

OCTOBER 2020

EC LEADER

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Who We Are

"...you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light".

1 Peter 2:9

From the Bishop

October is Pastor Appreciation Month so you might assume I'm going to write about pastors. But you'd be wrong! This October, I want to shift the focus slightly from the pastor to the pastor's wife. Since there is no official Pastor's Wife Appreciation Month, I'm going to expand this month's celebration to include them.

Pastors have to deal with a lot of things, well, his wife has to deal with many of those same things *and* she has to deal with him! Seriously, being married to a pastor is no simple task.

LifeWay Research surveyed pastors' spouses and discovered:

- Bad news first
 - 55% say it's difficult to balance church and family
 - 78% say they have felt burned out at some point in their role
 - Only 10% say they can count on friends in their church
- Now the good news
 - 90% believe their spouse being in ministry has positively effected their family
 - 79% are satisfied with their role in ministry
 - 80% sense a personal call to ministry along with their spouse

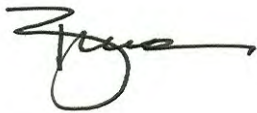
So, what can we learn? Allow me to share three things:

1. Pastors' wives are just like all of us – they experience all the joys and sorrows of following Jesus and living life in the church. We need to allow them and encourage them to just be themselves. Each one is a unique person, created by God with a unique set of gifts and graces. Praise the Lord for the ways they can use those in the ministry of your congregation.
2. Work to be the true friend your pastor's wife needs. Build a strong, caring, authentic, loving relationship. Many wives are concerned that if they shared their real prayer requests and burdens, if they shared real feelings, they would become the subject of gossip. Work hard to make sure that doesn't happen.
3. While their schedule will never be "normal," support and encourage them to invest in time alone as a couple, and as a family. Boundaries are often difficult to make and keep, that's a part of ministry; ask what the church could do to create a healthier environment for her marriage or family.
4. Ok, one more: pray for her!

Yes, it's Pastor Appreciation Month – but that doesn't mean we can't celebrate and appreciate the pastor's wife too. They are both special people, called by God, disciples of Jesus, with spiritual gifts by the Holy Spirit. Praise the Lord for Pastor's wife (and the bishop's wife too)!

In Christ's Service,

Rev. Bruce D. Hill



Bishop



Bishop's Top 10 Prayer & Praise

1. Pray for the Lord's clear leading in the decisions made in the National Ministry Team meeting on October 22.
2. Ask the Lord to protect our people as more return to in-person services and ministries.
3. Pray for our country during this very divisive time as we approach the presidential election.
4. Ask the Lord to lead each of us in how we can actively make a difference in our neighborhoods and communities.
5. Remember to thank the Lord for and pray for your pastor(s) during October (Pastor Appreciation Month).
6. Praise the Lord for the beauty that is seen in nature as we move from summer to autumn.
7. Thank the Lord for his faithfulness even during this very difficult year.
8. Praise the Lord for the men who are responding to God's call in their life and have begun the process of preparing for the Pastor's Assessment Center which will be held in January.
9. Thank the Lord for leading his church to find creative ways to engage in the lives of people even in the middle of a pandemic.
10. Join me in praising God for the people who remind me that they are praying for me as their Bishop. Prayer does make a difference!



News from the Executive Director

As announced last month, the active pastor's health insurance plan will be moved to CIGNA effective October 1, 2020. A list of participants and dependents was sent to CIGNA last week to begin enrollment processing. We hope to have ID cards mailed to the participants by October 1. Administration of the Health Reimbursement Account (HRA) is also moving from PrimePay to Benecon on October 1. PrimePay will continue to process claims incurred before October 1 through the normal run out of the plan year, December 30, 2020. However, please do not delay submitting HRA claims to PrimePay. If you run into difficulties with PrimePay, please reach out to Dave or me for assistance. I will be releasing details on the Benecon HRA to the health plan participants. The healthcare rates will not be changing. Please see the 2020 (current) and 2021 rates below:

Health Insurance rates (per month)

	Current	January 1, 2021
Single	\$ 845	\$ 845
Couple	\$1,790	\$1,790
Employer & Child(ren)	\$1,690	\$1,690
Family	\$2,230	\$2,230

(the rates are posted on www.eccenter.com)

The new plan with CIGNA should have overall better benefits than our plan with United Healthcare (UHC). There are enough differences in the plans (CIGNA vs UHC) to not to be able to give a concise listing of all the differences. The HRA will continue at the same reimbursement levels at \$500 for covered medical services, \$1,800 for prescriptions and \$1,800 for outpatient therapy services.

EC Benefits Corporation received a \$15,900 medical loss ratio rebate check from United Healthcare for calendar year 2019. Medical loss ratio rebates are required by law when a health insurance's plan utilization falls below a minimum threshold. The medical loss ratio rebate will be distributed to the churches that participated in the United Healthcare insurance plan at any time during October to December 2019. The distribution will be prorated based on the coverage type (single, couple or family). With 45 or so participants on the plan it is anticipated that the refunds will be between \$150 to \$500. We hope to have the refund checks issued by the end of September.

