

EC LEADER

A PUBLICATION OF EVANGELICAL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

JULY/AUGUST 2017

What if “Something More” became “Even More”?

I recently reminded the members of National Conference that back in 2015 we dreamed that our annual denominational gathering could become “something more.” Our denominational forefathers thought it was a good thing to conference. For them “conference” was a verb more than an institution; it was important in advancing the Good News about Jesus. This year, in addition to business, we spent more time in fellowship with each other, and in times of worship, and celebration. We participated in the “Kingdom & Community Experience” in which we interactively discovered the help and resources our communities and denominational personnel can provide to a local EC Church in order to be healthy and impact its community with the Gospel.

National Conference 2017 is now a memory; but what if that “something more” could become “even more”? Is it possible that the

conversations we had during that exercise could continue into more discussions in our local congregations and in our districts? During that afternoon there was a lot of good interaction about how we understand and accept our current congregational reality, how to integrate disciple-making in our churches, how we can help congregations grow in spiritual health, and how we can effectively impact our communities for the Kingdom. There was a lot of buzz that carried over into the evening and even Friday morning. Praise the Lord



that we were able to experience the “something more.” But why let it stop there? Why not take it to the next level of “even more”?

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(What if “Something More” became “Even More”? Continued from page 1)

What I've been thinking about since National Conference is how we can continue the conversations in such a way that we coach ourselves forward to “even more.” Maybe, for you, that means using the “Show Me Health—Vital Signs of a Healthy Church” worksheet with your local leadership team. Perhaps a conversation with Les Cool, Kingdom Extension Associate, or Gary Kuehner, Church Health Associate is in order. Or it could be that District Field Directors continue the conversation with their pastors based on the green GROWTH sheet from National Conference. Those are only three rather simple and easy ideas. The question really becomes a personal one for each leader in a local congregation—what will you do to “Press

On” and enable your congregation to “Press On” to greater spiritual health and Kingdom effectiveness?

My prayer is that as we “Press On” together the “something more” of National Conference will become “even more” in the weeks and months to come. May our time together, our worship and learning, impact our congregations and our communities as God’s Kingdom, his will, is done in our hearts, lives, and ministries!

In Christ’s Service,



Ordination Services



The ordination of **Rev. Wayne T. Houck**
Trinity Evangelical Congregational
Church
Royersford, Pennsylvania
Sunday, September 10, 4:00 p.m.

The ordination of **David M. Julian**
Grace Community Church
Willow Street, Pennsylvania
Sunday, October 8, 4:00 p.m.

The ordination of **Rev. Gene L. Stevenson**
Zion Evangelical Congregational Church
Myerstown, Pennsylvania
Sunday, October 15, 4:00 p.m.

The ordination of **Rev. Andrew D. Carr**
Wedgewood Park Evangelical
Congregational Church
Youngstown, Ohio
Sunday, October 22, 4:00 p.m.

The ordination of **Rev. Jeffrey S.
Stansbury**
First Evangelical Congregational Church
Palmyra, Pennsylvania
Sunday, January 28, 4:00 p.m.

Bishop's Top Ten Prayer & Praise List

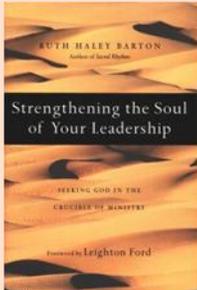
1. Pray along with me for the many conversations which will continue as a result of our Kingdom & Community Experience at National Conference as, together, we “Press On”!
2. Pray for Randy & Carla Sizemore, me and a few others who are traveling to Mexico for the celebration of our denomination’s newest National Conference: the EC Church of Latin America. Pray, too, for our Mexican brothers and sisters as some of them travel through dangerous areas.
3. Join me in praying for all the young people who will be attending one of our camps: Camp ECCO, Rock River, and Twin Pines. May the Lord touch hearts and may they respond to him.
4. Pray for rest and restoration as Gloria and I, and many other pastoral couples and families, take time off during the summer for much needed vacation.
5. Ask the Holy Spirit to speak through the many services and programs which will be held at our various Camp Meeting grounds: Herndon, Rosedale and Waldheim.
6. Praise the Lord for new ministry opportunities that are part of our stationing process as new pastors and churches begin to work together for the Kingdom.
7. As we celebrate Independence Day, thank God for our country. We certainly have lots of problems and issues; but we also have received many blessings.
8. Thank the Lord for new opportunities to share our love for him with those we will meet at picnics, bar-b-ques, and other summertime outdoor events.
9. Praise the Lord for the men who will be ordained in five different services this fall as they continue to serve him faithfully.
10. It’s another cool rainy day as I write this but eventually you may join Gloria in praising the Lord for hot summer days! The rest of you can thank the Lord for the person who invented air-conditioning.



