

EC Leader

MARCH 2016

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From the Bishop

Did you ever think there are days when life just stinks? You know, days when everything goes from bad to worse; another bill to be paid, another health problem, more doctor's appointments, a job lost, another child in trouble. Job, in the Old Testament, understood those kinds of days all too well. In one day Job lost just about everything. Imagine; all his herds of animals, all his servants, and all his children—dead and gone in one horrific day. After that Job got sick, he was covered with "terrible boils from head to foot." (Job 2:7) His wife's advise was simple, "Curse God and die." (Job 2:9) Life stinks, it's hopeless, just give up.

Of all the troubles we deal with, none is as over-

whelming as death. I think that's why Job asked the most significant question in Job 14:14, "Can the dead live again?" It's a question that has haunted humanity throughout history.

The question of death and life troubled the women who walked to Jesus' tomb that first Easter morning. The Bible accounts tell us a few faithful women went to the tomb focused on death, coming to finish the embalming of Jesus' body. When the women got to the tomb, they discovered the guards were gone, the stone was moved, and the body was missing. "Two men suddenly appeared to them, clothed in dazzling robes. ...Then the men asked, 'Why are you looking among the dead for someone who is alive.'" (Luke 24:4-5) The first Easter Sunday morning the big question was

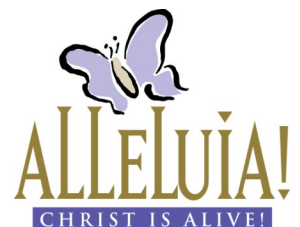
once again "Can the dead live again?"

When we look at everything that happened from the angels' perspective, I'm sure that what the women were doing seemed kind of silly. You go to a tomb to visit a dead person, but not someone who's alive; and that's exactly what Jesus was and is—alive. Soon Mary Magdalene saw him herself, as well as two of his followers who were walking to their home in Emmaus, then nine of the disciples in the upper room, and finally even Thomas. The message of Easter is that Jesus isn't in the tomb because he's not dead—he's alive.

So Easter is the definitive answer to Job's question. "Can the dead live again?" Yes! The message of Easter is that because Jesus is alive we can confidently answer Job's question. Jesus says "Since I live, you

also will live." (John 14:19) Jesus' resurrection is a statement that he is who he said he is—the Son of God, God in flesh appearing; but Jesus' resurrection is more than just a display of his own power over death—it is the assurance that through faith in the living Savior Jesus "you also will live." May the truth of the resurrection, the reality of the One Jesus who is "the way, the truth, and the life" impact our lives every day. Can the dead live again? Absolutely, through faith in Jesus! He is risen!

In Christ's Service,



Bishop's Top Ten Prayer & Praise

1. Please keep praying for the Stationing Committee as we seek the Lord's will in bringing pastors and churches together to build the Kingdom of God.
2. Pray for Rev. Abraham Powell, the new Field Superintendent (Bishop), of the Evangelical Congregational Church of Liberia (ECCOL). May the Lord clearly lead him as a wind of change blows through the ECCOL.
3. Ask the Lord to bless the upcoming National Ministry Team meeting on March 10. In particular, pray for the appointment of our new District Field Directors.
4. Pray for safe travel for Randy Sizemore, Carlos Kelly, Janor Bestwick and me as we attend the Evangelical Congregational Church of Mexico Annual Conference March 28-April 4. Ask the Lord to bless our



ministry alongside our Mexican brothers and sisters.

5. Continue to pray for me as I work on all the various aspects of our National Conference which will be held at Messiah College in Grantham, PA on May 25-27.
6. Join with me in praying for a number of our pastoral families who are dealing with significant health issues.
7. Praise God for the many opportunities to re-tell the story of his wonderful grace expressed in the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus.
8. Thank the Lord for our three Conference Ministers and their commitment to finish their ministry well as they serve the Lord and the E.C. Church.
9. Join with Gloria and me as we praise the Lord for news of another grand-child (#9) to be born into our family! Scheduled to be born in early August to Tim & Stephanie Hill and soon to be big sister Gabby.
10. Praise the Lord for the growing number of local congregations who are expressing interest in self-evaluation through Natural Church Development as they seek to grow in spiritual health and vitality.

Bishop Emeritus John Moyer is doing some early spring cleaning and getting rid of some old **Conference Journals** that still may be of some value to our pastors. There is a complete run of journals from 1916 through 2002, Eastern, Western and General. Interested pastors can call John at 717-866-6313. He has found that these journals have been a valuable resource through the years.



Belated congratulations to **Air Force Chaplain Karl Noel Blancaflor**, who on December 28, 2015 was promoted to Major at Barksdale Air Force Base in Bossier City, Louisiana. He currently serves as Deputy Wing Chaplain. His wife, Julie Ann, and his children, Kate, Megan and DJ were on hand to celebrate the occasion and helped pin on his new rank to his uniform. His promotion is a major step in his career as a chaplain. We are very proud of Noel!



It continues to be such a great joy to serve alongside EC Churches in the simple, personal, and powerful opportunity to go to the world with

the message of Jesus and opportunity for follow up discipleship!

We believe the Lord uses every prayerful effort to generate shoebox gifts to become Gospel Opportunities, and we are celebrating what He did to bring 11,213,010 shoebox gifts in 2015! Our goal in the U.S. was to collect 8.6 million shoeboxes, and we praise God for his provision in 8,765,637 shoebox gifts collected within the U.S.

As you may know, after receiving shoebox gifts, boys and girls are invited to enroll in The Greatest Journey, our 12-lesson discipleship program taught through the local church. Here, children learn from trained teachers what it means to faithfully follow Christ and how to share their faith with friends and family. Even before the course is over, students begin witnessing to others. Then at their graduation celebration, the graduates also receive a New Testament in their own language to use personally and in communicating their faith to others.



