

APRIL 2020

EC LEADER

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Who We Are

“...you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light”.

1 Peter 2:9

From the Bishop

If you find it on the internet, it must be true. I found the Top five global fears: 5. Fear of heights; 4. Fear of darkness; 3. Fear of spiders; 2. Fear of death; 1. Fear of public speaking. We all struggle with fear. We see it, hear it and feel it all around us. Maybe yours didn't make this list but that doesn't make the struggle any less real. There are more than enough fears and struggles in life to go around.

Both Matthew [Matthew 8] and Mark [Mark 4] tell us about one night the disciples were out in a fishing boat with Jesus. “Suddenly, a fierce storm struck the lake, with waves breaking into the boat.” They were sinking! The disciples were frantic with fear, while, according to Mark, Jesus was asleep at the back of the boat. Matthew says the disciples were shouting “Lord, save us! We're going to drown!” The disciples' reaction is understandable – they were more than afraid; they were scared to death. This great missional enterprise was going to end in a tragic boating accident. Mark tells us Jesus got up and said, “Silence! Be still!” and “Suddenly the wind stopped, and there was a great calm.” Jesus then looked at the disciples and asked, “Why are you afraid? You have so little faith!”

Fear can cause me to focus on the storm raging in front of me rather than on the one who has the power over the storms in my life. One commentator wrote “Fear is not an unbelief that denies truth directly, but one which neglects to appropriate the truth that is available.” The disciples were so preoccupied with their current problem, that they lost sight of who Jesus is. In an instant Jesus gave them a new perspective, not of the storm but of him.

What kind of faith do we have in Jesus? Faith is not a complacent feeling that somehow everything will work out all right. We know there are times when things don’t work out right. Grief, sickness, problems, disappointments, struggle, fear and failure are a common part of life, even the Christian’s life. But in that struggle what do you see? Do you focus on the storm, the struggle? Do you see yourself as a victim? Do you whine and complain? Or maybe you’re at the point where you don’t even want to do that; you just want to quit.

The problem is when we focus on our circumstances, at our problems, or even on ourselves, we lose perspective – we can’t see what God is up to. We live in a fallen world, chaos swirls all around us. Faith is confidence, not in yourself, not in others, not in circumstances, but in the person of Jesus who can lead you through them. The centuries have not changed Jesus; he still reigns over the storms of life, over sin and even death. He is still aware of our needs and ready to help. We don’t have to be afraid in the storms of life because our Savior is in our little boat. He’s here, he’s waiting, he can help.

