

Evangelical Congregational Church

E.C. National News

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Spring - Summer, 2013

Bishop Addresses 11th National Conference



"I am looking forward to what the Holy Spirit will do through us." So began Bishop Bruce Hill's Episcopal Address to the Eleventh National Conference of the E.C. Church at Messiah College, Grantham, Pennsylvania on May 30. Bruce focused his thoughts on the Conference theme, "Engage." He compared his feelings about the future to those experienced while riding a roller coaster: "There is exhilaration and fear at the same time."

Bruce continued that over the past year, he has been preaching "Passion," last year's Conference theme. He commented, "May it never be said that we traded the majestic love of Christ for the lukewarm."

He reminded us that we are commanded to love our neighbors, adding, "The best way to show love is to *engage* the culture. We must leave the building and *engage* the world. Like the Blues Brothers, 'We're on a mission from God.' That mission is to redeem the world."

Bruce stated, "The culture challenges us and is sometimes hostile. We can be tempted to shrink back." He directed us to John 20:21, where Jesus says, "As the Father has sent Me, so send I you."

"Most of Jesus' work was done in the community, especially among sinners. Huddles are strategic, but they are not the point of the game." He added that our denominational



commissions can provide resources to be "out there."

Bruce spoke about trends that can be discouraging: "Experts say we are post-denominational. We

don't like to play by the rules." He reported a decrease in churches that send reports and ministry funds and an increase in church closings and disaffiliations, as well as, decrease in pastors under the age of 50. He added that all denominations are suffering financially.

Bruce referred to the work of the Future Initiatives Task Force, commending them for their time and effort. He expressed concern that even though we may not be in a crisis now, our present system may not be sustainable in the future. As part of the solution, the committee proposed that churches be organized into clusters, while we phase out the



role of Conference Minister. Bruce advised, "We need an open conversation on how we view denomination, but don't let our differences become divisive. We must get there together."

"We can lose momentum because we like what we know. Too often, our goal is to get people *in here* to avoid sin and trouble. Are we open 'by appointment only?' That's not why Jesus came. We need to be *out there*. We ask, 'What would Jesus do?' when the better question is, 'What is Jesus doing?'"

Bruce observed on his recent visit to Liberia that "a building is not required." The church there grew during 14 years of civil war, meeting in crude circumstances, while demonstrating the importance of the community of faith.

"Actively engaging doesn't depend on an attractive package, but how we live it out." He cited 2 Corinthians 3:3, which says the Gospel is "a narrative written on the hearts of ordinary people."

The Bishop listed positive trends in our churches, including more discipleship, short-term missions, Life Tree Cafes, youth ministries, Natural Church Development, Camps, and

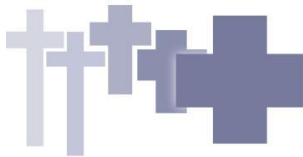
community volunteers. Commitments to Christ last year totaled 854.



Bishop Hill concluded by asking, "What's next? Step out in faith as in Hebrews 11:6. Accepting a God-size ambition can be risky, but He is leading. It's His church. It's our responsibility to follow." He also thanked those who come alongside him, saying, "I'm not on the roller coaster alone."

New Direction Helps Bring Better Health to the Needy

The Community at New Direction, the Tallmadge, OH restart, is helping the Faithful Servants Care Center provide healthcare to



uninsured residents. The agency began when a suite of offices became available, and two doctors volunteered their

services. One of the doctors recalled a medical school instructor who told his students to remember the gifts that got them where they were and to find ways to give back.

The two hoped to recruit a few more doctors to volunteer and got an overwhelming response of around a hundred, with as many registered nurses. Residents of the Northeast Ohio College of Pharmacy donate medicines. The clinic is open seven days a week.

In addition to New Direction, around 20 churches have joined forces with the project. They take turns providing an evening meal for the staff, who come to the center directly from their practices. Pastor Tim Ream is one of the pastors who serve as chaplains. He prays with the staff, visits with patients in the lobby, and it sometimes asked to pray with a patient.

Tim tells the story of an African man who came to the center. In addition to having health problems, he was close to being homeless. Faithful servants directed him to a temporary job service. He showed up at GOJO, where Tim has his "day job." The man's part-time job became full-time employment.

