

EC LEADER

A publication of the Evangelical Congregational Church



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FROM THE DESK

Bishop Randy Sizemore

Refreshing Your Resilience

“We are invited daily to allow the qualities the Maker puts inside of us to be stronger than those things pulling us away from Him.”



Click [HERE](#) for the Bishop's February video message



Speaking Schedule for 2025

Bishop Randy is now scheduling his 2025 preaching schedule. If you would like to schedule him at your church, please contact Bishop Randy directly at rsizemore@eccenter.com.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR NEWS KEVIN HENRY

As always, please email:

Bethany White
NC Administrative
Assistant / Business
Office and Benefits Corp
Specialist
bwhite@eccenter.com

Kevin Henry
Executive Director
khenry@eccenter.com

with any questions
or call
717.866.7581

Did you notice the refreshed EC Center website? Thanks to Wendy Beard and Bethany White for their time, talents and hard work on the finished product. The member login website will be getting a similar refresh soon. There is more information and a deeper menu structure on the member login website to reconfigure, thus, it is taking longer to complete. We hope to have the refreshed member login website released by mid-March.

Thanks to all of you that have completed the workers comp wage audit forms online and on paper. If you have not submitted your workers comp wage information, please do so immediately. The wage audit forms can be found here, <https://members.eccenter.com/members-home-page/forms-resources/>. Please remember to log into the member login section of the website before clicking the link above.

The deadline to distribute W-2s to employees, including pastors, is January 31, 2025, with the employer filing deadline also as January 31, 2025, if filed electronically or on paper. Social Security Administration's Business Services Online (BSO), www.ssa.gov/bsa, is an easy, convenient method for

help in producing the employee and employer copies of the W-2 on white paper, no forms, and for filing the W-2s electronically with SSA. We encourage all church treasurers that produce their W-2s in-house to use the SSA BSO services. The SSA BSO website changed their login procedures, making it more difficult to login (of course, they did). Do not delay updating your SSA BSO login credentials.

Due Dates: Disability Payment of \$100.00 was due January 15
Annual Reports were due January 25

Please remember that the EC Benefits Service fee of \$125 is due from churches on April 15, 2025; **retirees are not subject to the fee**. The 2024 disability premiums were due January 15, 2025. Please remit them as soon as possible. The due dates for the administrative fee and disability premium are listed in the Treasurer's Guide available on the EC Center website. You are welcome to remit the \$100 disability fee and \$125 EC Benefits Service fee at one time and with one check; save a stamp.

Pastoral Compensation forms were due on January 15, 2025. If you have not done so, please return your compensation forms to Bethany White as soon as possible. In early February, we will be contacting churches that have not submitted 2025 compensation forms and requesting compliance.

Please begin using the 2025 Ministry Fund forms for January offerings. One ministry fund form will be used for all EC churches in all regions and all districts. Offerings collected in December 2024 should be remitted on the 2024 Ministry Fund forms.

The Semi-Annual Ministerial Update report and Annual Report are now one report, the new Annual Report, and this report was due by January 25, 2025. There is a pdf version for download and an online version available.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR NEWS KEVIN HENRY

continued...

As always, please email:

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Kevin Henry
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The 2025 Business Mileage Reimbursement increased by \$.03/mile to \$.70/mile on January 1, 2025.

Year-end giving statements to donors must include a phrase similar to or contain the words, "no goods or services were exchange for these contributions or consisted entirely of a religious nature." The IRS has resources available at www.irs.gov to assist with charitable contribution (Tax Guide for Churches and Religious Organizations and Publication 526 Charitable Contributions).

Please contact Kevin Henry or Bethany White with any questions.

Kevin Henry
Executive Director

Bethany White
Benefits Specialist

New Look for the EC Center Website!