In Christ’s Service,

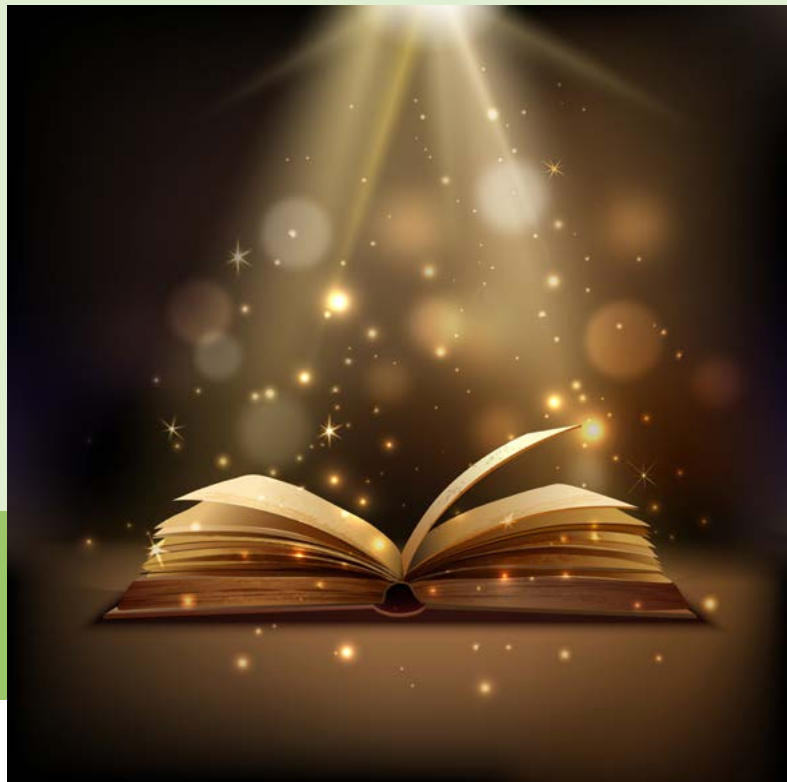


Rev. Bruce D. Hill
Bishop



Bishop's Top 10 Prayer & Praise

1. Join me in praying for so many who are impacted by the coronavirus pandemic: the world, country, communities, and congregations.
2. Pray for pastors and local leadership Boards/Councils as they wrestle with financial implications of cancelled services.
3. Pray for our camping ministries as they hire staff and plan for their summer camping season.
4. Ask for the Lord's leading as I continue to plan for National Conference, May 27-29.
5. Pray for students, teachers, and staff of schools, colleges, and seminaries as they adjust to the new normal.
6. Praise the Lord for his ever-present care in our daily lives.
7. Thank the Lord for the opportunities to be the church and make a difference in the lives of others.
8. Praise the Lord for the increasing sunlight each day, the warmth, and the new growth that comes with Spring.
9. Thank God for the technology that makes it possible to meet virtually and connect with people online when we can't come to our local facilities.
10. Praise God that we serve a risen Savior - Jesus the Christ!



News from the Executive Director

Denominational leadership is aware that churches are feeling or soon may be feeling a financial crunch from missed worship services. We are monitoring the anticipated length of the mandated closures and discussing how best to assist our churches and pastors. Each of our communities or committees has a different funding stream and bylaws that require an individual review and response. The responses from the communities and committees need to be coordinated and in some instances the action by a governing body to temporarily suspend a bylaw or rule may be necessary. The leadership of the communities and committees are committed to support local ministry together.

The federal government is working on a stimulus package and has already passed legislation to minimize the financial impact on businesses from missed productivity due to COVID-19. From what I have heard and read churches are eligible for the benefits being provided from the stimulus package(s). However, the details matter and not many details have been released.

Please share concerns or praises of how your church is doing financially with me or your DFD. Financial plans and contingencies, with ever changing details, are being discussed. You can help shape our response.

Business Interruption Insurance

Most commercial insurance policies carry a provision for Business Interruption that will provide cash payments for missed revenue if a business must cease operations for a period of time due to a covered loss. I previously issued guidance that Church Mutual would not recognize COVID-19 as a covered loss and deny claims for Business Interruption due to missed worship services. Very recently, I received advice that churches should submit a claim for Business Interruption due to missed worship services for any reason. It is very likely your claim will be denied however we are in uncharted territory. Nobody knows how long services will be missed or the details in the proposed government stimulus packages or how a state government insurance regulator or court case will interpret Business Interruption insurance during a pandemic. A filed claim **might** be a path to a stimulus payment or settlement or not. Nobody knows. The worst answer you will receive from the insurance company is a denied claim. Your premium payment will not increase due to a denied claim.

Regardless of who your insurance carrier is, Church Mutual, Brotherhood Mutual, Guide One, etc., it is in your best interest to file a Business Interruption claim. Use the insurance carrier's website or call the phone number on your insurance policy. You only need to file one claim after your first week of missed services. After your claim is filed, an insurance adjuster will contact you in a few weeks asking for documentation of the revenue that you missed. Normally, a certain number of bank statements from before and after the cancelled services will be collected to calculate average revenue and validate the claim. After the information is submitted wait for a final determination. A denied claim is the worst answer you will receive.

