

EC LEADER

A publication of the Evangelical Congregational Church



In this edition:

- From the Desk**
page 1
- National Conference News**
page 2
- Executive Director News**
pages 3-4
- GMC News**
page 5
- KEC News**
pages 6-7
- MDC News**
pages 8-9
- Twin Pines News**
page 10
- Calendars & Staff List**
pages 11-12

FROM THE DESK

Bishop Randy Sizemore

The Importance of Reporting

"Isn't it wonderful to have the broader view to see that in our districts, in our regions, in our National Conference, God is on the move, and we are all a part of that."



Click HERE for Bishop's February video message.



Speaking Schedule for 2023

Bishop Randy is now scheduling his 2023 preaching schedule. If you would like to schedule him at your church, please contact Bishop Randy directly at rsizemore@eccenter.com.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE NEWS

Prayer Mobilizers

Rev. Bryan Dever

Does your Church have a Prayer Mobilizer?

The Prayer Mobilization Committee was asked, "What is a Prayer Mobilizer? Do you have a job description?" In the past we accepted each church's definition of the position of Prayer Mobilizer. For those looking to define a Prayer Mobilizer for their church we offer the following suggestions.

We all recognize that prayer is a vital key to the spiritual and numerical growth of any church. Such growth can be enhanced when an individual is committed to promoting prayer in the church. This is a person that most people go to when they want to be prayed for. They might not be an elected official or hold any formal positions, but your people know them and trust them.

We refer to such people as "Prayer Mobilizers."

Here are some guidelines we feel may be helpful:

- The Prayer Mobilizer must be devoted to prayer.
- They must believe in the power of prayer to change things.
- They should commit themselves to regularly praying for their pastor and the church.
- They need to be willing to pray for others and keep confidences.
- They must be willing to put feet on their prayers as God directs.
- They are accountable to the Pastor and Leaders for the ministry they perform.

The most important thing is that they regularly commune with God for the pastor and the church. And that they believe God answers prayer and He will answer their prayers.

As the Pastor and Prayer Mobilizer pray over the needs of the church, they may feel other prayer ministries are needed. We offer these ideas that other churches are doing:

- Prayer chains
- Prayer rooms
- Training sessions for new leaders
- Developing small prayer groups
- Developing a team for altar ministry
- Hospital visitation
- Developing intercessory teams to pray for the pastor as he preaches
- Prayer walks

You can be as creative as God leads you.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR NEWS KEVIN HENRY



The transition of the pension plan to Nationwide from Empower Retirement/Prudential is going well albeit with many moving pieces. The moving of the funds to Nationwide is scheduled for early March 2023. One of the key features of the move is for churches to remit pension plan contributions directly to Nationwide via an ACH bank transfer, i.e., no more sending pension contribution checks to EC Benefits. Nationwide has a very simple remittance processing website that should take a church treasurer a few minutes and a few clicks to remit pension contributions. Training sessions on the Nationwide remittance website will be scheduled in February, with one weekday evening and one Saturday morning session available, as well as a couple of sessions during the normal workday. The tricky part of the transition will be the remittance of the February 2023 final contributions to EC Benefits and Empower Retirement/Prudential before the funds are moved to Nationwide. Unfortunately, we do not know when the funds will be transferred to Nationwide, thus we cannot give a final date for remitting contributions to Prudential. Information will be released via email when it is known.

The deadline to distribute W-2s to employees, including pastors, is January 31, 2023 with the employer filing deadline also January 31, 2023 if filed electronically or on paper. Social Security Administration's Business Services Online (BSO), www.ssa.gov/bsa, is an easy convenient method for producing the employee and employer copies of the W-2 on white paper, no forms, and for filing the W-2s electronically with SSA. We encourage all church treasurers that produce their W-2s in-house to use the SSA BSO services.

Due Dates: Disability Payment \$100.00 was due Jan. 15
Annual Statistical Reports were due Jan. 25
Workers Compensation Insurance Information due 30 days after receipt of the request for payroll information. To be in compliance with a new PA Dept. of Workers Compensation regulation all churches must include their official church name and tax ID number on the workers comp request for payroll information form.

Please remember that the EC Benefits administrative fee of \$125 is due from churches on April 15, 2023; retirees are not subject to the fee. The 2023 disability premiums were due January 15, 2023. Please remit them as soon as possible. The due dates for the administrative fee and disability premium are listed in the Treasurer's Guide available on the EC Center website.

Pastor's Compensation forms were due on January 15, 2023. If you have not done so please return your compensation forms to Dave King as soon as possible. We will be contacting churches in early February that have not submitted 2023 compensation forms and requesting compliance.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR NEWS KEVIN HENRY

continued...