No, your eyes are not deceiving you. Yes, the EC Center website is live and well, but it does have a different look. We have tried to condense and streamline the information available through the main page of the website to hopefully make resources easier to locate. If you are having difficulty finding something on the website, please contact EC Church Center at office@eccenter.com or 717.866.7581.

And look for an updated Member Login website in the spring!





Church Health Community News

FROM THE DESK

Rev. Wayne Houck, CHC Associate

Church Revitalization Cohorts

“We don’t want our church to die.’ The congregants concern matches reliable data that shows the North American church is, in fact, shrinking. The general adult population of the United States may have grown by a predictable 15 percent in recent years, but the number of unchurched adults has also, meanwhile, increased a more shocking 92 percent (source: The Barna Group).

“Perhaps you’ve noticed: large church buildings that were filled in the 1950s and 60s now hold a fraction of their capacity. And recent research suggests that the perceived church growth of the 1970s, 80s and 90s had more to do with redistribution of believers than reaching the unchurched. Overall, our churches are stagnant, in need of a return to healthy evangelistic growth.” (inside dust jacket of [Comeback Churches](#), Stetzer)

Beginning in February, our churches will be invited to participate in group study cohorts designed specifically to equip and encourage leaders so they can identify and make the changes necessary for new life in the congregation.

Here are some important details to consider:

- We plan to meet via Zoom once a month at a time that is mutually agreeable. So that your time investment is as productive as possible, we are asking that the Lead Pastor and at least one other person from the church join us. There would ideally be three to five people from each church at each meeting.
- You will be asked to complete the Church Health Checkup as a congregation at the outset of your cohort, if you have not already done so. You will want to get the MissionInsite report for your church as well.

Church Health Community News

FROM THE DESK

Rev. Wayne Houck, CHC Associate

continued...

Church Revitalization Cohorts

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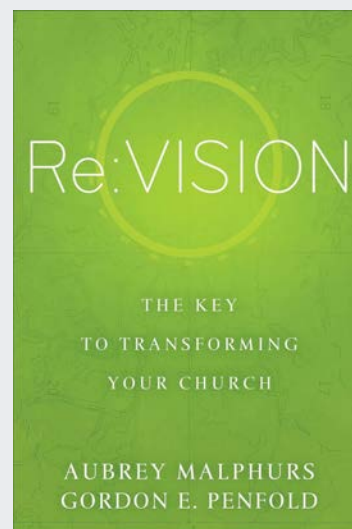
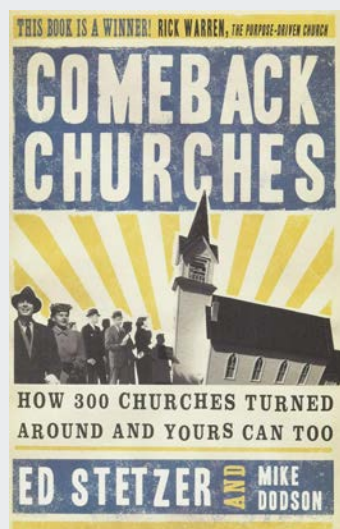
- Each month we will review a chapter of *Comeback Churches: How 300 Churches Turned Around and Yours Can, Too* by Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson (2007, B&H Publishing). We can provide books to you if cost is a concern.
- There will be one or two podcasts or blogs shared each month which will be part of the discussion.
- We ask that you approach your commitment with a willingness to make changes as necessary. All participants will be asked to actively participate in our discussions so we can collaboratively develop real, actionable plans for change.
- Pastors will also agree to meet privately and confidentially with me once a month while working through *Re: VISION* by Aubrey Malphurs and Gordon Penfold (2014, Baker Books). There is also an online assessment that we will ask you to complete on the characteristics of a revitalizing pastor which can help guide our discussion.

Keep in mind that just like it takes time and effort to get physically healthier, it usually takes a big commitment to help a church get healthier. Imagine going to a gym or eating a healthier diet for a week or two and expecting to impress your doctor. Sixteen months seems like a long time, but please prayerfully consider the possibilities for a turnaround in your church through this process. We are truly blessed to be part of a denomination which offers us resources and guidance we can utilize to help make a real difference in the health of a church.