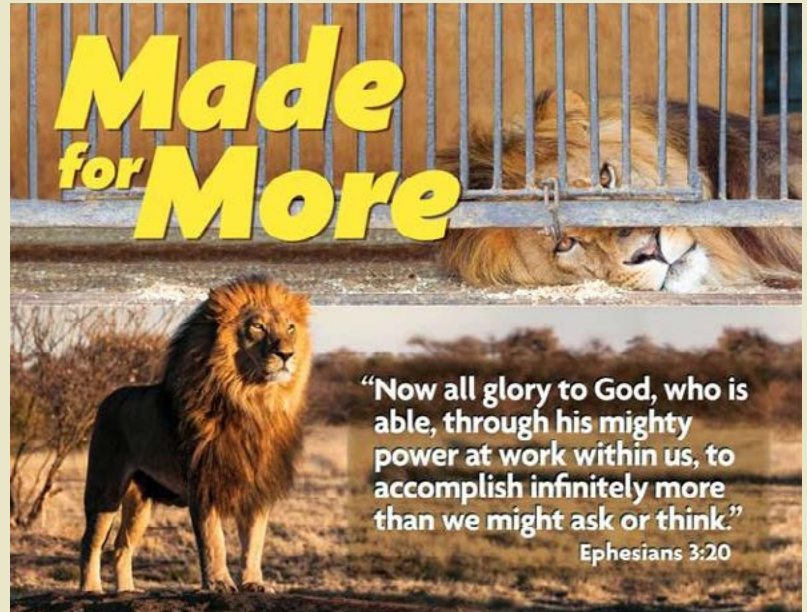
Please ask any questions.

Kevin Henry
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National Conference

May 27-29, 2020

We are continuing to plan for the May 2020 national conference at Messiah College, Grantham, PA; but we know the pandemic is impacting lots of plans. Messiah College has not made any final decisions as to their hosting of summer conferences. Therefore, we are encouraging all pastors and lay delegates not to wait, but to register for national conference now. Registration is available at: <https://www.eccenter.com/Home/2020-National-Conference.aspx>. If the May 2020 national conference is rescheduled or cancelled all paid registration, housing and meal fees are available for a 100% refund.



Unfortunately, we are not aware of Messiah College's timeline for deciding on hosting summer conferences. If Messiah College can host our national conference it will be held as scheduled. There are limited contingencies available if the episcopal election, scheduled for Wednesday, May 27, and the proposed Discipline amendments are not presented to the National Conference in May 2020. We are trusting we will be able to hold national conference as scheduled May 27-29, 2020. Please join us in praying for the Lord's clear leading.

Global Ministries Community

- > Congratulations to **Yoriyoshi and Emiko Abe**, who welcomed daughter Wakana on February 21st. Their older daughter Kanae was excited to become a big sister! Please keep the Abes in prayer for good health for everyone.
- > Due to travel restrictions, Bishop Bruce Hill and Rev. Ted Rathman, GMC Associate, will not be traveling to India in April as originally planned. As far as we know now, ECCL is still planning on meeting and electing their new General Director. Please keep ECCL and all their members in prayer for this leadership change, and for the health and safety of those who gather, if they are allowed to do so.
- > Keep **Rev. Kaitikap Vaiphei**, the outgoing General Director in prayer, that he may sense where God would have him use his gifts to continue to grow the E.C. Church of India.
- > Keep **Jim and Janet Stahl** in prayer; many of their trips for this year were cancelled or postponed due to the coronavirus. Pray that they won't be too frustrated by this turn of events and will be able to find other venues for teaching Biblical story telling until they get the all clear to resume their travels to Asia and Africa.
- > **Sad news** – Through the help of our local postal carrier, we were able to learn that retired missionary **Gwen Melger** passed away – in 2014! We aren't sure what's been happening to the mail since then, but it has only been returned recently. Please remove Gwen from your mailing and prayer lists.
- > Please be in prayer now for the men whose names will be submitted to be our next bishop. Pray for them to seek God's vision for the EC Church to move forward and be a relevant force in today's society.
- > Be in prayer for all our **EC missionaries** and other missionaries who are currently serving in parts of the world affected by the coronavirus. This includes much of Asia, parts of Africa, and even western Europe. Pray for their safety, their health, and fortitude to continue to minister as God allows.
- > **Brian & Missy Wagner** are interested in purchasing a home in Lancaster County, PA for an investment, and to provide a home for their children, all of whom are now living in the USA. If you know of anyone who is selling, perhaps you could give their information to the Wagners. Their email is bwagner@rva.org, and Brian's phone is (717)842-0284. Brian and Missy are returning to serve at Rift Valley Academy in Kenya in July, so there is a time element.
- > A **number of our missionaries** continue to be under-supported. If you or your church would be willing to take on more regular support, or even a one-time gift, please contact the GMC office for a list of names. Thank you!
- > Congratulations to **Rev. Gene Stevenson**, one of our newest missionary candidates! Gene is a teacher and administrator at Indian Bible College in Flagstaff, AZ. This school provides a biblical education for Native Americans who want to go into ministry. Gene, his wife Beth and their family relocated to AZ last year; they are originally from eastern PA. Gene was a youth pastor and lead pastor at several EC churches, including Palmyra First and Frackville Trinity.
- > **Rev. Tomoyuki Abe** is now an official missionary candidate. Tomoyuki and his wife Jessica are serving in France. Tomoyuki is training with OMF International, a mission organization that focuses on

