# EC LEADER



A publication of the Evangelical Congregational Church



Twin Pines News page 12

MDC News pages 10-11

Calendars & Staff List pages 13-14



## FROM THE DESK

**Bishop Randy Sizemore** 

## Mindful Leadership

"Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well." 3 John 1:2 NIV





#### **Speaking Schedule for 2025**

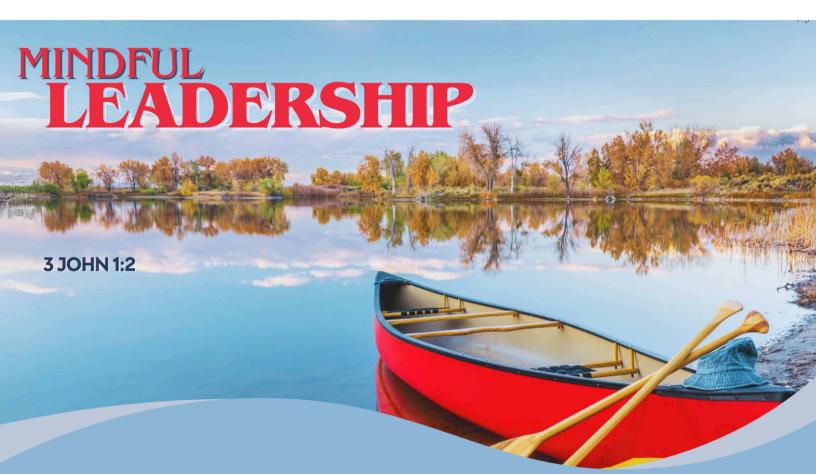
Bishop Randy is now scheduling his 2025 preaching schedule.

If you would like to schedule him at your church, please contact Bishop Randy directly at

rsizemore@eccenter.com.

## NATIONAL CONFERENCE NEWS

# National Conference 2025 May 21 through 23 at Messiah University



"Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you even as your soul is getting along well." (3 John 1:2)

#### Deadline to register is May 1!

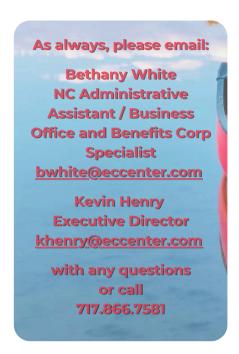
Report packets are available on the eccenter.com website at 2025 National Conference Report Packet.

#### Register online today at

https://eccenter.app.neoncrm.com/np/clients/eccenter/eventRegistration.jsp?event=28&.

To view the brochure or print a hard copy registration form to be mailed to EC Church Center, go to our website, eccenter.com. Links for these items may be found near the bottom of our homepage.

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR NEWS KEVIN HENRY



Worker's Compensation invoices to the churches included in our group policy were mailed the week of April 14<sup>th</sup>. Most churches will see an increase over 2024, except for churches that experienced staffing changes from last year. If your church did not receive an invoice, please contact Bethany for another copy. Bethany's contact information is below.

Online bill payment is available with instructions included on the worker's compensation invoices. Online bill payment is only available for payments by credit card. A fee is not charged when paying online by credit card. The EC Church Center received notice that the US Postal Service will be increasing postage rates, again, on July 13, 2025. Online bill payment is easy, simple and safe. Please contact Bethany or Kevin with any questions regarding online bill payment.

The EC Benefits Corporation Service fee of \$125 per pastor per church was due on April 15. Thanks to the many churches that have paid the fee on a timely basis. If your payment is outstanding, please send it in as soon as you are able. Reminder notices on unpaid fees will be sent in a few weeks.

An online payment option is available for the Benefits Corporation Service fee; please contact Bethany for details.

Churches not included in the denominational worker's compensation group policy - Ohio, Illinois and Kentucky churches - your individual state mandates worker's compensation coverage. Please confirm that all employees of the church are covered by worker's compensation insurance. Per EC Benefits Corporation policy H.3.b, churches not covered by the denomination group worker's compensation policy shall submit proof of worker's compensation coverage by July 1 of each year. Please submit proof of your workers compensation coverage to:

EC Benefits
100 W Park Ave
Myerstown, PA 17067
Or fax 717.866.7583 or email khenry@eccenter.com

Please contact Bethany White or Kevin Henry with any questions.

