

EC Leader



November 2013

Special points of interest:

- Church Planting Commission would like to provide a limited number of grants.
- Seek God for 2014 booklets available.
- Merger of Grace & Grace Community

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From the Bishop

Last year we encouraged the members of the EC family to consider being a part of the **My Hope with Billy Graham** experience. **My Hope** is a nationwide effort to reach people across the United States with the Gospel of Jesus Christ through the use of video programs and personal relationships. It involves four simple steps: 1) Invite your friends and neighbors who don't know Jesus Christ to your home for a meal or dessert, 2) Use a TV broadcast, DVD, laptop, or mobile device to show one of several new evangelistic programs featuring life-changing testimonies and powerful messages from Billy Graham, 3) Briefly share how Jesus gave you hope and tell what he is doing in your life today, 4) Ask your friends if they would like to make the same decision you did to receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and pray with them. I know a number of local EC congregations have received the training in preparation for this event which is set for November 7, but can be done at any time.

While an event like this reminds us all that we are to be joining God on his mission to redeem his creation, we must remember that it is



something we're to be doing as a normal part of life. The apostle Paul wrote, *"My life is worth nothing to me unless I use it for finishing the work assigned me by the Lord Jesus—the work of telling others the Good News about the wonderful grace of God."* (Acts 20:24) The good news is the story of God's wonderful grace.

We know that Jesus said we are to be his "witnesses," but we get stuck on how to do that. Paul again gives us a key when he describes his strategy in 1 Corinthians 9:22 *"...I try to find common ground with everyone, doing everything I can to save some."* I believe that Christians are called to build bridges, not walls, and repeatedly in the Bible, we're told to reach out, to engage our culture. In fact, over and over again God said it in one word—

"go." For too long the church's main strategy has been for the people "in here" to get the people "out there" to come "in here." The truth is that the church is to be "out there." So let's engage our culture on November 7 and on every other day with the Good News about the wonderful grace of God. I am convinced the success of the Good News in our culture does not depend on how attractively it is packaged, but on how honestly real Christians live our their lives in our homes and communities.

In Christ's service,

Bishop's Top Ten Prayer & Praise



1. Pray for the transition to a shared ministry position for the Director of Global Ministries, Randy Sizemore. Pray for Randy & Carla as they prepare to move from Myerstown, PA to Dixon, IL. Pray for his new ministry at Bethel EC Church and for the continued ministry of our Global Ministries Commission.

2. This month begins a series of holidays and family days. Be in prayer for those who have lost loved ones as they go through this emotional time.

3. Ask the Lord to guide our Futures Initiative Group as they work together to discover how we can most effectively and efficiently serve the Lord as a denomination in the years ahead.

4. It may be Fall, but join me in

praying for the Lord's blessing on our seminary with lots of new students as recruiters talk with prospective students for the Spring semester.

5. Be in prayer for the many individuals who will be hosting "My Hope" events on November 7. And pray that the Lord will lead you to someone who needs to hear the Good News about the wonderful grace of God.

6. Praise the Lord for the continued ministry of the Evangelical Congregational Church as we celebrate our denominational heritage on November 17.

7. Praise the Lord for our growing family! Grandchild #7, Aubree Joy Hill, born to Matt & Emily (their third child) on October 16 and we've just

been told our daughter and son-in-law, Jen & Chuck Beck, are expecting another child (their fourth and grandchild #8) in May (just before National Conference).

8. Even though October is officially "Pastor Appreciation Month", it's not too late to thank the Lord for your pastor. It's not too late to thank your pastor for being your pastor too!

9. Praise God for the growth being experienced in a number of EC congregations this Fall.

10. Thank the Lord for a faithful and effective Church Center staff who support the work of the Bishop and Conference Ministers.

Futures Initiative Update

Elsewhere in this issue of the EC LEADER is an announcement of the Director of Global Ministries entering into a shared ministry position. This is a bold move to address the Global Ministries Commission's administrative budget needs. But their action does not bring any relief to the National Conference's budget concerns since the GMC budget is completely separate from Ministry Funds. In our present world economy, shared ministry positions are the new normal in many ministries in the USA and around the world. Is this a possible paradigm shift for denominational leadership positions? We will study the possibility of shared ministry positions for the Bishop and Conference Ministers.



