

# EC LEADER

A publication of the Evangelical Congregational Church



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## FROM THE DESK

Bishop Randy Sizemore

## Hey Conference, Let's Conference!

I looked up the definition of our word, "conference," to discover it has a few slightly different uses. Three that stood out to me were:

1. *a formal meeting or event involving people with a shared interest*
2. *the association of various sports teams that engage with each other*
3. *a governing body of some churches*

All of the local E.C. Churches in the United States are incorporated into the National Conference of



## Speaking Schedule for 2024

Bishop Randy is now scheduling his 2024 preaching schedule.

If you would like to schedule him at your church, please contact Bishop Randy directly at [rsizemore@eccenter.com](mailto:rsizemore@eccenter.com).

continued...

## Hey Conference, Let's Conference!

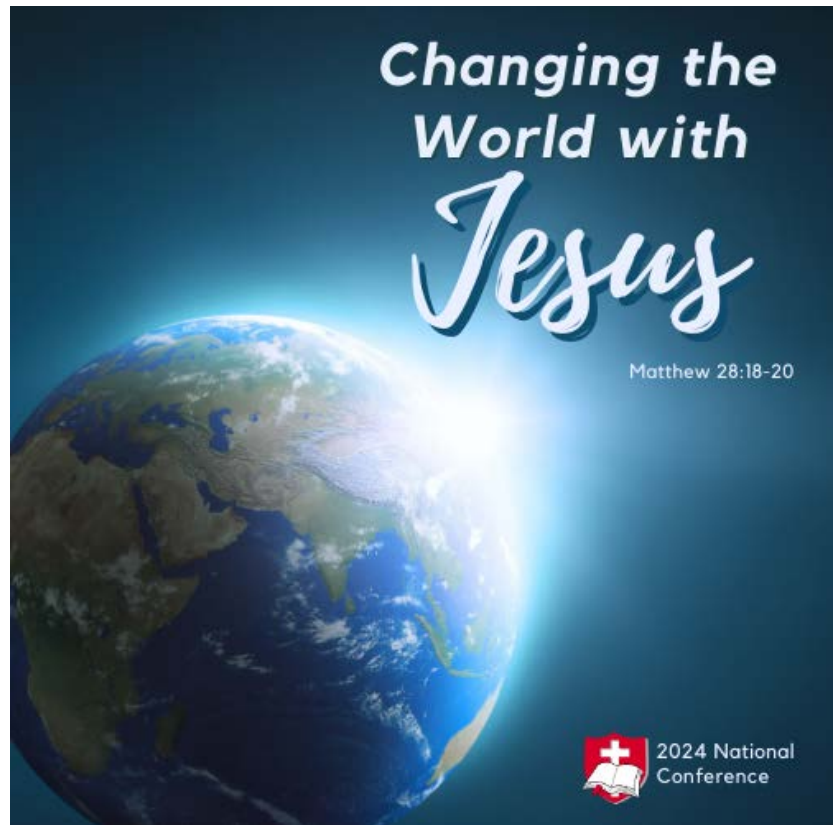
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the Evangelical Congregational Church. In our districts and regions and across the entire conference, we engage with one another, not in competition like rival sports teams, but in cooperation like a single team. Each year we set aside a few days in May to gather at Messiah University as the National Conference of the Evangelical Congregational Church in order to conference – that is, to do the governing work of the denomination and to engage with one another in worship, fellowship, prayer and learning opportunities. As a pastor, and member of this family we call the EC Church, I have always looked forward these gatherings to reconnect with brothers and sisters, to hear what God has been doing in and among us and to learn how I can help move us forward in our mission.

Continuing our focus on the EC Vision Statement, the theme for this year's National Conference gathering is ***"Changing the World with Jesus."***

Steve Addison reminds us that, ***"In simple terms, a movement is a group of people committed to changing the world."*** (Pioneering Movements, IVP 2015. p.15)

Jesus has commissioned us to join Him in changing the world, one person at a time, saying, ***"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*** (Matthew 28:18-20)



Before we get to this year's National Conference celebration on May 22-24, we will have the opportunity to ***"pre-conference."*** I will personally be hosting seven pre-conference meetings across our National Conference to share the theme and flow of our National Conference celebration at Messiah and to speak to and answer questions concerning the reports that will be shared during our National Conference gathering, including the Faith & Doctrine Committee's report on the issue of male/female ordination to the office of elder. Pastors, lay delegates and interested church members are welcome to attend. On the following page is a listing of the pre-conference dates, times and locations.

# FROM THE DESK

BISHOP RANDY SIZEMORE

*continued...*

## Hey Conference, Let's Conference!

*continued...*

**Allegheny District:** Sunday, April 28. 3:00PM at New Zion EC, Emlenton

**Buckeye District:** Monday, April 29. 6:30PM at Akron First EC, Ohio

**Midwest (formerly Illinois) District:** Thursday, May 2. 5:00PM at Dixon Bethel EC, Illinois

**Susquehanna Region:**

Thursday, May 9. 7:00PM at Reich's EC

Monday, May 13. 7:00PM at Mohn's Hill EC

**Delaware Region:**

Saturday, May 11. 9:00AM at Allentown Christ EC

Thursday, May 16. 7:00PM at Pitman Zion EC

I hope every pastor and lay delegate plans to attend this year's National Conference celebration at Messiah University as we continue to engage in our vision of becoming a dynamic movement of God.

Thanks for all you do!