If you are an EC Pastor below Medicare Eligibility age and not on the EC group health insurance plan you must complete a Health Insurance Election Not to Enroll form that is available on the website, <http://www.eccenter.com/Left/Member-Login/Benefits-Information/Health-Insurance.aspx>. The form must be completed each year by **December 15**. Please return the completed form to Dave King. The form may be mailed, faxed 717-866-7583 or returned electronically, dking@eccenter.com. If you are returning the form electronically, please do not include your social security number.

Highmark Senior Blue Renewal

The rates for the Highmark Freedom Blue plan are increasing by \$4/month to \$249/month per person with minor changes in benefits. The change will be effective on January 1, 2021 to be paid by December 15, 2020.

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.

With the cancellation of the 2020 National Conference, changes to pastoral compensation will not be approved until the National Ministry Team takes action to approve the Pastoral Compensation report on October 22, 2020. The 2021 Pastoral Compensation Forms will be available on the Church Center website shortly after Oct 22, 2020. Expect the Social Security Administration to release the 2020 COLA in late October 2020, if we are lucky. Early estimates from various internet bloggers is for a 1.10% to 1.30% COLA for 2021. Please be respectful and honoring of the job your pastor is doing and offer as much of an annual salary increase as is possible. In addition, the National Conference adopted the statement that “Churches that are financially able are encouraged to give either a larger percentage increase or to consider an additional increase as a merit raise in salary for each pastor. This merit raise would be in addition to the approved percentage salary increase.” The changes in Sunday morning worship services, ministry programs and church operations caused by the pandemic have been hard on pastors. They deserve to be rewarding for the job they are doing.

Please contact Dave King, dking@eccenter.com, or me, Kevin Henry, khenry@eccenter.com, 1-800-866-7581, with any questions or problems.

Kevin Henry
Executive Director

David King
Benefits Administrator

Global Ministries Community

- > **CORRECTION:** We listed the new street address for **BJ & Rachel Whitaker** incorrectly in last month's prayer guide. The correct street name is **Calle Salvador Dali 12**; evidently named after the famous artist. So sorry!
- > Several of our missionaries have reported testing positive for Covid 19, but thankfully they had only minor symptoms. They quarantined as directed and most are recovered now. Please keep them in prayer for full recovery with no lingering effects.
- > **Jonathan and Kathy Wilson** left in mid-September for their village in Nindewari. They will be working on scripture translation with local translators among the Binandere people until mid-November. While in the village, they cannot receive or respond to email.
- > **Randy and Chris Amberman** thank everyone for their prayers for safety. The wildfires that have been devastating much of the Midwest have not directly affected where the Ambermans live in the Four Corners area of New Mexico. However, they are getting the smoke and some ash from the fires, making breathing outside a bit uncomfortable.
- > **Chris and Deb Bowers** give praise that Deb's neck pain is much better, thanks to physical therapy. Originally the neurosurgeon was recommending surgery, but now feels that can be postponed indefinitely, as there is no permanent nerve damage. Deb still has significant neck pain and would appreciate continued prayers for total healing.
- > **Ed and Val Schubert** give praise that more damage wasn't done to their house and property during a recent severe thunderstorm. Many large trees came down, bringing down electrical wires and a transformer. Ed had been standing outside under the porch and had barely moved when a tree came crashing down, hitting the porch where he had been standing. Praise God for His deliverance!
- > **Brian & Missy Wagner** were able to get back to Kenya in mid-August. One of the trickier parts of their return wasn't the plane tickets, but getting a Covid test done and results within 96 hours of leaving the USA and arriving in Kenya. Praise God they were able to do that! The Wagners had to self-quarantine for two weeks upon arrival but were able to do so in time to begin the fall semester at RVA, which is online.
- > **FYI** – the Global Ministries office will be printing a fall/winter edition of our magazine, **Window on the World**. If you would like a copy mailed to you or if your church would like multiple copies, just let us know by October 6th. We will be happy to get it to you.

October is Pastor Appreciation Month!



Anytime is a good time to express appreciation for pastors, but especially during Pastor Appreciation Month in October. October is the time to give focused attention to appreciating your pastor(s) in tangible ways.

Pastor Appreciation Month is a special time that congregations set aside each year to honor their pastors and pastoral families for the hard work, sacrificial dedication and multiple blessings provided by these special people. It is also important to remember that appreciation, affirmation and prayer support of our spiritual leaders is appropriate throughout the entire year.

Often the main work of a pastor is thought to be the time in front of the congregation on Sunday, but many of these pastors not only serve their church but also their community throughout the year. Recognizing the commitments and sacrifices of those who lead churches and care for communities is behind Pastor Appreciation Month.

That's why God has instructed us to recognize His servants, "The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching". (1 Timothy 5:17) The partnership between the church body and the pastor(s) is a significant key to the effectiveness and well-being of your church. There are endless ideas of ways to celebrate and appreciate your pastor on the internet.

National Collection Week
NOVEMBER 16-23, 2020



SEND GOOD NEWS

and Great Joy to the Ends of the Earth

SAMARITAN'S PURSE PARTNERS WITH LOCAL CHURCHES GLOBALLY to deliver gift-filled shoeboxes in Jesus' Name, sharing the Gospel and teaching the boys and girls how to follow Jesus through follow-up discipleship.