We are currently exploring six areas to help us clarify and refocus in order to help local congregations more effectively make disciples and to help them understand how the denomination is important in resourcing them in that mission. Six general areas are being explored:

1. How to get local pastors and congregational leaders on the same page.
2. What a permission giving regional structure could look like.
3. How to encourage "communitas" to develop naturally.
4. Re-tasking/re-writing the bishop and conference minister job descriptions

to encourage greater effectiveness.

5. How to develop more effective communication and delivery systems.
6. The feasibility of additional shared ministry positions.

There are few easy answers to these issues. The conversations the Futures Initiatives Team has engaged in are stretching all of us. At the heart of all of this is what we all know—we're to be about the redemptive work of the Kingdom. What we've yet to discover is how that looks for the EC Church in the 21st century. Please continue to lift this vital work up to the Lord in prayer!

WHAT'S YOUR DREAM

The EC Church Planting Commission would like to talk with you about your dream to reach a new and yet-to-be-reached people group in your community.

We're looking for...

1. Church planters/plants that could benefit from another pair of ministry hands.
2. Established churches looking to begin a new outward focused ministry venue which could use a pair of hands to make this happen.

The Church Planting Commission (CPC) would like to provide a limited number of grants as a part of a 2-year-commitment to provide part time pastoral positions (planter,

fresh expressions) to work with or alongside current church plants/planters or established churches/pastors. These part time positions are being arranged for and assigned by the CPC and are for church planting ministries or fresh expressions; not for associates to help the pastor maintain what currently exists.

As we watch our first sponsored fresh expression (Gaming Grotto in Palmerton, PA), with planter Chris Bronico, make inroads into the community around Living Hope Lighthouse, we're eager to see something similar happen in another EC community.

Planters/pastors/churches interested in this offer should forward a detailed written ministry proposal to Bishop Bruce Hill by December 31,

2013. Each written proposal will be considered by the CPC for viability. We will interview planters/pastors who have acceptable proposals, and the CPC will make the final decision. This is important: this is not a handout; this is an investment in Kingdom ministry and growth.

The CPC will make all final decisions and will arrange for and assign a credentialed EC person who fits the plant/church and appropriate ministry team for each accepted ministry proposal. Please DO NOT go out and propose to hire someone!

Questions? Contact Rev. Les Cool (717-921-8433 or revcool@ptd.net) or Bishop Hill (717-866-7581 or bhill@eccenter.com).



Seek GOD for the CITY 2014

Seek God for the City 2014 will be off the press in just a few days. Being freshly convicted that in these days of uncertainty and crumbling hopes, we are hearing God's call to pray together in renewed and sustained passion for His promised kingdom. Consider the prayers in Seek God for the City as an incendiary device, rekindling your faith and love in the unrelenting hope and passion of Jesus Himself.

We must continue to hope for ourselves and others in these days of difficulty. God chooses days such as these to accom-

plish His greater purposes. These are days when great prayers can be prayed. Let's pray toward God fulfilling His yearnings for the kingdom to come and be present here on earth.

Consider ordering copies for many in your church or city. Seek God for the City will not only encourage you how to pray, but it will also urge you to find ways to pray with biblical substance for the glory and kingdom of God.

As in other years, Seek God for the City is designed to unite and focus prayer through the

40 days leading to Palm Sunday, March 5 through April 13, 2014. Check out the details at www.waymakers.org/pray/seek-god or call 800-264-5214.

Quantity discounts make the 64--page booklet available for as little as \$1.20 a copy. That makes it possible to equip many in your church or community for much less than the \$3 single copy price.



News from Global Ministries

The Global Ministries Commission welcomes Pastor Ted Rathman as their newest GMC member.



Pastor Ted is originally from Reamstown, located in Lancaster County, PA. His parents, Ken and Bonnie Rathman, reside there along with his 3 siblings and 5 nieces and nephews.

Pastor Ted was commissioned from his home church, St. Paul's E.C. Church in Reamstown to become pastor at Grace E.C. Church in Schuylkill Haven. He is excited to be beginning this new journey with his wife, Jessica, and daughter,



Lily, by his side.

