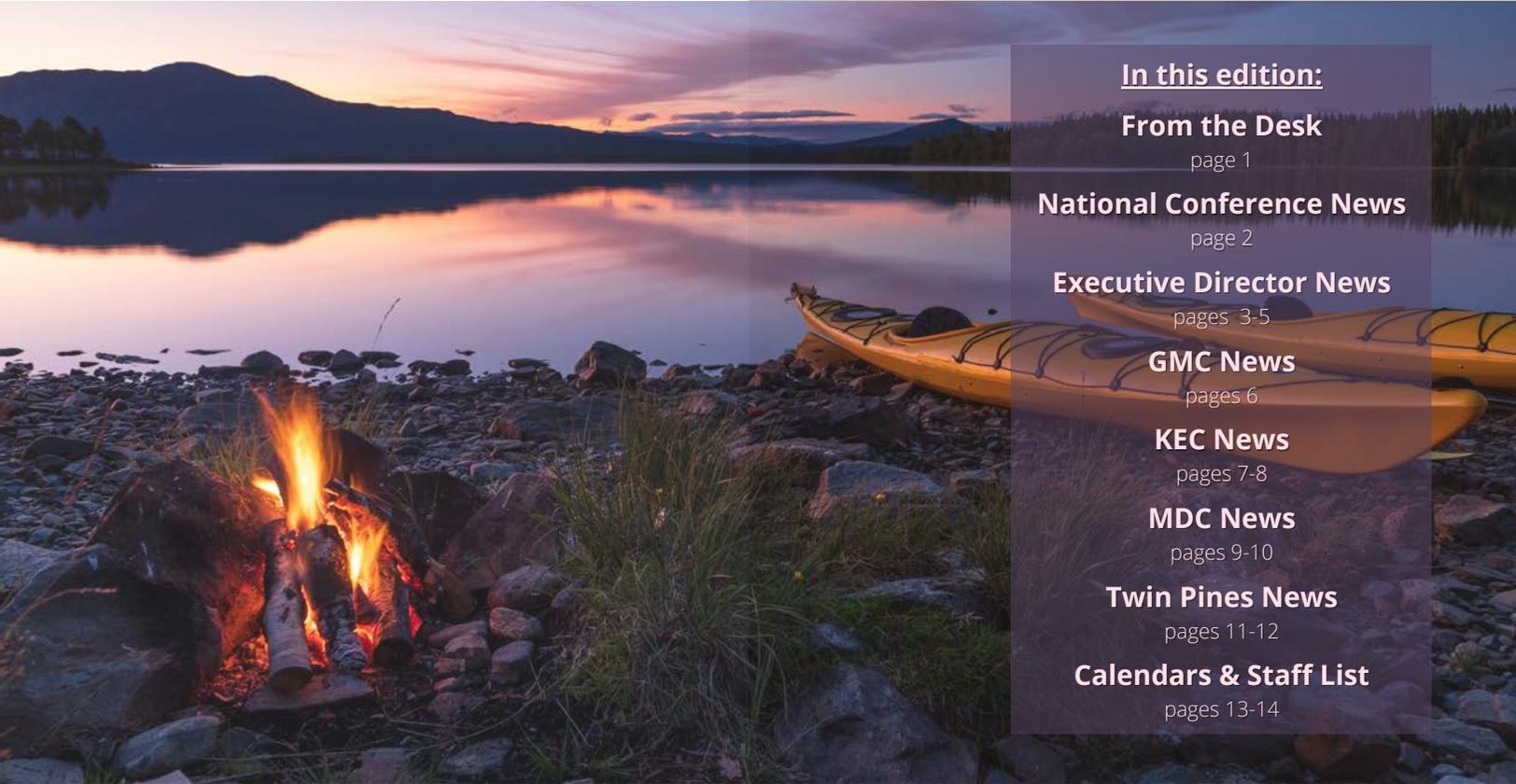


EC LEADER

A publication of the Evangelical Congregational Church



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FROM THE DESK

Bishop Randy Sizemore

Becoming a Dynamic Movement

"Overflowing Hope' casts a vision: We 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."



[Click HERE for Bishop's May/June 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

NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2023

May 24 through May 26 at Messiah University

Deadline to register is April 30!

Report packets are available on the eccenter.com website at 2023 National Conference Report Packet.