Just let me know if you have any questions or if you are ready to make a commitment. We are here to help. Reach out at waynehouck@gmail.com or 610-716-5603 (voice/text).

Looking forward to working with you.

Wayne





Nurturing a Global vision in the EC Church by...

Engaging the Local Church

Facilitating Missions Workers

Empowering National Churches

The Global Ministries Community uses digital platforms and formats to maintain financial stewardship and to bring you more timely updates, information and prayer requests.

If you would like to be added to our email distribution list to receive digital communications, send your request to

ecglobal@eccenter.com.

You may also connect with the Global Ministries Community on the following digital platforms:

Website: gmc.eccenter.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/GMC.ECChurch>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/ecglobalministries/>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@ECGlobalMissions>

Contact us at:

EC Global Ministries Community

EC Church Center

100 W. Park Avenue

Myerstown, PA 17067

717.866.7581 / 800.866.7581 / ecglobal@eccenter.com

Kingdom Extension Community News

FROM THE DESK

Rev. Mike Snedeker, KEC Associate



Three Things In Five Minutes

In my first couple of years as the Kingdom Extension Associate, I have been so encouraged by what is happening in the EC Church. It would be easy for us to get discouraged about what seems like annual decline in membership, attendance and professions of faith. That discouragement could lead to hopelessness and despair, leaving us feeling like the future hope of the denomination is bleak at best. That is not at all what I see. I see churches and pastors who are looking outside of their walls! They are seeing fields white unto harvest and believing that God has big plans for the future! This positive momentum and belief in God's plans are not just within a few "big churches" with extensive resources; they are found in our medium and small churches as well! God IS ALIVE, and He has not given up on His Church! He has called us into partnership with Him, and as you have heard, we are his plan A; there is no plan B.

Could you do three things right now, before you finish reading this edition of the EC Leader?

1. Take two minutes to stop and pray. Pray right now that God would open your eyes to the people and needs of your community, that He would give you His vision for how He wants to use your church to impact that community. He has put you there for a reason!
2. Allow yourself to open your heart and mind, even just a little, to the hope that God wants you to have for the future. I promise you that God is NOT done with this world. He is not done with your community. Start to believe that through the power of the Holy Spirit, YOU CAN DO THIS!!!
3. Send me an email. It does not have to be long. As a matter of fact, you do not have to put anything in the body of the email. Just include the words "WE CAN DO THIS" in the subject line. I would love to come alongside you and dream about how the Kingdom Extension Community might unite with you to reach your community with the Gospel. You can reach me at msnedeker@eccenter.com.

Mike





Kingdom Extension Community News

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Please continue to pray this month for the following new church planting opportunities that God is raising up:

El Shaddai – The Dominiques and Martial Pierre are well into actively planting a Haitian church in Lancaster, PA. El Shaddai Community has been meeting on Sunday evenings for worship service at Trinity EC Church in Lancaster, PA. They are seeing new families every week and witnessing people come to know Christ and follow Him. Please pray especially for Martial and his family. His wife and children remain in Haiti and are seeking to gain asylum to the US.

Manuel and Luz Arias – In Lexington, South Carolina, the Arias family is starting a new EC Church. Manuel and Luz continue to develop a team for ministry, as well as to strategize sharing the Gospel in tangible ways. They are currently developing men's and women's ministries at the church. Please pray that God would provide a location for this church to use for worship gatherings. Pray also for wisdom, strength and renewed energy for this couple. Manuel and Luz have especially asked for prayer for their family. They are considering potential changes that would allow them to devote more time to the church. Pray for wisdom for them and their family.