As pastor of Grace E.C., Ted strives to build a heart for missions into the DNA of the church. Pastor Ted has served as Outreach Coordinator and Missions Chair at St. Paul's E.C. in Reamstown, and currently provides leadership to Grace E.C.'s Outreach Commission and missions efforts. Pastor

Ted also serves at the local food pantry and is an area representative for Voice of the Martyrs. Perhaps most formative in Ted's life include the various mission trips he experienced in youth group, as a youth leader, and most especially his month long stay in Ukraine working with Hope International. God has given Ted a heart for His work throughout the world and his past experiences, his travels in the Navy, and his time as an International Studies major have only deepened this passion for God's mission around the globe.

India & Nepal Field Visit: November 26-December 11, 2013



Please be in prayer for the upcoming visits to the E.C. Church of India and Nepal. GMC Director Randy Sizemore will be

traveling to North East India to participate in a Church Leaders' Seminar co-hosted by the GMC and the EC Church of India. This seminar will be held November 29-December 1,

2013 in Manipur. Randy will be the keynote speaker for the 5 worship services while other local leaders will be teaching various seminars to the approximately 300 attendees.

Following this seminar, Randy will speak in a few

local EC Churches in India before traveling to Nepal for their Annual Conference, December 6-10, 2013. A GMC team will meet up with Randy



in Delhi on December 5 and they will all travel together to Biratnagar, Nepal for the conference. The GMC Team includes:

Rev. Angam (EC India)
Rev. Elias Martinez (EC Mexico)
Rev. Carlos Kelly (Spanish/English translator)
Dr. David Dick (EC Missionary & V.P. OMS)
Pastor Ted Rathman (GMC Member)



Upcoming GMC Offerings:

Thankoffering: This voluntary offering is collected by many churches in the months of October and November. These funds are dedicated to the support of our interna-

tional EC Churches. If you would like envelopes for this offering please contact the GMC office.

Christmas Missions Offering: Watch your mail for the 2013 Christmas Missions Offering insert to be collected on

December 22. This offering is one of the 2 required offerings the GMC depends on to help support the ministry and administration costs of the Global Ministries Commission. Thank you for your faithful partnership and generous giving!

New Direction for GMC

In the Spring 2013 issue of *Window on the World*, I wrote about the deep changes in our culture affecting mission organizations and ministries as explained in Steve Moore's book, *Seize the Vuja De*. The GMC has recognized these deep changes over the past few years and intentionally began to make paradigm shifts in our structure and operations to ensure that we continue to serve our EC missionaries, international conferences and local congregations in a combined effort to make disciples of all nations.

We realize that our role has shifted from being the "driver" of missions in the global EC Church to being the group that comes along side local congregations, missionaries and international partners to provide as many resources as possible to help them achieve their mission goals. We praise God that because of this strategic change we are seeing greater impact and influence for the Kingdom of God.

The next step in the GMC trajectory is to ensure the viability and sustainability of the needed administration—home office—to coordinate our combined efforts of facilitating mis-

sion workers, empowering international churches and engaging the Church in the Great Commission.

The National Ministry Team has approved a proposal from the GMC which will help secure the future funding of the DGM (Director of Global Ministries) and bring a measure of stability to the GMC home office. This new strategy involves allowing the DGM to enter into a shared ministry position with our Bethel EC Church in Dixon, Illinois. After re-locating to Dixon in mid-December, I will assume the lead pastor role for the Bethel Church and continue to be the Director of Global Ministries. Deputy Director Pat Strain will continue her current responsibilities of caring for our missionary workers and will also administrate the day to day GMC operations at Church Center.

My work with and travel to our international EC conferences will not change and the GMC will continue to offer our broad range of publications, training seminars, informational venues, customized assistance for local congregations, scheduling of missionaries and basically everything we offer now. We plan to better utilize the new denominational website to

post short video and power point updates to keep you informed and I will still be available to speak at local churches, gatherings, etc. on a limited basis when I return to Pennsylvania in March and October for the GMC and National Ministry Team meetings.

While we are confident that we have most of the logistics of this new ministry paradigm worked out on paper, we know there will be a few wrinkles along the way. However we are excited to lead the GMC in this new direction of effectiveness as we continue to serve the global EC Church in fulfilling the Great Commission.

