

JULY / AUGUST 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

The song “Summertime” was written in 1934 by George Gershwin and DuBose Howard as part of the opera “Porgy and Bess”. There are over 25,000 recordings of the song, according to Wikipedia. The first line of that song declares “Summertime, an’ the livin’ is easy.” I am not sure the “livin’” was that easy in the summer of 1934, but I am absolutely sure it’s not true in 2020.

Think about what we have all experienced in 2020. It began with impeachment hearings in Washington D.C. Then, before we knew it, we were dealing with a pandemic. Then racial tensions boiled over into protests and riots. Summertime begins and we wonder if we dare take a vacation while we prepare for whatever comes next (can you say presidential election?).

It will be up to the historians to decide what 2020 is best remembered for, but I believe it very well could be the year of exhaustion. Our senses and sensibilities have been assaulted. Most of the people I know and talk with are simply worn out. Emotionally, physically, and spiritually exhausted. We're too tired to even plan a vacation and where do you go, anyway?

Elijah, after the overwhelming victory over false priests and prophets and their false gods on Mount Carmel, soon said to the Lord “I have had enough, LORD.” Elijah was worn out, exhausted. The first instructions from the Lord were to eat, drink, and sleep. Then the Lord instructed him to travel to Mount Sinai. If you know the account found in 1 Kings 19, you know that when Elijah arrived on the mountain, he experienced a windstorm so strong that the rocks were torn loose. That was followed by an earthquake, and then a fire. “And after the fire there was the sound of a gentle whisper”; many of us remember that passage as “a still small voice.” You see while the wind, earthquake and fire were all impressive, the Lord was not in them. There is a difference between the power of God and the presence of God.

What do we need when livin’ is anything but easy? First, I need to understand, it’s okay to say to God (and to some trusted friends) “I’ve had enough”; “I’m worn out”; “I just want to quit”. When we’re exhausted, we may think we need more power; when the truth is, we need more of God’s presence. My prayer for you, as you read this, is that even now, in the middle of the year of exhaustion, you will experience the deep and abiding presence of God in your heart and life. May he restore your soul.

In Christ’s Service,



Rev. Bruce D. Hill
Bishop



Bishop's Top 10 Prayer & Praise

1. Join me in praying for the new pastoral appointments which begin July 1, and after.
2. Keep praying for our pastors and lay leaders as we all navigate the "new normal."
3. Ask the Lord to bless the children in our congregations and neighborhoods whose lives have been so impacted by the pandemic.
4. Pray for our nation and leaders as we deal with so many challenging issues at this time in our history.
5. Ask for the Lord's leading in the lives of our international E.C. conferences as they too deal with the effects of the pandemic, many in less than ideal conditions.
6. Praise the Lord for the ability to be the "gathered" church as in-person worship services are held once again. (But continue to be safe!).
7. Thank the Lord that while the vacation season looks very different, pastors and families can still get some time away to be refreshed and restored.
8. Praise God for those who are creatively developing childrens' ministries like Vacation Bible School, neighborhood clubs, and video lessons.
9. Praise the Lord that we've discovered we have the ability to reach more people with the Gospel through all kinds of online platforms.
10. Some of you can join Gloria in praising the Lord for hot weather; the rest can pray for fall to arrive early.



News from the Executive Director

Disbursements from the Health Reimbursement Account are available for any pastor on the United Healthcare plan. HRA Disbursements this year are about the same as previous years which translates to, they are lower than they probably should be. Funds are available to reimburse for covered health care expenses above the annual out of pocket limit of \$500, excluding co-pays. The HRA will reimburse for out of pocket prescription drug 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. Dave & Kevin strongly recommend submitting all HRA claims electronically through the PrimePay website.

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 United Healthcare application is completed, submitted, and accepted for processing. Please remind a new pastor joining our health insurance plan to contact Dave King for a United Healthcare 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.