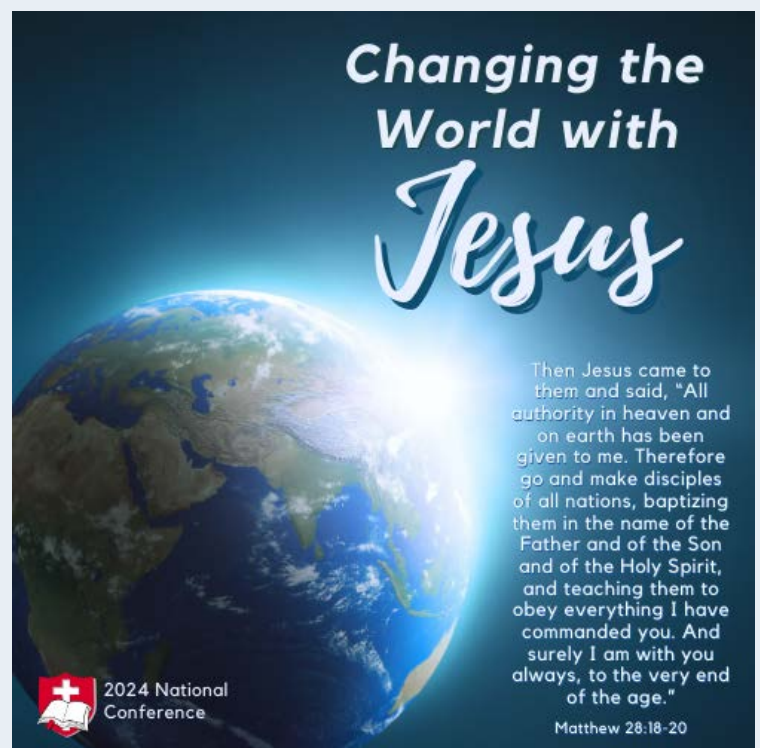
*Randy*

## National Conference Registration is now open!

To register, go to <https://eccenter.app.neoncrm.com/np/clients/eccenter/eventRegistration.jsp?event=15&>. Each attendee must register individually.

Please note, the registration is a bit different this year due to new software at EC Church Center. If you have any questions about the registration process, please do not hesitate to contact us at 717.866.7581.

Also, we still have on campus housing options available, but we also have reserved a block of rooms at two local hotels. If you are planning to stay at one of these hotels, please use the links in the conference [brochure](#) to reserve and pay for these rooms.





# NATIONAL CONFERENCE NEWS

## The Intimate Connection between Worship and Prayer, from your Prayer Mobilization Team

Bishop Randy Sizemore

The space where I meet with Jesus in the early morning hours has a Bible, a journal, a guide to prayer and two hymnals. Often while I am praying and reading scripture, the Holy Spirit brings songs to mind that I quietly sing back to God or write the lyrics in my journal as a prayer to God. Often, the lyrics and tune of that hymn continues my worship and prayer in the car on the drive to the office. Take a few minutes and listen to David and Edgar share how worship and prayer deepen our intimacy with God by clicking on the link below.

*Randy*

[PMT Video April 2024 - David Boose and Edgar Avalos](#)

**Also, don't forget our time of Worship and Prayer on  
Saturday, April 6 beginning at 9:30 AM at EC Church Center!**





**You Are Invited!**

The Prayer Mobilization Team invites you to an informal time of worship & prayer and a discussion of how we can encourage, engage and equip our congregations in prayer.

**When:** Saturday, April 6<sup>th</sup> 9:30 - \*noon-ish  
\* bring a bag lunch and we'll enjoy lunch together

**Where:** Church Center (100 West Park Avenue, Myerstown, PA)

RSVP to Bishop Randy at: [rsizemore@eccenter.com](mailto:rsizemore@eccenter.com)

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR NEWS KEVIN HENRY

**As always, please email:**

**Bethany White**  
**NC Administrative**  
**Assistant / Business**  
**Office and Benefits Corp**  
**Specialist**  
**[bwhite@eccenter.com](mailto:bwhite@eccenter.com)**

**Kevin Henry**  
**Executive Director**  
**[khenny@eccenter.com](mailto:khenny@eccenter.com)**

**with any questions**  
**or call**  
**717-866-7581**

Thanks to everyone for completing the workers compensation forms on a timely basis. The audit is currently in process, and we hope to have a final bill soon from Church Mutual. Like many insurance policies, I anticipate an increase in the worker's compensation premium. I am hoping the increase will be less than 10%, but I do not have much faith that it will be less than a 10% increase. We get questions from time to time on completing a workers' compensation claim. The process is not complicated, but it is confusing since claims are not filed often. Each church is responsible for filing their own claims at the time of the incident or shortly thereafter. The easiest method is to use Church Mutual's online claim reporting portal, [File a Claim | Church Mutual](#). Fill out the claim form with the best information available, the employer is the local EC church; each EC church is listed on the policy, and the policy number is 07-174436. Please call with any questions.

Churches in Ohio, Illinois and Kentucky are not included in the denominational workers compensation group policy. However, your individual state mandates workers compensation coverage. Please confirm that all employees of the church are covered by workers compensation insurance.

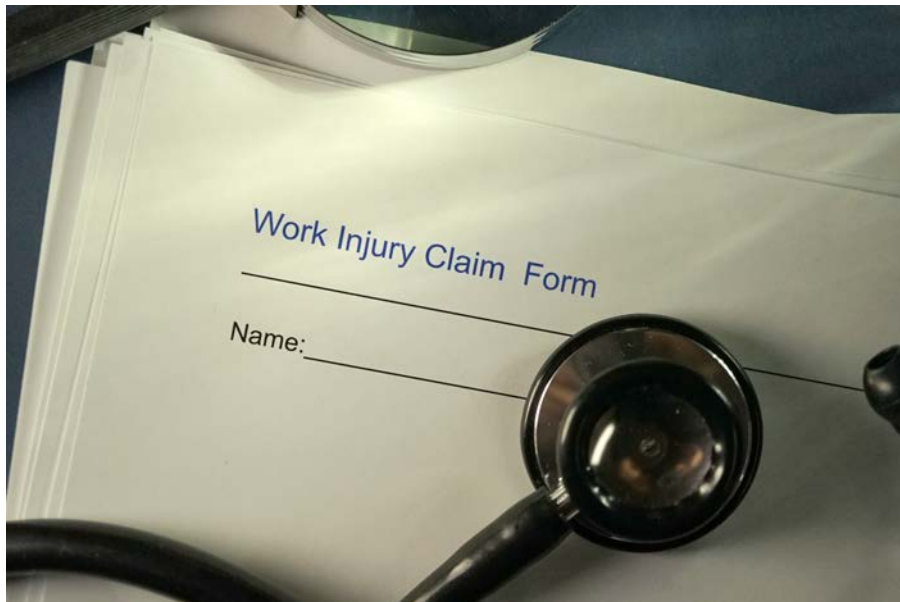
Per EC Benefits Corporation policy H.3.b, churches not covered by the denomination group workers compensation policy shall submit proof of workers compensation coverage by July 1 of each year. Please submit proof of your workers compensation coverage to:

EC Benefits  
100 W Park Ave  
Myerstown, PA 17067  
Or fax 717-866-7553 or email  
[bwhite@eccenter.com](mailto:bwhite@eccenter.com)

The annual disability premium was due January 15 and the Benefit Corporation administrative fee is due by April 15, 2024;

retirees are not subject to the administrative fee. Both of these fees are listed in the Treasurer's Guide available on the EC website. Many have remitted the disability fee in a timely manner, and a few have already submitted the administrative fee; we thank you for your diligence and hard work.