Please note: This shared ministry position will help eliminate some of the reoccurring financial shortages in the administration category of the GMC budget. To remain financially viable, we will still need to maintain the same level of donations from individuals and local churches to the general fund. Thank you for your faithful and continued prayer and financial partnership with the GMC.

-- Randy Sizemore



Merger of Grace & Grace Community

The congregation of Grace EC Church, Millersville, PA has voted to close the church and to merge their membership with Grace Community Church, Willow Street, PA. This will be effective upon the repayment of any claims of the National Conference being adequately satisfied according to our EC DISCIPLINE. The National Conference will take ownership of the assets of

Grace, Millersville and will hold them in trust for a period not to exceed twelve (12) months. During that time Grace Community will investigate the possibility of using the Millersville facilities for a satellite church or a new church plant. If Grace Community votes to move ahead with a satellite or church plant the Millersville assets will be transferred from the National Conference to Grace

Community. In the meantime the facilities will continue to be used by two other congregations: Tapestry and The Gathering. Please be in prayer for the members of Millersville as they integrate into the life and ministry of Grace Community and for the Lord's leading in the future use of the Millersville facilities.



News from StoneRidge Retirement Living



Can you hear the clock ticking away as we approach the Christmas season? Will you be suffering from the crazies... trying to work all day, do Christmas shopping at night or weekends, make the cookies, go to the kids' holiday programs, extra duty at church, spend time with the family, decorate the house, put up the lights... the list seems endless.

For those of us who work with and for the residents of a retirement community, our thoughts turn to all these things we do for ourselves but also what we can do to make Christmas meaningful and fun for our residents. When we turn off the light and go home at night, it's important to remember that this IS our resident's home. They live life here 24 hours a day.

At Christmas one of the things

we focus on is making sure the residents of our personal care and skilled nursing care areas have a special Christmas present to open on Christmas morning. In the past, monies generated by auxiliary donations were used to purchase these gifts. This year we were faced with the challenge of not having any auxiliary money to use and a need for \$8000 to purchase gifts for the residents.

A letter was sent out to the churches in the district asking for support for the Resident's Christmas Gift Fund. We have received a few donations in support of this appeal but are still very short of what is needed. The staff has stepped up to hold a sub sale and a pie sale to assist in growing the gift fund. We just can't imagine a Christmas morning here at StoneRidge where a resident

does not have a special gift to unwrap. The smiles, the joy... that's why we do what we do!



Your church can help by sending a donation to: StoneRidge Retirement Living, c/o Resident Gift Fund, 440 E. Lincoln Ave., Myerstown, PA 17067. Thank you for your help to be able to share with joy of Christmas with those we serve.

- - Sherry Heim
Director of Development/PR

Great Lakes Region Special Meeting



The special meeting of the Great Lakes Region to elect a Conference Minister has been scheduled for Saturday, January 11, 2014 beginning promptly at 10:00 AM (eastern) 9:00 AM (central). The special meeting will actually take place in two locations: Lakeside EC Church, Transfer, PA and Bethel EC Church, Dixon, IL. Members of the National Conference from the Great Lakes Region must be present at one of the locations in order to cast a ballot. Our Rules of Conference and the Discipline both allow for electronic meetings so while

the majority of delegates will gather in Transfer there will be a live video feed to those gathered in Dixon. Ballots will be provided at both locations so that voting can take place in both locations at the same time. The ballot will be published at the beginning of December and more specific information will be distributed closer to the special meeting.

While only those members of Conference from the Great Lakes Region can cast a ballot, I know the entire EC family will join me in prayer for the Lord's

leading as we approach this important day in the life of our church. Please be in prayer for the Nominating Committee, chaired by Rev. Robert W. Shuey, as they begin the interview and ballot preparation process. Please be in prayer for the men to be interviewed and their families as they honestly and humbly seek the Lord's will for their ministry. Thank you!