Kevin HenryBethany WhiteExecutive DirectorBenefits Corp Specialistkhenry@eccenter.combwhite@eccenter.com717.866.7581 x 1121717.866.7581 x 1100





#### One Church's Path to Revitalization

In 2023 Emmanuel EC Hatfield was faced with some difficult decisions about their future. With just more than a dozen active members and with the guidance of their District Field Director at the time, the church leadership drew a line in the sand: rather than continue to die a slow death of decreasing church attendance and diminishing effectiveness, the leadership of Emmanuel decided to go "all in" in church revitalization, once again reaching the community and future generations with the Gospel.

Over the last 18 months, Emmanuel has seen God move. While worship attendance has doubled, the more exciting news is that the church has a much greater network through the many outreach events we have done over the last year or so, and people have responded to the Gospel! While it has not always been easy, and the work still is not done, God has been faithful in revitalizing a church that was on the road to closure.

For churches seeking revitalization, we have gained some wisdom through first-hand experience at Emmanuel:

**#1 - Accept reality.** Doing what we have always done will very likely result in what we have always got as of late: continuing decline. Emmanuel's board wrestled with the question: "If things continue on their present trajectory, where will we be in five years?" They agreed the answer was the church would be closed. Emmanuel's leadership decided that rather than close their doors, they would revitalize in order to re-engage their community with the Gospel.

**#2 - Consider your context.** The leadership of Emmanuel was encouraged to think as missionaries to our community. When missionaries enter new places of ministry, they ask many questions about who they are trying to reach. For instance, who are the people that comprise your community? We, in Hatfield, learned that our community has over 20,000 in the immediate area surrounding the church, and the vast majority of them need Jesus. We also learned that our community is loaded with families and children in an increasingly diverse community. Learning about your community is very helpful, not just in understanding who you are trying to reach, but in giving you a fresh vision about the "fields that are ripe for harvest" outside the doors of your church. By

## **Church Health Community News**

#### FROM THE DESK

Rev. Adam Roberts, Member of the CHC continued...

#### One Church's Path to Revitalization

continued...

considering our context, we began a monthly kids' club ministry, reaching children in our community through a program of songs, a Bible story, crafts, games and a snack. We have built relationships with many kids (and their families) over the last year of doing this ministry. We also had our first Vacation Bible School in many years in which we had a couple dozen children attend, and eight surrendered their lives to Jesus!

- #3 Start with the resources God gave you. Every church has something to offer the community, and church revitalization does not always have to be costly. Here is what we discovered at Emmanuel: We have a well-maintained piece of property with ample facilities and open green space in the center of the borough. We used it to our advantage, doing activities on the church lawn that pushed us outside of the building and into the pathway of our neighbors... events like outdoor worship services; a "Free 4 All" resource giveaway (a free yard sale); and on the local Trick or Treat night, we handed out candy, tracts and invitations to church. We also decided to have a presence where the community gathered, so we had a simple float in the local Memorial Day Parade and a table with free goodies and information at local community festivals. We added an "outreach twist" to fellowship brunches and lunches and existing ministries, like our weekly food cupboard outreach and our annual Peach Festival. None of these things were very costly, but they did require the time and energy of a few.
- #4 Learn to surrender. While church revitalization sounds like a good idea, in practice it is kind of difficult, especially when we realize that church revitalization is going to require us to surrender in a lot of different ways. We had to surrender our complacency about the way things were. We had to surrender any desire to re-live the past or re-create what had been. We had to surrender any selfishness as to how we want "our" church to look. We had to surrender our preferences about worship service format, music style, the church calendar and more. Frankly, some of these are just too difficult of an ask for some people, but Emmanuel's leadership realized that until the pain of staying the same is greater than the pain of surrendering our wants and desires, revitalization is not going to happen.
- **#5 Get your facility "company ready."** Expect God to send people to "HIS house" (this is your church's "company"). At home when we expect company, we often clean up and spruce up. At Emmanuel, we did the same; we gave our foyer a little facelift, updated our bulletin board, refreshed our church handouts, refurbished our church nursery, fixed broken or worn-out aspects of our facility and more. To do that, we needed to look at our facility with a fresh set of eyes. A worn-out or unkempt facility with bulletin boards and periodicals that have not been updated since the Reagan Administration speak in ways we probably do not want. A little hard work can go a long way to make your spaces more inviting.
- **#6 Pray...A LOT!** The Scriptures tell us that, "Unless the Lord builds the house, its laborers labor in vain." For revitalization to be successful, we need a fresh outpouring of the Spirit; and if we are not seeking Him, we are not going to experience it. The fact is: God answers prayer, and all God's Kingdom works are fueled by prayer. A praying church is a powerful church! We serve a God who specializes in resurrections, and who makes dead things live again!

