

EC LEADER

A publication of the Evangelical Congregational Church

OCTOBER 2026



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FROM THE DESK

Bishop Randy Sizemore

Prayer

“Every movement of God in history began and was sustained by intentional, fervent prayer.”



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



Speaking Schedule for 2027

Bishop Randy is now scheduling his 2027 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
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Specialist
bwhite@eccenter.com

Kevin Henry
Executive Director
khenry@eccenter.com

with any questions
or call
717.866.7581

Churches are starting to prepare their 2027 budgets; however, some details are still pending. Initial estimates from various online sources suggest the 2027 Social Security COLA will fall within the 3.5% to 3.6% range. The official SSA COLA announcement is expected between mid- to late-October. Updated information on the health insurance renewal for active pastors will be available in early October. Reports indicate premium increases could exceed 10%, though the exact change for our specific plans is not yet confirmed. Open enrollment for the active pastor's health insurance plan with Guidestone begins November 1. Those interested in joining the Guidestone health insurance plan should contact Kevin Henry or Bethany White before December 1 for enrollment details. The plan is available to stationed pastors who work at least 30 hours per week and are under the Medicare eligibility age.

The Highmark Freedom Blue Medicare Supplemental Plan rates will increase to \$311 per month for 2027, representing a rise of \$6 per member per month, or approximately 2%. Additionally, the True Out of

Pocket Pharmacy benefit will see an annual increase of \$300, raising the limit to \$2,400 from \$2,100 in 2026. All other plan benefits will remain consistent with the previous year. Medicare participants are advised to consult with a Medicare Supplemental plan specialist and explore all available options to ensure their selected plan continues to meet their healthcare needs. The Medicare open enrollment period commences on October 15, 2026.

The 2027 Pastoral Compensation Forms will be available on the Church Center website shortly, in a few weeks or so. Expect the Social Security Administration to release the 2027 COLA in late October 2026.



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR NEWS

KEVIN HENRY

continued...

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The United States Postal Service (USPS) has changed its transportation processes, which may delay postmarking for some mail.

"While we are not changing our postmarking practices, we have made adjustments to our transportation operations that will result in some mailpieces not arriving at our originating processing facilities on the same day that they are mailed. This means that the date on the postmarks applied at our processing facilities will not necessarily match the date on which your mailpiece was collected by a letter carrier, dropped off at a retail location, or placed in a collection box."

(<https://faq.usps.com/s/article/Requirements-and-Standards-for-Sending-Domestic-Mail>)

A USPS postmark may establish when mail entered the postal system and whether it was sent on time to avoid late fees or penalties. Because mail dropped in a mailbox or at a USPS retail location on December 31 may not receive a December 31 postmark, donors should mail contribution checks several days early to ensure credit for the current year. Churches should likewise send tax statements, W-2s and 1099s several days before the January 31 deadline to help maintain compliance.

Please contact me, khenry@eccenter.com, 717-628-2171, or Bethany White, bwhite@eccenter.com, 717-866-7581, with any questions or problems.

Kevin Henry
Executive Director

Bethany White
Benefits Corp Specialist



Church Health Community News



Join ServingLeaders Ministries for “Created For Connection,” an interactive workshop based on life-changing practices for couples developed by Dr. Sue Johnson. Whether your relationship is healthy and you are looking to grow together, 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. This workshop is appropriate for married, engaged, and pre-engaged couples.



[Register Here](#)

Friday, November 6, 10:00 A.M. - 6:00 P.M. Check in at 9:30 A.M. | Lunch provided.
Saturday, November 7, 9:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M. Check in at 8:30 A.M. | Lunch on your own.

Trinity Lighthouse Church
66 S Limerick Rd | Royersford, PA 19468

Standard Rate: \$570/couple*

Early Bird Rates (Register before September 30!): Standard \$500/couple*

***For congregants and attenders use the code: ECC2026 for \$200 off**

Also, for EC Pastors only, the Church Health Community is offering reimbursement for up to \$250 for travel expenses. Contact waynehouck@gmail.com for details.



Global Ministries Community News

FROM THE DESK

Dee Jaramillo, GMC Deputy Director

Please be Praying for our Team as they Travel to Spain

As our Global Ministries team prepares to serve in Spain, we invite our entire EC church family to become an important part of this mission through prayer. Please pray for safe travel, good health, strength and energy, protection, unity among the team, wisdom and flexibility when plans change and sensitivity to the leading of the Holy Spirit. Pray especially for the people God will place in their path - that conversations will be Spirit-led, relationships will be genuine, hearts will be open and the love and hope of Jesus will be clearly seen in both words and actions. There is tremendous power when God's people faithfully pray, and while only some will board the plane, all of us can participate in what God is doing through this mission.

