

# E.C. Leader

## EC Church Around the World

**T**he role of the Bishop of the EC Church is a very interesting and challenging one. There are very few quiet or dull days; it seems like there's always something to do. In fact, I have discovered that those times I think I know what my day will be like, the telephone rings or someone walks into my office and everything changes. You've probably had days like that too. As Bishop, my Ministry Description lists general headings of responsibility like Spiritual Direction, Executive Leadership, Commission Leadership, and more. In the detail of that list it notes that I am not only Bishop of the Evangelical Congregational Churches in the United States, but of the EC Churches spread out around the world. Like most things in life, that is both a joy and a challenge. Fortunately, that leadership responsibility is shared with Rev. Randy Sizemore, Director of the Global Ministries commission, and national leaders in each of the countries with EC congregations.

A temptation common to all of us is to think mainly about ourselves; to focus on our own needs and situations. That is true of the church as well. When we think about the EC Church we can easily focus on our local congregation, our region, or the EC Church in the United States. The reality is that we are a network of almost 600 local EC congregations and ministries around the world! Praise the Lord! And even more exciting is that God is at work in the EC Church around the world. Many people are coming to know Jesus as their Savior and being disciplined in the faith. Local churches are being planted. Orphans and widows are receiving care, and missionaries are being sent out to the least and the lost. That's not to say there are no challenges. Many of the countries where our brothers and sisters live are poor, persecution is real, and spiritual warfare is a daily battle.



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This month Randy Sizemore, Rev. Josh Reinders, pastor of the Seneca EC Church in western Pennsylvania, and I will be traveling to visit the EC Church of Liberia, Africa. When we arrive we will be joined by Rev. Th. Janga, the leader of the EC Church of Nepal. Together we will minister at the Liberian National Conference and hopefully travel out of the capital of Monrovia to visit churches and ministries throughout the country. Please be in prayer for this important trip. The country of Liberia has begun its slow recovery from a devastating decade-long civil war. Travel is difficult and spiritual opposition is evident. And as you pray for our short term mission trip please pray for your brothers and sisters who live, worship, and serve in the EC Church around the world. I praise and thank God for their deep love for him and their commitment to the Evangelical Congregational Church. May his Holy Spirit continue to unite us, to enliven and empower all of our churches, here in the United States and around the world, as we serve him together!

In Christ's service,



Rev. Bruce D. Hill  
Bishop



We have set the dates for a number of Pre-Conference meetings to be held in various regions of the EC Church. Agenda items and more location information will be announced as we move closer to the dates, but for now we'd like you to note the date that works best for you, put it on your calendar and then participate in one of these important pre-conference meetings.

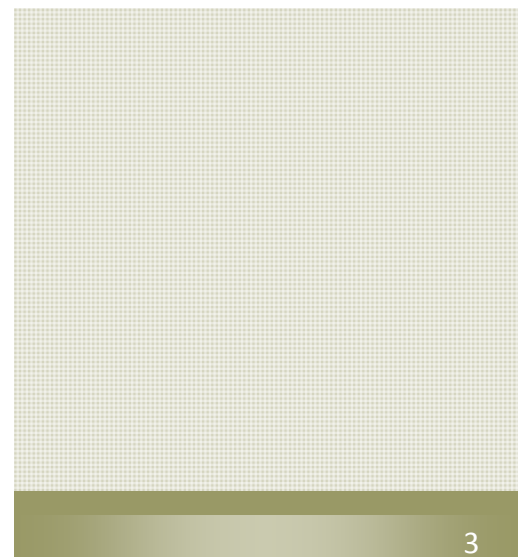
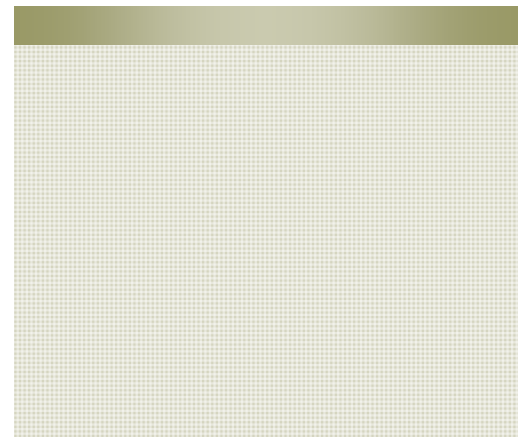
- Thursday, April 4 @ 7:00 pm in the Delaware Region
- Sunday, April 7 @ 6:00 pm at Lakeside EC Church, Transfer
- Tuesday, April 9 @ 7:00 pm in the Susquehanna Region
- Thursday, April 11 @ 7:00 pm in the Delaware Region
- Tuesday, April 16 @ 7:00 pm in the Susquehanna Region
- Wednesday, May 1 @ 7:00 pm at Bethel EC Church, Dixon, IL

Don't forget that our 2013 National Conference will meet at Messiah College on May 29, 30, 31, 2013. Please plan on being present for the entire National Conference!



