



# EC LEADER

JANUARY 2018

## From the Bishop:

We live in tumultuous times and it doesn't seem like that's going to change any time soon. We enter a new year; but not much has changed and, for many, it only seems to get worse. What's your attitude when facing the New Year—insecurity or confidence? As a human, I can understand the feeling of uncertainty; but as a follower of Jesus I am called to live in confidence.

We don't know when David wrote Psalm 27 but he begins with a strong word of testimony, "The Lord is my light and salvation." When we study the Bible we are tempted to believe that this whole concept of Jesus being the light is a Gospel of John, New Testament, kind of thing. The reality is that throughout God's interaction with his people in both the Old and New Testament he is seen as a light to his people.

In 21st Century America we tend to take light for granted. It wasn't that long ago when the sun went down, it was dark. Many of us have traveled to

places in the world where that is still the experience for most people. When the sun goes down, its dark; no paved roads, no smooth sidewalks; they walk crooked, uneven, stony paths and roads. Spiritually, we also understand the symbolism. All around us people stumble around in spiritual darkness. The dangers of darkness seem obvious to those who walk in the light, but those who walk in darkness have no idea of the spiritual dangers in their path.



Even for the believer, there are lots of dangers along the path of

life. We struggle with issues of faith and doubt; temptation is a constant companion, we all experience struggles with the uncertainties of life. Who of us does not know the pain of uncertainty and fear? The reality is that being a follower of Jesus does not remove you from the difficulties and dangers of life.

The question David had to face, that we need to answer, is what is my response to the rocky path of life?

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David chose to walk with light, with the Lord as his light. His confidence was not in himself, not in his own abilities or strength, but in the Lord who is the light. David's intimate relationship and personal knowledge of God's protecting presence gave him confidence. So David asks, since I have the Lord's light as I walk on my path of life "Why should I be afraid?" and "Why should I tremble?" Yes, as we start a new year we know there will be unpleasant and troubling days and nights. They could cause us to stumble and fall in our walk with the Lord; but not if he is our light.

Let us never forget that as we close the Christmas season, Jesus is the light who gives us life and light so that we can confidently follow him.

In Christ's service,



## Bishop's Top Ten Prayer & Praise List

1. Pray for safety for Gloria and I as we are scheduled to travel to Israel with a group of denominational leaders January 3-13.
2. Pray for the Stationing Committee as they meet for their annual retreat on January 15-16 and begin to work with pastors and congregations to identify new opportunities to fit and flourish in ministry.
3. Pray for all those who will be participating in our Pastoral Assessment Center (Jan. 16-20) as we work together to affirm God's call in the life of each attendee.
4. Ask the Lord to bless the students, faculty, and staff at Evangelical Seminary as they begin a new semester.
5. Pray for Randy Sizemore, Global Ministries Associate, as he travels to Liberia to participate in the annual conference of the EC Church in Liberia.
6. Thank the Lord for opportunities to gather with family and friends over the Christmas season (and for fresh Christmas cookies!).
7. Praise the Lord for the many opportunities to reach people with the Good News about Jesus over the Advent and Christmas season. Pray for opportunities to follow up on their interest.
8. Thank God for the many congregations who are investing time and resources in raising up disciples who are living out a transformed life in a lost and hurting culture.
9. Praise God for EC congregations who are reporting increases in attendance and support for the work of the Kingdom.
10. Praise the Lord that the Evangelical Congregational Church is made up of all kinds of people—lots of colors and languages—all around the world.

CALL ON HIS NAME





# Global Ministries Community

## Prayers for Liberia Trip: January 18-29, 2018

Please be in prayer for Randy Sizemore and Pastor Rick Sergi (chair of the GMC Liberia Committee) as they travel to Liberia for the Annual Conference. While there they plan not only to attend the conference sessions, but to meet with the ECCOL leadership to do some strategic planning for the current literacy project and to help them develop their pastor/lay training program, as well as further our cooperative partnership for the Gospel.