Pre-Conference Meetings Schedule

Sunday, April 30

Buckeye District at Cottage Grove E.C., 4:00 - 6:00 p.m.

Monday, May 1

Allegheny District (Location to be determined),
7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Thursday, May 4

Illinois District at Bethel E.C., 4:45 - 6:45 p.m.

Tuesday, May 9

Susquehanna Region at Reich's Church,
7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Saturday, May 13

Delaware Region at Allentown Christ Church,
9:00 - 11:00 a.m.

Monday, May 15

Susquehanna Region at Mohn's Hill, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Thursday, May 18

Delaware Region at Pitman Zion, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Please see the invitation on page 6 from our Global Ministries Community for a special event during lunchtime on Thursday at National Conference.

Conference Support Team Updates - Church Reporting Forms

Just a reminder that at last year's national conference, we approved changing the charter church reporting schedule from quarterly reporting to semi-annual reporting, due July 25th and January 25th of each year, along with the annual report, also due on January 25th of each year. These reports may be found on the [Member Portal](#) of the website under [Forms & Resources](#), Local Church Forms. If you need access to the Member Portal, that access may be requested by selecting "[Request Access](#)" on the top right-hand corner of eccenter.com website or by emailing wbeard@eccenter.com.



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR NEWS

KEVIN HENRY

As always, please email:

David King
Benefits Administrator
dking@eccenter.com

Kevin Henry
Executive Director
khenry@eccenter.com

with any questions
or call
717-866-7581

403(b) Pension Plan Transition

The transition of the 403(b) Pension Plan from Prudential/Empower Retirement to Nationwide was completed on April 3, 2023, with participants gaining access to their accounts shortly after April 3. There is some continuing confusion with the transition, but those issues are being worked through. So far, no drastic or severe issues have been encountered. A few items to bring to the attention of participants and church treasurers/administrators:

Participants:

1. Please establish your online account at Nationwide as soon as you can. Participants should have received an email on April 5, 2023 with online account creation instructions. The creation of an online account requires the participant to complete an enrollment process. It is recommended that the participant complete the "Quick Enroll" option. After the "Quick Enroll" option is completed the participant will not see their account information until the next day. Nationwide must complete an overnight process to finalize a participant's enrollment.

2. After a participant receives access to their online account, please check demographic and contact information and account balance. **Participants must add beneficiaries to their Nationwide 403(b) account.** Nationwide allows the adding of beneficiaries via the participant's online account.

a. On the right side of the main participant screen are "Quick Links." The fourth link in that column is "Manage Beneficiaries." Click that link to add beneficiaries. To add a beneficiary, the participant will need the beneficiary's Date of Birth and Social Security number. A participant may add as many primary and contingent beneficiaries as necessary.

b. By default, all participants are enrolled in paperless delivery of Nationwide account statements and notices. A participant can change their account settings to receive paper statements and notices through their Nationwide online account.

3. A recurring problem we have encountered is incorrect contact information that Nationwide received from Prudential/Empower Retirement that has caused participants to not receive Nationwide emails and mailings. If you have not received communication from Nationwide, please contact Kevin Henry, Executive Director, and we will get you the link to establish your online account. For additional information on the transition, please visit <https://retirement.eccenter.com/>. Thanks to Addison Roberts for setting up and managing this website for us.

a. Representatives from Nationwide will be at Messiah College during national conference to assist participants in establishing their online accounts, adding beneficiaries and answering questions. Jennifer Buehler and her team remain the investment advisor for the 403(b) plan and can assist EC pastors with retirement questions and assist with Nationwide investments and transactions. Jennifer will also be at national conference.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR NEWS

KEVIN HENRY

continued...

As always, please email:

David King
Benefits Administrator
dking@eccenter.com

Kevin Henry
Executive Director
khenry@eccenter.com

with any questions
or call
717-866-7581

403(b) Pension Plan Transition continued...