An extension of the program is the PATH 37 garden project. The letters stand for

Providing Access To Healthy living. Thirty-seven refers to 1 Corinthians 3:7 – "So the one who plants is not important, and the one who waters is not important. Only God, who makes things grow, is important."

New Direction is sharing their property for raised-bed gardens. Sponsor churches are



asked to contribute \$50 toward the cost of a garden and to have volunteers present at least one night a week.

Nutritionists use the church kitchen and building to teach food preparation. Doctors refer patients to PATH 37 so they can have access to fresh food, get some exercise, and gain some life skills.

As time allows, Pastor Tim can share with your church or group. Contact him at pastortim226@att.net or 330-285-7890.

Seminar to Focus on Devotional Life

The Church Health Commission is sponsoring the seminar, "Be Still" on Saturday, September 21 at Zion E.C. Church, Annville, PA. The title comes from a prayer and devotional guide written by Pastor Mike Campbell of Bair, PA Faith. Cost is \$15 before September 9. To register, contact Rev. Gordon Lewis at 717-866-7581 or glewis@eccenter.com

Biography Translated

Rev. David Dennis, who recently began ministry at Bridgeville, PA Zion, has completed a German to English translation of the biography of Jacob Albright. The English title of the 120-page book is *Jacob Albright: a Tilemaker becomes Bishop*. Albright founded the association that became the E.C. Church.

Rev Run Aids Church Plantings

Around 25 runners and walkers participated in the first Rev Run 5K at this year's National Conference. The event was sponsored by the Healthy Pastors Team and the Church Planting Commission.

Rev. Janor Bestwick, who recently began ministry



in Seneca, PA, crossed the finish line first. Shirley Carr and Ann Brown, both of Akron, Ohio shared last place.

Approximately \$1,750 was raised for church planting.

Illinois Team Helps in Kentucky

During March, a team from Dixon, Illinois Bethel traveled to Canyon Falls, Kentucky to help with construction and maintenance. The continued work began a year ago on the "Sale House," which once housed a mission school. The building is now a thrift store for needy families. The team worked on making an apartment in the upper level. They also made improvements to Pastor Bill and Gloria Bryant's home.

Team members were Jerry and Nancy Virtue, John Michel, Ben Fichter, Matt and Amanda Fassler, Ed Cavanaugh, and Dan Royer. Pastor Bill brought his skill to the projects.

Family News

Wedding

Justin Giles, son of Allen and Cheryle Giles of Emmaus, PA St. Matthew's, married **Elise Sherman** on March 23. The wedding took place at St. Matthew's, with the father of the groom officiating.



Engagement

Pastor Chuck Campbell, Emlenton, PA Zion, used the March 23 ECCO's Got Talent as a platform to propose to his bride-to-be, **Annette Wells** of Youngstown, Ohio Wedgewood Park. He wrote and performed a song to declare his intentions. The annual camp fundraiser took place at Wedgewood Park.

Welcome, Babies

Tomoyuki and Jessica Abe, church planters in Fuchinobe, Japan, have a new daughter, **Alyssa**, born on May 24.

Adam and Michelle Roberts,

CONGRATULATIONS



Kutztown, PA Grace, welcomed a son, **Grant Michael**, on March 5, 2013. He joins sister, Nora and brother, Evan.

Gregory and Brandy Stefan, Creswell, PA Bethany have a new little daughter, **Sophie Leandra**. She was born on April 6, 2013.

Bradley and Tonya Hatter, Herndon and Mandata, PA, welcomed a son, **Micah Thomas Ronald** on June 4, 2013.

Ordinations

Donna Baldt of First E.C. Church, Akron, Ohio was approved by the National Conference for ordination as a Deaconess. She completed Leadership Contact Studies and serves in Specialized Women's Ministry. Husband is Tom.



Rev. Lewie Bennett of Grace E.C. Church, Knox, PA was ordained as an Itinerant Elder on Sunday, August 4th at the Grace Church.

Retirements

Rev. Robert and Christine Stahl were honored for their retirement at National Conference. They most recently served Schuylkill Haven, PA Grace.

Rev. Daniel Rohrbaugh of York, PA also retired.