Bishop Hill

News from Benefits Corporation

We are quickly approaching the end of the calendar year and we are encouraging all local church pastors, treasurers or administrators to begin planning for the required year end reporting. Required reporting includes year-end tax forms, giving statements, denomination annual reports and pastor compensation forms. A small amount of preparation and planning early in the process will save time and frustration later. Due dates for year-end reporting:

Due to EC Church Center—Compensation and Benefit Administrator

Pastor Salary Forms	January 15, 2014 (copy to Conference Minister)
Annual Reports	January 25, 2014
Form W-2 (pastors and church employees) Filed with Social Security	January 31, 2014 February 28, 2014 (paper forms) or March 31, 2014 (electronically)
Form 1099-MISC (independent contractors) Filed with IRS	January 31, 2014 February 28, 2014 (paper forms) or March 31, 2014 (electronically)

The aggregate cost of all applicable employer provided health insurance is to be reported on 2013 W-2s issued in January 2014. The EC Benefits staff will calculate and communicate the cost of health insurance to include on the 2013 W-2. **The cost of employer provided health insurance is not a taxable benefit. This is informational reporting only.**

Pastors are employees of the local church and should receive a W-2 with federal, state and local taxes withheld from every paycheck.

New information of the Affordable Care Act has been sparse lately with the government budget crisis and the introduction of the health insurance marketplace attracting attention. Dave and I are enjoying the lull to focus on other matters but we know the Affordable Care Act is not going away.

Please remember that HRA reimbursements from the October 1, 2012 to September 30, 2013 health insurance year must be submitted to PrimePay by December 29, 2013. If you need assistance submitting claims to PrimePay please contact the EC Benefits office. The HRA (Healthcare Reimbursement Account) is only for the active pastors on the Highmark PPO plan.

There will be a slight increase in the cost of the retiree Medicare supplement plan, Highmark Freedom Blue, of \$17 per month to \$188 per month with no changes to benefit levels. Your invoices for January 2013 will reflect the increase in premium cost.

Retirees please be careful when responding to solicitations for other Medicare supplemental plans or Medicare Part D plans. The regulations concerning Medicare supplemental programs are very complex. There have been instances when a retiree unknowingly cancels their Freedom Blue enrollment. If your membership in Freedom Blue is cancelled for any reason it may take 30 days or longer to get you re-enrolled in Freedom Blue. Please be very careful making any changes to your Medicare supplemental coverage.

Have a blessed Thanksgiving Holiday,

Kevin Henry	Dave King
Controller	Benefits Administrator



Bishop's Speaking Schedule

The bishop is planning his preaching/speaking calendar for 2014. If you are interested in having Bishop Hill speak at your church, 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 and **you need to invite him.** So as*

you plan your congregation's 2014 church service schedule see when it would be good to have the bishop come preach. He enjoys meeting new friends, is a pretty good preacher, and is even willing to wear socks and a tie if necessary.

If you'd like 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 2014. He hopes to see you soon!



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News from Evangelical



Faith in the Marketplace Breakfast on Tuesday, November 12, will feature **Dr. Janet Stauffer**,

professor of marriage and family therapy, speaking on the topic, "Navigating Conflict in the Workplace." The event begins at 7:00 a.m. and ends promptly at 8:30 a.m. Register online at www.evangelical.edu/lifelonglearning or call Marsha Conley at 717-866-5775 by November 5.

Donald Kraybill, noted author and Anabaptist scholar, will present the **2013 Ritter-Moyer Lecture** on Thursday, November 14, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. He will speak on "The Upside Down Kingdom" and "Radical Forgiveness." Registration information is available on the seminary website (www.evangelical.edu).



Evangelical
Seminary
LIVE • LEARN • LEAD



News from Twin Pines

Twin Pines Camp, Conference and Retreat Center will be celebrating 50 years of ministry in 2014. In those 50 years, Twin Pines has been used by God to change the lives of many young people and people young at heart. Twin Pines would like you to join in celebrating 50 years of ministry by participating in the events planned throughout the year. Please mark your calendar for these events. More information will be in the local churches in November as well as on the Twin Pines website, www.twinpines.org.

January 4th—Anniversary Party at Twin Pines with a hymn sing, time of memory sharing, and cake reception to follow.

March 12th—Day of Concerted Prayer for Twin Pines—Pray with others who love Twin Pines.

June 7th—Summer Celebration/Rededication Day—Special speaker, events, reunions, memory museum, competitions, and rededication ceremony.

August 2nd—Summer Staff Sing and Alumni Picnic—Picnic for summer staff and program staff alumni followed by staff sing.

Twin Pines Camp, Conference and Retreat Center
Honoring our Heritage, Living the Legacy