Kingdom Extension Community

Resources for the Local Church

SOUL CARE



Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership: Seeking God in the Crucible of Ministry by Ruth Haley Barton

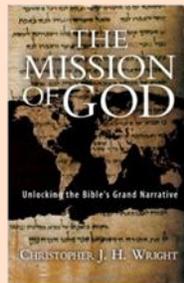
Barton helps us consider the danger of ignoring the health of our souls as we lead. It is possible to do good things while destroying ourselves or even our churches. She helps us identify the danger areas, teaches us the art of

paying attention to our souls and guides us toward healthy rhythms in ministry. A good resource for the leader, Barton's book becomes even more valuable when read by leadership teams. Strengthening the soul of your leadership conversations create a network of relationships that will serve each member and your church for years to come. (recommended by Les Cool)

RETHINKING HOW WE THINK

The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative by Christopher Wright

Wright's book is for those interested in what the "missional" shift is all about and is a biblically faithful, thorough and compelling explanation of the mission of God in the world. Wright makes it clear that as God's people we are expected to continue in that mission not simply as one thing among others but as the fundamental purpose of the church in the world. (recommended by Tim Seiger)



The Blue Parakeet: Rethinking How You Read the Bible by Scot McKnight

McKnight takes us on a serious journey into and out of our approach to Bible reading and study. Do we merely assume "what was then" should be for now? Do we pick and choose the nuggets we want to consider? Do we have a system

(besides "it works for me") regarding the application of "old" commands? McKnight challenges us to read the Bible as it was written—it's a story, an unfolding drama of God and Creation (including and especially man). If it's a story, the end rests upon the rest of the story. There is no picking and

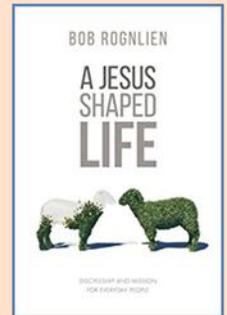


choosing of "favorite" nuggets. There is no static Law. Everything must be applied in the context of the reading. "What was then" may be true, but what should it look like today? (recommended by Les Cool)

MISSIONAL LIVING

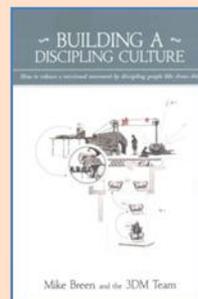
A Jesus Shaped Life: Discipleship and Mission for everyday people by Bob Rognlien

You are invited to reflect on your way of life in light of the life Jesus lived. This is a practical guide to following Jesus more closely, living as a part of his extended family, and finding the power to do your part in his mission to change the world. (recommended by Al Giles)



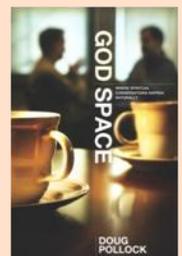
Building a Discipling Culture: How to release a missional movement by discipling people like Jesus did by Mike Breen and the 3DM Team

This is the textbook for initiating a disciple-making culture in your context. It is the framework for the training of discipling leaders who learn how to listen to the Father, move into healthier rhythms of life, balance the 3 central relationships that Jesus pursued, and most importantly, how to train others to reproduce the Jesus life into small groups who will do the same! (recommended by Al Giles)



God Space: Where Spiritual Conversations Happen Naturally by Doug Pollock

Pollock uses stories to help us imagine the bridges we might make use of to place the gospel before the lost people in our lives. An everyday conversation can become a moment of witness. That brief moment at work or play, across the back yard fence, could be a moment of witness. (recommended by Les Cool)





W. Joel Copeland, Jr.

In 1985 Joel began his service as a VA Chaplain by serving as a contract Chaplain at Batavia, NY V.A. Medical Center where he served until 1988 under endorsement by the Wesleyan Church.

Joel joined our denomination in 1988 and was assigned to pastor Myerstown EC Church for 7 years. He then pastored Rexmont EC Church part-time for 3 years. He and his family are still associated with the Rexmont church.