Treasurers, please confirm that you are remitting your ministry fund payments on the correct monthly form. Although, for 2024 the ministry fund percentage remained at 5.65%, it is easier on us to have the correct form submitted. We have implemented a process to accept ministry fund payments electronically. Electronic



# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR NEWS

KEVIN HENRY

continued...

As always, please email:

**Bethany White**  
NC Administrative  
Assistant / Business  
Office and Benefits Corp  
Specialist

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

**Kevin Henry**  
Executive Director  
[khenry@eccenter.com](mailto:khenry@eccenter.com)

with any questions  
or call  
**717-866-7581**

payments are not mandatory. If you are interested in remitting your ministry fund payments electronically please contact, Kevin Henry, [khenry@eccenter.com](mailto:khenry@eccenter.com). I can explain the process to you.

To date, about 60% of pastoral compensation forms have been returned. Thank you to all the churches that have responded. We will be reminding non-compliant churches to complete and submit their pastoral compensation forms. Please save Bethany White some work by submitting your pastoral compensation forms as soon as possible.

As always, please contact Kevin Henry, Executive Director, or Bethany White, EC Benefits Specialist, with any questions or problems, [khenry@eccenter.com](mailto:khenry@eccenter.com) or [bwhite@eccenter.com](mailto:bwhite@eccenter.com) or 717-866-7581.

Kevin Henry  
Executive Director  
[khenry@eccenter.com](mailto:khenry@eccenter.com) or 717-628-2171

## Interested in Remitting Ministry Fund Payments Online?

If you are interested in remitting your ministry fund payments online through our website via an ACH transfer, please watch this brief video (<https://youtu.be/ffRZbDUilk4>) which guides you through the process. If you need the form for the Direct Deposit Authorization, please contact Kevin Henry, Executive Director, [khenry@eccenter.com](mailto:khenry@eccenter.com) or 717-866-7581.





# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR NEWS KEVIN HENRY

continued...

**As always, please email:**

**Bethany White**  
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**Assistant / Business**  
**Office and Benefits Corp**  
**Specialist**  
**[bwhite@eccenter.com](mailto:bwhite@eccenter.com)**

**Kevin Henry**  
**Executive Director**  
**[khenry@eccenter.com](mailto:khenry@eccenter.com)**

**with any questions**  
**or call**  
**717-866-7581**

## Free Money Is Going Fast -

~~\$10,000~~ ~~\$8,000~~ ~~\$6,000~~ **\$5,000!**

We have once again partnered with the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) to offer Pastoral Financial Health and Church Generosity training. To encourage participation in the financial health training, a grant of ~~\$10,000~~ \$5,000 is available for cash gifts upon completion of a training module and the training is open to all paid pastoral or ministerial individuals employed by an EC Church. The pastor/minister may be full time or part time (no minimum hours), serve as the lead, senior, associate, assistant or youth pastor or serve in outreach or music ministry; these positions are all eligible to take the training and receive a cash gift. If you have completed the financial health training previously (2019 – 2021), you are not eligible to receive a second cash gift. The offer of a cash gift expires on December 31, 2024. The cash gifts are made available by the generosity, vision and ministry of the Lilly Endowment in partnership with the NAE.

To receive a \$250 cash gift, a pastor must complete one of the Pastoral Financial Health modules at, <https://naefinancialhealth.online/>. Scroll down the page and select "Create Account." On the next page, enter your information and from the drop-down box of participating denominations select us, Evangelical Congregational Church. On the next page select one module from the six session Personal Finances Course. Once the module is completed, I will receive an email that the class was completed and send the registered participant the financial gift.

A second \$250 grant will be awarded for the completion of a second module in the Personal Financial Health course. A maximum of \$500 in grants will be awarded per participant. Each training can be completed in 60 to 90 min, and these grants are tax free.

The \$250 grant is also available to a pastor that completes the Church Generosity training with their church leadership. The pastor and church leadership are required to complete the Church Generosity class together. The grant for completing the training is only available for the pastor and will be paid to the pastor. The maximum cash award is \$500 per pastor, and a combination of completed training between the Personal Finances Course and the Church Generosity training is allowed.

Please contact Kevin Henry, Executive Director, with any questions at (717) 628-2171 or [khenry@eccenter.com](mailto:khenry@eccenter.com).

Kevin Henry  
Executive Director  
[khenry@eccenter.com](mailto:khenry@eccenter.com) or 717-628-2171



## Church Health Community News

**FROM THE DESK**  
Rev. Wayne Houck, CHC Associate

### Four Tiers of Discipleship

Several years ago, Rev. Dr. Gary Kuehner put together a seminar for churches called Four Tiers of Discipleship (4TD for short). The concept is to encourage us to make disciples in the way that Jesus did. He spoke to great multitudes and had a smaller group of disciples in which He invested a great deal personally. He taught and mentored them over three years. He modeled the kind of ministry that they would then employ following His departure. Jesus also invited a small subset (Peter, James and John) into some opportunities beyond what the other nine experienced. Then John seems to think he is the Lord's favorite.

*Likewise, we are best involved in disciple-making when we are ministering to the crowd (Sunday morning services) and a small group (a life group, Bible study or Sunday School class) and then at the personal 1:2 or 1:1 level.*

Many of the churches we have been privileged to work with in the first few months of 2024 are struggling to establish the 1:2 and 1:1 culture in their congregation. There are a few reasons why establishing this repeatable pattern - making disciples who make disciples - can be helpful.