Church Treasurers/Administrators:

1. One of the goals of the 403(b) plan provider transition was for church's to electronically remit their pastor's pension plan contributions directly to Nationwide. Most churches have completed and remitted their Nationwide affiliate set-up form; a few churches have not completed their affiliate set-up form. **A church cannot remit pension contributions until the affiliate set-up form is completed, remitted to Nationwide and Nationwide process the form.** Please contact Kevin Henry with questions on completing the affiliate set-up form or if you did not receive a form.
2. A recurring problem treasurers/church administrators are having is website access. The Nationwide site has been a little persnickety. These issues have been minor and quickly corrected by Nationwide. If you are having trouble accessing the site please contact Cindy Davis at Nationwide, newplan@nationwide.com.
 - a. Cindy Davis has done a marvelous job implementing our plan at Nationwide. A big thank-you to Cindy and her team. Cindy responds to all emails and phone calls usually within a day or maybe two at most.
3. The remittance of online pension contributions is overall going well. It is a new process for some, but once the process is learned and understood, there are minimal problems. If a church needs some assistance remitting pension contributions, please contact Cindy Davis at Nationwide or Kevin Henry or Bethany White at the church center. We can walk you through the process over the phone.



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR NEWS

KEVIN HENRY

continued...

As always, please email:

David King
Benefits Administrator
dking@eccenter.com

Kevin Henry
Executive Director
khenry@eccenter.com

with any questions
or call
717-866-7581

Workers Compensation

Invoices to churches on our group Workers Compensation policy will be mailed shortly. The billed amounts will be slightly above 2022 invoices.

Churches not included in the denominational workers compensation group policy - Ohio, Illinois and Kentucky churches: 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 khenry@eccenter.com

*Happy Retirement,
David!*

David King, Benefits Administrator, will be retiring from the EC Church Center at the end of April 2023. I would like to thank Dave for his twelve years of service to EC pastors and churches. Dave brought experience and knowledge to his position that he willingly shared with us to make the benefit plans for EC pastors stronger. You may thank Dave for his service and share a pun or dad joke at dking@eccenter.com.



GMC

Global Ministries Community of the Evangelical Congregational Church



You're Invited!

Join the Global Ministries Community at lunchtime on Thursday, May 25, 2023 during National Conference for the

We Are A Global Church Update

on our EC international churches, missionaries, and introducing the organization - TEAM



Ted Rathman
Global Ministries
Executive Director



Yoriyoshi Abe
Church Planter
ECC Japan

featuring



Scott Brady
Church Engagement
Manager



Dee Jaramillo
Global Ministries
Deputy Director

Hear Yoriyoshi share about the EC Church in Japan and a first-hand report on what the Lord is doing there; Scott will introduce the mission of TEAM to help churches send missionaries; Ted and Dee will provide updates on how the GMC's vision and mission are influencing the local church, how your district/church can adopt a nation, and current information on the ministries of our EC missionaries around the world.

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.

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

Weber or Blackstone?

I LOVE my Weber Grill! It is the best grill I have ever owned! It distributes the heat evenly and cooks consistently no matter where on the grill surface the food is placed. The best part is that the grill is almost 8 years old and is as good as new. It was totally worth the extra cost. "BUT," some of you are saying, "Blackstone is the way to go!" Consider the health benefits, the versatility and space on the Blackstone. Others of you are scoffing right now, "How dare you even consider 'grilling' on anything except good ole fashioned charcoal!?" As the roar of this debate intensifies, still a fourth camp chimes in that grilling with wood pellets is the new and best way to go. Things go from bad to worse when the smoker crowd chimes in, which prompts a whole new battle of the best form of smoker on the market!

What does any of this have to do with KEC, Mike?

Hopefully I have gotten you thinking about summertime and the joys of outdoor life. While your mouth is watering over the thought of a backyard cookout and your mind is imagining the joy of sharing a warm evening with friends on the back deck, I want to encourage you to begin to strategize how you could use the beautiful weather and opportunities that summer brings for the sake of the Kingdom. Summer gives us an opportunity to interact with neighbors in a way that is difficult during the cold winter months. Consider the possibility of inviting one or two, or even your entire neighborhood, to your home or to your church for a cookout or a bonfire complete with s'mores. Maybe host a picnic or a pool party. What are the opportunities in your context to intentionally engage your neighbors and begin to build a friendship with them for the sake of the gospel? The ideas are almost endless.

