Lotsa Love 4	LL 4	Varied	Beth Kimbel
Weeks 7 & 8	7/26-8/8	Staff in Training Program(SIT)	SIT	Actual age 14-17	Shawn Fetterhoff/Rev. Sam Yeager
	By Arrangement	Staff in Training 2	SIT2	After completion of SIT	Shawn Fetterhoff



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



*Merry Christmas from the
Church Center Staff*

*Jodi Earhart
Kevin Henry
Bishop Bruce Hill
David King
Brenda Long*

*Shirley Long
Rev. Ted Rathman
Patricia Strain
Patricia Wolfe
Abigail Zimmerman*

December 2019

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT Day of Prayer for Kingdom Extension	2	3	4	5	6 Day of Prayer for the E.C. Church	7
8 SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT	9 Info for the January EC Leader is due	10	11	12	13 Health Insurance Due	14
15 THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT	16	17	18 Church Center Christmas Party	19	20	21
22 FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT Christmas Missionary Offering	23	24 CHRISTMAS EVE Church Center Closed	25 CHRISTMAS DAY Church Center Closed	26 Church Center Closed	27	28
29	30	31 NEW YEAR'S EVE Church Center Closed				

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

Christmas Missionary Offering to:
EC Church
100 W. Park Ave.
Myerstown, PA 17067
(designate: Christmas Missionary Offering)

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

January 2020

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>Ministry Funds to: EC Church 100 W. Park Ave. Myerstown, PA 17067</p>	<p>Insurance Payments to: Benefits Corp. 100 W. Park Ave. Myerstown, PA 17067</p>		<p>1 NEW YEAR'S DAY Stationing Request Deadline Church Center Closed</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3 Day of Prayer for the E.C. Church</p>	<p>4</p>
<p>5 EPIPHANY Day of Prayer for Kingdom Extension</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>7</p>	<p>8</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>11</p>
<p>12</p>	<p>13 Info for the February EC Leader is due</p>	<p>14</p>	<p>15 Health Insurance Due Pastoral Comp. Forms Due</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17 Twin Pines Winter Thaw-A</p>	<p>18</p>
<p>19</p>	<p>20 Prayer Mobilization Team Mtg</p>	<p>21</p>	<p>22</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24 2019 Annual Report Due</p>	<p>25</p>
<p>26 Twin Pines Winter Thaw-A</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p>	<p>29</p>	<p>30 Evangelical Seminary Board Mtg</p>	<p>31 Twin Pines Winter Thaw-B</p>	