



December 2021

## From the desk of Bishop Bruce Hill

Snow! I think many people who don't like snow secretly hope that there's at least a little snow on Christmas morning. The world changes under a layer of snow: everything looks so clean, so pure. A new layer of snow *looks* pure, but if you really study it, and if you melt that snow, you'll discover that it carries many impurities.

Purity is a difficult concept for us. God's holiness is hard to understand because nothing in this world is completely pure. Hospital operating rooms, and the "clean rooms" where computer components are made, are certainly purer than the outside world, but there is no way they can be made completely pure.

A.W. Tozer wrote,

*"We cannot grasp the true meaning of divine holiness.  
[Humanity] may fear God's power and admire his wisdom,  
but his holiness, we can never even imagine."*

Some try to describe the holiness of God as an "otherness:" He is so different than anything we know or experience. When God spoke to His people through the prophet Hosea He said, "*I am the Holy One living among you.*" (Hosea 11:9) God is holy, pure, perfect; that is His character, and it says everything about Him. His love is perfect, His grace is perfect, His peace is perfect, His thinking is perfect; everything about God is perfect. His actions are perfect even when we don't understand them.

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# From the desk....

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Christmas reminds us of the difficulty we have in understanding the work of a holy God. The prophecies had been given; the Anointed One of Israel would come to set the people free. But over the years the people lost hope because they could not understand the action, or lack of it, by a holy God. Then, at the right time, God sent his One and only Son, Jesus. The world was confounded by the actions of the perfect God. They were not looking for a poor little baby born in a stable and laid in a manger. They weren't prepared for a carpenter to be the Messiah. They couldn't understand a Savior who had to die. But it was all God's perfect plan and will.

So, what does God's holiness mean to you and me today? Maybe today is one of those times when we don't know what God is doing and wonder if He is doing anything. The temptation is always there, then, to play God and come up with a solution and tell God how to put it in practice. But our solutions don't come close to God's holy and perfect will. The advent of Jesus and the holiness of God remind us that God knows what He's doing; He is holy. May His holiness give us confidence in what He is doing in our lives at Christmas and throughout the coming New Year!

Merry Christmas!

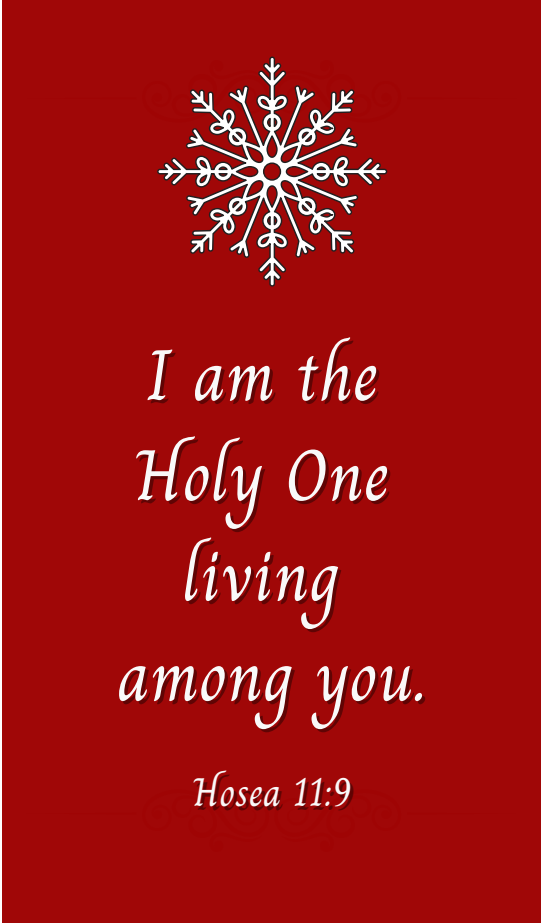
  
Rev. Bruce D. Hill  
Bishop



## **AS A REMINDER! - Status Changes & Stationing Assignment Changes**

**January 1** is just around the corner, and is an important date for lots of reasons. One of the reasons is that according to our National Conference Rules, pastors are to notify the Bishop or Jeff Byerly, Ministerial Development Associate, in writing, if they are requesting a *change in their status due to retirement or superannuation*.

**January 1** is also the deadline for pastors and congregations who are requesting a *change in their stationing assignment*. In this case, all requests for a change in stationing must be made in writing to the Bishop. This is vital for the Stationing Committee as they meet in January to begin their work of identifying pastors and congregations who can fit and flourish in ministry. If you have questions about either of these issues, please contact the Bishop at Church Center.