## Missionary Updates and Prayer Requests

*Jim and Joan Farr* return to Papua New Guinea early this month for approximately 10 months on the field. This will be to finish up any open projects, celebrate the Baruga scriptures in the village in June, and make arrangements to sell, give or otherwise dispose of their property as they prepare for retirement in 2019.

*Cassie Wells*, EC missionary candidate with Disciple Makers, has moved to be closer to her work assignment at Kutztown University. Cassie's new address is: 107 South Main Street, Apt. 4, Alburtis, PA 18011.

*Dave Hershey* and the Christian Student Fellowship student members handed out cookies at the Penn State-Berks campus in early December, while asking students how they could pray for them. Since it was the week

before finals, you can guess what most of the prayer requests were for! The CSF students will also be hosting a video game tournament as a way to meet other students who wouldn't attend Bible study.

*Ron and Brenda Anderson* extended their stay with family in the USA after the passing of Ron's mother, mostly to help his father adjust to the loss of his life partner. They had planned to spend Christmas with son Mark and his family, and will return to Spain in mid-January. Please continue to pray for Loren Anderson.

*Beth Grimm* will be traveling to Guatemala this month, from January 8-29, to do more evaluation of MK students with possible learning disabilities. Beth then develops a teaching plan for the teachers and parents, and works with them so they understand how to implement it to aid the student in learning. This allows missionary families to remain on the field instead of having to return to the USA to make sure their child gets a decent education.

Please continue to pray for safety and wisdom for *Ed & Val Schubert* in Honduras as the country is experiencing upset and violence over the election process. As I write this there is a 6:00PM to 6:00AM curfew in place, roads are blocked by angry crowds and safety is a real issue. *Sarah Smith* from our Dixon Bethel EC Church is scheduled to travel to Honduras in early January to serve as one of the Schubert's interns. Please pray for her and her family as they discern God's will for her to go now or wait until things settle down.



## MINISTERIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY IMPORTANT DATES

January 17-20	2018 Pastoral Assessment Center (Full)
March 1	Applications Due for New & Transferring Credentials and Itinerancy
March 1	Renewal Applications Due for Credentials Requiring Annual Renewal (for Deacon/Deaconess/Lay Preacher/Licensed and Local Candidate)
June 1	Questions for Applicants at National Conference for New Credential Recipients
June 1	Deadline for Enrollment in 2019 Pastoral Assessment Center



## The Christmas Spirit of Giving at StoneRidge

The spirit of the season was alive and well at the four campuses of StoneRidge Retirement Living this Christmas season. At **StoneRidge Towne Centre and StoneRidge Poplar Run** in Myerstown, a Secret Santa project was held to the joy of many residents. Team members from both campuses played Secret Santa to personal care and skilled nursing residents. Those willing to participate were given the name of a resident, and the Secret Santa purchased an appropriate gift that was distributed on Christmas Day.



At the **Church of God Home** in Carlisle, their annual Christmas Tree Hat project was once again a big hit. Residents knitted and crocheted hats for elementary school children in the Carlisle School District. These hats were hung on a Christmas tree for all to enjoy. A basket was needed as they soon ran out of space on the tree! Dozens of lovely handmade hats were distributed to surprised schoolchildren on December 20.

**Schoolyard Square** in Pine Grove will play host to the Culinary Landscape feature for the Early Winter edition of StoneRidge Living that will be published in mid-to-late January. They decided to focus on classic Christmas cookies that are popular in the area. For our EC Leader readers, we included one of the recipes for you to enjoy! Soft Michigan Rock cookies are scrumptious and a local favorite. We hope you enjoy them!