Last night I had the opportunity to hear Craig Allen Cooper share the story of his friendship with Walker Hayes. For those of you who are country music fans, you know who Walker Hayes is. You probably have heard his song "Craig" in which he sings about Craig's impact on his life (check it out if you haven't heard it). Pastor Craig became friends with Walker and loved him. As Craig concluded his story, he showed a picture that featured Walker sharing his testimony of faith in Christ and the message of the gospel with over 70,000 people at a sold-out show in Texas. Walker Hayes does this at EVERY ONE of his concerts. It all started because Craig was willing to befriend Walker when he was nobody

What does Craig have to do with Weber and Blackstone? I'm glad you asked. Craig was willing to befriend an alcoholic atheist who had zero interest in the gospel. God opened a door for the gospel through this friendship and millions have heard about Jesus as a result. The truth is, you and I will probably not have the opportunity to befriend the next Walker Hayes, but in a culture where we no longer have the home court advantage and people

Kingdom Extension Community News

FROM THE DESK

Rev. Mike Snedeker, KEC Associate
continued...

Weber or Blackstone?
continued...

no longer flock through the doors of our churches to hear our sermons, God is still opening doors to the gospel through backyard grills and swimming pools and picnics in the park. We must be looking for opportunities to engage our neighbors both as individuals and as churches if we are going to be a dynamic movement of God that is seeing new people come to faith in Christ.

Mike



PRAYER NEEDED

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 – 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. Also, pray that a recent funding grant they applied for will be approved.

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. 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, He gives them a specific vision for the future and energizes them for this task.

The Reams – Tim and Pam Ream have announced they are moving to Tennessee. They are pursuing the opportunity to engage in planting an EC Church once they have settled into their new community. Pray that God would begin preparing that community even before they move to be receptive to His glorious presence.

New Church Planters – We have three 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 an 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.



Ministerial Development Community News

FROM THE DESK
Rev. Matt Hill, MDC Associate



Summer Reading

"Is the applicant studious? Is he devoted first and foremost to the study of the Bible and to understanding its meaning? Does he love to learn as much as he can about this world while at the same time understanding that his call to building the Kingdom of God will always be his primary calling?"

- 504.5.1 Thirst for Knowledge, from the The CREED, RITUAL and DISCIPLINE of the Evangelical Congregational Church

As May approaches, I know that we all think of one thing: National Conference! Okay, so maybe we don't think about National Conference. But many of us begin to think about longer days, warmer temperatures and taking time away to rest. Our minds are filled with dreams of sitting in the sand or rocking in a chair on the front porch of the cabin. Whether the sandy beach or cool air of the cabin, summer is a great time to rejuvenate your body, mind and soul.

Each summer our family travels to the coast of New Jersey to soak in the sun and for quality time together. As a part of our vacation, I set a goal to read at least one book. Vacation is a great time to read. In the busyness of ministry and life, we often don't take time to learn new things, to grow personally, to rethink ministry or to feed our souls. This summer as you think about days of sitting and resting, I would challenge you to read. Pick up a book that speaks to the truths of scripture and how God desires to use us in an ever-changing world. Would you consider joining me in the goal to read one book this summer?

If you're not sure what to read, consider texting a fellow pastor today or grab one of the books below. Enjoy the summer, rest well and grow in the Lord!

Books to consider:

In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership, by Henri Nouwen

The Trellis and the Vine, by Colin Marshall and Tony Payne

The Shaping of Things to Come, by Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch

Understanding Homosexuality and Transgenderism: Biblical and Scientific

Insights with Compassionate Care, by Lester Zimmerman

Matt



Ministerial Development Community News

...continued

Institute for Church Leadership

Rev. Dr. Joel Kime

Have you or anyone in your congregation ever felt that the Old Testament seems intimidating, foreign or difficult? Our spring class is for you and your congregation! Take a look at the course description below.