Please begin using the 2023 Ministry Fund forms for January offerings. One ministry fund form from will be used for all EC churches in all regions and all districts. Offerings collected in December 2022 should be remitted on the 2022 Ministry Fund forms.

The Annual Reports and fourth quarter Ministerial Update forms were both due by January 25, 2023. Reports can be emailed to office@eccenter.com or mailed to the EC Church Center, 100 W Park Ave., Myerstown, PA 17067.

The Business Mileage Reimbursement increased by \$.03/mile to \$.655/mile on January 1, 2023.

Year-end giving statements to donors must include a phrase similar to or contain the words, "no goods or services were exchanged for these contributions or consisted entirely of a religious nature." The IRS has resources available, www.irs.gov, to assist with charitable contributions; Tax Guide for Churches and Religious Organizations and Publication 526 Charitable Contributions.

Please contact Dave King or Kevin Henry with any questions.

Kevin Henry

Executive Director

I have received a few requests over the last few weeks for recommendations for church software packages. Unfortunately, I cannot answer that question, but other churches may be able to.

If you would like to share what software package your church is using, please send me a short email at khenry@eccenter.com.

I will collect the results and release the list next month. Larger churches may use a different software package than smaller churches so I would like to encourage responses from all of our different sizes of churches.





Global Ministries Community of the Evangelical Congregational Church



FROM THE DESK Rev. J. Ted Rathman

The News We Bring - Together!

Are you a “news junkie”? The daily news discourse is likened to a ballerina’s pirouette – precise spinning, twirling, and whirling in grand display. Yet, to an untrained dancer attempting the same, it would be a dizzying experience ending in an erratic and wayward gait of the individual.

The “new” news every morning, so we are told, is what we need to know, and, if heeded, will yield a successful day and a good life – a fully updated dossier to keep us informed, active, fit, safe, and secure – just like a ballerina’s perfect pirouette. Yet, for some, all this daily information is burdensome, a weight too heavy to carry; and, like that of the untrained dancer attempting the pirouette, ends in erratic and wayward thoughts and actions. And for all, discerning the truth and accuracy of the daily news is a vicious game.

Amid this daily grind, however, we find that there is one steadfast, consistent, true, and good news. **GOD NEWS!** And, together, we bring this GOD News to the world in desperate need of something good.

How do we do this together? Glad you asked! Those who are called to serve as a missionary are the Lord’s hands and feet in the places He directs. The rest of us are serving as senders – providing care and support (via prayer, finances, communication, logistics, etc.) for our missionaries as they prepare to go, are on the field, and when they return. We provide support, resources and care to our international churches in India, Nepal, Mexico, Japan and Liberia.

TOGETHER we bring the GOD News to the far reaches of our world. And, like that of our daily news cycle, GOD news is 24/7, always precisely and purposely spinning, twirling and whirling, is carefully selected for our ears, and is intended to save, redeem, heal, strengthen and encourage hearts and lives. **It is good news to the hearts of those lost and dying in sin. It is good news to bodies in need of healing, marriages in need of reconciliation, and addictions and bondages needing to be broken. And, until the day He returns, is the news we need to hear, again and again and again. Amen? Amen!**



Ted Rathman



To know how your church can partner directly with an EC missionary or an International EC Church, call the GMC office at 717-866-7581 x 1109; or email ecglobal@eccenter.com.



Connect with us on Facebook: Global Ministries Community



Kingdom Extension Community News

FROM THE DESK

Rev. Mike Snedeker, KEC Associate

Know Your Context



One of the biggest struggles for churches in reaching their communities is their own ability to know and understand their context. In previous *EC Leader* articles we have discussed how we often make assumptions about what our neighbors think, feel or need. We discussed getting out and meeting neighbors and prayer walking the neighborhood. We have also discussed the desire to multiply our impact as churches. One of the big hopes for the Kingdom Extension Community is to help resource churches to multiply their impact.

One of the big hopes for the Kingdom Extension Community is to help resource churches to multiply their impact.

One of the ways we are doing that is through a partnership with an organization called MissionInsite. This partnership is completely FREE to you! MissionInsite can help you learn your community well. It is a demographic company that gives you and your church access to pages and pages of information about your community. KEC will help to provide individual coaching to your church, again free of charge, to help you utilize this information.

MissionInsite will help you learn extensive demographic information on your community, including ethnic, racial, financial, employment, and family information, as well as projected trends for each of these areas. It will also give you geographic information to help you know the locations that are significant in your community. Finally, they will provide extensive survey results from the areas surrounding your church. All this in one place. You can develop and customize reports with information you are trying to gather.

If you would like to learn more about MissionInsite, check out their web page at <https://www.acstechnologies.com/missioninsite/>. Contact our Kingdom Extension Associate, Mike Snedeker, at msnedeker@eccenter.com to start your journey to reach your community.