## **Church Health Community News**

#### FROM THE DESK

Rev. Adam Roberts, Member of the CHC continued...

#### One Church's Path to Revitalization

continued...

So, after 18 months of revitalization, the work is not completely done, but our conviction is steadfast. We want God to revitalize our church to be a thriving place where we help people know Jesus, and we make Jesus known. We want to continue to reach our community and the next generation with the Gospel. We want to disciple those God is sending to us to love, look and live like Jesus in increasing measure. We want to continue to meet the practical needs of our community in a way that mirrors the heart of Jesus while engaging them with the Gospel. So, we are continuing to preach the Word with boldness, heralding the good news of the Gospel regularly, staying burdened for our community's need for Christ and remaining steadfastly prayerful about God's direction for our church.

For those who are in a similar situation, realize that revitalization is not impossible. Seek Jesus, pray fervently and reach out faithfully, trusting that revitalization is not only possible - it is what the Spirit does best!





# GMC



Global Ministries Community of the Evangelical Congregational Church



## National Conference

Join the Global Ministries Community on Thursday, May 22, 2025 during National Conference

Mission Discipleship

People of the Good News

Where is God stirring you to go?



Ted Rathman Global Ministries Executive Director

Scott Brady

TEAM



Dee Jaramillo Global Ministries Deputy Director



BJ Whitaker (Rachel) EC Missionary -Featured Speaker



Ron & Brenda Anderson



Pastor Kenichiro Sudo & delegation, ECC Japan



Pastors Juan and Flavio, ECC Mexico

Join the GMC on Thursday at National Conference!

BJ, Ron & Brenda, Pastors Juan & Flavio, Pastor Kenichiro, Scott, Ted and Dee will be on campus all day and available to chat all things Global Ministries! You're invited to a special gathering during lunchtime.\*

\*No special meal ticket required, simply make your way through the normal cafeteria line with your pre-purchased conference meal ticket, and join us in the Martin room - adjacent to Lottie Nelson Dining Hall.



### **Don't Miss the Opportunity!**

A few years ago I wrote an EC Leader article that started out talking about Weber grills vs. Blackstone grills. I shared this story that I want to revisit:

"Last night I had the opportunity to hear Craig Allen Cooper share the story of his friendship with Walker Hayes. For those of you who are country music fans, you know who Walker Hayes is. You probably have heard his song 'Craig,' in which he sings about Craig's impact on his life (check it out if you haven't heard it). Pastor Craig became friends with Walker and loved him. As Craig concluded his story, he showed a picture that featured Walker sharing his testimony of faith in Christ and the message of the Gospel with over 70,000 people at a sold-out show in Texas. Walker Hayes does this at EVERY ONE of his concerts. It all started because Craig was willing to befriend Walker when he was nobody."

The point of my article was this, we must be looking for opportunities to make connections and build relationships. Walker Hayes saw his life changed by Christ because someone was willing to intentionally seek a relationship with him. As churches, we are often looking for the next creative program or idea that will attract people to our churches. So much of our time, energy and resources are spent trying to hold events to attract people to our churches. While events and programs can be valuable, they are not nearly as effective in introducing people to Jesus as relationships are. Walker and Craig's story reminds us of the incredible importance of intentionally seeking relationships with people who need Jesus and equipping our congregations to do the same.

As we approach summertime and the joys of outdoor life, I want to encourage you to begin to strategize how you could use the beautiful weather and opportunities that summer brings for the sake of the Kingdom. Just imagine the joy of sharing a warm evening with friends on the back deck. Summer gives us an opportunity to interact with neighbors in a way that is difficult during the cold winter months. Consider the possibility of inviting one or two neighbors, or even your entire neighborhood, to your home or to your church for a cookout or a bonfire complete with s'mores. Maybe you could even host a picnic or a pool party? What opportunities are there in your context to intentionally engage your neighbors and begin to build a friendship with them for the sake of the Gospel? The ideas are almost endless.

## **Kingdom Extension Community News**

#### FROM THE DESK

Rev. Mike Snedeker, KEC Associate continued...

#### **Don't Miss the Opportunity!**

continued...