### Soft Michigan Rock Cookies

- |                                 |                              |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 2 cups brown sugar, packed      | 1 tsp vanilla                |
| 1 cup butter                    | 1/2 tsp. cinnamon            |
| 4 eggs                          | 1 lb. dates, cut into pieces |
| 3 1/2 cups flour                | 1 lb. raisins                |
| 1 tsp. baking soda in the flour | 1 cup walnuts (optional)     |

Cream brown sugar and butter. Add eggs. Beat well. Then add flour, soda, vanilla and cinnamon. Mix well. Stir in the dates, raisins and walnuts mixing well. Bake 350 degrees for 12-15 minutes. Store in a tight container for cookies to stay soft.

\*StoneRidge Retirement Living Communities is comprised of four retirement communities in South Central Pennsylvania. Locations include StoneRidge Poplar Run and StoneRidge Towne Centre both in Myerstown and Church of God Home in Carlisle and Schoolyard Square in Pine Grove. For more information about options available for you or a loved one, visit us online at [www.StoneRidgeRetirement.com](http://www.StoneRidgeRetirement.com) or call us at 717-866-3553. StoneRidge Retirement Living is all about just that—living!

# What's Happening at Twin Pines from January—April 2018 ??



## Winter Thaw Youth Group Retreats Jan. 12-14, 2018 or Feb. 16-18, 2018

Theme: Transform—Romans 12:2

Winter Thaw 2018 will focus on transforming teens to become the best God

has for them and their future. Join other teens facing these same challenges for a winter weekend youth retreat in the Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania. Come to experience camp fun, worship, friends, Bible study, and Christ's transforming love and grace.

**Warning: teens will return different from when they arrive!**

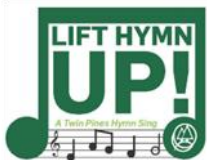
January speaker is Rev. Jim Ehrman; with worship songs led by Matt Logan Band.

February speaker is Rev. Wayne Morgan; with worship music led by a worship team from Clarks Summit University.

## Lift Hymn Up! Hymn Sing March 18

The first 2018 Lift Hymn Up! Will be hosted by Clarks Valley Zion EC Church, Dauphin, PA. Join us at 3:00 PM to sing hymns of faith. Start decid-

ing now which hymn is your favorite that you want to have sung.



## Craft Retreat—April 6-8

Spend time away from your "normal life" crafting, laughing and sharing. Bring whatever craft you wish to make progress with. Times are flexible for you to get up as early as you want, or stay up at late as you want to work on your craft. There is now an extension option available to craft Thursday evening & all day Friday.



## Spring Fling Children Retreat April 27-29

Twin Pines will again offer a retreat for children. This year's Spring Fling theme is **UR**. It will challenge children in their faith; and guide them to a better understanding of who they are in Christ. The retreat is for groups of children between 3rd & 5th grade. Churches provide their own group leadership. Information, promotional poster and registration materials are available now at <http://bit.ly/SpringFling2018>.

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Learn more about all of these at [www.twinpines.org](http://www.twinpines.org)

# Reminder

January 25th is the deadline for all annual reports. The reports, both manual and auto-fill can be found on the EC Church website—

[www.eccenter.com](http://www.eccenter.com)



# Kingdom Extension Community

## MEETING COMMUNITY NEEDS AS OUTREACH

Community outreach! That's the solution. You've decided that community outreach is what you need to do to impact your neighbors for the Kingdom. And maybe grow your church. You need to reach out and serve. Now what? Where do you begin?

Listen! Listen to your neighbors. Listen to the members of your congregation. Listen to your neighbors as they tell you what they need. Now, they probably won't say, "my needs are..." But if you listen (and maybe watch), they will allow you to hear and see what they need. Listen to your church members as they tell you what they can do and, more importantly, tell you their passions.

Match! Once you identify the needs of your community and the skills and passions of your congregation, you can begin to identify the more natural bridges between your congregation and your neighborhood. Just match skills and passions with needs. The following questions will help you begin this process.

- What do you think are the assets and strengths of your congregation?
- What do you think are the needs of your community?
  - How would you prioritize the needs of your community?

Once you have your two lists, use the following questions to help you determine the more natural bridges that might be developed between church and community.

