

E.C. LEADER

JULY-AUGUST 2019

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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:

Do you listen to the radio while you're driving or do you ride in silence? I'm a radio person and I will admit that I really only listen to a couple of stations: contemporary country or contemporary Christian music or talk radio. The talk radio stations also break down into two categories: sports or news. A constant trend I've noticed when it comes to talk radio is that the popular form, both in sports and news, is that I've come to call "argument radio." This trend is also clearly observed on television. It goes something like this: get two people of opposing views and have them argue and talk over each other for four minutes. Follow that with a commercial and then repeat with two other people arguing about a different subject. If you feel the need to break from that formula, you can have a panel sit around a table so everyone can get in on the argument. Everyone talking, nobody listening; let's just make noise.

During my lifetime I have seen trolls go from a scary ugly little being who lives under a bridge, threatening to eat anyone or anything that tries to cross it, to a little rubber doll with crazy hair (eventually with their own movie), to "one who posts a deliberately provocative message online with the intention of causing maximum disruption and arguments". (Thank you Urban Dictionary.) The wonder of our online world is that now anyone or everyone can be a troll. Everyone has an opinion and they are more than happy to tell you how theirs is better than yours. A member of a local E.C. congregation said to me that we seem to have become a culture that is addicted to anger. Find a topic, inside the church or outside the church and it won't take long to find someone who's angry about it.

Continued on page 2

As followers of Jesus, we are not defined by what we're angry about or who we're angry with. We are not defined by our economic status. We are not defined by our political affiliation. If our culture doesn't see love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control in us; if they don't see "the goodness of God" and, instead, sees a political party or a "cause," we have missed the point of the Kingdom.



In a culture and world that have lost their collective minds, where anger and arguments pass for entertainment, Christians are called to minister mercy, grace, hope, love, and peace. Argument radio or television may get ratings; but it rarely solves anything. Through Jesus we experience real peace, so Jesus calls his followers to a life of active peace-making when he says "God blesses those who work for peace, for they will be called the children of God." (Matthew 5:9 NLT)

In Christ's service,



Bishops Top 5 Prayer & Praise

1. Please continue to pray for the work of the Stationing Committee. Pray too for the congregations who continue to do ministry without an assigned pastor.
2. Pray for me to be able to take at least some time off as a sabbatical for renewal, to retool, and to refocus.
3. Pray for all of those involved in the three camping ministries of our denomination: Camp ECCO (Ohio), Rock River Bible Camp (Illinois), and Twin Pines (Pennsylvania).
4. Pray for our family and the many families who will be traveling while on a summer vacation.
5. Ask for the Lord's leading as the Evangelical Seminary Board continues to investigate opportunities for collaboration or partnership with other institutions.



News from the Executive Director

Disbursements from the Health Reimbursement Account are available for any pastor on the Capital Blue Cross plan unfortunately the disbursements are about the same as previous years. 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 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.

If your church is changing pastors on July 1 please be aware that the benefit payments may change, e.g. health insurance and pension. Every year there is a 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 Capital Blue Cross and Prime Pay applications. Pastors must also complete a form to cancel their previous 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 workers compensation insurance was switched to Church Mutual. The workers compensation section on the website (www.eccenter.com) has been updated to include information on Church Mutual's workers compensation program. If you have a workers compensation claim Church Mutual prefers and encourages the completion of an online claim form. The claim form must be completed by the employee's supervisor. Follow the link on the workers compensation section of the website to file a workers compensation claim.

Brotherhood Mutual will continue to service workers compensation claims for injuries sustained during the period of time they held our policy.

Thank-you to all that have timely paid the workers compensation invoices. Payment for the Disability and Benefit Corp Services fee were due January 15 and April 15 respectively, both fees are listed on the 2019 Treasurer's Guide available on www.eccenter.com.

Please contact Dave King, dking@eccenter.com or myself, Kevin Henry, khenry@eccenter.com with any questions or problems.

Ministerial Housing Allowance

Late Breaking News from the Church of God Benefits Board, Inc. (6/18/2019).

Housing Allowance Case Over for Now

In another surprising move, the Freedom From Religion Foundation has decided not to seek United States Supreme Court review of the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals' March 15, 2019 unanimous decision, holding that the ministerial housing allowance did not violate the Constitution. With the decision not to appeal to the Supreme Court, the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) has no other alternatives and the decision that the cash ministerial housing allowance does not violate the Constitution will stand unless challenged in another venue at some point in the future. Without taking action previously, the plaintiffs (FFRF) also let the deadline pass for seeking an en banc review of the case by all the judges on the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals.

While the decision not to appeal to the Supreme Court ends a case that started in 2014, it is expected that the plaintiffs or a similar group will soon file a new lawsuit in another jurisdiction with the hopes of getting a more favorable decision. It would most likely take several years for a new lawsuit to work its way through the legal system.