Rather than spending countless hours on thinking about the next big event for the church to reach the neighborhood, maybe the best way we could be spending our "outreach energy" is training our people how to engage their neighbors in relationship and how to build intentional bridges where we can share the good news of Jesus with them. If I can help you learn how to equip your church, feel free to reach out! I would love to talk to you more!



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 U.S.

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, lowa. 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**

#### CHAPLAINCY CORNER

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

#### **Prayer Focus on our Heroes - Our Chaplains**

One of the questions often asked of a child is, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" Often the answer comes back a policeman, a fireman, a soldier, etc. The chaplain we want to feature this month is the only US Army Chaplain in the EC Church at this time. He also did not plan or want to become a chaplain, but the Lord had other plans. Chaplain Joshua Metz, Lt. Col., has served as a Chaplain in the US Army since 2006. He is married to Andrea and, before joining the military chaplaincy, was the Assistant Pastor of Palmyra for three years. When asked what led him to chaplaincy and the military in general, he responded:

As the son of a pastor, I was raised in the E.C. Church but never imagined I would become a pastor myself. In fact, after high school, I was pretty sure of one thing: I didn't want to become a pastor! I next attended college, because that seemed to be [what] you were supposed to do. I thereafter joined the military, because that seemed to be what you were not supposed to do; a snap decision that horrified my saintly mother.

In the military, I found a tribe, serving as a Calvary Scout in the 24<sup>th</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Divisions. After completing two tours in Korea, I was homesick and decided to terminate my Active Service, transferring to the Army National Guard. There I reconnected with my family and local church. While working full-time for the National Guard, I received a call from a member of our Church who attended a prayer session with then Bishop Mike Sigman. The last EC Chaplain was retiring from Active Duty, and, in faith, they asked God to send them not one but two replacements! [God sent Chaplain Joshua Metz (Lt. Col.) and Chaplain Karl Noel Blancaflor (Lt. Col.)]. And he next told me that God told him I would be one of our next E.C. Chaplains. I laughed.



Twenty-four years later, I must confess: the calling laid on me by God through his Church was the stronger.

When asked what he does at this particular time, Joshua said:

I currently serve as a Command Chaplain, responsible for providing Religious Support to an Army Organization. The closest civilian equivalent to this role in our denomination would be a conference minister.

He stated that his next assignment will be this Summer as he is transferred to the Middle East.

I will next be deploying to the Middle East where I will serve as a supervisory Chaplain, responsible for providing Religious Support to an Army Installation. Pray that I will be faithful to the Lord and his calling in this new and exciting role. Pray also that he would keep and guard our family in my absence.

#### **Ministerial Development Community News**

### CHAPLAINCY CORNER

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

## **Prayer Focus on our Heroes - Our Chaplains**

continued...

We want to remember Chaplain Metz and his family in prayer as he assumes this new assignment. We also ask that you pray that God will supply additional EC Chaplains for the military in the days ahead.

For information on the EC Chaplaincy, contact our Chaplaincy Endorser Rev. W. Joel Copeland, Jr., D.Min.
Evangelical Congregational Church Chaplaincy Endorser
Chair, E C Chaplaincy Committee
909 Ginkgo Grove
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055
717.507.2174
ecparson@hotmail.com

# Lebanon VA Medical Center is looking for a couple of Residents for its CPE program!

Applicants will be reviewed and interviewed as CPE applications are received. There is no application due date; students are encouraged to apply approximately six months before the program start date. Please contact Dean Luther at <a href="mailto:vhalebcpeadmin@va.gov">vhalebcpeadmin@va.gov</a> or 717-228-6021. There is no tuition charge for the program.

#### **Attention Chaplains!!!**

The Chaplaincy Committee requests any pastor who is a past or current chaplain, whether military or civilian, to wear whatever identification they used in their chaplaincy position to National Conference on Thursday, May 22, 2025. This could be a uniform, part of a uniform, a cap, ID badge, or another item you may have worn in your chaplaincy service. Help us to have a good representation and let the members of Conference know that the EC Church is impacting our communities through the ministry of our chaplains.

Also, when registering for National Conference, please select "Chaplain" as one of your Roles at Conference and indicate where you serve in the Comments / Notes section of your registration. This will help the denomination to keep the record of where all our chaplains are serving up-to-date. Again, thank you!





Summer is quickly approaching! We encourage you to prayerfully consider what your role may be in Twin Pines Camp for 2025 Summer Camp.