reaching Asian people in Asia and beyond. They were looking for someone to work with Japanese expatriates in France, and Tomoyuki is uniquely qualified. He is currently in intensive French language school. The Abes hope to come to the USA in July to meet with current supporters and share about the work.

- > **Dan Moury** will be going to the Philippines later this month into mid-May to film a scripture dedication. Please keep him in prayer for safety and that all equipment arrives with him and in good working order.

EC Benefits

Thanks to everyone for completing the workers compensation forms on a timely basis. As with many processes this year, the workers comp audit has been delayed although there is a regulatory requirement mandating an annual audit of wages. Not sure if or when an audit is going to happen. Our claims history remains low however we have no control over any mandated increases from the PA Department of Labor and Industry.

Churches not included in the denominational workers compensation group policy; Ohio, Illinois and Kentucky churches, however your individual state mandates workers compensation coverage. Please confirm that all employees of the church are covered by workers compensation insurance. Per EC Benefits Corporation policy H.3.b, churches not covered by the denomination group workers compensation policy shall submit proof of workers 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 dking@eccenter.com

The annual disability premium was due January 15 and the Benefit Corporation administrative fee is due by April 15, 2020, retirees are not subject to the administrative fee. Both of these fees are listed in the Treasurer's Guide available on the EC website. Many have remitted the disability fee timely and a few have already submitted the administrative fee and we thank you for your diligence and hard work.

Treasurers please confirm that you are remitting your ministry fund payments on the correct monthly form. In 2020 the ministry fund percentage decreased to 5.60%.

To date about 80% of pastoral compensation forms have been returned. Thanks to all the churches that have responded. We will be reminding non compliant churches to complete and submit their pastoral compensation forms. Please save Dave King some work by submitting your pastoral compensation forms as soon as possible.

As always please contact Dave King, Benefits Administrator, or Kevin Henry, Executive Director, with any questions or problems, dking@eccenter.com, khenry@eccenter.com or 717-866-7581.

FREE MONEY! Come and get it!

To date \$11,450 in financial grants has been awarded to four EC pastors with one pastor receiving over \$3,500. There is plenty of money available for future awards. Please register at, <https://naefinancialhealth.org/ecc/>. Scroll down the page to the green “Apply Now” button under the Financial Grant heading. Your money is waiting.

The Evangelical Congregational Church is honored to be selected to participate in the National Association of Evangelicals Pastoral Financial Health initiative funded by the Lilly Endowment. Any EC credential and stationed lead/senior/solo pastor is eligible for a grant by completing personal financial training or church generosity training. We have up to \$100,000 to give away!

There are three paths to FREE MONEY; God is Your Provider Personal Finances - \$2,500 if completed by July 31, 2020; Dave Ramsey Financial Peace University - \$2,500 if all nine sessions are completed by July 31, 2020 and Church Generosity training - \$1,000. Smaller grants are also available.