And let us pray for more than a successful trip; pray for a fruitful and transformative one. May God use these days in Spain not only to touch the lives of those our team will encounter but also to shape the hearts and minds of every person who goes. Pray that they will see people as Jesus sees them, discover a deeper dependence upon Him, grow in compassion and courage and return home with an even greater passion for His mission. After all, being "on mission" is not simply something we do when we travel to another country - it is who we are as followers of Christ wherever He sends us. May this team go knowing that their church family is faithfully holding them before the Lord, asking Him to accomplish far more than any itinerary or ministry plan could ever contain.

Ted



Global Ministries Community



October 12-20, 2026

SPAIN

The GMC is heading to Spain this fall to work alongside EC missionaries, the Whitaker family, and their ministry in Madrid.

Sports Camps
ESL Classes
Work Projects
Prayer Walks
Youth Night
(examples of ministry opportunities while there)



Global Ministries Community News

FROM THE DESK

Dee Jaramillo, GMC Deputy Director

End-of-Year Personal Missionary Gifts



The missionaries supported by the Global Ministries Community of the Evangelical Congregational Church are beyond blessed with the gifts that come from donors supporting their ministries throughout the year. With stores already decorating for Christmas, it is approaching the time when many of you may be considering making an end-of-year personal gift contribution to support our missionaries. As such, we would like to make you aware of a few items.

- If the missionary you would like to bless with a personal gift lives and serves in the United States, it is best to send the gift directly to them. If you need an address, please do not hesitate to reach out to our office, ecglobal@eccenter.com.
- The US Postal Service has had a change in their operations, and mail may not be transferred to a mail processing facility and, hence, may not be postmarked, the same day that it is put in the mail. Therefore, for mail to be considered received by December 31 by postmark, mail will need to be placed in the mail before December 31.
- Gift distributions from our office occur quarterly, so personal gifts that arrive after December 31 will not be sent to the missionary until April.

We thank you for your generosity and your support of the global reach of the Evangelical Congregational Church!

Dee



**Global
Ministries
Community**

Resourcing and assisting the
local church in cultivating
mission-mindedness.

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 evenings 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 at this time. Despite having legal status, there is much fear in the Haitian communities 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 also for wisdom, strength and renewed energy for this couple. Manuel and Luz have especially asked for prayer for their family. Manuel is beginning the transition from full-time employment on top of church planting to part-time employment and part-time paid church planting ministry.

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 homes 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!



“The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.”-

James 5:16b

Ministerial Development Community News

CHAPLAINCY CORNER

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

Chaplain Focus

You may have heard that The Department of Defense has reduced its list of recognized religious affiliations from more than 200 codes to just 31 codes, eliminating roughly 180 faith groups. The current list, issued in May 2026 by the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, contains 31 categories - most are Christian denominations, plus Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Agnostic and "No Religion." Many minority and non-mainstream faiths - such as atheists, humanists, pagans, Wiccans, Druids and Deists - and numerous specific Christian denominations were cut.

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth and other leaders said the old system was "impractical and unusable" because many codes were rarely used, and 82% of service members tend to use just six codes. Also, a smaller list is easier to track and manage. Service members may still record their personal faith on dog tags, but the official codes will be limited to the 31 categories.



Chaplains in both the military and Veteran Affairs Medical Centers serve under a broader classification, such as "Chaplain" or "Protestant Chaplain." The reduction in the list of religious affiliations does not affect the Evangelical Congregational Church's recognition and ability to serve as an ecclesiastical endorser in any of the federal chaplaincies, nor does it have any bearing on our membership in the National Association on Ministry to the Armed Forces (NCMAF).

I do want to include a reminder to remember our EC chaplains in prayer. We have four National Conference-appointed chaplains besides the ones who serve the communities in which they minister. Our National Conference Chaplains are:

Chaplain Karl Blancaflor, Colonel, U.S. Air Force
Rev. Evan Clelan, Lebanon VA Medical Center
Rev. Glenn Lambert, Community Hospice
Chaplain Joshua Metz, Colonel, U. S. Army

Also, please continue to pray for the Lord to raise up the next generation of chaplains. If you are interested, or if anyone you know is interested in chaplaincy, I would be glad to talk with you.

Rev. W. Joel Copeland, Jr., D.Min.
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TWIN PINES

CAMP, CONFERENCE & RETREAT CENTER



More than a Summer – Summer 2026 Recap

As I look back on our 2026 summer season at Twin Pines, one phrase keeps coming to mind: **God is Stronger.**

There were plenty of reasons this summer could have felt uncertain. We were navigating a new season of leadership (including me), new staff and volunteers learning the rhythms of Twin Pines, changes to our summer schedule, and more than a few moments when we had to simply trust God and keep moving forward.

And yet, as the summer came to a close, I am incredibly grateful that God provided.

God was faithful.

This summer was not simply about how many campers came through our gates or how many programs we were able to offer. It was about creating space for children, youth, adults, volunteers, and staff to encounter Jesus Christ in a place where faith can grow.