First, we are following the model that Jesus laid out for the church prior to the Great Commission. He effectively tells His disciples that after He had invested in them that they should go do the same. Making disciples is part of being disciples.

Secondly, many of our churches want to reach younger families. One of the most effective ways to do so is for pastors and lay leaders to disciple younger men and women. All the data suggests that younger families are looking for meaningful connections. They are less interested in being part of an audience or class than they are in the personal time we can offer them. Like the saying goes, they do not care how much you know until they know how much you care. If we want to reach and retain younger people, one of the best ways is to invite them for coffee or breakfast and offer them a regular meeting time for three, six or even 12 months so you can get to know each other, pray and study God's Word together. There are a lot of reliable resources we would be happy to recommend for your study time.



# Church Health Community News

## FROM THE DESK

Rev. Wayne Houck, CHC Associate  
*continued...*

## Four Tiers of Discipleship

*continued...*

Lastly, if our invitation is only to Sunday services we are likely to be competing for the time and attention of people with a better “show” than ours. Screens, activities and even online worship services cannot replace the intimacy of spending time with people and praying with them as you invest your heart in theirs. Netflix is not going to pray for them; the travel soccer team will not help them grow in sanctification; and a TV or internet preacher will not be there when their children get sick or their lives get tough. 2 Timothy 2:2 reads “The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” (NASB95) Imagine if half of the people in our churches were involved in making disciples who then faithfully made more disciples. We would be growing both deeper and numerically at the same time.

Let us help you find ways to move fellowship activities into opportunities for intentional discipleship. We can help you develop a plan to encourage your church to personally invite their community to meet and grow in relationship with Jesus (first) and your church (maybe). And we can provide some reliable resources for you to use. Together we can help you get started on the 4TD model. Imagine... it is quite possible that your church will not just grow but grow younger, too. Feel free to reach out to me by email at [waynehouck@gmail.com](mailto:waynehouck@gmail.com) anytime.





Global Ministries Community of the Evangelical Congregational Church



# You're Invited!

Join the Global Ministries Community at lunchtime on Thursday, May 23, 2024 during National Conference for

## GMC 2.0

### Helping the Local Church Be Dynamic

Where is God stirring you to go?

featuring



**Ted Rathman**  
Global Ministries  
Executive Director



**Valerie Schubert**  
EC Missionary - Honduras



**Dee Jaramillo**  
Global Ministries  
Deputy Director

Hear Valerie's first-hand report of what the Lord is doing in Honduras, and how you can nurture your passion for God, develop a missionary zeal to reach the lost, and how being on mission and on the field will exponentially grow your faith and the missional influence on those around you.

Ted and Dee will provide updates on how the GMC's vision and mission are influencing the local church and where God is stirring you to go!

*\*No special meal ticket required, simply make your way through the normal cafeteria line with your pre-purchased conference meal ticket, and join us in the Martin room - adjacent to Lottie Nelson Dining Hall.*



Global Ministries Community of the Evangelical Congregational Church



## ECC OCC Participation Report



|                               |     |
|-------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Mohn's Hill                | 140 |
| 2. Tamaqua                    | 297 |
| 3. Steelstown                 | 43  |
| 4. & 5. Pitman (2)*           | 390 |
| 6. Reich's                    | 267 |
| 7. Mohnton                    | 43  |
| 8. Palmyra                    | 43  |
| 9. Reedsville                 | 81  |
| 10. Whiting NJ                | 52  |
| 11. Clark's Valley            | 106 |
| 12. Reamstown                 | 142 |
| 13. Rothsville                | 27  |
| 14. Ephrata Christ's House    | 36  |
| 15. Plymouth Meeting          | 35  |
| 16. California                | 32  |
| 17. Chambers Hill             | 18  |
| 18. Wedgewood Park            | 42  |
| 19. Manbeck's Zion            | 96  |
| 20. York - Iglesia Christiana | 25  |
| 21. Lenhartsville             | 94  |
| 22. Sinking Spring*           | 616 |
| 23. Annville                  | 52  |
| 24. Conestoga*                |     |
| 25. Weiglestown St. David's   | 200 |

\* The two **Pitman** churches held a packing party and needed \$500 but actually collected \$650 and sent 14 Volunteers to the packing center.

\* **Sinking Spring** collected 365 boxes plus another 251 online for a total of 616. They also processed 19,559 boxes as a central drop off location for nine drop off locations, including CEC. Forty-two volunteers served 280 hours and sent four trucks to the processing center. Also, nine individuals went to Baltimore to serve at the processing center.

\* **Conestoga** did not pack boxes this year but sent \$200.

\* **Weiglestown St. David's** had 89 boxes packed by AWANA club kids and also processed 16,290 boxes as a central drop off location. A team from the church went to Baltimore to serve at the processing center.

A total of **2,877** boxes were collected that were reported to us, but we know that there may have been other EC churches that are not on this list because we did not receive a report from them. If your church participated in Operation Christmas Child and is not on this list, please let us know so that we can add your church's shoeboxes to the count and include your church on the list of participating EC churches.

Including the shoeboxes that were collected at our two EC churches that serve as central drop off locations, **38,726** shoeboxes were collected and sent from EC churches in 2023 (but with additional EC churches that collected boxes that are not included in this report, that number is most likely over 40,000).

If you need any help with resources for Operation Christmas Child, please go to [www.samartianspurse.org/occ](http://www.samartianspurse.org/occ) There you will find videos that you can download, promotional materials and many other resources all for free to download.

If you have any questions about how you can begin Operation Christmas Child in your church, please contact us. We are here to help to resource you in any way that we can.

Serving the Lord with you as we seek to change the world through Christ.