Testimonials from pastors who have received a financial assistance grant:

“My wife and I enjoyed doing the course together. It was really the first time we seriously discussed money matters together. It led to a better understanding and trust.”

“This was a good experience. We walked away feeling pretty good about most of our stuff being in the right place. We did meet with our lawyer this past week and update our wills and get our end of life paperwork in place.”

There is plenty of time to supplement your income before July 31, 2020. Your only commitment is time and pay taxes (the grant payments are taxable income).

Please contact me with any questions.

Kevin Henry
Executive Director
717-628-2171
khenry@eccenter.com



Twin Pines Camp

2020 Spring Happenings



Spring Fling – April 24-26



Theme: *A Rootin' Tootin' Weekend*
A weekend retreat focused on children currently in grades 3-5. Come and enjoy Twin Pines Camp and learn about some Biblical outlaws. Participating groups must provide chaperones for the weekend.

CANCELLED

For Ladies Only Retreat – May 12-14*



Speaker: Sue Duffield
A relaxing and laugh-filled mid-week retreat “for ladies only.” Enjoy fellowship, worship, and in-depth Bible sessions.
bit.ly/2020ForLadiesRetreat

Spring Spruce-Up – May 5-7*



Join other volunteers for a mid-week volunteer opportunity to help the ministry “spruce-up” camp and prepare for summer ministry! Projects include both indoor and outdoor sprucing-up. There are always tasks for volunteers of any skill level!
bit.ly/2020TPSF

Summer Camp – June 14-August 8



The summer starts with a week for Adults, who are matched with summer staff as prayer partners. The summer continues with 7 weeks of a variety of camps for a range of ages and interests. Check out the list of camps offered during Summer 2020 at bit.ly/20SumSchedule. Then choose which camp you will attend and/or send someone to.

*These dates are different from previously publicized. They are now correct.

The Power of Camp is discovering something new

www.twinpines.org

TWIN PINES CAMP

SUMMER STAFF OPENINGS

Life Guard | Kitchen Help | Counselors

More Information & Application
bit.ly/2020staffinfo

Questions? Call Shawn
@ 570-629-2411





SENDING THE GOSPEL TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

God's Word is being proclaimed in some of the world's most remote and hard-to-reach places through Operation Christmas Child, a project of Samaritan's Purse.

Learn more at our booth and at
SAMARITANSPURSE.ORG/ENDSOFTHEEARTH



Shoebox Gifts Become a Turning Point

FOR AN UNREACHED AREA OF MEXICO



La Laguna village in remote Mexico, home to the Nahuatl people, was once unreached with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. No one in the mountain community had ever heard the name of Jesus. No one had ever been told that God loves them. No one had a Bible.

Now, because of one pastor's obedience to share the Gospel and his vision for reaching children through Operation Christmas Child, the Good News has come to La Laguna and the community will never be the same.

Pastor Jose Benitez was leading a church in a town several hours away when, through his radio broadcast, a listener from La Laguna named Eusebia wrote a letter explaining that she wanted to know more about God.

Pastor Jose traveled to the village to meet with Eusebia and he rejoiced when she became a follower of Christ. For the next 20 years, Pastor Jose made the arduous trek up the mountain, along a dangerous road that's often flooded, to preach and teach as often as possible. But other people did not come to faith as Eusebia had done.

Yet, Pastor Jose didn't give up. He continued praying and sharing the Good News.

When he had the opportunity to bring Operation Christmas Child shoebox gifts to the village and share the Gospel together with these simple gifts, dozens of children came to faith. He then taught them the follow-up discipleship course, *The Greatest Journey*, which is designed especially for shoebox recipients. As these boys and girls learned how to follow Christ and share Him with others, more people came to faith and a church was established in the village.

Pastor Jose has had polio since age 2 and uses a scooter to get around since he can't walk. He wears a glove on the one hand that he uses to push the scooter.