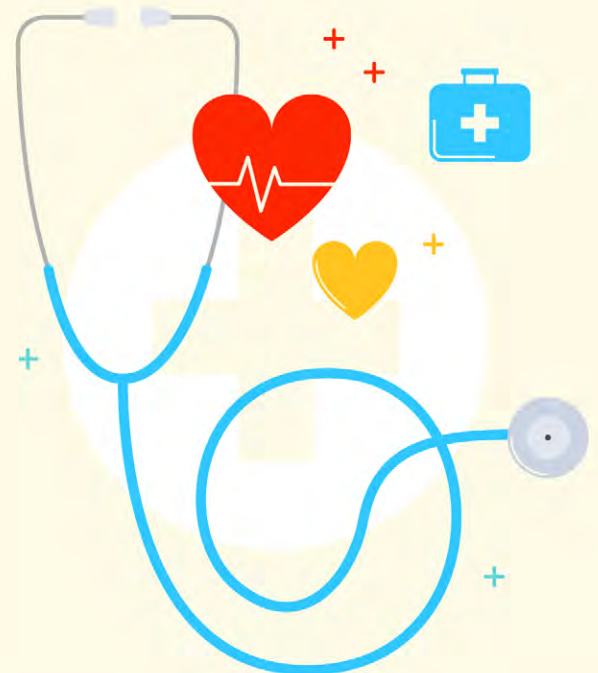
Workers Compensation:

Our apologies for the late workers compensation invoices. Each church should have received an invoice by late June. Please remit the payment as soon as you are able.

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

Kevin Henry
Executive Director

David King
Benefits Administrator



Global Ministries Community

- > Our **VBS project** for this year is to raise funds for our **EC Church of Latin America**. They want to renovate a building to use for training programs for teaching children. The goal is \$10,000. We realize that many of your churches may not have a VBS this summer due to Covid 19. If that is the case, would you consider taking a special VBS offering to help our Mexican brothers and sisters continue their outreach in their communities, especially to children? You can mail it to Church Center, marked 'VBS offering' and it will be used for that purpose. You can also donate online at our EC website. Gracias! (Thank you!)
- > **Rev. Yoriyoshi & Emiko Abe** give thanks for the many prayers offered on behalf of their three-month-old daughter Wakana. She had to be hospitalized in late May, showing signs of Kawasaki disease. This is a side effect of Covid 19 that has been affecting some children. It affects their hearts and can be fatal. Most children outgrow it. Wakana had to be hospitalized for five days, but she recovered and is home with her family. Thank you, Lord!
- > Unfortunately, **Rev. Tomoyuki & Jessica Abe** and family were unable to come to the USA this month as they had planned. There are still restrictions on international travel, both coming and going, so even if they had come, they would have faced a two-week quarantine.
- > Congratulations to **Rev. Paozathang Singson**, the new General Director of the Evangelical Congregational Church of India. He was elected in a special session on May 9th, since ECCL, just as EC Church-USA, couldn't hold their annual conference. Rev. Singson served as a missionary with ECCL before becoming the Mission Director for his presbytery, the position he held up to his election. Please keep Rev. Singson in prayer as he takes on the responsibility of the leadership of our largest national EC Conference – almost 60,000 members!
- > We also give praise that **Justin Wilson**, son of missionaries Jonathan & Kathy Wilson, is home and recovered from an emergency appendectomy in late May. Justin had a stone that perforated his appendix, so he was rushed to the hospital before sepsis set in. His sisters Sarah and Jonita flew to Nebraska to help Justin's wife Kelsie with their three children while he was under the weather.
- > Brian & Missy Wagner plan to return to Rift Valley Academy in Kijabe, Kenya early next month. They are finishing their year of home assignment and are eager to get back to teaching and other responsibilities at RVA. Pray that the staff and students will all be able to return and gather safely for the new school year.

Kingdom Extension Community

Redeem Your Days IN Quarantine!

This is not simply down time, this is time to anticipate and to prepare.

Even while we cannot “be” together as we used to be together, we can work together to become more, better equipped, ready to face post-quarantine church and community life. Invest in yourself, your leadership team, and your congregation for an anticipated new normal that includes healthy leaders, productive leadership teams, and intentional ministries. The following development resources will help you intentionally prepare for what might be next for you and your congregation. Each can be accessed by Zoom today.

Evangelism Starts with a Conversation

Conversation! When was the last time you started a conversation? With a stranger? Sharing Jesus usually starts with a conversation and a relationship and trust. Consider developing new conversational skills.