- Which community needs match congregational skills and passions.
- What ministries could be built around existing relationships?
- What ministries would address the most urgent needs?

Still need help? Contact Les Cool, Kingdom Extension Associate ([revcool@ptd.net](mailto:revcool@ptd.net) or 717-951-8433), and he will arrange for a face-to-face conversation with you and your leadership team.



## FRESH EXPRESSIONS NATIONAL GATHERING 2018

**From the Steeple to Street:  
Leadership in a New  
Mission Era**

**Friday, March 16, 2018, 9:00 AM—  
Saturday, March 17, 2018, 3:30 PM**

**Heritage Fellowship Church  
2501 Fox Mill Road  
Reston, VA 20191**

The church is rediscovering its identity in mission. More and more churches are taking seriously the call to engage with their communities...and many more would like to. But this new mission landscape is going to need new skills of leadership. Bold, risk-taking, creative, discerning leadership. Leaders who will move to the mission edges and foster fresh expressions of church. Leaders who will take on the adaptive challenges within existing churches to catalyze new energy for mission. Leaders who will make room for experiments and risks for the sake of the gospel.

It's time to move from merely talking about it and wishing for it...to doing it.

Join with other church leaders and pioneers to be energized and equipped to be a collaborative, innovative, and courageous leader. Catch the vision for a Church that is willing to fling open the doors and step out into the streets. Respond to the Spirit's invitation to be a sign and foretaste of the kingdom of God in the midst of everyday world all around us.

Visit [www.freshexpressionsus.org/FXNG2018](http://www.freshexpressionsus.org/FXNG2018) for more information about the Conference, Pre-Conference Events, presenters, schedule, hotels and more. Register now and save up to \$60 per person. Registration scholarships are available; contact Les Cool, Kingdom Extension Associate ([revcool@ptd.net](mailto:revcool@ptd.net) or 717-951-8433).

# News from the Executive Director

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- \* The **2018 mileage reimbursement** has not been released at the writing of this article.
  - \* The **January 2018 health insurance premiums** increased from the 2017 rates, with the first payment due December 15, 2017 at the new rates. Please see [www.eccenter.com](http://www.eccenter.com) for the current rates.
  - \* The **deadline to submit HRA reimbursements** for the October 2016-September 2017 plan year is December 29, 2017. This is a federally mandated deadline that cannot be changed.
  - \* **Church contributions to the 403(b) pension plan** will increase on January 1 to \$260 for full time pastors and \$130 for part time pastors.
  - \* **W-2s and 1099-MISC forms** are due to the recipients by January 31, 2018 and the respective Federal, State or Local taxing authorities by January 31, 2018. Please refer to the specific taxing authority regulations for due dates. **All full time and part time Pastors should receive a W-2 from their church.**
  - \* **Due Dates:**
    - Disability Payment—\$100.00 due Jan. 16
    - Annual Statistical Reports due Jan. 25
    - Workers Compensation Insurance Info due 30 days after receipt
    - Pastor's Compensation Forms due Jan. 16
- Please see the 2018 Treasurer's Guide located on [www.eccenter.com](http://www.eccenter.com), for additional due dates, current amounts due and ministry fund & camping fund percentages.

- \* **Remember to add the following phrase** (or something close to it) to all tax deductible giving receipts issued by a church or ministry. "No goods or services were exchanged for these contributions or consisted of an intangible religious benefit." All year end contributions to a church must be received at the church on December 31 or have a postmark of December 31 or earlier. Electronic giving adds a layer of complexity to the year-end giving deadlines. There are extra entities involved e.g., credit card processors, banks and internet gateways, that are involved in the processing of an electronic charitable contribution that churches and

donors cannot control. The amount of time from the donor making a contribution until the church receives the funds can be a couple of days to a week or more. Church treasurers should carefully review the processing statements received to note what day a contribution was processed!

