

EC LEADER

A publication of the Evangelical Congregational Church



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FROM THE DESK

Bishop Randy Sizemore

A Movement That Will Last Part 3

“A movement that will last... has an undeniable presence of joy.”



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



Speaking Schedule for 2026

Bishop Randy is now scheduling his 2026 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

Thanks to all of you that have completed the workers comp audit forms online and on paper. If you have not submitted your workers comp wage information, please do so immediately. The wage audit forms may 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, 2026**, with the employer filing deadline also as **January 31, 2026**, if filed electronically or on paper. Social Security Administration's Business Services Online (BSO), www.ssa.gov/bso, is an easy, convenient method for 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 due January 25

Please remember that the EC Benefits Service fee of \$125 is due from churches on **April 15, 2026**; retirees are not subject to the fee. The 2026 disability payments are due **January 15, 2026**. Please remit them as soon as possible. The due dates for these fees 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.

MEMBER LOGIN

If anyone speaks, let it be as one who speaks God's words; if anyone serves, let it be from the strength God provides, so that God may be glorified through Jesus Christ in everything. To him be the glory and the power forever and ever. (1 Peter 4:11)

MEMBER WEBSITE

Our updated member website went live in mid-August of 2025. Unfortunately, in the update, not all the usernames and passwords transferred over to the new site. If you find your password does not work or you forgot your password, please use the form found on the main website, eccenter.com, under Member Website > Request Member Website Access.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR NEWS

continued...

As always, please email:

**Bethany White
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bwhite@eccenter.com**

Kevin Henry
Executive Director
khenry@eccenter.com
with any questions
or call
717.866.7581

Pastoral Compensation forms were due on **December 31, 2025**. If you have not done so, please return your compensation forms to Bethany White as soon as possible. We will be contacting churches that have not submitted 2026 compensation forms in early February, requesting compliance.

Please begin using the 2026 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 2025 should be remitted on the 2025 Ministry Fund forms.

The Semi-Annual Ministerial Update report and Annual Report are now combined into a new Annual Report, which is due by **January 25, 2026**. There is a pdf version for download and an online version available.

The 2026 Business Mileage Reimbursement increased by \$.025/mile to \$.725/mile on January 1, 2026.

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

You may have received a reminder email to complete your PA Annual Report. If not, please remember this Annual Report is due by **June 30, 2026**. The Annual Report is asking for the same information as last year. The hardest part will be remembering your PA Keystone login.

The Treasurer's Workshop videos have been posted to our YouTube channel, [Treasurer's Workshop Videos](#).

Please contact Kevin Henry or Bethany White with any questions.

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Church Health Community News

FROM THE DESK

Rev. Wayne Houck, CHC Associate

Healthy Marriages

The Barna Group reports that pastors are more likely to be married (91% to 47%) than the total adult population of the US, but ministry is hard, and marriage is hard. For churches to be healthy, it is vitally important that pastors enjoy healthy, satisfying marriages. EC Pastors and their wives are eligible to attend a Weekend to Remember marriage retreat at no cost. Church Health will even reimburse you for up to \$250 in travel-related expenses. Just reach out to let me know that you are interested. The calendar for all 2026 Weekend to Remember events is available at www.familylife.com. Some of the upcoming dates include:

Hershey, PA - February 6-8

Skytop, PA (Poconos) - March 13-15 and 20-22

Columbus, OH - March 13-15

Cleveland, OH - October 2-4

Pittsburgh, PA - November 13-15

There are many other opportunities, too, and we encourage pastors and their wives to prayerfully consider attending. Just pick a date and reach out so we can help you get registered at no charge and be ready to help with the travel expenses.

For the first time this year, the Church Health Community will also be hosting a marriage conference along with ServingLeaders. On November 6-7, 2026, The Created for Connection conference will be held at Trinity Lighthouse Church, Royersford.

Whether your relationship is healthy, or whether you are experiencing disconnection and conflict, this powerful workshop will help you create deeper connection with your partner. You will learn to identify and stop the negative cycle common to all couples, and create new patterns of relating that are based on the fact that we are created for connection - to God and to each other.

Church Health Community News

FROM THE DESK

Rev. Wayne Houck, CHC Associate

continued...