Blessings,

*Pastor Dan and Kim Blank*

[pastordblank@gmail.com](mailto:pastordblank@gmail.com)







# Kingdom Extension Community News

## FROM THE DESK

Rev. Tanner Cosgrave, Kingdom Extension Community Member

### Understanding Your Context

Early on in our denomination's history, when it was still the Evangelical Association, our dynamic movement of God grew from a small German group in Pennsylvania into an American denomination which spread across multiple states. From 1830 to 1850, it grew from 3,850 members and 34 preachers to 21,179 members and 195 preachers. By the end of that century, from 1875 to 1891, membership exploded from 54,981 to 150,234, and preachers increased from 391 to 1,227. Church planting initiatives in the United States were underway in California, Oregon, Texas, Colorado and Florida. Urban church planting initiatives were undertaken as well, and church planters were sent into the cities of Philadelphia, New York, Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Chicago, Buffalo and Indianapolis.

What can we attribute this success to? In one sense, the Evangelical Association was simply in the right place at the right time. America's population was booming, especially the German segment, and the Evangelical Association just so happened to mainly be concerned with ministering to Germans. However, to simply attribute success to this one fact would be to reduce the true nature of what was happening. The Spirit of God was at work, and when paired with the intentionality of the itinerant preachers, the young denomination found success. These preachers followed the German population west as they migrated, establishing congregations as they went. They also followed the movement of German neighborhoods as they moved to and through the cities. Simply put, they tracked the movements of people and moved with them, ministering as they went.

We may not be itinerant preachers anymore, but we can still track the movements of people! This is exactly what MissionInsite helps us to do. As pastors and church leaders, we all have a general sense of what is going on in our communities. Attending a school board meeting, reading a local newspaper or even overhearing a conversation at a local coffee shop are all ways in which we learn about our communities.

MissionInsite cannot replace the work of the Holy Spirit or the relationships we have with people near our churches. It is a tool that is meant to come alongside how the Spirit is already at work in your church and the existing relationships you already have with your community. MissionInsite might not make the decisions for you, but it can help to inform decisions or bolster existing ministries.

# Kingdom Extension Community News

## FROM THE DESK

Rev. Tanner Cosgrave, Kingdom Extension Community Member  
*continued...*

## Understanding Your Context

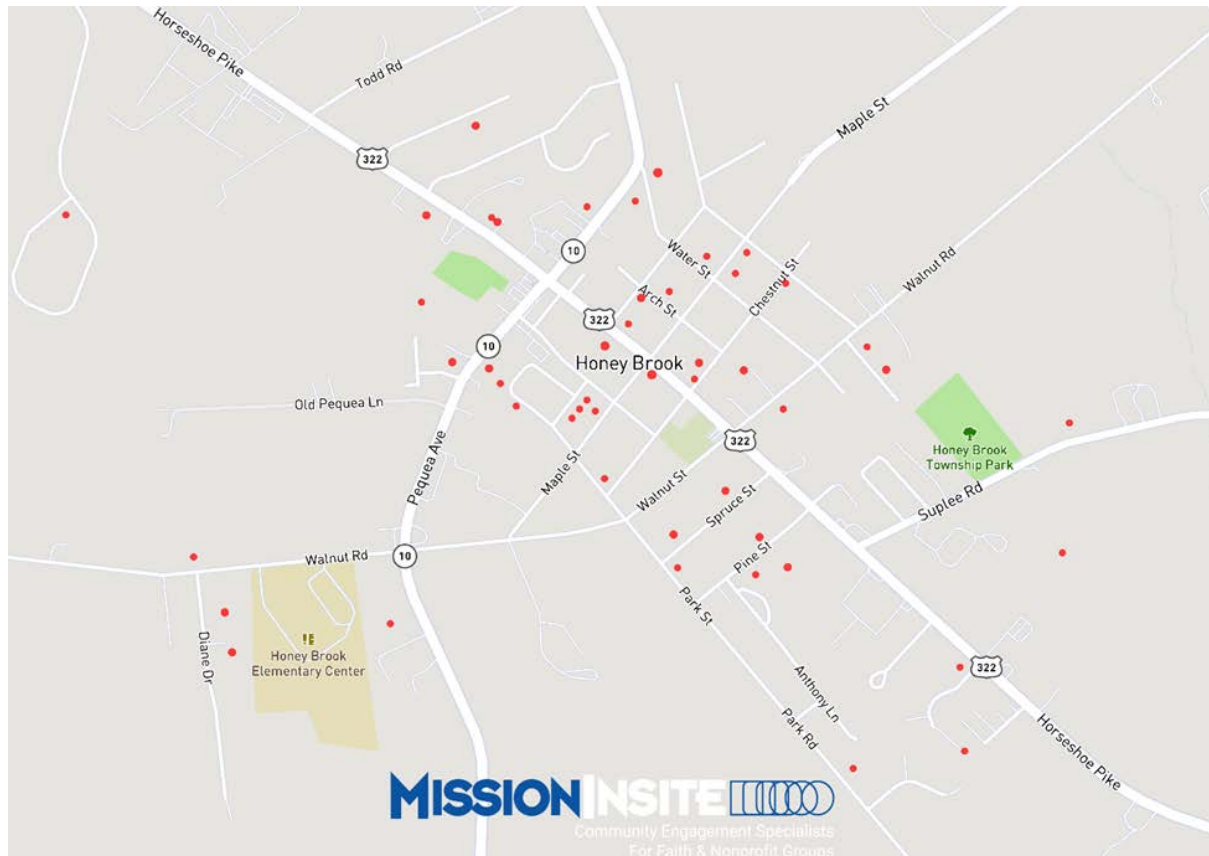
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MissionInsite helps us to answer four essential questions:

1. Who are we?
2. Who do we think our neighbors are?
3. Who are our neighbors?
4. How can we reach our neighbors?

MissionInsite goes even further beyond demographic reports and statistics. By uploading an address list of your church members, you get access to what MissionInsite calls the “Neighbor Center.”

In their recent book “The Great Dechurching,” authors Jim Davis and Michael Graham state that the number one reason why people are leaving the church today is simply because they move away. For several reasons, once they arrive in a new community they don’t get connected to a new church. Let’s say I, as a church leader, want to identify who these people are that are moving to my community and reach out to them. With MissionInsite’s Neighbor Center, I can see who has moved into my community over the past year. Each red dot on the map below is a household that is new to the community!