## The Bishop's TOP TEN Prayer & Praise Items

1. Be in prayer for Rev. Randy Sizemore, Rev. Josh Reinders, Rev. Th. Janga (leader of the EC Church in Nepal) and me as we visit the EC Church in Liberia, Africa (January 31-February 9).
  - a. Pray for safety and health getting there and while traveling in the country.
  - b. Pray for spiritual protection and blessing of our ministry.
2. Join the Stationing Committee in prayer as they work with pastors and congregations contemplating ministry changes.
3. Remember to lift up the preparations for our denomination's 2013 National Conference which will be held May 29-31, 2013.
4. Keep praying for the Lord's leading of our Futures Initiative Team as they continue to develop a strategic vision for the future of our denomination.
5. Pray for (and consider supporting) our missionaries who continue to be negatively impacted by the world economy and falling support levels.
6. Praise the Lord! He continues to lead local congregations to see the needs of those living in the neighborhoods and communities around them.
7. Praise the Lord for his leading in our denomination's Pastoral Assessment Center which was held in January. He continues to call men into his service!
8. Thank the Lord for his continued leading of two of our significant ministries to those beyond the EC Church—Evangelical Theological Seminary and New Dawn Christian Communities.
9. Praise God for the people who are being touched and changed through the various ministries of our church planting efforts. God is at work!
10. Thank the Lord for the energy and safety he gives Gloria and me as we travel around the National Conference preaching and visiting in local churches.



## Missionary Updates

- **Jim & Joan Farr** will be in Pennsylvania from February-June 2013. They will be staying in the Lititz apartments.
- **BJ & Rachel Whitaker** will be in the Myerstown area March-May of 2013.
- **Tomoyuki & Jessica Abe** have announced that they are expecting a baby near the end of May 2013!
- **Congratulations to Yoriyoshi Abe and Emiko Furuya**, on their engagement! Emiko is a member of our Kyodo Grace Church. They plan to be married in the summer of 2013 in Japan and return to Evangelical Seminary in Myerstown for a final year of study.

## News from Global Ministries



### NEW PROCEDURES TO ENHANCE OUR CHILDREN'S SAFETY

The GMC and other National Conference leaders recently met with our insurance provider for updates and further training in regard to providing a safe environment for our children at GMC events such as the Mission Minded Kids Rally. Following this training, we have adopted the following procedures/requirements for our Mission Minded Kids Rallies.

1. Each MMK Rally Team member must submit a completed and signed copy of the Adult Screening Verification Form (ASVF). The ASVF will be kept on file in the GMC office. Every session room must have at least one "cleared" adult at all times. Other "cleared" adults should patrol the hallways and bathrooms and lunch areas.
2. Every church who participates in a Rally must have Sexual Misconduct coverage through their insurance company. The minimum coverage rates must be at least \$300,000. Proof of this coverage must be sent to Shirley Long at Church Center at the time of pre-registration in the form of a copy of the insurance page specifying the amount of coverage. This will be kept on file in the GMC office and only needs to be updated if insurance coverage or company changes.
3. Every adult (over 21) attending the rally for the day must sign in at registration on a form indicating their name, address, home church and whether or not they have child clearances on file somewhere. This adult registration will be kept on file in the GMC office as proof of who was at the rally and where their clearances are on file if they have them. This would serve several purposes. Although we would not deny an adult admittance to the rally, the presence of the form and the training we provide would be reminders for some to get their clearances, as well as a clear message to all that we are intentionally serious about the safety of our children. It will also serve as documentation for the insurance company if an issue would arise. Child clearance requirements are commonplace procedure now in every area of child service across the country. Our E.C. churches need to be aware of and in compliance with these procedures if they are not already.
4. Approximately 10 minutes of the opening will be dedicated to "Safe Child" training. Depending on the agreed upon content of this training, we could do



### Mission Minded KIDS



this with everyone together in the sanctuary, or we could remove the adults for 10 minutes and provide a worship time for the children with the Rally Team watching over them. We will have a paper handout to give the adults, and then go over it orally, providing instructions on how, to whom, and when to report incidents, as well as safe procedures for bathrooms, appropriate touching, safety in numbers, etc.