This Zoom workshop (or we can schedule an event for early fall) is a conversation is 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. Missional conversations might just happen. Deciding to be prepared usually guarantees they will happen. Resources and ideas will address starting conversations, redirecting conversations, and leaving space for future conversations.

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 Zoom workshop (or we can schedule an event for this fall) 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!

The Art of Neighboring: Connecting with our Local Communities

This hands-on workshop (Zoom or live) 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.

These several training sessions can be provided now by Zoom (or we can schedule an event for the fall). Plan now to launch exciting, new 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 (invite other local congregations to join you).



Herndon Camp Meeting

The Board of Herndon Camp Meeting met on June 13 and made the difficult decision to cancel the 2020 Camp Meeting which had been scheduled for July 17 – 26. This decision was made following a lot of prayer and conversation; but given the unpredictability of the pandemic and changing health and safety guidelines it was felt that this was the best decision. We've grown accustomed to hearing phrases like: "out of an abundance of caution" and "in order to protect the most vulnerable" and they really are true.

While this decision was difficult to make, the board looks forward to July 16 – 25, 2021 when, Lord willing, people from all over Pennsylvania will be able to gather together at the grove for times of worship, Bible study, food, and fellowship.



Twin Pines Camp

Twin Pines Camp can open this summer for overnight camp. Measures and practices are in place to ensure the health and safety of the campers. *

Excitingly, we can continue to present Jesus Christ, the salvation offered by Him, and living out the Kingdom of God, to campers. But also opportunities to enjoy God's creation and build relationships with other believers and with God.

If you know of people whose camp is closed this summer, please let them know about Twin Pines Camp.

Twin Pines offers camps for various ages and interests. Check online (www.twinpines.org) for available camps and grades to attend. Most camps are for Elementary, Junior High, and Senior High ages. Reminder: camps are based on grade completed, not entering!

Ensure your Kamp Koordinator is aware of this information so your church can have people as campers this summer.



**The measures and practices in place are based upon the guidance from the American Camp Nurse Association (ACNA), the Center for Disease Control (CDC), and the Christian Camp and Conference Association (CCCA). COVID-19 Information concerning Twin Pines Camp is available on the website.*



Groups had to reschedule their spring retreats, and are looking to do so this fall. As such, fall weekends are filling up.

Fall is an ideal time to schedule a retreat at Twin Pines Camp. There is the change of leaves, the smell of fall, and a chill in the air to enjoy.

Schedule retreats for:

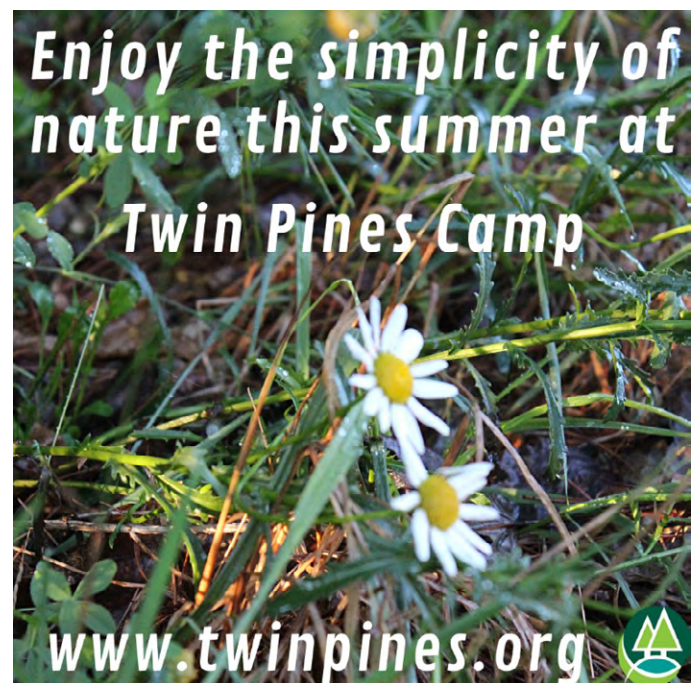
- > church leadership
- > Sunday School classes
- > Small group(s)
- > Men's or Women's groups

To find out if a weekend, or mid-week, is available, please send an email to retreats@twinpines.org, or call 570-629-2411.