Mike



FROM THE DESK

continued...



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

Mike Coulson and People's EC Church in the Virtual Space – Mike is leading a team that is exploring a Virtual Reality Church. Their church name is Echo and is impacting people around the country and around the world. Pray for Echo and its team as they are constantly needing to flex to the rapidly changing virtual world and they are needing to be stretched to meet people where they are and begin to multiply disciples in this new realm.

Manuel and Luz Arias in Lexington, South Carolina – The Arias family is starting a new EC Church. Les and Carol Cool and I had a chance to spend a few days with Manuel and Luz and their family in early December. They are learning the culture and meeting new families, as well as strategizing ways to share the Gospel in tangible ways. Pray for wisdom, strength, and renewed energy for this couple.

Haitian Church Plant – One of our couples who recently went through our Pastoral Assessment Center are feeling called to plant a church in Reading, PA or Lancaster, PA; specifically targeting the Haitian community! Pray as God gathers the planting team, gives them a specific vision for the future, and energizes them for this task.

New Church Planters – We have four other individuals/couples that are exploring their potential call to become church planters with the EC Church. Please pray for clear vision for these couples. Also pray for courage as they consider taking a difficult step in a uncertain ministry realm.

Greater Impact – Please pray for churches across our denomination as they look to expand and even multiply their impact on their communities. Pray for wisdom for our pastors and leaders. Pray for eyes to see the needs of their communities, and pray for creativity as they step into the opportunities to meet those needs with the love of Christ.



Required Courses for Pastors are scheduled:

The **EC History and Polity Course** has been rescheduled to March 24-25, 2023. This weekend class taught by Bishops Emeriti Bruce Hill, Mike Sigman and Bishop Randy Sizemore will meet in-person at our Grace Community EC Church in Willow Street on Friday from 9am-5pm and Saturday from 9am-3pm, with meals and snacks provided. Those required to take this course will be contacted with registration information. If you have not taken this course, please contact Jodi Earhart at jeahart@eccenter.com to make sure we have you on the list of registrants. Please note the EC Ethos Class will be offered in the Fall of 2023.



Institute for Church Leadership **Rev. Dr. Joel Kime**

Have you promoted our upcoming classes to your congregation? There's still time to encourage them to participate. Understandably, people in our churches might be hesitant about taking ICL classes. Consider printing the FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) found on the next page and handing it out to your people.

Ministerial Development Community News

...continued

ICL FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions)

Rev. Dr. Joel Kime

Do I have to be a Bible scholar to take these courses? Not at all! These classes are for anyone, and they will encourage you to go deeper in your relationship with God, your study of his Word and your service to His Kingdom.

Do the courses have homework? It depends if you audit the course or take it for ICL credit. If you audit the course, you will just be attending the course sessions, with no homework. If you take the course for ICL credit, you will be asked to read a couple of books and complete some writing assignments.

What is ICL credit? ICL credit is issued upon successful completion of the course. If you earn credit for all twelve ICL courses, you will receive an ICL certificate. That certificate can give you access to serve in an increased capacity in the Evangelical Congregational Church. For example, some of our EC pastors are not interested in entering the ordained ministry, so they do not go to seminary. Instead, they can enroll in the ICL. While the ICL will not lead toward ordination, it can give people the educational foundation they need for pastoral ministry in other ways, perhaps as a local preacher within their congregation.

Must I attend all 7 sessions of each course? If you are auditing, your payment gives you access to the course with no requirement to attend sessions. If you are taking the course for ICL credit, however, you are required to attend all 7 sessions. If you must miss a session, you will need to make arrangements with the class instructor to make up for that absence.

The classes seem long. Do we just sit and listen for 2.5 hours? No. While there will be sections of the class during which the instructor is teaching, our instructors are excellent communicators so class sessions will not be boring. Additionally, the instructors include lots of opportunity for dialogue, for question and answer. There is also a short break in the middle of each class.

What kinds of classes does ICL offer? Here are the twelve courses. People can take any class in any order. We have a new schedule that we are launching Fall 2023. Fall 2023 will be Fall 2 on the schedule below.

Term	Formative Course	Informative Course
Fall 1	Intro to Ministry	Hermeneutics
Spring 1	Pastoral Leadership	OT Survey
Fall 2	Personal Spiritual Formation	NT Survey
Spring 2	Preaching	Theology 1
Fall 3	Healthy Worship & Ministry	Theology 2
Spring 3	Developing a Contextual Missional Mindset	Church History

What kinds of courses are offered in Spring of 2023?

Technically, as you can see, it's a winter course. The course is...

How to Study the Bible (aka Hermeneutics), Tuesdays, February 7 – March 21, 6:30-9:15 p.m.