I have heard back from our Twin Pines and ECC community that this happened.

Lives Were Changed

During the summer, at least **15 campers and one volunteer made first-time professions of faith**, while another **16 campers rededicated their lives to Christ**. One camper heard the call to ministry.

Those numbers are worth celebrating—but each number represents a person.

A child who heard the Gospel in a new way. A teenager who realized that following Jesus is more than something their family does. An adult who was reminded that God is still working. A volunteer who discovered that serving others can also deepen their own faith.

This is why Twin Pines exists. Our greatest hope is that people leave Twin Pines knowing Jesus more deeply than when they arrived.

This summer, we saw evidence of that hope becoming reality.

The Little Things Mattered

One of the things I have appreciated most this summer is how often the ministry happened in the ordinary moments.

It happened around a dining table. It happened in a cabin conversation. It happened when someone sat beside a camper who needed a listening ear. It happened when volunteers stepped into the kitchen, wiped down tables, helped with check-in, encouraged a staff member, or quietly took care of something that needed to be done.

Some of those moments will never make a newsletter. But they matter.

In fact, I suspect that many of the most important things that happened at Twin Pines this summer were things that only God saw. And perhaps that is exactly the way camping ministry is supposed to be.



TWIN PINES
CAMP, CONFERENCE & RETREAT CENTER

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



TWIN PINES

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A Community Came Together

This was also a summer of people coming together.

Our staff carried significant responsibility. Volunteers stepped forward. Churches and families supported the ministry. People gave financially. Others gave their time, energy, skills, prayers, and encouragement.

Some came to Twin Pines for a week. Others have been connected for decades. Some were experiencing Twin Pines for the first time. Together, they became part of the same story.

That is one of the things that makes this ministry so special. You don't have to be big to be great. You simply have to be willing to be faithful with what God has placed in your hands. This summer, I watched people do exactly that.

Looking Ahead With Gratitude and Hope

As my first full summer leading Twin Pines comes to a close, and I am approaching my one-year anniversary, I find myself more grateful for what God allowed us to be part of.

We still have work to do.

There are still the tax challenges to address - and we are working diligently to overcome this. There are facilities that need attention. There are systems to strengthen and plans to develop. There are opportunities in front of us that will require wisdom, prayer, generosity, and faith.

But after this summer, I am even more convinced than ever that **Twin Pines has a future worth investing in.**

There is still ministry to do here. There are still children who need to hear about Jesus. There are still families looking for Christian community. There are still churches that need a partner.

There are still generations of campers, volunteers, alumni, and friends who can be part of what God is doing in this place.

So, as we close the book on Summer 2026, I simply want to say **thank you!**

Thank you for praying. Thank you for giving. Thank you for serving. Thank you for encouraging our staff. Thank you for believing in Twin Pines. And thank you for helping make room for God to work.

The summer may be ending, but the ministry continues.

With Gratitude and Hope,

Tony Lea

CEO

Twin Pines Camp, Conference & Retreat Center

Double the Impact

Donate Today

We are so thankful to all who have donated already! Contributions up to \$5,000 will be matched to double the impact on helping us pay down our tax burden. We're more than 60% there, but you can still help!



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CALENDAR

OCTOBER 2026

Sunday, October 4

Day of Prayer for Kingdom Extension Community

Church Planting Offering*

Worldwide Communion

Liturgical Color - Green

Tuesday, October 6

EC Benefits Meeting

Wednesday, October 7

Day of Prayer and Fasting for the EC Church

Sunday, October 11

Liturgical Color - Green

Thursday, October 15

National Ministry Team Meeting

Friday & Saturday, October 16 & 17

EC Ethos Class

Sunday, October 18

Liturgical Color - Green

Sunday, October 25

Liturgical Color - Green

Ministry Funds, Insurance & Benefits and Church Planting Offering*

Mail to:

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

NOVEMBER 2026

Sunday, November 1

Day of Prayer for Kingdom Extension

Daylight Savings Time Ends

Liturgical Color - Green

Tuesday, November 3

Election Day

Wednesday, November 4

Day of Prayer and Fasting for the EC Church

Finance Committee Meeting

Sunday, November 8

Liturgical Color - Green

Wednesday, November 11

Veterans Day

Sunday, November 15

Liturgical Color - Green

Sunday, November 22

Thanksgiving Sunday

Liturgical Color - White

Thursday, November 26

Thanksgiving Day

EC Church Center Closed

Friday, November 27

EC Church Center Closed

Sunday, November 29

First Sunday of Advent

Liturgical Color - Purple



**The deadline to submit
written pastoral changes is
January 1, 2027.**



Built to Move

"For in him we live
and move and have
our being."
- Acts 17:28

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717-866-7581

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



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October 2026 Edition - Editor/Art Design

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