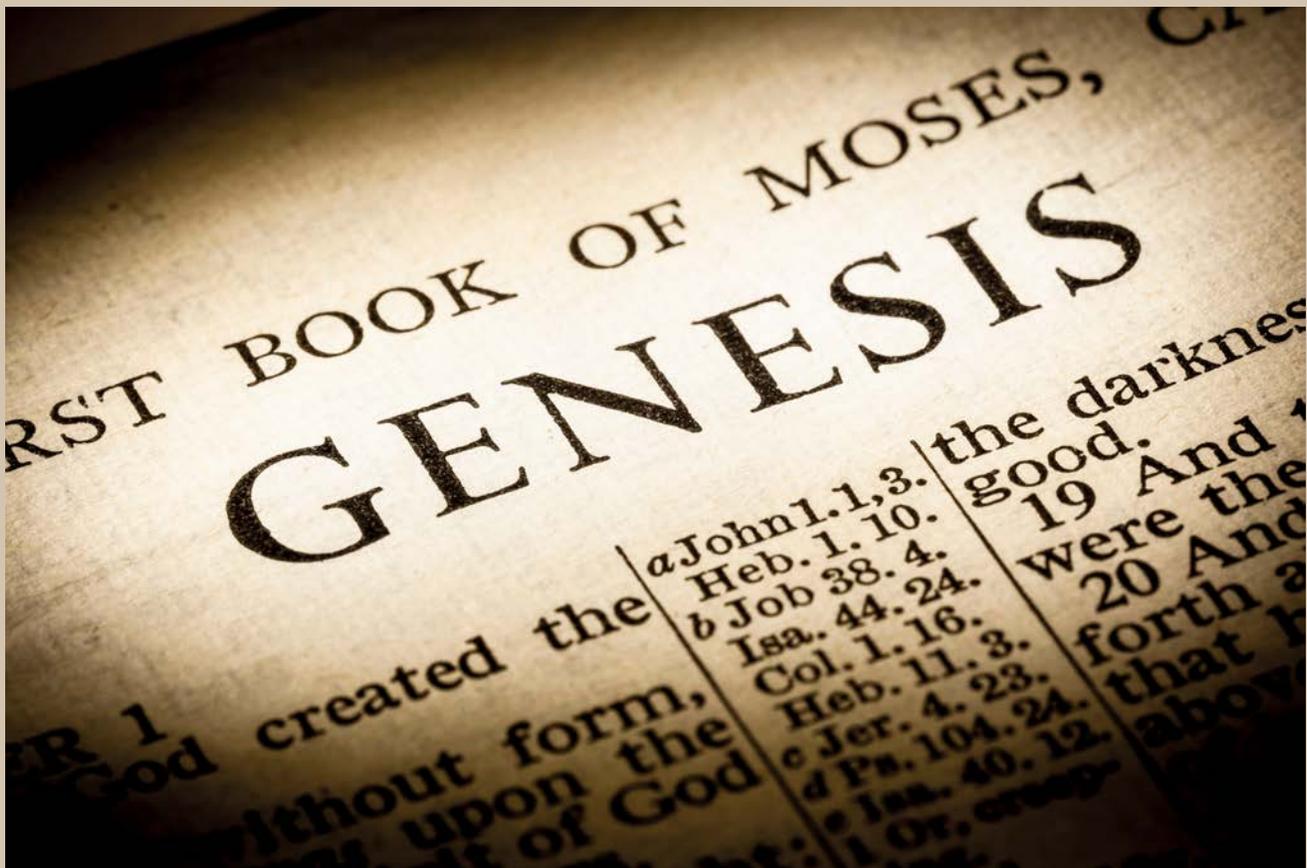
Old Testament Survey Tuesdays, May 2 – June 13, 6:30-9:15 p.m.

Instructor: Tim Valentino

Course Description: In this course the student surveys Old Testament literature, history, geography, culture, theology, and structure to understand and communicate what the Old Testament reveals about God. Additional issues addressed include:

- Who are the important people and nations?
- What are the significant events, and where do they happen?
- How is the Old Testament put together?
- How does the Old Testament apply to us today?
- What resources are available to understand, teach, and preach the Old Testament?

To sign up or get more information, contact Joel Kime: joel.faithchurch@gmail.com.



WHAT'S HAPPENING THIS SUMMER AT...

Twin Pines summer camp schedule is available, and registration is open on their website.



Summer Camp Schedule and Registration are available at bit.ly/2023SummerSchedule

*Bulletin Inserts
Posters
Slides*



Contact Twin Pines if your church needs resources to help promote summer camp at Twin Pines.

Slides
Posters
Bulletin Inserts

Contact Camp
570-629-2411
shawn@twinpines.org

Spring Spruce Up – May 2-4



This event is a mid-week retreat to help the ministry “spruce up” camp and prepare for summer ministry! Projects include both indoor and outdoor sprucing-up. And there are always tasks for volunteers of any

skill level!

You may choose to participate in all or part of the retreat. Registration is requested for the camp to have work in mind for those attending for meal counts and overnight housing. To register: call the office-570.629.2411, or send an email to beverly@twinpines.org.

For Ladies Only Retreat – May 16-18



Sue Duffield is a well know speaker and musician, and she will return for the For Ladies Only Retreat. Ladies from your church will not want to miss out on this fantastic mid-week retreat of spiritual growth and challenge. Registration information is available at bit.ly/2023FLORetreat.