To view the entire Church of God Benefits Board statement please follow this link: <https://benefitsboard.wordpress.com/>



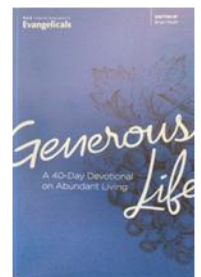
The Evangelical Congregational Church has been invited to participate in the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) initiative to financially assist pastors and churches funded by the Lilly Endowment.

The first initiative is **Financial Health Training for Some** and **Financial Health Training for All**. Financial Health for Some is a six session online training program that provides biblically relevant financial information and resources for individuals and couples. Financial Health for ALL is a similar six session online training program but designed for church boards or ministry councils focused on church generosity. A financial incentive, i.e. free money, is available to lead or solo pastors (an NAE rule) that complete either training program. I, Kevin Henry, Executive Director, completed the Financial Health for Some training and found it to worthwhile. I gleaned a few nuggets of information as well as the inspiration to make a few changes in my personal finances.



The second initiative is **Bless Your Pastor/Bless Your Pastor and Staff**. Any church that collects a Bless Your Pastor/Bless Your Pastor and Staff offering sometime before December 31, 2019 and reports the amount of the offering collected to Kevin Henry, Executive Director, the lead pastor will receive an additional \$150 gift card from the National Association of Evangelicals. All Bless Your Pastor/Bless Your Pastor and Staff offerings collected and distributed by December 31, 2019 are exempt from ministry funds. The Bless Your Pastor brochure will be available on www.eccenter.com under Resources then Downloads. Or contact the EC Church Center at 717-866-7581 to request a brochure.

Did you get your copy of the Free 40 Day Generosity Devotional at National Conference? Need more copies? Contact Kevin Henry, khenry@eccenter.com, to request as many copies as is needed for your church, official board, adult Sunday School or small group ministries.



Also many other free resources are available at <https://naefinancialhealth.org/>



WILL HE OR WON'T HE

That's the question people have been asking when it comes to Bishop Hill's sabbatical. In case you missed it, in 2010, the Healthy Leaders Task Force presented a recommendation for Episcopal sabbaticals. It was then presented to the 2011 National Conference which adopted it. During our most recent National Conference, it was affirmed that our Bishop be given a sabbatical of at least "60 consecutive days." **The plan is for Bruce to be on sabbatical July 1—September 2.**

Bishop Bruce noted that this process has been very challenging to him personally. The thought of being out of the office for over 60 consecutive days is foreign to him. Additionally, the work of stationing is stretching into the summer season and work on amendments to the Discipline must begin as well. So "will he or won't he?" He's going to give it a shot (more or less) but will probably be around occasionally to work on stationing, at least.

Please respect our Bishop's need to unplug and rest. Therefore, between July 1 and September 2, please refrain from calling, emailing, or texting him. If you need to contact someone in denominational leadership please contact your District Field Director, as Associate, or Church Center to speak with Jodi Earhart, the Bishop's Assistant, or Kevin Henry, our Executive Director. Thank you!



We Need New Pictures

We would like some new pictures for the main page of our website www.eccenter.com. Do you have any pictures you can send us? Pictures of your church building exterior or interior, activities, events, community outreach, mission trips, etc. We will not identify any person or place in the pictures, however please be mindful of who is in the photos, i.e. if that individual would not want their picture posted or is in the witness protection program. Only send us pictures that you own the copyright, the pictures are no larger than 300x300 dpi and no more than three (3) pictures from any one church. All pictures received will be reviewed by those that have an eye for what makes a good website photo so not every picture received will be posted. Please send your pictures to blong@eccenter.com or send a link to your preferred online file sharing services; Dropbox, Google Drive, MS Onedrive, iDrive, etc.

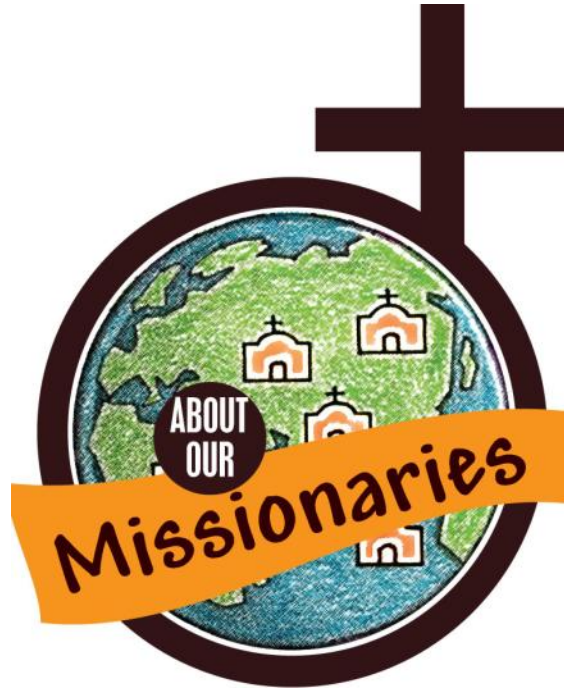


REMINDER:

**The EC Church Center will be closed on Fridays
from July 5 through August 30.**

Global Ministries Community

- Please continue to keep **Nancy G.** in prayer as she recovers from surgery for breast cancer in early June. She will begin radiation therapy later this month.
- **David Hershey** is asking folks to consider collecting items for care packages that his organization, Christian Student Fellowship, can distribute to students at Penn State-Berks campus next month. For information about what items to collect and where to take them, contact Dave at dave@csfpa.com. Items are needed by mid-August.
- Please keep **Chris & Deb Bowers**, and their daughters Katelyn and Emily, in prayer as they fly east this month to begin six months of home assignment and deputation. They will be in PA with Chris' family part of the time, but also driving to neighboring states to see donors. Chris will be doing some pilot training as well for Moody Aviation.
- **Ken Sears** will be flying to PA in July to begin his six months of home assignment and deputation. He will be staying at the missionary apartment in Lititz for most of the time. Ken has no more Sunday mornings available, but might possibly be able to fit in a meeting during the week. Contact the GMC office for more details.
- Congratulations to **Micah Wagner**, who graduates from Rift Valley Academy this month. Micah will be starting at Messiah College in the fall, where older sister Hannah is already a student. He along with parents **Brian and Missy** will be coming to the USA in August. Brian and Missy will remain in the USA for a year of home assignment and deputation.
- **REMINDER:** Our VBS project this year is to raise \$10,000 to aid our **EC Church of Japan** in their children's ministries and outreach. A slideshow and script are available to use for each day of your VBS, but you must contact the GMC office for the link. Call Pat at 717-866-



7584 or email to ecglobal@eccenter.com to request access.

- **Rev. Dan Dixon** will be ending his time of service at Rift Valley Academy at the end of this month. Dan has accepted a position teaching at Triad Baptist Christian Academy in Kernersville, NC. Please keep Dan in prayer as he transitions into a new season of life. Praise that he was able to find a place to rent and a car to use. His mailing address as of August 1st will be Daniel Dixon, 4106 Reich St., Winston Salem, NC 27105. His new email is daniel.e.dixon@outlook.com.
- Please keep **Tomoyuki and Jessica Abe** in prayer as they get settled into their new home and ministry in Orleans, France. Tomoyuki will be serving with Overseas Missionary Fellowship, or OMF, to work with expatriate Japanese living in France. Jessica will start a position with the Evangelical Free Church in France in September.



Kingdom Extension Community

The Art of Neighboring: Connecting with our Local Communities:

The Kingdom Extension Community would like to partner with your church or your district to provide a hands-on workshop 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?); each followed by a hands-on workshop (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.

SAVE THE DATE

Fresh Expression Vision Day

The Kingdom Extension Community, Fresh Expression, and Evangelical Seminary have partnered to bring a Fresh Expression Vision Day to the EC Community at Evangelical Seminary on October 4, 2019. Details will follow as they are developed. For now... save the date and recruit the team you will bring with you.

Useful WEB Resources

The following websites include books, articles, newsletters, training opportunities, resource tools, web and podcasts, coaches and coaching, blogs, and more.

<http://www.soulcare.com/>

Soul Care helps you live from a healthy soul and wisely lead others towards authentic transformation.

<http://www.transformingcenter.org/>

Strengthening the souls of pastors, Christian leaders, and the congregations and organizations they serve.

<http://studyingcongregations.org>

This site provides tools for understanding your church’s identity. By examining the congregation’s social environment, culture, resources, and patterns, you can customize a vision and plan that fits your “calling” and assignment from God.

<http://www.200churches.com>

This is a podcast series for small church pastors.

<https://www.christianitytoday.com/karl-vaters/>

A blog by Carl Vaters, innovative leadership from a small church perspective.

<http://newsmallchurch.com/>

This resource is designed for the pastor of the smaller church. I especially loved a recent article title which says it all, “Being A Small Church Pastor Isn’t A Penalty, It’s A Speciality.”

Kingdom Extension Community (continued)

Useful WEB Resources (continued)

<http://www.smallchurchleaders.org/>

The Small Church Leadership Network is a ministry designed to encourage pastors and leaders of small churches and assist in helping them become more effective in their ministry.

<http://www.smallchurchpastor.com/home>

Dave Jacobs, with 30 years of pastoral experience in smaller churches, specializes in small churches and their pastors. He provides resourcing and coaching.

<http://www.rhma.org/>

Rural Home Missionary Association serves small town pastors and churches. They also run annual multi-day seminars with appropriate speakers and resources.