Healthy Marriages

continued...

At this event, we will discuss how to:

- Better understand romantic love, and the pivotal moves that make or break it
- Explore what drives conflict - and how to work through it
- Learn to rebuild broken trust, safety and security in your relationship
- Learn to communicate in a way that leaves you feeling deeply heard
- Deepen your bond and decrease pain and distance (www.servingleaders.com)

There will be an "early-bird" discount for EC pastors and their wives before registration is opened to the public, so please save the date and plan to join us in November. And let us know how we can help you and your church grow more healthy. Reach out anytime at 610-716-5603 or waynehouck@gmail.com.

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

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 evening for worship service at Trinity EC Church in Lancaster, PA. They are seeing new families every week and seeing people come to know Christ and follow Him. Please pray for our Haitian brothers and sisters. Despite having legal status, there is much fear in the Haitian communities at this time with the increasing deportation measures being taken. This has impacted church attendance and participation. Pray for peace in their hearts and the ability to keep their eyes on and hope in Jesus. Please pray especially for Martial and his family. His wife and children remain in Haiti and are seeking to gain asylum to the US.

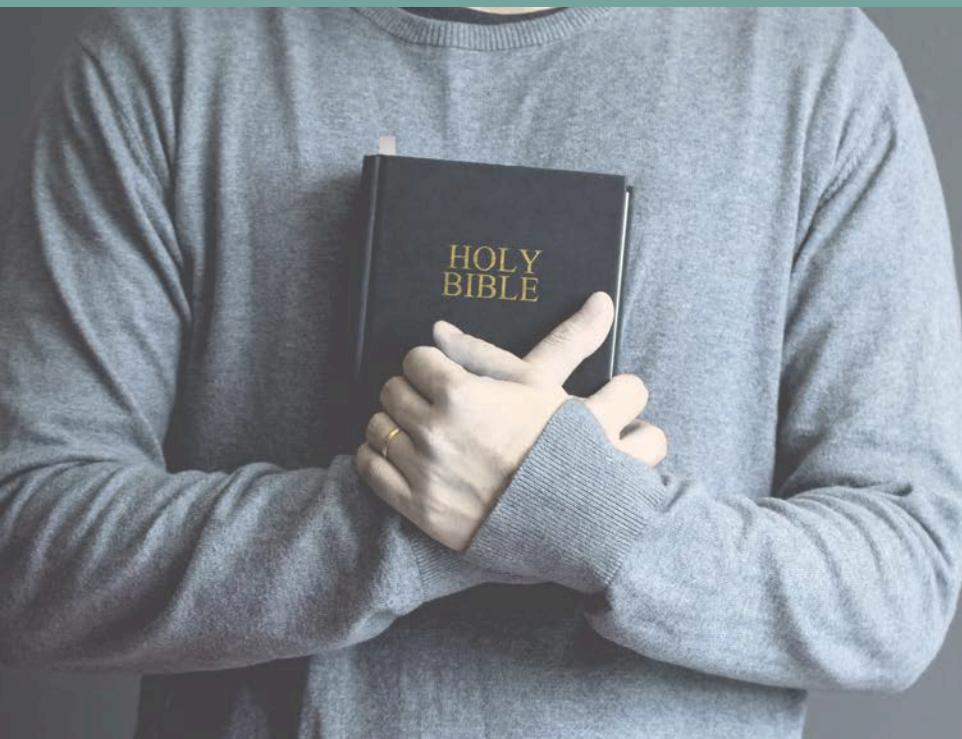


Manuel and Luz Arias – Praise the Lord!!! God has provided a church to partner with Casa de Amor to host them on Sunday afternoons and a couple of nights throughout the week. Manuel and Luz have had numerous disappointments as location opportunities have fallen through; this is a major answer to prayer. The Casa de Amor leadership team is working on plans for an official launch date and service. Pray 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 are 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. Zach and Kelsey are actively discipling people through a discipleship multiplication pathway. They have a growing list of individuals they are making regular contact with and are praying for daily.



Ministerial Development Community News

FROM THE DESK

Rev. Cameron Smith, PAC Director

Discerning The Call

Are you open to the idea that God has a calling upon your life that is filled with purpose?