While he was at Rexmont the Evangelical Congregational Church endorsed him to serve as a fee base Chaplain at the Coatesville VA Medical Center in May, 1996. The next March he was endorsed as a full time Veterans Affairs Chaplain in Coatesville and served on the staff of 5. While there he achieved Board Certified Chaplain status in Feb. 2004 and the next year he was granted a Competency in Hospice and Palliative Care. In Feb. 2008 he applied to be assigned to the Lebanon PA V.A. Medical Center as a Clinical Staff Chaplain. In May 2012, Joel was promoted to become the Chief of Chaplaincy Service at Lebanon V.A. Medical Center, and he has served in the position until the present and his retirement from the Chaplaincy on May 31, 2017, with 20 years of service to the VA endorsed by the Evangelical Congregational Church.

We are grateful for Joel's faithful service over the years to our denomination and to the veterans and the staff members of the V.A. Medical Centers where he served.

PRAY TOGETHER SUNDAY Calling Church to Join in Prayer on July 9

The National Association of Evangelicals encourages churches across the country to commit to a time of prayer for spiritual renewal during their worship service on July 9. Together we will lift our voices on behalf of our communities and nation.

At the heart of Pray Together Sunday is the belief that Jesus changes everything. With one voice, we will ask him to transform our congregations, communities and nation for his glory. We will join together and ask God for renewal in our own hearts and in those around us.

For more information go to www.NAE.net/praytogether



Financial Solutions for Pastors and Churches

The majority of pastors faithfully serve in small congregations with financial challenges. Others serve in churches with larger budgets and salaries. Regardless of what a pastor's personal and church income looks like, all can benefit from discovering the best financial practices for their home and church. The NAE Financial Health project launched a website to help pastor do just that.

NAEfinancialhealth.org offers self-assessment surveys where pastors can learn their Financial Health Score and discover action steps for improvement in different areas of financial health. The site also brings together a vast collection of Best Practices resources from financial health experts. Pastors and their spouses—or pastors and church leadership teams—can also sign up for online training in which they meet



once a month and work together on shared goals.

The NAE began planning for the project in 2015 with surveys of pastors and denominational leaders, a consultation of church leaders and an initial assessment of existing financial resources designed for pastors. The NAE is also partnering with a small group of NAE member denominations to offer matching grants to pastors with financial needs.

More from the Kingdom Extension Community

Peers in Ministry,

I was impressed by a brief piece written by Pat Strain. She captured a significant concern for our churches—the use of cleverness over desperate dependence upon God, upon the power of the presence of Jesus' Spirit. He gave His Spirit to infuse life into us and into the Church (our churches) that carry His name. I have asked that this piece be reproduced to make sure as many of us as possible read it, even take it to heart. There is nothing wrong with being clever. Let's choose, however, to be clever after we get up from our prayer time.

Les Cool

for the Kingdom Extension Community

Raising the Dead

In the classic horror novel Frankenstein, author Mary Shelley tells the story of a man so driven with grief at the loss of a loved one that he tries to recreate life artificially. The result, a creature cobbled together with the parts of various human bodies, is brought to life from a bolt of lightning, but is a hideous creature that his creator sees as a monster. The book ends with creature and creator pursuing each other to their deaths.

Sometimes I wonder if we don't use the Dr. Frankenstein method to try to bring new life to our struggling or dying churches. We try new programs, we add (or subtract) praise choruses for hymns, we take out the pews for more com-



fortable seating, we get rid of the organ and have a praise band, etc. In other words, we try all sorts of artificial means to breathe new life into our church body. Please don't misunderstand me; there is nothing wrong with these methods in and of themselves. But it's unlikely that they will rejuvenate a church if there is no desire to change and grow. If you'll forgive the mixed religious metaphor, sometimes we

use these ideas as a Hail Mary pass. (If you don't understand that reference, just ask any football fan.)

In Ezekiel 37, the prophet writes that the Lord took him into a valley of dry bones and told him to prophesy to them. In verses 7-8, Ezekiel says, "...And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound and the bones came together, bone to bone. I looked, and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them." He continues in verse 9 "This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe into these slain, that they may live." (NIV)

Just as when Ezekiel stood in the valley of the dry bones, there is no life until the Spirit of the Lord breathes into the body. My adult Sunday School has begun a study on the Holy Spirit, and all of us in the class have been struck by how most of our evangelical churches do not put any emphasis on this person of the Trinity. Yet Jesus told his disciples that it was better for him to go, so the Counselor could come.

*The EC Church Center
will be closed on Fridays
for the summer
starting Friday, July 7th
through September 1st*



Evangelical Congregational Church

100 West Park Avenue
Myerstown, PA 17067
717-866-7581
www.eccenter.com



News from the Executive Director:

I am glad to see reimbursements from the HRA are trending upward. Funds are available to reimburse for covered health care expenses above the annual out of pocket limit of \$500, excluding co-pays, is available through the HRA. The HRA will reimburse for out of pocket prescription cost above \$1,800/yr and therapy co-pay visits (occupational, physical, speech and respiratory therapy) above \$1,800/yr. Instructions and forms for HRA reimbursements are available on the website or call Dave King or Kevin Henry at the Church Center and we will walk you through the HRA reimbursement process.