# Kingdom Extension Community News

## FROM THE DESK

Rev. Tanner Cosgrave, Kingdom Extension Community Member  
*continued...*

## Understanding Your Context

*continued...*

What our church does from there is up to us. It could be sending these people a care package, welcoming them to the neighborhood or inviting them to a church outreach event. Better yet, we could pass this information off to a member of our church who might live in the same neighborhood as they do! From here, we can use the information MissionInsite has given us and apply our relational and pastoral wisdom to form new connections and reach our communities!

If you are interested in learning more about how you can use MissionInsite free of cost to you or your church, email me at [tanner@californiaecchurch.com](mailto:tanner@californiaecchurch.com) to schedule a Zoom call.

Tanner



*Please continue to pray this month for the following new church planting opportunities that God is raising up:*

**Haitian Church Plant** – Chezaire and Laurel Dominique have begun meeting with a leadership team to pray and seek God’s vision for a Haitian church. Please pray as God continues to gather the planting team, He gives them a specific vision for the future and energizes them for this task. The team has a lead on a church building; pray that God works out the details for this possibility to become a reality. This planting team has begun to expand their search for where God would have them start to include the Lancaster, PA area as well.

**Manuel and Luz Arias in Lexington, South Carolina** – The Arias family is starting a new EC Church. Manuel and Luz are developing a team for ministry, as well as strategizing ways to share the Gospel in tangible ways. Please pray that God would provide a location for this church to use for worship gatherings. They recently found a very promising opportunity for a location to gather for worship. Pray also for wisdom, strength, and renewed energy for this couple.

**The Reams** – Tim and Pam Ream have moved to Thorn Hill, Tennessee. They are pursuing the opportunity to engage in planting an EC Church in their new community. Pray that God would begin preparing that community to be receptive to His glorious presence. Pray also for the Reams as they begin building relationships and engaging in discipleship relationships through inviting people into their home and engaging individuals in their community.

**Mike Coulson and People’s EC Church in the Virtual Space** – Echo, the name of this church that is meeting in the Virtual Space, is reaching people with the Gospel and making disciples. Pray that the team will continue to develop and grow. They are pursuing ways they can partner with other EC Churches in reaching people with the Gospel through the virtual space. People’s EC Church has also begun to pray about planting an EC Church in an unreached community near them. Pray for wisdom as they move forward with their research and planning.

**Zach and Kelsey Van Dyke** – Zach and Kelsey have begun planting a network of house churches in and around Davenport, Iowa. They are currently meeting with a group in their own home weekly and seeking God’s plan for their future. They are developing a vision for raising up house church shepherds and developing a discipleship and multiplication strategy. Please pray for Zach and Kelsey that God would give them wisdom as they follow Him while providing part-time shepherding to the Hooppole, Illinois EC Church.





## Ministerial Development Community News

### FROM THE DESK

Rev. Dr. Robert Santucci,  
Pastoral Care & Restoration Team Member

## Take Care!

We say it, sign our texts or emails with it, talk about it with others and may even preach about it. But do you really take care? It is essential for us to do so. God's Word even tells us so.

In October 2021, Rev. Dr. Gary Brown, Rev. Dr. Ken Schira and I presented A Vision for Member Care of EC Pastors To Encourage Their Own Self Care at the Conference Network Team Meeting. Portions of it are included in this article.

### THE GOAL STATEMENT

The goal of the pastoral health arm of the Ministerial Development Community is to develop and implement member care strategies which equip EC pastors toward caring for themselves, spiritually, physically, and emotionally.

### THE VISION STATEMENT

A Biblical View of Ministerial Member-Care Leading to Self-Care

**Paul to Timothy:** In his own version of "member care" of his ministry team, Paul says to Timothy, "Keep a close watch on yourself and on your teaching." (1 Timothy 4:16a) Paul nearly always worked in a team. The members are well known to us through his letters and Luke's description of their travels in Acts. He had earlier urged believers in Galatia to "bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2), emphasizing that we are our brothers' keepers in spiritual matters, sort of "member care" among members of a local congregation. The goal of this Biblical vision was self-care, as described in Galatians 6:5, "For each will have to bear his own load."

**Jonathan to David:** Perhaps Paul was remembering the special relationship between David and Jonathan in our previous passage. When David was running for his life from King Saul, Jonathan, David's friend and Saul's own son and heir, found David in hiding (1 Samuel 23:16). Jonathan "strengthened David's hand in God." On the strength of his encouragement, David went on to escape and gather a band of men around him. Years later, David was alone and under pressure from his own men, who had lost their families when David led them to help Israel defeat the Philistines. In 1 Samuel 30:6, we read how "David strengthened himself in the LORD his God."

This is an Old Testament model of the ongoing investment of resources by mission agencies, churches and other

# Ministerial Development Community News

## FROM THE DESK

Rev. Dr. Robert Santucci, Pastoral Care & Restoration Team Member

*continued...*

## Take Care!

*continued...*

mission organizations for the nurture and development of missionary personnel of "member care." David received encouragement from Jonathan who helped him care for himself when he was facing trouble alone.

At this moment as you read this article are you running on "E?" THE BIG QUESTION is how are you comforted today? Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 1:3-5, "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ."

Our objective as a member care team is to develop and implement a plan of care to reduce the presence of burnout and compassion fatigue in your lives and ours. What have been the signs of burnout in your life? Carl George said the following, "divert daily, withdraw weekly, and abandon annually." To divert daily is to do something that is not work-related everyday; do something that relaxes you. Then you withdraw weekly. The Bible says every seven days you take a day off. Abandon annually means you just go out and forget it all.

The theologian Frederick Buechner said the following, "the place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet." (Wishful Thinking, pg.95.) What are the ways our work may affect us? The following are symptoms of stress: teeth grinding, skin problems, sleep problems, headaches, diarrhea, constipation, back pain, chest pain, clenched jaw, upset stomach, weight gain or loss and high blood pressure.

So how is burnout defined?

- Emotional exhaustion - feeling overextended and overwhelmed
- Depersonalization - unfeeling responses and though achieving personal accomplishment, still feeling ineffective
- Compassion fatigue is referred to as the cost of caring for others and includes exhaustion, an inability to refuel and the loss of ability to feel compassion.