A letter explaining these new procedures was mailed to the pastor, lay delegate

and mission representative of each congregation in the Susquehanna and Delaware Regions. Thank you for your cooperation in our efforts to provide a safe environment for our children to learn the joys of participating in the Great Commission. If you have any questions regarding these procedures please contact the GMC office.

**MISSION MINDED KIDS RALLY:** March 2, 2013 at Evangelical Seminary, Myerstown

Theme: "I Have Decided To Follow Jesus"

Come learn about the six (6) North East Indian tribes that make up the EC Church of India; experience Amy Carmichael's "I Dare"; the India Room and interact with EC missionaries Jim & Joan Farr and Lamar & Janice Stoltzfus.

- 9:30 am registration
- 10:00 am—2:00 pm program
- Registration fee is \$5.00 for children and adults (covers the costs of lunch and one curio per child).

**Delaware Region Mission Leaders' Brunch: March 11, 2013**

All pastors, lay delegates and local church mission leaders are invited to the Delaware Region Mission Leaders' Brunch on March 11, 2013 at 10:00 am at the Superior Restaurant located on 102 State Road, Emmaus. During our time together we will hear from EC missionaries and share important updates from the GMC. (Each person will pay for their own meal.) **RSVP by February 25, 2013 to the GMC office.**

**India Work Team Computer Project:**

We are collecting gently used laptops in working condition that we can update and take along for the seminary students at Evangelical College of Theology in North East India in August of 2013. Please help us get the word out to our congregations. Laptops or monetary donations can be dropped off at Church Center. Any questions can be directed to Randy Sizemore at [rsizemore@eccenter.com](mailto:rsizemore@eccenter.com).



**Spain Vision Tour Postponed:**

The September 3-16, 2013 Spain Vision Tour has been postponed until 2014 due to changes in the schedule of our missionaries in Spain.



**Randy is now scheduling speaking engagements for 2013.**

To schedule Randy for Sunday school, worship, Sunday evening, weekday/night or anytime that fits your church's schedule, contact him at [rsizemore@eccenter.com](mailto:rsizemore@eccenter.com) or call the GMC office at 717-866-7584.

## News from Evangelical



We are praising the Lord—and extremely grateful to all who support Evangelical—for a record \$208,475 received for the Annual Fund for Transformational Leadership by December 31, 2012. This amount represents the highest AFTL ever tallied for the first half of a fiscal year and serves as a wonderful impetus toward our June 30, 2013 target of \$491,000. Thank you... thank you... for your faithful prayers and sacrificial contributions.



Our new Master of Arts in Christian Leadership program (MACL) launched on January 8 with 10 eager students in the first cohort.



Evangelical hosted the Lebanon Valley Chamber of Commerce in a “Behind the Scenes” networking event on January 10. The gathering brought many first-timers to our campus and offered informational presentations and tours of Christ Hall and the Pense Archaeological Collection. We are excited about the new friends God is bringing to us!



We rejoice that our three-week Winterim has twice as many students enrolled as last year. It’s not too late to register for spring semester courses which begin January 24.



Spring Convocation on Tuesday, January 29 at 1:00 pm features Dr. Edwin Aponte, an expert on Hispanic spirituality and vice-president of academic affairs at Christian Theological Seminary. A 2:30 pm Hispanic Ministry Summit will follow the Convocation in Dech Chapel.



The Phonathon is history... at least in name! We’ve learned that our friends and alumni prefer various means of contact from Evangelical—texting, Facebook, Twitter, email, snail mail, phone calls—so this year’s CONNECT-A-THON from February 18-28 will include different methods of communication as we seek to be less intrusive, yet more informative, about the seminary’s ministry and needs. The process has changed, but we still need your support! For up-to-date information on the initiative, or to give online, check the Evangelical website or the seminary’s Facebook page.



Dr. Eugene Merrill, Distinguished Professor of Old Testament at Dallas Theological Seminary, will present a lecture in honor of Evangelical’s own Distinguished Professor of Old Testament, Dr. David A. Dorsey, on February 21, at 3:00 pm. The public is invited.



Don’t miss the boat! That’s the Ark, as in Sight and Sound Theatre’s production of “NOAH” on Thursday, March 14. Friends of Evangelical will enjoy the 4:15 pm performance, followed by a delicious meal at the nearby Fireside Tavern. The \$100 package also includes a donation to the seminary. Contact Marsha Conley at 717-866-5775, ext. 2130 or [mconley@evangelical.edu](mailto:mconley@evangelical.edu) to reserve your place. We’d love to meet some new friends that evening, so feel free to invite others!