"This has not been an impediment in any way to take the Gospel to those who need it," he said. "God has given us the strength to take His Word." As a result, lives are being changed, and Pastor Jose said, "The message is spreading."



LEFT: Shoebox gifts are delivered to children in La Laguna, Mexico, along with the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

RIGHT: Mauricio is one of nearly 80 children in the remote mountain village who have graduated from *The Greatest Journey* and are sharing God's Word with their families.





Evangelical Congregational Church

100 West Park Avenue
Myerstown, PA 17067
717-866-7581
www.eccenter.com



Who We Are

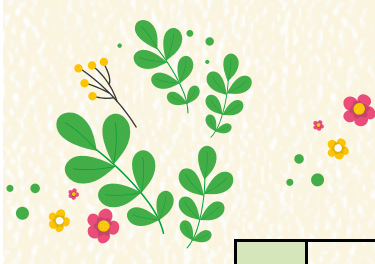
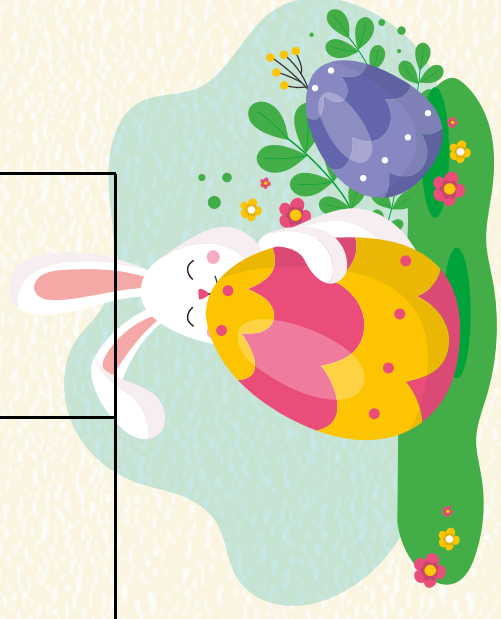
“...you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God’s very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light”.

1 Peter 2:9



April 2020

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Ministry Funds to: EC Church 100 W. Park Ave. Myerstown, PA 17067	Insurance Payments to: Benefits Corp. 100 W. Park Ave. Myerstown, PA 17067	1	2	3	4	
PALM SUNDAY Day of Prayer for Kingdom Extensions	6	7	8	MAUNDY THURSDAY	GOOD FRIDAY CHURCH CENTER CLOSED	11
EASTER SUNDAY	13	14	15	16	17	18
	CHURCH CENTER CLOSED		Health Insurance Due Conference Network Team Mtg. Prayer Mobilization Team Mtg.	National Ministry Team Mtg.	Twin Pines Board Mtg.	
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
	Info. for the May EC Leader is Due	StoneRidge Board Mtg.				
26	27	28	29	30		



May 2020

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Ministry Funds to: EC Church 100 W. Park Ave. Myerstown, PA 17067	Insurance Payments to: Benefits Corp. 100 W. Park Ave. Myerstown, PA 17067				1 Day of Prayer for the EC Church	2
3 Day of Prayer for Kingdom Extension	4	5	6	7 NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER Pre-Conf. Mtg. Mohn's Hill Finance Committee Mtg.	8	9 Pre-Conf. Mtg. Allentown, Christ
10 MOTHER'S DAY Mother's Day Offering	11 Prayer Mobilization Team Mtg.	12 Pre-Conf. Mtg. Reich's	13	14 Pre-Conf. Mtg. Schuykill Haven	15 Health Insurance Due Evangelical Seminary Commencement	16 Pre-Conf. Mtg. Transfer/Dixon, Bethel
17 Day of Prayer for Bishop Election	18	19	20 Info. for the JUNE EC Leader is Due	21 Evangelical Seminary Golf Tournament	22	23
24	25 MEMORIAL DAY CHURCH CENTER CLOSED	26	27	28 ASCENSION DAY	29	30
31 PENTECOST	NATIONAL CONFERENCE at MESSIAH COLLEGE					