Additional signs and symptoms are being more tired, less socializing and productivity, hypertension, despair, cynicism, persistent anger, sadness and anxiety.

Self-care strategies include: whom can I trust to tell when I am feeling over overwhelmed? What are my resources? Our own Pastoral Care brochure is very helpful.

Books on self-care include Clergy Self Care, Finding A Balance For Effective Ministry, by Roy Oswald, Walking Through The Valley, by Robert Randall, The Right Road by Dr. Gwen Halaas, Clergy Burnout by Fred Lehr and Spiritual Wholeness For Clergy, by Donald Hands and Wayne Fehr.

Guidelines for successful self-care are sharing your feelings with someone such as your district field director, make your day(s) off sacred and thou shalt go on vacation. You can strive for self-management by determining when you will not preach. Do you have supportive supervision at your church through your Pastoral Relations Committee? What is their feedback for you? What or who grounds you? You must ground yourself vertically or you will shop horizontally for your identity.

# Ministerial Development Community News

## FROM THE DESK

Rev. Dr. Robert Santucci, Pastoral Care & Restoration Team Member  
*continued...*

### Take Care!

*continued...*

Steven Covey states the following about time management: "What is urgent and important? What is urgent and not important? What is important and not urgent? What is neither urgent or important?"

#### **An EC Church View of Member-Care Leading to Personal Self-Care.**

Borrowed from the World Missions usage of the term "member-care," this definition, although broader in scope, expresses the values of an evangelical view of member-care. The Evangelical Alliance Mission (TEAM) definition of member-care is "the ongoing investment of resources by mission agencies, churches and other mission organizations for the nurture and development of missionary personnel."

**A possible revised view of member-care/self-care:** The ongoing investment of resources shared denominationally through the District Field Directors (DFD's), and driven by the Evangelical Congregational Church, for the pastoral development of self-care, and toward a movement of healthy pastors, churches and their varied ministries.

**Our Rationale:** The itinerancy is defined by the Evangelical Congregational Church as a "self-disciplining body of ordained elders" (2016 EC Discipline, paragraph 514). Pastors (DFDs) help local pastors to help themselves. Member-care encourages self-care. District Field Directors can be effective in this way by developing strategies that deliver member care services.

The outcome of producing a culture of pastors healthy enough and supported enough to care for themselves in their ministries is a connectional biproduct of member/self-care.

#### **Healthy Pastors: An Emerging Picture of Member-Care**

A brainstorming session with the Conference Network Team in October 2020 described what the field directors were currently doing to maintain healthy pastors in their districts. This created a picture of how these men were presently caring for their pastors. Picture if you will a DFD meeting regularly, one-on-one and in groups, to let the pastors talk. This has helped pastors feel connected and not alone.

Lay delegates are also brought into the loop of caring for their own pastors. The local district fellowships of EC Church pastors meet regularly. This provides a place for pastors to be vulnerable. Study days on relevant topics are scheduled, enriching those who participate. Good questions are asked to help bring about creative thinking and problem-solving. The Field Directors, pastors themselves, "are not seen as threats but as partners with fellow pastors in their local ministries."

Pastors benefit from a culture of encouragement. Pastors' wives find fellowship and friendship among each other. Pastoral families have a sense that the EC church cares about them. (Where deemed appropriate, referrals are made to professional counselors. EC Care funds help pay for needed counseling.)

#### **A Picture of a Preferred Future**

Because it is difficult to give others what you do not have yourself the sabbath principle is better encouraged. Pastors are asked by their Pastoral Relation Committees (PRC) when and how they take their weekly days off.



# Ministerial Development Community News

## FROM THE DESK

Rev. Dr. Robert Santucci, Pastoral Care & Restoration Team Member

*continued...*

## Take Care!

*continued...*

Generous vacations are offered to pastors and their families. Intentional sabbaticals are regularly sought and practiced among our pastors, resulting in fresh leadership in the churches.

The above are both activities that are currently done to deliver care for members as well as dreams of what it could look like among us. These are visions of a preferred future, to be delivered by the denomination to the men who lead our congregations, who in turn are safe places for the lost to be found by Christ.

Take Care!

Rev. Dr. Robert Santucci, D. Min., BCC  
District Field Director Penn Jersey District



## INSTITUTE FOR CHURCH LEADERSHIP

Rev. Adam Roberts, ICL Director

The EC Church's Institute for Church Leadership is alive and well! Rev. Dr. Tim Valentino will soon be wrapping up our Preaching course, and our next course, Theology 1, begins on April 2. Rev. Dan Blank and Rev. Tanner Cosgrave will co-teach, equipping students to understand and practice the doctrines of our faith by presenting a gospel-centered theology. This course will be helpful, not just for pastors, but for lay leaders and church members of every variety. Information on how to register is below.

The ICL (Institute for Church Leadership) offers a series of courses in Bible, theology, spiritual formation, the mission of the Kingdom, church history and more. Anyone can benefit from these opportunities for spiritual enrichment and leadership development. Courses do not have any educational prerequisites and do not earn seminary credit. Classes are affordable as students and auditors will pay a one-time fee per class of \$250 and \$50, respectively.

If you are interested in learning more about what the ICL has to offer you and your church, go to: <https://mdc.eccenter.com/institute-for-church-leadership/>. If you have any interest in or questions about our ICL, I would love to talk to you! Reach out to me at [aproberts563@gmail.com](mailto:aproberts563@gmail.com).

**Our next ICL course:** *Theology 1*

**Instructors:** *Rev. Dan Blank and Rev. Tanner Cosgrave*

**Dates and times for classes are:** *April 2 to May 7, 2024 (Tuesdays 7:00PM - 9:30PM)*

**Course description:** The ICL Theology 1 course will equip students to understand and practice the doctrines of our faith by presenting a gospel-centered theology that is robust, accessible and grounded. Students will engage with key doctrines of evangelical faith including the EC Articles of Faith.

To register, go to <https://mdc.eccenter.com/institute-for-church-leadership/>.