There are several opportunities to participate in Summer Camp!

- Attend as a camper! There are opportunities for all ages: register online today!
- Work on Summer Staff! Consider joining us for several weeks to serve on staff! (email Sam@twinpines.org for more info)
- Volunteer for a week of service! As a nurse, kitchen help, senior counselor and more! (email Sam@twinpines.org for more info)
- Pray and give! We need everyone to pray for God's guidance and provision to spread his love this summer!

#### CHANGE IS HAPPENING!

There is a bustle and busyness around Twin Pines recently – in several projects and renovations! We are incredibly thankful for faithful EC members who are volunteering their time, talents, and resources to provide much needed maintenance and updates around the camp.

See the work done to clean out the kitchen, replace flooring, remediate lead paint, and allow for the installation of a new stove!



As projects continue around camp as we prepare for the upcoming Summer season, please reach out to Rev. Keith Miller (<a href="mailto:btownecc@ptd.net">btownecc@ptd.net</a>) if you or your congregation would like to help!



www.twinpines.org 3000 Twin Pines Camp Road, Stroudsburg, PA 18360 (570)-629-2411

### CALENDAR

#### **MAY 2025**

Thursday, May 1

National Day of Prayer

Sunday, May 4

Day of Prayer for Kingdom Extension Liturgical Color - White

Wednesday, May 7

Day of Prayer and Fasting for the EC Church

Sunday, May 11

Mother's Day

**Mother's Day Offering** 

Liturgical Color - White

Tuesday, May 13

EC Finance Committee Meeting

Sunday, May 18

Liturgical Color - White

Wednesday - Friday, May 21 - 23

2025 National Conference

Sunday, May 25

Liturgical Color - White

Monday, May 26

Memorial Day
EC Church Center Closed

#### **Ministry Funds, Insurance & Benefits and**

**Student Aid Offering** 

Mail to:

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

**Mother's Day Offering** 

Mail to:

StoneRidge Retirement Living 440 E. Lincoln Avenue Myerstown, PA 17067

#### **JUNE 2025**

Sunday, June 1

Deadline for Registration for PAC 2026 Day of Prayer for Kingdom Extension Liturgical Color - White

Wednesday, June 4

Day of Prayer and Fasting for the EC Church

Sunday, June 8

Pentacost

**Student Aid Offering** 

Liturgical Color - Red

Sunday, June 15

Father's Day

Liturgical Color - White

Tuesday, June 17

Loan & Investment Committee Meeting

Sunday, June 22

Liturgical Color - Green

Sunday, June 29

Liturgical Color - Green

#### **JULY 2025**

Wednesday, July 2

Day of Prayer and Fasting for the EC Church

Friday, July 4

Independence Day
EC Church Center Closed

Sunday, July 6

Day of Prayer for Kingdom Extension Liturgical Color - Green

Sunday, July 13

Liturgical Color - Green

Sunday, July 20

Liturgical Color - Green

Friday, July 25

Semi-Annual Reports Due

Sunday, July 27

Liturgical Color - Green





Evangelical Congregational Church Center 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.



#### **Contributors**

Bishop Randy Sizemore Kevin Henry Rev. Adam Roberts Rev. J. Ted Rathman Rev. Mike Snedeker Rev. W. Joel Copeland, Jr. Kaitlin Logan

Wendy Beard
May / June 2025 Edition - Editor/Art Design

#### **STAFF**

Rev. Randy Sizemore - Bishop rsizemore@eccenter.com

Jodi Earhart - Assistant to the Bishop jearhart@eccenter.com

Kevin Henry - Executive Director khenry@eccenter.com

Shirley Long - Business Office Specialist slong@eccenter.com

Bethany White - NC Administrative Assistant / Business Office and Benefits Corp Specialist <a href="mailto:bwhite@eccenter.com">bwhite@eccenter.com</a>

Wendy Beard - NC Communications Coordinator wbeard@eccenter.com

Denise Jaramillo - GMC Deputy Director ecglobal@eccenter.com

#### **ASSOCIATES**

Rev. Wayne Houck - Church Health waynehouck@gmail.com

Rev. J. Ted Rathman - Global Ministries <u>pastorted@graceecchurch.org</u>

Rev. Mike Snedeker - Kingdom Extension msnedeker@eccenter.com

Rev. Matthew Hill - Ministerial Development <u>matt@stpaulsreamstown.com</u>