*I am the  
Holy One  
living  
among you.*

*Hosea 11:9*





## The Bishop's Top Ten Prayer & Praise

- 1 PRAY FOR THE MANY FAMILIES WHO ARE OBSERVING THEIR FIRST HOLIDAYS WITHOUT A FAMILY MEMBER WHO HAS DIED DURING THE LAST YEAR.
  - 2 DURING THIS TIME OF CHRISTMAS BUSYNESS ASK THE LORD TO HELP YOU TO REMEMBER THE REALLY GOOD NEWS; THAT A SAVIOR, JESUS, CAME TO EARTH FOR US.
  - 3 PRAY FOR OUR INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES AND MISSIONARIES AS THEY CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS IN MANY CULTURES THAT ARE NOT OPEN TO THE GOSPEL.
  - 4 PRAY FOR BISHOP-ELECT RANDY SIZEMORE AS HE WORKS ON THE THEME AND AGENDA FOR NATIONAL CONFERENCE. (MAY 25-27, 2022)
  - 5 ASK THE LORD TO KEEP ALL OUR FRIENDS AND FAMILIES HEALTHY THIS HOLIDAY AND WINTER SEASON.  
1 JOHN 2:3,5
  - 6 THANK THE LORD FOR HIS WONDERFUL GIFT OF SALVATION, MERCY AND GRACE THROUGH THE GIFT OF JESUS.
  - 7 PRAISE THE LORD FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO SHARE THE TRUTH OF THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS DURING THIS SEASON.
  - 8 THANK THE LORD FOR THE ASSURANCE THAT HE IS WITH US EVEN WHEN THE STORMS OF LIFE ARE ALL AROUND US.
  - 9 PRAISE GOD FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO COME TOGETHER WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS TO CELEBRATE THE BIRTH OF JESUS, THE GREATEST GIFT.
- \*\*IF YOU DON'T LIKE HUNTING, STOP HERE.\*\**
- 10 PRAISE THE LORD THAT I WAS ABLE TO HARVEST A 9-POINT BUCK IN ARCHERY SEASON.





# News from Executive Director

**Kevin Henry**

Executive Director

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Benefits Administrator

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## Year-end Reminders

- Pastor Compensation Forms should be returned to David King, Benefits Administrator, by **January 14, 2022**.
- Annual Statistical Report is due to EC Church Center: 100 W Park Ave, Myerstown, PA 17067, by **January 25, 2022**.
- W-2 forms for employees (including pastors), and 1099-NEC forms for independent contractors, are due by **January 31, 2022** to the recipient and to the respective government agency. The 1099-NEC is a new form, replacing the 1099-MISC in most instances for churches, payments made during 2021, to be filed by **January 31, 2022**. *Pastors are employees of the local church and should receive a W-2 with federal, state and local taxes withheld from every paycheck.*

## EC Benefits Service Fee

Please remember the EC Benefits service fee is \$125/year and due by **March 15, 2022**. The service fee offsets the cost of the annual financial audit, directors' and 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 are updated and posted on the website.

## Health Insurance

The rates for the active pastor health insurance plan will not increase on January 1, 2022 (premium due Dec. 15, 2020).

The health insurance rates are:

|                       |         |
|-----------------------|---------|
| Family                | \$2,297 |
| Employee w/child(ren) | \$1,741 |
| Couple                | \$1,844 |
| Single                | \$870   |

Please see the website, [www.eccenter.com](http://www.eccenter.com), for additional information.

The HRA plan year ends on December 31, 2021 and all requests for reimbursement for the July 2021 - December 2021 plan year must be received by Benecon, our HRA administrator, by March 31, 2022, (ninety days after the end of the plan year.) This is an HRA rule regardless of the insurance carrier. Reimbursements received after December 29 will not be paid. No exceptions.





### Highmark Freedom Blue

The retiree Medicare supplemental plan, Highmark Freedom Blue, is increasing by \$6/mon to \$255 per person per month, effective January 1, 2022, with no changes in coverage levels.

*Cost Sharing Amounts for 2022 (single policy)*

*Year of Medicare Eligibility Current January 1, 2022*

*2005 or before \$249.00 \$255.00*

*2006 \$249.00 \$255.00*

*2007 \$249.00 \$255.00*

*2008 \$249.00 \$255.00*

*2009 and after \$249.00 \$255.00*

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

The open enrollment period for the Highmark Freedom Blue plan is from October 15, 2021 through December 7, 2021. Retirees enrolled in another Medicare supplemental plan, or not in a Medicare supplemental plan, may join the Freedom Blue plan only during the open enrollment period. The open enrollment period does not affect pastors that plan on retiring after December 7, 2021. Medicare eligible pastors may join Freedom Blue at the time they superannuate from pastoral service.