Calling can mean different things biblically. God calls people to himself - like an invitation to be restored and to do life with Jesus in the power of the Spirit. God calls people to holy lifestyles - Christians inhabit the upside-down kingdom. God calls people to suffer for the sake of Christ, to pick up crosses and suffer for righteousness' sake. Furthermore, God calls people into a vocation or a type of service or ministry.

If there is a call, then there is a caller. A calling from God has the ability to activate. Calling is a catalyst that keeps pushing you to show up again and again, even when times get tough. Additionally, when there is a calling upon your life, others can and will be moved to help you answer that call as well. As it relates to calling specific to pastoral ministry, the EC Church has the Pastoral Assessment Center (PAC).

PAC is part of the ongoing efforts to help the denomination accomplish her mission by effectively stewarding the leadership resources God has given us. The primary goal of PAC is to serve those who sense the call of God upon their lives into pastoral ministry by assisting them in discerning if they possess the calling, gifts and graces for pastoral ministry.

If you are currently in the process of discussing and exploring pastoral calling with one of your congregants and are sensing the next appropriate step is to pursue the PAC, then please reach out to Cam Smith or Matt Hill for more details and an application.

As a reminder, the deadline to apply to the next Pastoral Assessment Center (to be held in January 2027) is **June 1, 2026**.

Cam



Ministerial Development Community News

CHAPLAINCY CORNER

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

Prayer Focus on our Heroes - Our Chaplains

In this column we recently presented the service of Rev. Dr. Gordon Lewis with the Pennsylvania State Police. Since that article, it came to light that the EC Church has a few other pastors who are serving or have served with the Pennsylvania State Police.

One such individual is Rev. Mark Brooks. In his chaplaincy experience, he has served both the Pennsylvania State Police and StoneRidge Retirement Living Community. Rev. Mark Brooks' first assignment with the EC Church was in 2000 as an Associate at the Palmyra First Church. He was then transferred to Reedsville as Associate in 2002 where he served until his appointment as a chaplain at StoneRidge. In 2023, he assumed responsibilities as pastor at Reedsville.

In his reflection on his years of ministry as a chaplain, he thought of them as a "ministry of presence." How did he get into chaplaincy work and what are his remembrances of those experiences? Here is what he had to share:



For most of my life, I have enjoyed developing relationships with others. I can strike up a conversation with just about anyone, and I especially value the opportunity to sit and listen as people share their joys, challenges, failures and victories.

Several years ago, a close friend of mine who served with the Pennsylvania State Police said, "Mark, you would make a great PSP chaplain." I completed the application process, background checks and interviews, and after being selected, participated in the PSP chaplain training program. One of the central themes of the training was understanding chaplaincy as a ministry of presence. We were encouraged to spend time visiting PSP members, civilian employees and their families. Sometimes this meant conversation; other times, it meant simply listening. The key was learning when to be present - and when to step out of the way.

Following my training, I was assigned to Troop L, serving the Frackville, Jonestown and Schuylkill Haven stations. Over the next twelve years, I developed meaningful relationships with PSP members and their families. I responded to critical incidents and walked alongside families as they processed the aftermath of overdoses, automobile accidents and suicides. I conducted funeral services, provided pastoral care, offered premarital counseling and officiated weddings. It was truly a ministry of presence for all those connected to Troop L.

This chaplaincy experience eventually opened the door to full-time ministry at StoneRidge Retirement Living Community. There, a ministry of presence was foundational to daily life. As chaplain, I sought to be present with residents, caregivers, family members and administrators. During this time, I pursued board certification in chaplaincy and completed Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) through Hershey Medical Center and the Ecumenical Institute for CPE of Northwest Iowa. CPE is an interfaith training program that provides hands-on ministry opportunities in clinical settings and equips spiritual care providers to offer meaningful support during times of crisis.

Ministerial Development Community News

CHAPLAINCY CORNER

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

Prayer Focus on our Heroes - Our Chaplains

continued...

After two years serving as a full-time chaplain, God opened the door for me to return to congregational ministry. This season of deepened self-awareness, empathy and interpersonal growth - along with experience in multicultural and interfaith environments - has strengthened my ability to serve our congregation and our community with greater compassion and understanding.