Tim and Pam Ream – The Reams moved to Thorn Hill, Tennessee. They are pursuing the opportunity to engage in planting an EC Church in their new community. Pray that God would begin preparing that community to be receptive to His glorious presence. Pray also for the Reams as they begin building relationships and engaging in discipleship relationships through inviting people into their home and engaging individuals in their community.

Mike Coulson and People's EC Church – Echo, the name of this church that is meeting in the Virtual Space, is reaching people with the Gospel and making disciples. Pray that the team will continue to develop and grow. People's is also beginning a micro church that will meet at Confessions Bar in Nesquehoning. Pray for this open door to be a Gospel presence where people who need Jesus hang out!

Zach and Kelsey Van Dyke – Zach and Kelsey have begun planting a network of house churches in and around Davenport, Iowa. They are currently meeting with a group in their own home weekly and seeking God's plan for their future. They are developing a vision for raising up house church shepherds and developing a discipleship and multiplication strategy. Please pray for Zach and Kelsey as they transition away from shared ministry to fully focus on TACO (The Axios Community Outpost). Also pray for wisdom as they develop discipleship pathways and vision and mission statements.

Ministerial Development Community News



ICL UPDATE

Rev. Adam Roberts., ICL Director

Registration for the Spring 2025 ICL courses is now open!

The first course of the Spring semester is "The History of Evangelicalism." Rev. Adam Roberts will guide students through the development of evangelicalism from the Reformation to the 21st century, examining the key individuals, events and organizations that have influenced the movement. We will also examine the historical and theological advancements that have shaped our identity today. Classes will take place on Tuesday evenings from February 11 (*note the date change*) to March 11, 2025, via Zoom.

With the help of a small team of instructors, Rev. Tanner Cosgrave will lead learners on the journey of "Developing a Contextual Missional Mindset," guiding them on how to effectively make disciples in our ever-evolving world. The focus of this course will be disciple-making processes, evangelism tools and the use of technology. Classes will meet via Zoom on Tuesday evenings from March 25 to May 6, 2025.

The Institute for Church Leadership (ICL) is not just for those interested in pursuing full-time ministry. Each semester offers both an informative and formative course ranging in topics from Bible study, theology, spiritual formation, the mission of the Kingdom and church history, among others. These courses are for anyone searching for opportunities for spiritual growth and leadership development. There are no required educational prerequisites, and there is no seminary credit awarded. The classes are reasonably priced at \$250 for students and \$50 for auditors per course.

If you are interested in learning more about the ICL and what opportunities may be available for you and your church, please visit:

<https://mdc.eccenter.com/institute-for-church-leadership/> or contact me at aproberts563@gmail.com.

You may register for either of the Spring ICL classes at:

<https://eccenter.app.neoncrm.com/nx/portal/neonevents/events?path=%2Fportal%2Fevents%2FRegistration>.

Adam



Ministerial Development Community News

CHAPLAINCY CORNER

Rev. W. Joel Copeland, Jr., Chaplaincy Committee Chair

Prayer Focus on our Heroes - Our Chaplains

We appreciate each of the EC leaders who follow our pastors who serve in some form of chaplaincy through this column. We try to present the various types of chaplaincy ministries our pastors serve in, or in some cases, have served in. For Our February chaplain of note, we turn to a Vietnam Vet who is still serving veterans in more ways than one. He serves in an honor guard at the Indiantown Gap National Cemetery two days a week and also serves as a veterans' group chaplain.

The Rev. Harold Easter is currently pastor at Bunker Hill EC Church. He is from the Faith Church in Bair and was granted credentials in 1983. His first assignment was the Berrysburg/Gratz circuit in 1985. He then was assigned to Hamburg in 1988, and in 1993 this church relocated becoming the Lenhartsville Church. In 2003, he was assigned to Bunker Hill in a part-time capacity. Prior to serving in pastoral ministry, Rev. Easter served in the Marines and fought in the Khe Sanh conflict in Vietnam during 1968. Rev. Easter is the father of three children, grandfather to nine grandchildren and and great-grandfather to 10 great-grandchildren!