# Ministerial Development Community News

## CHAPLAINCY CORNER

Rev. W. Joel Copeland, Jr., Chaplaincy Committee Chair

### Prayer Focus on our Heroes - Our Chaplains

Starting this month the EC Leader will contain a short focus on one of our Chaplains for whom you can pray specifically that month. We should be familiar with our military chaplains: Lt. Col. Joshua Metz (U.S. Army) and Lt. Col. K. Noel Blancaflor (U. S. Air Force). The other one of our EC Chaplains whom most of you know is Chaplain Dana Logan at the Stoneridge Retirement Home. Hopefully, we all remember to pray for them regularly as they minister in their respective communities. The EC Church, however, has many of our ministers serving as volunteer community chaplains. In the coming months, we would like to introduce you to some of them and the work they do. As we introduce their chaplaincy work, we will also give you a few items you can focus on as you pray for that particular individual.

Our chaplaincy prayer focus for April is Rev. Donald Howell who is pastoring in Clarks Mills, PA, a very rural area. Besides his pastoral work, he freely gives of himself and his time to the community and denomination. For many years he served on the old Conference Selection Board. He has served as Chaplain of the Amboy Fire Dept. (25 years). In addition, he has served the KSB Hospice (26 years) and KSB Hospital as Chaplain on Call (27 years). Although he has recently cut back on some of his responsibilities, he currently serves as the community chaplain and still takes occasional on call in the hospital and also for funeral homes. This month please pray specifically for the following for our Chaplain of the Month, Rev. Donald Howell:



1. Pray that the Lord will minister spiritually to Rev. Howell so that he will have the inner resources to minister to those to whom he is called to support in a time of crises.
2. Pray that the Lord will minister through him to hurting and grieving families and that the Lord will bring comfort and draw these families to Himself through Rev. Howell.
3. Pray that all of our EC Chaplains will never forget their primary responsibility is to make Christ known.
4. Finally, praise the Lord that Rev. Howell and the many other EC pastors who are willing to serve beyond their local charges and to be available to minister to those suffering physically and spiritually.

We recently asked each pastor to fill out a form regarding any of their chaplaincy service that they are currently or have given in the past, if any, so we will know the work our pastors are doing in this area. We have had some pastors respond to this request, but I know that a lot more of our men have given and are giving of themselves and their services. Please fill out the form and mail it to me if you have any chaplaincy service whether full or part-time, military or civilian / community, paid or volunteer. If you have misplaced the form, email me, and I will send another digital copy. We do appreciate your service in this area and want to know about it and recognize it as we are able!

Rev. W. Joel Copeland, Jr., D.Min.  
EC Endorser and Chaplaincy Committee Chair  
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# Twin Pines Update:



## 60th Anniversary Open House!

**June 1st 2024**

Join us for a 60th Anniversary Open House! If you were ever a camper, summer staff, fulltime staff, retreat guest, or just want a fun filled day at Twin Pines be sure to visit on June 1st!

Activities begin at 10 am. and run through 4 pm.

Overnight accommodations are available both Friday night and Saturday night with a continental breakfast. \$45.00 per room.(limit 6 people per room)

For more information or to book a room:

call: 570-629-2411 or email [OpenHouse@twinpines.org](mailto:OpenHouse@twinpines.org)

## For Ladies Only!

**May 14-16th 2024**

An exciting mid-week retreat "for ladies only." Come enjoy fellowship, worship, and in-depth Bible learning as the retreat looks at what it means to be a woman of God.

Register via the "register now" button at the bottom of [www.TwinPines.org](http://www.TwinPines.org)

For more information or the paper registration form, send an email to:

[Jonah@twinpines.org](mailto:Jonah@twinpines.org) or call the office 570-629-2411.

## We want to work with You!

Would you like us to come present at your church? Would you like materials to include in your Sunday bulletins or in your church newsletter? Reach out to us and let us know!

Email: [Shawn@twinpines.org](mailto:Shawn@twinpines.org) or call the office 570-629-2411





# CALENDAR

## APRIL 2024

### Monday, April 1

EC Church Center Closed

### Wednesday, April 3

Day of Prayer for the EC Church

### Saturday, April 6

A Morning of Prayer & Planning with the PMT

### Sunday, April 7

Day of Prayer for Kingdom Extension

Liturgical Color - White

### Sunday, April 14

Liturgical Color - White

### Sunday, April 21

Liturgical Color - White

### Friday, April 26

Episcopacy Meeting

### Sunday, April 28

Pre-Conference Meeting - Allegheny District

Liturgical Color - White

### Monday, April 29

Pre-Conference Meeting - Buckeye District

## MAY 2024

### Wednesday, May 1

Day of Prayer for the EC Church

### Thursday, May 2

National Day of Prayer

Pre-Conference Meeting - Midwest (formerly Illinois) District

### Sunday, May 5

Day of Prayer for Kingdom Extension

Liturgical Color - White

### Thursday, May 9

Ascension Day

Pre-Conference Meeting - Susquehanna Region

### Saturday, May 11

Pre-Conference Meeting - Delaware Region

### Sunday, May 12

Mother's Day

Mother's Day Offering \*

Liturgical Color - White

### Monday, May 13

Pre-Conference Meeting - Susquehanna Region

### Thursday, May 16

Pre-Conference Meeting - Delaware Region

### Sunday, May 19

Pentecost

Liturgical Color - Red

### Wednesday - Friday, May 22 - 24

2024 National Conference

### Sunday, May 26

Liturgical Color - White

### Monday, May 27

Memorial Day

EC Church Center Closed

### **Ministry Funds and Insurance & Benefits:**

#### **Mail to:**

**EC Church Center  
100 W. Park Ave.  
Myerstown, PA 17067**

#### **Mother's Day Offering:**

#### **Mail to:**

**StoneRidge Retirement Living  
440 E. Lincoln Avenue  
Myerstown, PA 17067**

(\*Mother's Day Offering - designate in memo line)





## A Dynamic Movement of God

The Evangelical Congregational Church will be a **dynamic movement** of God 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.

Evangelical Congregational Church Center  
100 West Park Avenue, Myerstown, PA 17067  
717-866-7581

[office@eccenter.com](mailto:office@eccenter.com) / [www.eccenter.com](http://www.eccenter.com)

Office Hours: Monday - Thursday  
8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.



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April 2024 Edition - Editor/Art Design

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