“Christian Worldview” is the first 2013 course offered by the Institute for Church Leadership, in cooperation with the seminary’s Center for Lifelong Learning. The credit-free class meets in Zinn Commons on seven Tuesday evenings (6:30-9:15 pm) from January 29 through March 12, with Dr. J. Kenneth Nafziger, MD, MDiv, as the



instructor. Registration is due by January 22 and costs \$175 (\$185 for registration with CEUs or \$50 for auditing). The second spring course from March 19 through May 7, 2013, is “Pastoral Care and Counseling” taught by John Wallace, MDiv, MAMFT. Originally known as the EC Local Preacher Course of Study, this program is now open to anyone interested in spiritual enrichment and leadership development.



Finally, check out our “Deeper Leader Blog” at [www.evangelical.edu](http://www.evangelical.edu) and on Facebook for some insightful articles from our staff and nationally known writers.



## News from Benefits & Compensation

While the debate continues on if a fiscal cliff was actually avoided or not, we do know that the payroll tax holiday was not extended. Per the IRS bulletin IR-2013-1.

*“...employers should also begin withholding Social Security tax at the rate of 6.2 percent of wages paid following the expiration of the temporary two-percentage-point payroll tax cut in effect for 2011 and 2012. The payroll tax rates were not affected by this week’s legislation.*

*Employers should start using the revised withholding tables and correct the amount of Social Security tax withheld as soon as possible in 2013, but not later than Feb. 15, 2013. For any Social Security tax under-withheld before that date, employers should make the appropriate adjustment in workers’ pay as soon as possible, but not late than March 31, 2013.”*



Summarizing the above, beginning with wages paid on or after Jan. 1, 2013 the Social Security tax rate was increased to 6.2% and any wages paid on or after Jan. 1, 2013 at the lower withholding rate of 4.2% the employer must withhold an additional 2% by March 31, 2013. For example, if the church payday was Jan. 2, 2013 with the employee portion of the Social Security tax withheld at 4.2%, the church must withhold an additional 2% Social Security tax on the wages paid Jan. 2, 2013, by March 31. All wages paid in 2013 must have Social Security taxes withheld at 6.2%.

Pastors are W-2 employees of the local church but are self-employed for Social Security and Medicare taxes, the SECA tax rate for 2013 is 15.3%. With all wages paid in 2013 at the 15.3% rate.

Reporting the cost of employer sponsored health insurance plans is now required on 2012 W-2’s filed in 2013. **This is informational reporting only.** The amounts to report for those in the active pastor group health plan are:

Single coverage	\$7,560+ any church contributions to the FSA
Couple coverage	\$15,840 + any church contributions to the FSA
Family coverage	\$20,520 + any church contributions to the FSA
Parent and Child(ren) coverage	\$13,200 + any church contributions to the FSA

Include the cost of the coverage in box 12 of form W-2 with code DD. The FSA contributions to include are only the church's contribution of up to \$500/yr. Do not include any voluntary contributions made by the pastor toward the FSA.

For the portions of the Affordable Care Act that have been implemented to date the EC church has been classified as a large employer (denominationally the EC Church employs well over 300 pastors, custodians, secretaries, child care workers and musicians). This may change as the law is interpreted in light of legislative and legal challenges but for now the guidance being offered is that the EC Church is a large employer. So I am strongly recommending that all churches with a pastor(s) on the active group health insurance plan report the cost of employer sponsored health insurance on 2012 W-2s filed in 2013.

- ◆ Please remember that the EC Benefits administrative fee is due from churches on April 15, 2013, retirees are not subject to the fee. The 2013 disability premiums are due January 15, 2013. Please remit them as soon as possible. The due dates for the administrative fee and disability premium are listed in the Treasurer's Guide available on the EC Center website, [www.eccenter.com](http://www.eccenter.com).
- ◆ Treasurer's please begin using the 2013 Ministry Fund forms for January offerings. Offerings collected in December 2012 should be remitted on the 2012 Ministry Fund forms.
- ◆ The Annual Reports and fourth quarter Ministerial Update forms are both due by January 25, 2013. Please remit to: Rev. Ken Wiest, statistician, EC Church Center, 100 Park Avenue, Myerstown, PA 17067 or email [blong@eccenter.com](mailto:blong@eccenter.com)
- ◆ The 2013 Business Mileage Reimbursement increased to \$.565/mile on January 1, 2013.
- ◆ 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". The IRS has resources available at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov), to assist with charitable contributions; Tax Guide for Churches and Religious Organizations and Publication 526 Charitable Contributions.