Mark Brooks, Bethesda ECC

We thank Rev. Brooks for his chaplaincy service in both the PSP and at StoneRidge Retirement Living Community.

I have just returned from the annual conference of the National Conference of Ministry to the Armed Forces (NCMAF) where the top military chaplains presented, among others. Next month, I look forward to sharing an update with the information I received there that might be of interest to those considering chaplaincy. In the meantime, please do not forget to remember our military, VAMC and civilian chaplains in prayer.

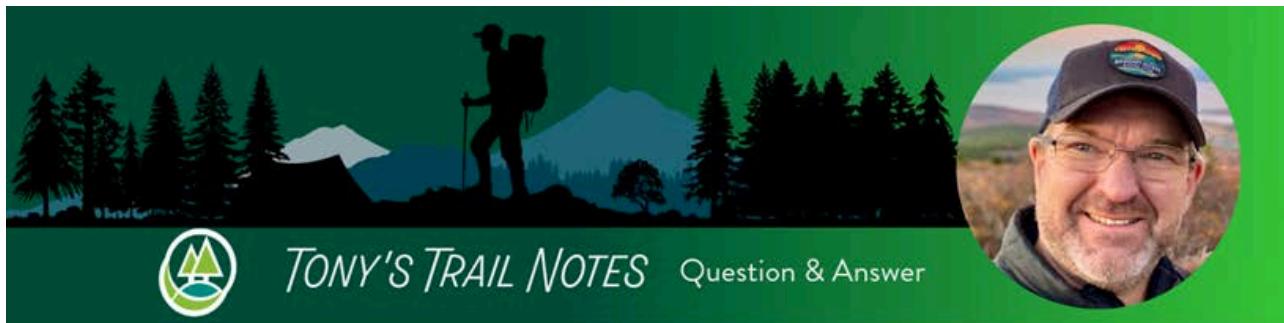
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TWIN PINES

CAMP, CONFERENCE & RETREAT CENTER



Summer Camp Questions Parents Ask Most

In this edition of **Tony's Trail Notes**, I'm focusing on the two questions I have heard most often from parents and pastors as summer approaches. Both center on what matters most to you: **your child's safety, care, and experience at camp**. We thought you may enjoy the opportunity to get to know Tony, the new CEO of Twin Pines better. We felt some thoughtful Q&A could be a great way to share. If you have more questions for Tony, reach out at tony@twinpines.org.

1. How do you recruit, screen, train, and supervise counselors?

Great camps rise and fall on the quality of their staff. At Twin Pines, we take this responsibility very seriously. Our best and most natural counselors are former Twin Pines campers. My goal is to intentionally build a strong pipeline, starting 2027, through **Counselor-in-Training (CIT)** and **Leader/Staff-in-Training (L/SIT)** programs. These programs help young leaders grow in faith, maturity, and responsibility while preparing them to serve future campers well. Because God is at work everywhere, we also recruit from **Christian colleges and universities, churches**, and Lord willing in the future, **international staff**. Every staff member is chosen not only for their skills, but for their **love for Jesus and love for others**. Our expectation is clear: staff are strong role models who seek to love God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength—and to love their neighbors as themselves.

Safety is foundational. All staff complete reference checks, Pennsylvania State Police Criminal Record Check, PA Child Abuse History Clearance, and FBI Fingerprint-Based Criminal History Check.

Before campers arrive, staff participate in **1–2 weeks of intensive training**, including:

- Camper development (behavior support, social-emotional skills, building healthy community)
- Professional skills (communication, leadership, and partnering with parents)
- Safety and risk management (abuse prevention, emergency response, health protocols)

Training emphasizes creating a **safe, supportive, Christ-centered environment** where everyday camp activities become opportunities for growth, confidence, and faith.