Along with his pastoral work, he serves as chaplain for the Khe Sanh Veteran's Organization. He has been serving in this position since 2020. Khe Sanh, in Vietnam, was the site of a major battle of the Vietnam Conflict. Although the younger EC leaders may be unaware of this battle, most of the older members still remember.

According to Rev. Easter, the Khe Sanh Veteran's Organization is a "national organization serving those veterans of all branches of the military who served at Khe Sanh especially during the 1968 siege of the base." As Chaplain, his duties are to "perform memorial services at our National Cemeteries during our reunions" and "to recognize those members who have passed on during the year."

This position does come with opportunities to offer spiritual support to the veterans by praying for them, being available to those who are in need of spiritual guidance and meeting with small groups.

Most, if not all, of the veterans who were in Khe Sanh suffer from the long-term effects of their combat (commonly called Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder or PTSD) that has completely changed their lives in many different ways. In spite of this, Rev. Easter has said that there are "few who would seek spiritual help. Those who do make known their hurtful memories are blessed, and in turn, bless me."

Rev. Easter has requested prayer for the organization. He added, "Our organization is one experiencing the loss of several members every year, and one that will eventually die out as the members pass away. Pray for the families who have their Khe Sanh veterans pass away." Also remember those who served and who carry the psychological and physical effects of that service and of conflict but find it hard to believe in God after their service.

Ministerial Development Community News

CHAPLAINCY CORNER

Rev. W. Joel Copeland, Jr., Chaplaincy Committee Chair

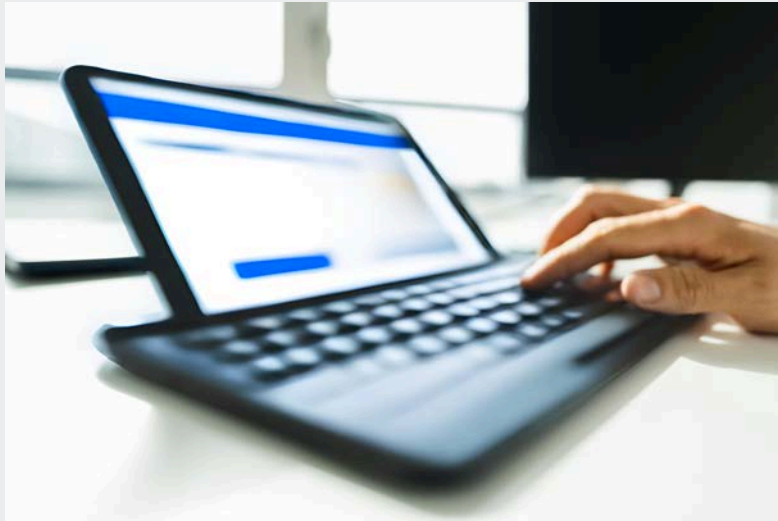
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Prayer Focus on our Heroes - Our Chaplains

continued...

We thank Rev. Easter for his service in the Marines, his continued service to the veterans of the Khe Sanh Conflict and his service on the Chaplaincy Committee.

For any questions concerning chaplaincy or information on chaplaincy ministry, contact Rev. Dr. W. Joel Copeland, Jr., Chair, EC Chaplaincy Committee, at 717.507.2174 or ecparson@hotmail.com.



Reminder for Chaplains

All National Conference appointed chaplains are asked to complete the Annual Chaplaincy Report. The report was due January 20, 2025, and can be found under Forms & Resources in the Member Login section of the eccenter.com website. The report is available as both a fillable pdf and a fully online version. If using the online version, a signature is requested so it is best to complete the report using a device with a touchscreen.