WHAT'S HAPPENING THIS SUMMER AT...

continued...

Twin Pines summer camp schedule is available, and registration is open on their website.



Food Service Manager/Chef

Twin Pines Camp, Conference and Retreat Center offers quality Christian summer programming as well as retreats and facilities for adults, youth and children. Twin Pines is searching for a Food Service Manager/Head Chef to oversee the food service for all of the camp's retreats and summer camp programming.

A qualified candidate will be a believer in Jesus Christ with a background in cooking for large groups. This person should also have experience in managing kitchen inventory, including ordering. The candidate will oversee kitchen staff and assign work as appropriate. The qualified candidate should also have knowledge of specialty diets to meet the needs of the guests.

This position is located at Twin Pines Camp in Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania, with a starting salary based on experience, includes benefits and possible on-site housing. Interested candidates may request a job description and should submit a resume to Executive Director, Shawn Fetterhoff at shawn@twinpines.org or 3000 Twin Pines Camp Rd, Stroudsburg, PA, 18360.

What Young Adult or Older Teen do you know who want to make a lasting impacts for eternity?

As a Twin Pines Summer Staff member they will make such an impact.

Have them Apply today!
More information and application at bit.ly/tp-summer-staff

Twin Pines is inspected and licensed by the Pennsylvania Departments of Health and Agriculture.

Twin Pines welcomes campers without regard to race, color, or national origin.

CHRISTIAN CAMP & CONFERENCE ASSOCIATION MEMBER

 **TWIN PINES**

CAMP, CONFERENCE & RETREAT CENTER
3000 Twin Pines Camp Road, Stroudsburg, PA 18360
570.629.2411 • 570.620.0664 (fax) • www.twinpines.org

CALENDAR

MAY 2023

Monday, May 1

Pre-Conference Meeting: Allegheny District
(Location TBD)

Thursday, May 4

National Day of Prayer
Pre-Conference Meeting: Illinois District at Bethel EC

Friday, May 5

Day of Prayer for the EC Church

Sunday, May 7

Day of Prayer for Kingdom Extension Community
Liturgical Color - White

Tuesday, May 9

Pre-Conference Meeting: Susquehanna Region at
Reich's EC

Saturday, May 13

Pre-Conference Meeting: Delaware Region at
Christ EC

Sunday, May 14

Mother's Day

Mother's Day Offering*

Liturgical Color - White

Monday, May 15

Health Insurance Due

2023 Pre-Conference Meeting: Susquehanna Region
at Mohn's Hill EC

Thursday, May 18

Ascension Day

2023 Pre-Conference Meeting: Delaware Region at
Zion EC Pitman

Wednesday, May 24 through Friday, May 26

2023 EC National Conference at Messiah University

Sunday, May 28

Pentacost Sunday
Liturgical Color - Red

Monday, May 29

Memorial Day
EC Church Center Closed

Mother's Day Offering*

Mail to:

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

JUNE/JULY 2023

Thursday, June 1

Registration Deadline for PAC 2024

Friday, June 2

Day of Prayer for the EC Church

Sunday, June 4

Day of Prayer for Kingdom Extension Community
Liturgical Color - White

Sunday, June 11

Student Aid Offering*

Liturgical Color - Green

Thursday, June 15

Health Insurance Due

Sunday, June 18

Father's Day

Liturgical Color - Green

Sunday, June 25

Liturgical Color - Green

Sunday, July 2

Day of Prayer for Kingdom Extension Community
Liturgical Color - Green

Sunday, July 4

Independence Day

EC Church Center Closed

Friday, July 7

Day of Prayer for the EC Church

Sunday, July 9

Liturgical Color - Green

Thursday, July 15

Health Insurance Due

Sunday, July 16

Liturgical Color - Green

Sunday, July 23

Liturgical Color - Green

Sunday, July 30

Liturgical Color - Green

Ministry Funds and Insurance & Benefits and Student Aid Offering*

Mail to:

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



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 / 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
Shawn Fetterhoff

Wendy Beard

May/June 2023 Edition - Editor/Art Design

STAFF

Rev. Randy Sizemore - Bishop
rsizemore@eccenter.com

Jodi Earhart - Assistant to the Bishop
jeahrt@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 - NC Administrative Assistant
bwhite@eccenter.com

Wendy Beard - NC 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