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 a 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.

### Manna Fund

The Manna Fund was established to assist our retired clergy and surviving spouses with financial needs. The income limits to qualify for a Manna Fund distribution were recently changed to 200% of the federal poverty level as defined by the US Department of Health and Human Services. The 2021 Manna Fund income limits are \$25,720 for a single and \$34,840 for a couple. If you are aware of any of our retired clergy or surviving spouses that could benefit from a Manna Fund distribution, please encourage them to complete an application for assistance. Manna Fund applications are mailed to retired clergy and surviving spouses in April, and an application can also be received from the Benefits Administrator at EC Church Center.



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

  
Kevin Henry  
Executive Director

  
Dave King  
Benefits Administrator



# Global Ministries Community

**Tomoyuki & Jessica Abe**  
*Overseas Missionary Fellowship  
France*



Celebrating the work and ministries of these missionaries and international church leaders and the Great News of Christ being shared around the world!

*"Again he said, peace be with you.  
As the Father has sent me,  
so I am sending you."*

John 20:21



**Gene & Bethanie Stevenson**  
*Dove Mission International  
Arizona*

Facilitating Mission Workers  
Empowering National Churches  
Engaging the Local Church

**Rev. J. Ted Rathman**  
*GMC Associate*

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**Randy & Chrisanne Amberman**  
*World Gospel Mission  
New Mexico*



**EC Church of Nepal (ECCN)**  
**Rev. Th. & Mercy Janga**  
*Dharan, Nepal*







## **KINGDOM EXTENSION COMMUNITY NEWS**

**Pastors and Team Leaders . . . plan now for early 2022 teaching-learning experiences.  
Contact Les Cool at 717-951-8433 or revlescool@gmail.com to arrange for a training event.**

### **The Art of Neighboring: Connecting with our Local Communities**

This hands-on workshop is designed to help you explore how to identify points of intersection between the DNA of 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.



### **Preparing New Leaders and Developing Your Team**

Most days you just need somebody to do that thing or to serve in that role. Why? The job must get done. Or at least, that’s the theory. But the reality is that the right person in the right role for the right reason will not only get the job done; they will also thrive. That means they will continue to serve long after the job is done. How do you know who is best for which role? You start with helping your leaders, potential and existing, identify their spiritual gifts and personality. Add gift development, and they are ready to deploy into long-term ministry roles! A Leadership Grip or Grip-Birkman workshop would provide insights on building a better church leadership team, as well as help you equip your congregation for powerful ministries. And save someone from burnout!



***Need help turning a good idea or a recent training experience into action and meaningful ministry? The KEC would like to help you realize more out of your ideas and training. Let’s talk. Maybe a coach is what you need.***

### **Coaching Toward a New Tomorrow**

Great ideas sometimes need coaching support in order for you to hit the target.



Coaching keeps you on task, and enables you to play at the top of your game. Coaching enables you to achieve more. Let’s talk! The Kingdom Extension Community (KEC) would like to partner with you (pastor) or your leadership team or congregation to make sure your next great idea becomes your next ministry success. The KEC would like to help pay for up to six months of coaching attached to training and a new ministry that is missional or Kingdom focused. That is, we would like to pay for coaching designed to help you make use of new learning that moves you and your church family out of the building to develop a ministry not attached to what happens in your sanctuary. What might that look like? A church plant. A dinner church. A fresh expression of church. This is about creating a ministry that didn’t exist for people not yet reached. Interested?



# What's Happening @ Twin Pines



Winter Thaw - A  
January 14-16  
Rev. Jeff Berger

Winter Thaw - B  
January 28-30  
Rev. Dr. Brett Jenkins

Winter Thaw - C  
February 11-13  
Jason Hummel

Winter Thaw - D  
February 25-27  
Eli Tyler

bit.ly/WT2022

twinpines.org



### NEW!

#### Adult Retreat - April 1-3, 2022

Getaway to the mountains for a weekend and enjoy a time away from usual daily interruptions. More details in the coming months. Reserve the dates now to attend.

#### Spring Fling Children's Retreat

April 22-24, 2022

A weekend retreat focused on those currently in grades 3-5. Enjoy Twin Pines in the spring and get ready for the summer. Participating groups must provide chaperones for the weekend.