IRS Guidance that has been released states that contributions made by credit card in 2017 are considered 2017 contributions, regardless if the donor does not make a payment on the credit card until 2018 or with normal credit card processing times the church does not receive the funds until 2018. The same is true for donations made via an ACH transfer. A donor that initiates an ACH transaction in 2017 with the funds debited from the donor's bank account should be counted as a 2017 donation. Even though, the church will not receive the funds until 2018 with normal bank processing times.

As always, please contact David King, Benefits Administrator, [dking@eccenter.com](mailto:dking@eccenter.com) or myself, [khenry@eccenter.com](mailto:khenry@eccenter.com) with any questions, 1-800-866-7581.

Kevin Henry  
Executive Director

Dave King  
Benefits Administrator



## Evangelical Congregational Church

100 West Park Avenue  
Myerstown, PA 17067  
717-866-7581  
[www.eccenter.com](http://www.eccenter.com)



## Prayers that anchor your hope in God.

*Seek God for the City* is designed to mobilize many to pray with united, sustained vision for people of your community. The daily prayers are all new and different from last year's prayer guide. The scriptures and topics help God's people pray with passionate, full-hearted hope. This timely guide will help God's people in your congregation to pray beyond themselves with confidence and clarity.

We will Seek God in two simple ways: First we will seek God's face and then we will seek His kingdom. And as we come to God, seeking His face, then He comes to us bringing His kingdom. These are prayers you don't want to pray alone. Invite your whole congregation to pray along with you. Even better, think about joining your prayers with a few other churches in your community.

The forty days to Palm Sunday makes an ideal time to venture into a season of sustained, hope-filled prayer. Dated February 14 – March 25, 2018.

We are able to offer a complimentary review copy to leaders in recognized positions of pastoral or prayer leadership for a limited time. Call us now at 800-264-5214 or 512-419-7729.

Also available as an app that makes it possible to help many to keep their prayers rolling in the midst of busy lifestyles and schedules. **Available in January 2018.**

Order online now: <https://waymakers.org/product/seek-god/>



# January 2018

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	<b>1</b> NEW YEAR'S DAY Church Center Closed  Stationing Request Deadline	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> <i>Day of Prayer for the E.C. Church</i>	<b>6</b> EPHIPHANY
<b>7</b> <i>Day of Prayer for Kingdom Extension</i>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>  Winter Thaw A, Twin Pines	<b>13</b>
<b>14</b>  Winter Thaw A, Twin Pines	<b>15</b> Pastoral Comp. Forms Due  Health Insurance Due  Stationing Retreat	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>  Pastoral Assessment Center	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>  Info for FEBRUARY EC Leader Due	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>  2017 Annual Reports Due	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>			

**Ministry Funds to:**  
EC Church  
100 W. Park Ave.  
Myerstown, PA 17067

**Insurance/Pension Payments to:**  
Benefits Corp.  
100 W. Park Ave.  
Myerstown, PA 17067

# February 2018

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 Evangelical Seminary Board Mtg.	2 <i>Day of Prayer for the E.C. Church</i>	3 4 Chaplains Run
4 <i>Day of Prayer for Kingdom Extension</i>	5	6 StoneRidge Trustee Mtg.	7	8	9	10
11 <i>Church Planting Offering</i>	12	13 Benefits Corp. Mtg. Youth Network Mtg.	14 ASH WEDNESDAY VALENTINE'S DAY	15 Church Pension Contribution Due Health Insurance Due	16	17
18 FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT	19 Info for MARCH EC Leader Due PRESIDENTS' DAY	20	21	22	23	24
25 SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT	26	27	28 Church Health Community Mtg.			

**Ministry Funds to:**  
EC Church  
100 W. Park Ave.  
Myerstown, PA 17067

**Church Planting Offering to:**  
EC Church  
100 W. Park Ave.  
Myerstown, PA 17067  
*(designated—Church Planting Offering*

**Insurance/Pension Payments to:**  
Benefits Corp.  
100 W. Park Ave.  
Myerstown, PA 17067