"Go into all the world and proclaim the Gospel to the whole creation." —Mark 16:15 (ESV)

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Kingdom Extension Community

The Art of Conversation



Conversation! When was the last time you started a conversation? With a stranger? Smooth? Awkward? When was the last time a conversation included Jesus?

As Christians, we get to talk about Jesus. Sharing Jesus usually starts with a conversation and a relationship and trust. Consider developing new conversational skills.

This 2-hour workshop (Live or Zoom) is a conversation about conversations. There is an art to making space for conversations.

Discover resources, develop ideas, and practice the art of moving from “hello” to something deeper, even gospel-focused. Deciding to be prepared usually guarantees they will happen. Resources and ideas will address starting conversations, redirecting conversations, and leaving space for future conversations.

Let’s talk about how this workshop might fit the needs of your church family (717-951-8433 or revcool@ptd.net); and when a workshop would fit into your schedule.

Powerful Leadership and Prepared Members

It’s a great feeling to know that your leadership positions are all filled. It is equally satisfying to know your people want to make a difference. It’s a different reality, however, knowing the right person is in the right role for the right reason.

God empowers his Church through spiritual gifts, holy enablements given to each believer. Identifying and developing our spiritual gifts are steps toward impactful ministry. We can do the best we can do or we can thrive as we effectively serve out of our gifting.

A Leadership Grip workshop (Live or Zoom) would provide insights on building a better church leadership team, as well as help you equip your congregation, for powerful ministries. And maybe save someone from burnout!

Let’s talk about how this workshop might fit the needs of your church family (717-951-8433 or revcool@ptd.net); and when a workshop would fit into your schedule.



The Art of Neighboring: Connecting with our Local Communities

This hands-on workshop (Live or Zoom) 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. *(continued on page 10)*

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.



Let's talk about how this workshop might fit the needs of your church family (717-951-8433 or revcool@ptd.net); and when a workshop would fit into your schedule.

These training sessions can be provided now, Live or Zoom (or we can schedule an event for the fall / winter). Plan now to launch new and exciting connectional ministries as you slide into your new normal. Contact Les Cool (717-951-8433 or revcool@ptd.net) for more information or to schedule an event for your church, district, or community (share! invite other local congregations to join you).



Evangelical Congregational Church

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Who We Are

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1 Peter 2:9

JODI EARHART • KEVIN HENRY • BISHOP BRUCE HILL •
DAVID KING • SHIRLEY LONG • REV. TED RATHMAN •
PATRICIA STRAIN • PATRICIA WOLFE • ABIGAIL ZIMMERMAN

October 2020

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Ministry Funds to: E. C. Church 100 W. Park Ave. Myerstown, PA 17067	Insurance Payments to: Benefits Corp. 100 W. Park Ave. Myerstown, PA 17067	Kingdom Extensions Offering to: E. C. Church 100 West Park Ave. Myerstown, PA 17067		1	2 Day of Prayer for the E.C. Church	3
					Twin Pines Getaway Weekend	
4 WORLD WIDE COMMUNION Day of Prayer for Kingdom Extension KEC Special Offering	5	6	7	8	9 E.C. Ethos Class	10 E.C. Ethos Class
Twin Pines Getaway Weekend		Twin Pines Fall Fix up			Twin Pines Getaway Weekend	
11	12 PMT Mtg.	13	14	15	16	17
Twin Pines Getaway Weekend	COLUMBUS DAY			Health Insurance Due	Twin Pines Getaway Weekend	
18	19	20 Info. for the November E.C. Leader Is Due	21	22	23	24
Twin Pines Getaway Weekend		Twin Pines Celebration Banquet	CNT Strategic Team Mtg.	National Ministry Team Mtg.	Twin Pines Women's Getaway Weekend	
					Twin Pines Getaway Weekend	
25 Twin Pines Women's Getaway Weekend	26	27	28	29	30	31
Twin Pines Getaway Weekend						

November 2020

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 Day of Prayer for Kingdom Extension	2	3 ELECTION DAY	4	5	6 Day of Prayer for the E.C. Church Twin Pines Jr./Sr. High Fall Retreat	7
8 Twin Pines Jr./Sr. High Fall Retreat	9	10 Stoneridge Board Mtg. Finance Mtg.	11 VETERAN'S DAY	12	13 Twin Pines Men's Weekend	14 Health Insurance Due
15 Twin Pines Men's Weekend	16	17	18	19	20 Info. for the November E.C. Leader Is Due	21
22 Thankoffering (voluntary)	23	24	25	26 THANKSGIVING DAY CHURCH CENTER CLOSED	27 CHURCH CENTER CLOSED	28
29 FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT	30	Ministry Funds to: E. C. Church 100 W. Park Ave. Myerstown, PA 17067 Insurance Payments to: Benefits Corp. 100 W. Park Ave. Myerstown, PA 17067 Thankoffering (Voluntary) to: E. C. Church 100 W. Park Ave. Myerstown, PA 17067 (designate: Thankoffering)				