APPLICATION  
FOR  
Twin Pines Summer Staff  
2022



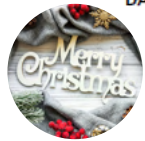
**TWIN  
PINES**  
CAMP, CONFERENCE  
& RETREAT CENTER

Camp, Conference, and Retreat Center  
3000 Twin Pines Camp Road • Stroudsburg, PA 18350  
Phone • 610-629-2612 • Fax • 610-629-0988 • Email • [info@twinpines.org](mailto:info@twinpines.org)

The 2022 application to be on Twin Pines Summer Staff is now available at [bit.ly/2022tpcapp](http://bit.ly/2022tpcapp). People are needed to be counselors, kitchen help, life-guards, and fill other roles of ministry for eight weeks so people of all ages can have an experience with Jesus.




# December

| SUNDAY  | MONDAY   | TUESDAY  | WEDNESDAY                           | THURSDAY                   | FRIDAY                                       | SATURDAY   |
|---|--|--|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|--|--|
| Ministry Fund to:<br>E.C. Church<br>100 W. Park Ave.<br>Myerstown, PA 17067             | Insurance Payment to:<br>Benefits Corporation<br>100 W. Park Ave.<br>Myerstown, PA 17067 | Christmas Missionary Offering to:<br>E.C. Church<br>100 W. Park Ave.<br>Myerstown, PA 17067<br><i>(designate: Christmas Missionary Offering)</i> | 1                                   | 2                          | 3  | 4  |
| SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT<br><br><i>Day of Prayer for Kingdom Extension</i><br><br>Violet | 6  | 7  | 8                                   | 9                          | 10   | 11   |
| THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT<br><br>Violet  | 13   | 14   | 15<br>Health Insurance Due          | 16                         | 17   | 18   |
| FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT<br><i>Christmas Missionary Offering</i><br><br>Violet           | 20<br>EC Leader deadline   | 21<br>Loan & Investment Committee Mtg.   | 22<br>Church Center Closing at Noon | 23<br>Church Center Closed | 24<br>CHRISTMAS EVE<br>Church Center Closed  | 25<br>CHRISTMAS DAY<br> |
| 26<br><br>White   | 27<br>Church Center Closed   | 28   | 29                                  | 30                         | 31<br>NEW YEAR'S EVE<br>Church Center Closed |  |



# January



| SUNDAY  | MONDAY                        | TUESDAY  | WEDNESDAY                            | THURSDAY  | FRIDAY                                     | SATURDAY  |                                    |
|---|-------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|---|--|---|------------------------------------|
| Ministry Fund to:<br>E.C. Church Center<br>100 W. Park Ave.<br>Myerstown, PA 17067      |                               | Insurance Payment to:<br>Benefits Corporation<br>100 W. Park Ave.<br>Myerstown, PA 17067 |                                      |  |  | 1 <b>NEW YEAR'S DAY</b><br><br>Stationing Request<br>Deadline |                                    |
| 2 <b>EPIPHANY SUNDAY</b><br><br><i>Day of Prayer for Kingdom Extension</i><br><br>White | 3 <b>Church Center Closed</b> | 4  | 5                                    | 6 <b>EPIPHANY</b>   | 7 <i>Day of Prayer for the E.C. Church</i> | 8   |                                    |
| 9<br><br>White  | 10<br><br>Stationing Retreat  | 11 PAC Training  | 12<br><br>Pastoral Assessment Center |   | 13   | 14 Health Insurance Due<br>Pastoral Compensation Forms Due    | 15<br><br>Twin Pines Winter Thaw-A |
| 16<br><br>Green<br>Twin Pines Winter Thaw-A   | 17 <b>MLK Jr. Day</b>         | 18   | 19                                   | 20 <b>EC Leader deadline</b>  | 21   | 22  |                                    |
| 23<br><br>Green   | 24                            | 25 <b>2021 Annual Reports Due</b>  | 26                                   | 27  | 28   | 29  |                                    |
| 30<br><br>Green<br>Twin Pines Winter Thaw-B   | 31                            |  |                                      |   |  | Twin Pines Winter Thaw-B                                      |                                    |





December 2021

## EC Center Staff and Associates

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Rev. Leslie Cool - Kingdom Extension: [revlescool@gmail.com](mailto:revlescool@gmail.com)

## Know Him Better Love Him More


"We can be sure that we know him if we obey his commandments...Those who obey God's word truly show how completely they love him."  
1 John 2:3,5

The logo for EC LEADER, featuring the letters 'EC' in a large, stylized font followed by the word 'LEADER' in a smaller, sans-serif font, all in white on a red background.

### Contributors

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A decorative background featuring pine branches and cones on a dark blue surface.

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