What's happening at Twin Pines Camp Fall 2020?

Fall Craft Retreat – September 24-27	
	Enjoy a laid-back weekend of fellowship and Bible study while working on your crafts. Fellowship as you work on things you have put off, such as knitting, quilting, scrapbooks, crocheting, etc.
Fall Fix-Up – October 6-8	
	Help camp to "batten down the hatches" for winter, complete special projects, and extensive cleanup after summer camp has concluded! The various projects are both indoor and outdoor, amongst nature.
October Getaway Weekends – October	
	Getaway for relaxation, relationship building, enjoying nature, and spend time with God. Housing, breakfast, and spiritual guidance materials are provided at the weekend rate. You can choose getaways for Family, Couples or a gathering of your Friends.
Celebration Banquet – October 15	
	Join us for a special evening as we celebrate how God has blessed and used the Ministry of Twin Pines the past year. The banquet is free; however, there is the collection of a free-will offering to support the ministry of Twin Pines Camp. Good 'n' Plenty Restaurant, Smoketown, Pa.

Women's Weekend – October 23-25	
	Women's Weekend – October 23-25 Women will appreciate this weekend together with others to focus on strengthening one's relationship and discipleship of Jesus Christ while getting away and enjoying God's creation. <i>(this is different from the spring For Ladies Only Retreat)</i>
Jr/Sr High Fall Retreat – November 6-8	
	This weekend for youth in grades 6-12 is like a mini week of summer camp. Campers get to participate in many of their favorite camp activities, and reunite with camp friends! They will explore their faith in Jesus Christ through group discussion and Bible study. Twin Pines provides staff for this retreat.
Men's Weekend – November 13-15	
	Men will appreciate a weekend together with other men to focus on strengthening their relationship and discipleship of Jesus Christ. <i>(rescheduled from the Spring)</i>





Evangelical Congregational Church

100 West Park Avenue
Myerstown, PA 17067
717-866-7581
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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

July 2020

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Ministry Funds to: EC Church 100 W. Park Ave. Myerstown, PA 17067	Insurance Payments to: Benefits Corp. 100 W. Park Ave. Myerstown, PA 17067		1	2	3	4
Day of Prayer for Kingdom Extensions	Prayer Mobilization Team Mtg.		8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Herndon Camp Meeting CANCELLED						
		E.C. Benefits Corp. Mtg.			Church Center CLOSED	
26	27	28	29	30	31	
					Church Center CLOSED	

INDEPENDENCE DAY

Herndon Camp Meeting
CANCELLED

CANCELLED

CANCELLED

August 2020

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>Ministry Funds to: EC Church 100 W. Park Ave. Myerstown, PA 17067</p>	<p>Insurance Payments to: Benefits Corp. 100 W. Park Ave. Myerstown, PA 17067</p>					1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<p>Day of Prayer for Kingdom Extensions</p>			<p>Finance Committee Mtg.</p>		<p>Day of Prayer for the EC Church Church Center CLOSED</p>	
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
					<p>Health Insurance Due Church Center CLOSED</p>	
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
		<p>Episcopacy Committee Mtg.</p>		<p>Info. for the September E.C. Leader Is Due</p>	<p>Twin Pines Board Mtg. Church Center CLOSED</p>	
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
<p>Twin Pines Offering (Voluntary)</p>		<p>StoneRidge Board Mtg.</p>			<p>Church Center CLOSED</p>	
30	31					

September 2020

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	4 Day of Prayer for the E.C. Church	5
6 Day of Prayer for Kingdom Extensions	7 LABOR DAY Church Center CLOSED	8	9	10 Evangelical Seminary Golf Tournament	11 Church Center CLOSED	12
13 Student Aid Offering	14	15 Loan & Investment Committee Mtg.	16	17	18	19
20	21 Info. for the October E.C. Leader Is Due	22	23 Church Health Commission Mtg.	24	25	26
27 Twin Pines	28	29	30	Twin Pines Fall Craft Retreat		
				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	Student Aid Offering to: E. C. Church 100 West Park Ave. Myerstown, PA 17067