Reminder for the Chaplaincy Committee

The Chaplaincy Committee members are reminded of the Chaplaincy Committee meeting on February 13, 2025, at 2:00 P.M. in the EC Church Center. Again, for any questions on chaplain service through the EC Church, please contact the Chaplaincy Committee or myself. We will keep you informed of developments and changes as they become available.





TWIN PINES

CAMP, CONFERENCE & RETREAT CENTER

Twin Pines Update:



Winter Thaw

WT-C (Feb. 14-16) & WT-D (Feb. 21-23)

We will have fun activities, our annual video competition and so much more! Learn more about the keynote speakers for each weekend and how to register on our website. Go to www.TwinPines.org and click on the Events tab & Winter Thaw page. Reach out to Jonah@twinpines.org for more info on Thaw!

Summer Camp Registration is now Open!

If you and your friends are thinking about summer camp, you can now register! There is a program for everyone. NEW this summer - Serve Camp! Bring your youth group and be part of a work team that helps in the local area or completes a project at camp. This is a great way to do summer camp with your entire youth group or, if you are in grades 9-12, you can participate on your own. Families looking for a family camp option, consider our Family Camp. It promises to be a fun experience for all ages! Bring Grandma and Grandpa; they can participate in activities with our Adult Camp but also spend time with their kids and grandkids in Family Camp as the camps interact and enjoy growing in faith and as a family.



Chill the Camp Campaign!

Twin Pines is equipping meeting spaces around camp with air conditioning and upgraded heating. The project has an estimated cost of \$27,000 for the equipment; the labor for the installation is being donated. The HVAC market is projecting a steep increase in equipment prices in the new year. Help Twin Pines make the purchase of the equipment before that happens. You can give a one time gift or commit to giving each month for the next six months.



We Are Hiring!

If you or someone you know is interested in working in Full-time Camp Ministry, please contact Shawn Fetterhoff at shawn@twinpines.org.

Twin Pines is also looking for summer staff! Being a member of Summer Staff at Twin Pines allows you the opportunity to reach people for the Gospel while growing in your own faith, as well as making some money while you have fun! Go to www.twinpines.org to apply online.



CALENDAR

FEBRUARY 2025

Sunday, February 2

Day of Prayer for the Kingdom Extension

Liturgical Color - Green

Wednesday, February 5

Day of Prayer and Fasting for the EC Church

Sunday, February 9

Church Planting Offering

Liturgical Color - Green

Sunday, February 16

Liturgical Color - Green

Monday, February 17

Presidents' Day

Tuesday, February 18

EC Benefits Meeting

Sunday, February 23

Liturgical Color - Green

Ministry Funds, Insurance & Benefits, Church Planting Offering and Self-Denial Offering

Mail to:

**EC Church Center
100 W. Park Ave.
Myerstown, PA 17067**

MARCH 2025

Sunday, March 2

Day of Prayer for the Kingdom Extension

Liturgical Color - Green

Wednesday, March 5

Ash Wednesday

Day of Prayer and Fasting for the EC Church

Sunday, March 9

First Sunday of Lent

Self-Denial Offering

Liturgical Color - Purple

Wednesday, March 12

Faith & Doctrine Committee

Friday, March 14

EC History & Polity Class

Sunday, March 16

Second Sunday of Lent

Liturgical Color - Purple

Wednesday, March 19

Conference Network Team Strategic Meeting

Thursday, March 20

National Ministry Team Meeting

Sunday, March 23

Third Sunday of Lent

Liturgical Color - Purple

Sunday, March 30

Fourth Sunday of Lent

Liturgical Color - Purple



**NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2025 WILL BE
HELD AT MESSIAH UNIVERSITY FROM
MAY 21 - 23, 2025.
LOOK FOR MORE INFORMATION IN NEXT
MONTH'S EC LEADER!**



Changing the World with Jesus

“Jesus came and told his disciples, ‘I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’” [Matthew 28:18-20]

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

office@eccenter.com / www.eccenter.com

Office Hours: Monday - Thursday
8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.



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