Instructor: Tim Seiger

Course Description: This course is an introduction to the interpretation of the Biblical text. The course will cover some of the basic skills of Biblical interpretation, as well as exploring issues surrounding questions concerning what the Bible is and how it "works." The course will help equip the student to interpret, teach, and preach the Biblical text in a pastoral setting with an emphasis on moving from interpretation to appropriate application.

Later in the spring, our next course is Old Testament Survey.

To sign up or get more information, contact Joel Kime, joel.kime@evangelical.edu.

WHAT'S HAPPENING THIS WINTER AT...



Twin Pines has many things scheduled for the winter and coming up in the spring. Mark your calendar now and check the website for updates.

2023 Winter Thaw Youth Retreats



2023 Winter Thaw youth retreat weekends have begun. And the Holy Spirit is working to change teens' lives to be followers of Jesus.

Room is still available for individuals from your church to attend Winter Thaw – C, February 17-19. During this weekend, Twin Pines provides cabin counselors as supervision for individuals. To register for this weekend, go to bit.ly/WT-2023.



Spring Fling Children's Retreat

April 21-23, 2023



Save the date of April 21-23, 2023, for the upcoming Spring Fling Children's Retreat. A great weekend to introduce Twin Pines Camp to the children of your church, have fun outdoors (weather permitting), sing songs of worship, and learn more about Jesus with active lessons.

The website will be ready soon with more information!



For Ladies Only Retreat

May 16 – 18, 2023



Due to her overwhelming popularity, Sue Duffield is scheduled to return as the speaker for the For Ladies Only Retreat. Ladies from your church will not want to miss out on this great mid-week retreat of spiritual growth and challenge. Registration information is available at bit.ly/2023FLORetreat.



CALENDAR



FEBRUARY 2023

Friday, February 3

Day of Prayer for the EC Church

Sunday, February 5

Day of Prayer for Kingdom Extension Community
Liturgical Color - Green

Sunday, February 12

Church Planting Offering*
Liturgical Color - Green

Wednesday, February 15

Health Insurance Due

Sunday, February 19

Liturgical Color - Green

Monday, February 20

President's Day
EC Church Center Closed
EC Leader Submissions Deadline

Wednesday, February 22

Ash Wednesday
Church Health Community Meeting

Sunday, February 29

First Sunday of Lent
Liturgical Color - Purple

Ministry Funds, Insurance & Benefits and *Special Offerings

Mail to:

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

*(*Designate in the memo line the Special Offering that it is for
February - Church Planting and March - Self-Denial.)*

MARCH 2023

Friday, March 3

Day of Prayer for the EC Church

Sunday, March 5

Second Sunday of Lent
Day of Prayer for Kingdom Extension Community
Liturgical Color - Purple

Tuesday, March 7

Finance Committee Meeting

Sunday, March 12

Third Sunday of Lent
Self-Denial Offering*
Liturgical Color - Purple

Wednesday, March 15

EC Benefits Service Fee Due
Health Insurance Due
Conference Network Team Strategic Meeting

Thursday, March 16

National Ministry Team Meeting

Sunday, March 19

Fourth Sunday of Lent
Liturgical Color - Purple

Tuesday, March 21

Loan & Investment Committee Meeting

Friday, March 24 to Saturday, March 25

EC History & Polity Class at Grace Community Church
of Willow Street

Sunday, March 26

Passion Sunday
Liturgical Color - Purple

Wednesday, March 29

GMC Board Meeting



Overflowing Hope

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may OVERFLOW with HOPE by the power of the Holy Spirit."
Romans 15:13

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

office@eccenter.com / www.eccenter.com

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



Contributors

Bishop Randy Sizemore
Kevin Henry
Rev. J. Ted Rathman
Rev. Mike Snedeker
Rev. Matthew Hill
Rev. Dr. Joel Kime
Rev. Dr. Sam Yeager

Wendy Beard

February 2023 Edition - Editor/Art Design

STAFF

Rev. Randy Sizemore - Bishop
rsizemore@eccenter.com

Jodi Earhart - Assistant to the Bishop
jearthart@eccenter.com

Kevin Henry - Executive Director
khenry@eccenter.com

David King - Benefits Administrator
dking@eccenter.com

Shirley Long - Business Office Specialist
slong@eccenter.com

Bethany White - Administrative Assistant
bwhite@eccenter.com

Wendy Beard - Communications Coordinator
wbeard@eccenter.com

Denise Jaramillo - GMC Deputy Director
ecglobal@eccenter.com

ASSOCIATES

Rev. J. Ted Rathman - Global Ministries
pastorted@graceecchurch.org

Rev. Mike Snedeker - Kingdom Extension
msnedeker@eccenter.com

Rev. Matthew Hill - Ministerial Development
matt@stpaulsreamstown.com

Rev. Gary Kuehner - Church Health
gkuehner@eccenter.com