If your church is changing pastors on July 1 please be aware that benefit payments may change, e.g. health insurance and pension. Every year there is at least one change in health insurance coverage at a church that is a surprise to us. Pastors and their families are not covered by our health insurance plan until a Capital Blue Cross application is completed, submitted and accepted for processing. Please remind a new pastor joining our health insurance plan to contact Dave King for a Capital Blue Cross and Prime Pay applications. Pastors must also complete a form to cancel their health insurance. The application to join the plan and the insurance cancellation form requires the pastor's signature to be valid. A church will continue to be billed for health insurance until the cancellation form is processed.

Worker's Compensation: Thank you to all that have timely paid the worker's compensation invoices. For those that haven't the due date was May 15. Payment for the Disability and Benefit Corp Services fee were due January 15 and April 15 respectively, both fees are listed on the 2017 Treasurer's Guide available on www.eccenter.com.

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

Group Property & Liability Insurance Program

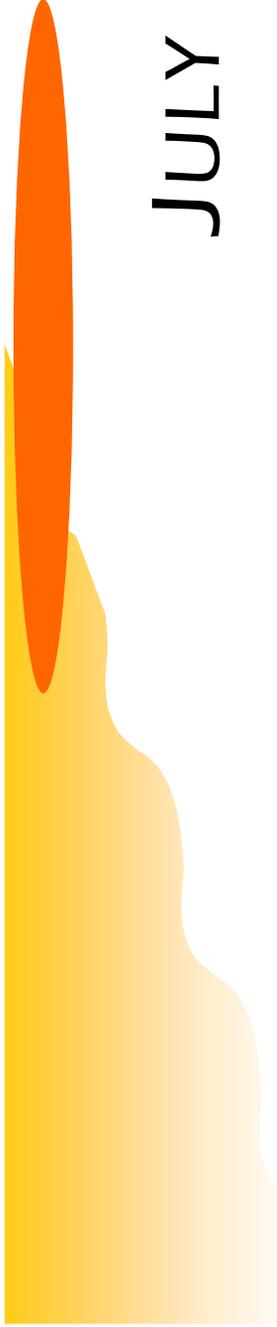
The National Conference of the Evangelical Congregational Church entered into a partnership with the Church Mutual Insurance Co. to offer EC Churches discounts on property

and liability insurance as well as the possibility of a group dividend rebate. Multiple churches reported receiving a comprehensive insurance review by a Church Mutual representative please contact Mike Ricci, 215-828-1327 or mricci@churchmutual.com. EC Churches in all states are eligible to participate in the premium discounts and dividend rebate program.



I had a great week with the ULead campers & staff at Rock River Bible Camp. A good group of campers open to the teaching with a desire to discern **God's plan for their life. Thanks to Dave Carr for inviting me to ULead and for Nettie and Marilyn's** work in the kitchen keeping everyone well fed and hydrated. I enjoyed serving with the other camp staff: Annette, Chuck, Franklin, Gary and Jill. God was at work directing the teachers to speak on relevant coordinated topics and pulling all the practical details together for a successful camp.

Kevin Henry
Executive Director



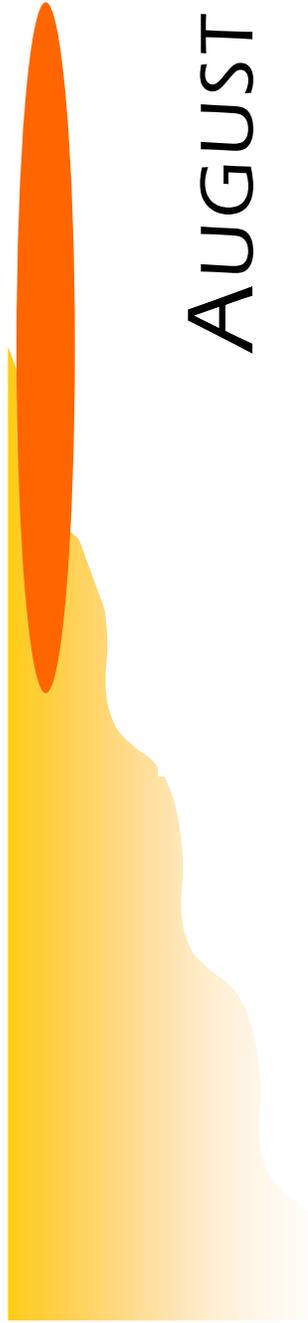
JULY 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Herndon Campmeeting—July 21-30 Rosedale Campmeeting—July 30-Aug 6 Waldheim Campmeeting	www.herndoncampmeeting.org www.rosedalegrove.org www.waldheimpark.org					1
2 Day of Prayer for Church Planting	3 Church Center closed	4 INDEPENDENCE DAY Church Center closed	5 Church Center closed	6 Church Center closed	7 Day of Prayer for the EC Church Church Center closed	8 Church Center closed
9	10	11	12	13	14 Church Center closed	15 Church Pension Contribution Due Health Insurance Premium Due
16	17	18 Benefits Corp Mtg.	19	20	21 Church Center closed	22
23	24	25	26	27	28 Church Center closed	29
30	31					