<http://www.leadershiptransformations.org/>

LTI will help you listen, equip you to discern, invite you to act, encourage you to pursue God's unique will for you, your team, and your ministry.

Bishop's Speaking Schedule:

The bishop has a few open Sundays in his preaching calendar for the fall of this year (2019). If you would like to invite him to spare him of having to invite himself, now is the best time to contact Church Center. No church is too big or too small for him to schedule a Sunday but it is first come-first served. So as you plan your congregation's fall service schedule see when it would be good to have the Bishop come preach. If you really like to plan ahead you can also check on the Bishop's availability for spring 2020. To schedule a date please email your requested date(s) to his Administrative Assistant, jeanhart@eccenter.com and she will work with him in developing his schedule for 2019-2020. He hopes to see you soon!



What's happening at Twin Pines Camp Summer/Fall 2019?



Summer Staff Sing—August 3



Join us for a time of worship led by our summer staff! Hear about how God has worked through them during summer camp.

Fall Fix-Up—September 17-19



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 in nature.

6th Annual Family Fall Festival & Ridge Runner 5K—September 28



Come run (or walk) the trails around Twin Pines amidst the beauty of the colorful fall foliage. Enjoy time with your family as you participate in pumpkin decorating, hay rides, homemade soups, and much more!

October Getaway Weekends—October



Getaway for relaxation, relationship building, enjoying nature, and spend time with God. Housing, breakfast and spiritual guidance materials are provided in 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

Jr/Sr High Fall Retreat—November 1-3



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.

Schedule your group's
**Fall
Retreat**
Weekends are filling up!

Contact the office by phone at 570-629-2411,
or send an email to retreats@twinpines.org

Evangelical Congregational Church

100 West Park Avenue
Myerstown, PA 17067
717-866-7581
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1 PETER 2:9



You are invited to attend the 2019 National Conference Ordination Services

The ordination of **Rev. Cameron L. Smith**
Plymouth Meeting Evangelical Congregational Church
Plymouth Meeting, Pennsylvania
Sunday, September 8, 4:00 p.m.

The ordination of **Rev. J. Paul Weitzel**
Grace Community Evangelical Congregational Church
Willow Street, Pennsylvania
Sunday, September 15, 4:00 p.m.

The ordination of **Rev. George T. Custer**
Bethel Evangelical Congregational Church
Conestoga, Pennsylvania
Sunday, September 22, 4:00 p.m.

The ordination of **Rev. Rick M. Reilly**
New Life of Shillington Evangelical Congregational Church
Shillington, Pennsylvania
Sunday, September 29, 4:00 p.m.

The ordination of **Rev. Michael G. Knapp**
Zion (Clarks Valley) Evangelical Congregational Church
Dauphin, Pennsylvania
Sunday, October 13, 4:00 p.m.

The ordination of **Marisel Mieses**
Buenas Nuevas Evangelical Congregational Church
Hazleton, Pennsylvania
Sunday, November 3, 1:00 p.m.

July 2019

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3	4 INDEPENDENCE DAY Church Center Closed	5 Church Center Closed <i>Day of Prayer for the E.C. Church</i>	6
7 <i>Day of Prayer for Kingdom Extension</i>	8	9	10	11	12 Church Center Closed	13
14	15 Health Insurance Due	16 Benefits Corp. Mtg.	17	18	19 Church Center Closed HERNDON CAMPMEETING	20
21	22	23	24 HERNDON CAMPMEETING	25	26 Church Center Closed	27
28 HERNDON CAMPMEETING	29	30	31			

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

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

August 2019

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1	2 Church Center Closed <i>Day of Prayer for the E.C. Church</i>	3
4 <i>Day of Prayer for Kingdom Extension</i>	5	6	7	8	9 Church Center Closed	10
11	12	13	14	15 Health Insurance Due	16 Church Center Closed	17
		ROSEDALE CAMPMEETING				
18 ROSEDALE CAMPMEETING	19 Info for the September EC Leader is due	20	21	22	23 Church Center Closed	24
25 Twin Pines Offering (voluntary)	26	27 StoneRidge Board Mtg	28	29	30	

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Insurance Payments to:
Benefits Corp.
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September 2019

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2 LABOR DAY Church Center Closed	3	4	5 Benefits Corp Mtg	6 Day of Prayer for the E.C. Church	7
8 Day of Prayer for Kingdom Extension	9 Prayer Mobilization Team	10	11	12	13 Health Insurance Due	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21 Allegheny/Buckeye ECCO Women's Retreat
22 Allegheny/Buckeye ECCO Women's Retreat	23 Info for the October EC Leader is due	24	25 Church Health Community Mtg. StoneRidge Golf Tournament	26	27	28 Allegheny/Buckeye ECCO Men's Retreat
29 Allegheny/Buckeye ECCO Men's Retreat	30					

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