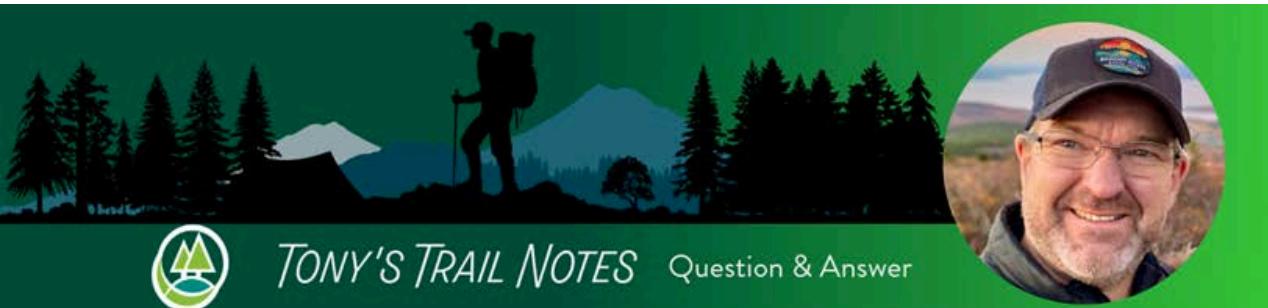
Throughout the summer, counselors are **closely supervised, mentored, and coached daily** by Thomas Politte, Program Director, and me, with an ongoing focus on leadership development and excellent camper care.





TWIN PINES

CAMP, CONFERENCE & RETREAT CENTER



TONY'S TRAIL NOTES Question & Answer

2. How do you help first-time campers and homesick kids adjust?

This is on every parent's mind at drop-off, and it's something we are well prepared for. At Twin Pines, we don't label campers as "homesick." Instead, we talk about **S.A.D. campers**, which stands for **Separation Anxiety Discomfort**. Why? Because "homesick" sounds like an illness that needs fixing. S.A.D. is simply a normal response to a new experience, and the first sign is often sadness.

Our staff will be **specifically trained** to recognize and support S.A.D. campers, with one consistent goal: **get them joyfully engaged in camp life**.

Engagement changes everything—making new friends, participating in activities, learning independence, and discovering that God is present even when things feel hard. Making it through the week at camp is a **huge accomplishment**, and often a milestone moment of growth.

From the very first greeting, campers are **warmly welcomed** by enthusiastic, caring staff whose love for others is contagious. These counselors are the **front line of support** for first-time campers, helping them form friendships and feel at home quickly.

A few things that help tremendously:

- Coming to camp with a sibling or friend from church or school
- Parents expressing confidence and pride at drop-off
- Sending mail during the week (or writing letters ahead of time and giving them to staff at check-in)
- Praying; for your camper, their cabinmates, their counselors, the weather, the fun, and for God to work powerfully in their lives

If a camper struggles to fully engage despite support, **parents are always part of the conversation**. We partner with you and care deeply about your child's well-being.

And yes, if needed, **Tony is very experienced in helping S.A.D. campers**. I've walked many children through those first hard moments and watched them finish the week stronger, more confident, and smiling with joy.

We are honored that you trust Twin Pines with your children. Camp is a sacred place of growth, faith, and transformation—and we can't wait to welcome your camper this summer.



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

CALENDAR

FEBRUARY 2026

Sunday, February 1

Day of Prayer for Kingdom Extension
Liturgical Color - Green

Wednesday, February 4

Day of Prayer and Fasting for the EC Church

Sunday, February 8

Church Planting Offering*

Liturgical Color - Green

Sunday, February 15

Liturgical Color - Green

Monday, February 16

Presidents' Day

Tuesday, February 17

EC Benefits Corporation Meeting

Wednesday, February 18

Ash Wednesday

Sunday, February 22

First Sunday of Lent

Liturgical Color - Purple

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

Mail to:

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

MARCH 2026

Sunday, March 1

Second Sunday of Lent
Day of Prayer for Kingdom Extension
Liturgical Color - Purple

Wednesday, March 4

Day of Prayer and Fasting for the EC Church

Sunday, March 8

Third Sunday of Lent

Self-Denial Offering*

Liturgical Color - Purple
Daylight Savings Time Starts

Wednesday, March 11

Faith & Doctrine Committee Meeting

Friday, March 13

EC History & Polity Class

Sunday, March 15

Fourth Sunday of Lent
Liturgical Color - Purple

Wednesday, March 18

Conference Network Team Strategic Meeting

Thursday, March 19

National Ministry Team Meeting

Sunday, March 22

Passion Sunday
Liturgical Color - Purple

Sunday, March 29

Palm Sunday
Liturgical Color - Purple





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

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