Award

Juliana Lesher, Chief of Chaplains Service at the South Texas Veterans Healthcare System, received the Military Chaplains Association Distinguished Service Award on April 10 in Gettysburg, PA. Juliana, who works in San Antonio, led her team to become the first to be granted dual accreditation with the Commission for Accreditation of Pastoral Services and the Association of Clinical Pastoral Education.

Remembering loved ones...



Margaret Bean, wife of the late Charles Bean, passed away on February 25. She was a member of

Lebanon, PA Bunker Hill. She is survived by children, John, James, Rose, and Ruby.

Retired pastor, **Rev. Milton Frantz** of Palmyra, PA passed away on February 27. He came to us from the Free Methodist Church and

served three of our PA churches. He was preceded in death by wife, Violet.

Carol Dowlin, sister of Rev. David Long, Lenhartsville, PA Salem, passed away on March 4. She is survived by husband Ed, and children, Colin and Megan. Carol was a member of Akron, PA Grace.

Shirley Paoli, who served for many years as Lay Delegate for Chicago Kimball Avenue, passed away on March 18. She is survived by son, Ken, and daughter, Karren, wife of Rev. Bruce Ray.



Ada Gockley Good, wife of the late Rev. Robert Gockley, passed away on March 19. She was a member of Lititz, PA Trinity. She is survived by son, Rev. Robert Gockley, II, and a daughter, Sandy.

Retired pastor, **Rev. Roger Fenstermaker** of Allentown, PA passed away on March 26. He served eight churches in PA. He is survived by wife, Joan and brother-in-law, Rev. Harold Scanlin.

Margaret Brown, wife of the late Rev. William Brown, passed away on March 27. She had been living in Lancaster, PA. She is survived by son, Rev. Robert Brown of Plymouth Meeting, PA and daughter, Barbara.

Retired pastor, **Rev. Richard Christman** of York, PA, passed away on April 1. He served seven PA churches and was Conference Evangelist. He is survived by wife, Charlotte; son, Rev. Richard Christman, II of Boyertown; daughter, Barbara, wife of Rev. Raymond Newlin of East Berlin; and daughters, Sharon, Debbie and Pam.

Reba Leader, who served for many years as Lay Delegate for Canyon Falls, Kentucky, passed away on April 7. Miss Leader came from New York State as a missionary teacher. Her many acts of service around nearby Beattyville prompted the community to elect her Citizen of the Year.

Donald Kauffman, Lay Delegate for Clarks Valley, PA Zion, passed away on May 10. He is survived by wife, Peggy and two sons.

Doris "Dottie" Kuder, Lay Delegate for Mandata, PA Peifers, passed away on May 16. She was also a trustee of Evangelical Seminary. She is survived by her daughter, Kim.

Doris Weaver, wife of retired pastor, Rev. Kenneth Weaver of New Holland, PA, passed away on May 21. She is also survived by children, Nancy, James, Caroline, and Angela.

Former pastor's wife, **Bonnie Purnell** of Tiffin, Ohio, passed away on June 8. She was preceded in death by daughter, Cheryl Mong, wife of retired pastor, Rev. Keith Mong; and sister, Gayle Anderson, wife of the late Rev. Fred Anderson.

Retired pastor, **Rev. Gerald Davison** of Warren, Ohio, passed away on June 23. He served churches in Ohio, Illinois and Pennsylvania. He was preceded in death by wife, Wilma, and is survived by children, Anita, Twila, and Jerry.

Velma DeTemple, who played piano and organ at Rosedale Campmeeting from 1949 to 2009, passed away on June 29. She was a member of New Life (formerly St. Luke's), Shillington, PA. She was preceded in death by husband, Arthur.



Rev. Peter Marsden, who served many of our churches as an interim pastor, passed away on July 6. He was a member of Lititz, PA Trinity. He is survived by wife, Cheryl, and daughters, Val and Jo.

Retired pastor, **Rev. Edward Nelson** of Sun City, Arizona, passed away on July 15. He served churches in Illinois, Ohio and Pennsylvania and was chaplain of Sun Valley Lodge. He is remembered as a song leader. He was preceded in death by wife, Elvera, and is survived by children, Edward and Nancy.