Please contact Dave King or Kevin Henry with any questions.

Kevin Henry  
Controller

David King  
Benefits Administrator

## BIBLICAL PREACHING SEMINAR

Sponsored by Church Health Commission

### KINGDOM LIVING IN A WORLD GONE NUTS A CORPORATE ENDEAVOR

Speaker: Dr. Kenneth Miller

Saturday, February 23, 2013 1:00—4:00 pm

Zion E.C. Church, 25 South College Street, Myerstown, PA

**Watch for the Registration brochure in the mail!!**



## On 2.2.13, the biggest battle of men's lives begins.



If there was ever a time when men needed vision for what it means to be a man, this is it. And Stepping Up™ can help them make it happen. As football's elite athletes prepare for the Super Bowl® battle on the gridiron, Dennis Rainey and FamilyLife invite men to tackle an even bigger challenge: the battle for godly, courageous living in their own lives.

On the Saturday before the Super Bowl®, churches across America are hosting the Stepping Up Super Saturday: one life-changing day that could turn the tide for men across America. Imagine if we could call every man to become courageous leaders in their own lives, marriages, churches, and communities.

The Stepping Up Super Saturday Video Event delivers dramatic stories, humor, man-on-the-street interviews, and expert teaching from men's leaders like James MacDonald, Tony Dungy, Bill Bennett, Dennis Rainey, Crawford Lorritts and others. Here's an idea of what to expect: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qCGUQwKIRJk>

Two Evangelical Congregational Churches are participating in this event and welcome all the men of EC churches to come together for an awesome day. **Please plan to attend at one of the EC Churches below on Saturday, February 2, 2013.** Seating is limited so register today.

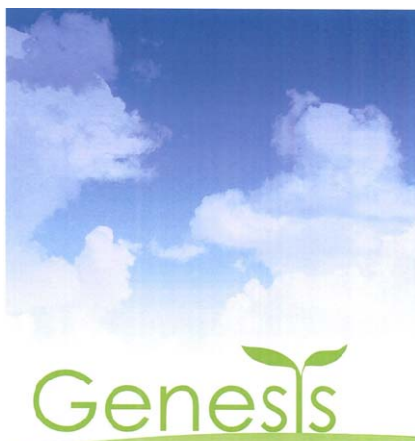
### **PALMYRA PA**

At Palmyra First E.C. Church (55 W. Main Street, Palmyra, PA 17078) the Stepping Up event features LIVE Worship with Bryan Stevenson. The registration fee of \$24 per man covers conference materials and a lunch will be provided. The event will run from 7:30 AM until 4:00 PM (doors open at 7:00). Contact the church office at [717-838-3758](tel:717-838-3758) if you have any questions.



### **ROYERSFORD PA**

At Trinity Lighthouse Church (66 S. Limerick Road, Royersford PA 19468) the Stepping Up event features LIVE Worship with Heaven's Thunder. The registration fee of \$24 per man covers conference materials and a Chick-fil-A lunch. The event runs from 7:30 AM until 4:00 PM (doors open at 7:00) Click the link below to register with your credit or debit card. Call Wayne Houck at [610-716-5603](tel:610-716-5603) if you have any questions. Go here to REGISTER: [www.trinitylighthouse.org](http://www.trinitylighthouse.org)



**Genesis**  
A Theological & Practical Trajectory  
for Missional Church Planting

May 20—24, 2013  
Richmond Hill  
2209 East Grace Street, Richmond VA

**Genesis** is unique in comparison to other church planters training opportunities available.

**First**, there will only be somewhere between 20-30 people. This means plenty of room for dialog, conversation and questions amidst all of the planned training.

**Second**, everyone stays, eats, and prays together for the week. Most people leave with better friendships, some of which will be life-long, because they started the church planting journey—in this way—together.

**Third**, there will be a host of different equippers with unique planting stories. This gathering isn't dominated by just a few individuals or models of church planting. You'll hear from a variety of planters, both seasoned and new, and learn from their experiences and approaches.

**Finally**, we hope to provide a good balance of theology, theory, and practicality. Each component is vital.

### **Registration and more information:**

Email: [bob@ecclesianet.org](mailto:bob@ecclesianet.org)  
[www.ecclesianet.org](http://www.ecclesianet.org)