Ministry Funds to:
E.C. Church Center
100 West Park Avenue
Myerstown, PA 17067

Manna Fund to:
Benefits Corp.
100 West Park Avenue
Myerstown, PA 17067
(designated—Manna Fund)

Medical/Insurance/Pension Payments to:
Benefits Corp.
100 West Park Avenue
Myerstown, PA 17067



AUGUST 2017

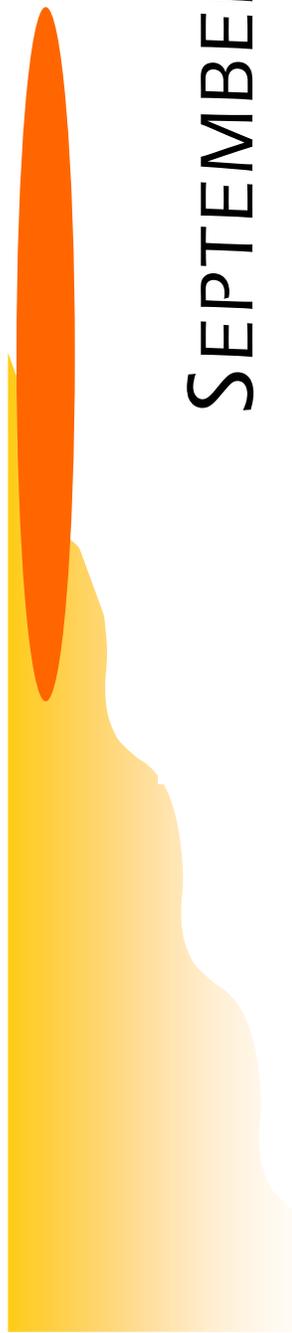
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3 Episcopacy Committee Mtg.	4 Day of Prayer for the EC Church Church Center closed	5
6 Day of Prayer for Church Planting	7	8	9	10 Finance Committee Mtg.	11 Church Center closed	12
13	14 Prayer Mobilization Team Mtg.	15 Church Pension Contribution Due Health Insurance Premium Due	16	17	18 Church Center closed	19
20	21	22	23	24	25 Church Center closed	26
27	28	29 StoneRidge Board Mtg.	30	31		

Ministry Funds to:
E.C. Church Center
100 West Park Avenue
Myerstown, PA 17067

Twin Pines Offering to:
Twin Pines Camp
3000 Twin Pines Camp Road
Stroudsburg, PA 18360

Manna Fund to:
Benefits Corp.
100 West Park Avenue
Myerstown, PA 17067
(designated—Manna Fund)

Medical/Insurance/Pension Payments to:
Benefits Corp.
100 West Park Avenue
Myerstown, PA 17067



SEPTEMBER 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
3 Day of Prayer for Church Planting	4 LABOR DAY Church Center closed	5	6	7 Benefits Corp. Mtg.	8 1 Day of Prayer for the EC Church Church Center closed	9
10 Rev. Wayne T. Houck Ordination	11 Prayer Mobilization Team Mtg.	12	13	14	15 Ch Pension Contrib Due Health Ins Prem Due Est Tax Pmt. Due	16
17 CAMP ECCO WOMEN'S RETREAT	18	19	20	21	22 CAMP ECCO WOMEN'S RETREAT	23
24	25	26	27 Church Health Community Mtg.	28	29	30 CAMP ECCO MEN'S RETREAT

Ministry Funds to:
E.C. Church Center
100 West Park Avenue
Myerstown, PA 17067

Medical/Insurance/Pension Payments to:
Benefits Corp.
100 West Park Avenue
Myerstown, PA 17067