1095 Information Tax Forms—As reported in the January 2016 EC Leader, a new information tax form, 1095, was created to record a taxpayer's health insurance coverage. There are three (3) types of 1095 information forms; 1095-A Health Insurance Market Place Statement, 1095-B Health Coverage and 1095-C Employer Provided Health Insurance Offer and Coverage. If you are enrolled in the EC Benefits group health insurance with Highmark Blue Shield (not Freedom Blue) or Capital Blue Cross you will receive a 1095-B from Highmark and a 1095-B from Capital Blue Cross. I understand Capital Blue Cross has issued their 1095-B and Highmark will be issuing their 1095-B by mid February 2016. The original due date of the 1095s was February 1 but that was pushed back to March 31.

It is not necessary for you to wait until both 1095-B forms are received to file your taxes. IRS.gov and a CPA firm both affirm that a tax return can be filed without having form 1095-B or 1095-C. However, be careful completing your individual tax return. If you were in the EC Benefits Group Health Insurance plan for all of calendar year 2015 be sure you check the box on your tax return that you had coverage for all twelve months of 2015. If you did not have coverage for all twelve months of 2015 check the appropriate months when you did have coverage. If you make a mistake and check the wrong box a tax penalty may be assessed. You knowingly check the wrong box you have committed tax fraud.

If you received a health insurance outside of an employer sponsored group health plan you **must wait until you receive your 1095-A** to complete your tax return and complete Form 8965.

Do not send the 1095s to the IRS with your tax return. Keep the 1095s with your other tax documents in a safe place. Most experts agree that it will take the IRS multiple years to properly process the 1095s they will receive. You may get a request from the IRS to prove your health insurance coverage two or more years from now and your 1095s will be an acceptable document to prove that you had health insurance coverage in 2015.

Medicare Beneficiaries, enrolled in Medicare parts A&B, are exempt from the 1095 filing requirements. Highmark Freedom Blue is not required to issue 1095-Bs. However, if you joined Medicare during 2015 you will receive a 1095 for the months before you joined Medicare.

Please consult a qualified tax preparer if you have any questions.

News from Global Ministries

The Delaware Region Mission Brunch will be held Friday, March 11th at the Perkins Restaurant located at 3400 Lehigh Street in Allentown, PA. The brunch is Dutch treat and begins at 10 a.m. Rev. Randy Sizemore will be bringing updates on our fields and missionaries, including his recent trip to Liberia. Reservations are requested. Please contact Pat at the GMC office (1-800-866-7584 or email to ecglobal@eccenter.com) by March 3rd.

Liberia trip a success!

Thank you for your prayers on behalf of the GMC Team that traveled to Liberia for their 47th Annual Conference. God used our team to dedicate a much needed truck to the conference, to recognize the seventeen years of exemplary service of Rev. Matthew Gueh, out-going Field Superintendent and to facilitate the first-ever general election of the new position of Bishop of the E.C. Church of Liberia as they move one step closer to becoming a National Conference. Rev. Abraham G. Powell, current General Secretary of ECCOL was elected to a six year term as Bishop. Please pray for Abraham and Matthew as they lead the conference transitions in the weeks ahead.

Great Lakes Work Team Traveling to Mexico

Please pray for the members of the GMC Great Lakes Work Team traveling to Mexico March 11-19 to assist the Rio Bravo congregation in the construction of their new church called Casa De Dios. Our team will primarily focusing on the electrical aspects of the project. At this point the team includes: Dave Bowers (leader); Dan Royer, Chris Harrison and Steve Couniham—members from our Bethel E.C. Church in Dixon, IL.

Bishop and GMC Team Traveling to Mexico

Please pray for the GMC Team traveling to Mexico the week of March 28th for their Annual Conference. Team members traveling with Randy include Bishop Bruce Hill, Rev. Carlos Kelly and Pastor Janor Bestwick. The GMC Team will be participating in the conference sessions, speaking in churches, meeting with pastors and conference leaders and discussing how we can strengthen our partnership in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The GMC Team will also be meeting with the leadership of El Retiro to help facilitate the GMC's transition out of this ministry in the next 18 months.

Prayer for Japan Church Plant

Yoriyoshi & Emiko have asked us to continue to pray for their targeted goal of launching their church plant during this Easter season. Pray that God provides the direction and resources needed!

Reminder: There will be no Mission Minded Kids Rally this year. We continue to urge our congregations to develop their MMK groups in their local fellowships. The VBS project this year will focus on Mexico—stay tuned for more details.



News from Benefits Corporation



Thanks to everyone who has returned the Worker's Compensation audit forms in a timely manner. The return rate this year is very good. It is important that we receive all the salary information to obtain an accurate worker's compensation billing. Missing information will be estimated and most likely estimated higher than actual, resulting in a higher bill. Please help yourself and other EC Churches by returning the Worker's Compensation audit forms.

The annual disability premium was due January 15 and the Benefit Corporation administrative fee is due by April 15, 2016. **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 submitted the administrative fee and we thank you for your diligence and hard work.

Treasurers please begin using the 2016 Ministry Fund forms for January offerings. Offerings collected in December 2015 should be remitted on the 2015 Ministry Fund forms.

Capital Blue Cross

As a member of Capital Blue Cross you can obtain a gym membership for \$25/month. Please visit www.blue365deals.com for details. Carefully review the cost of all gym memberships before making a long term commitment.

As always please contact David King, Benefits Administrator, dking@eccenter.com or myself khenry@eccenter.com with any questions, 1-800-866-7581.

Kevin Henry
Controller

Dave King
Benefits Administrator

REGISTRATION for MOUNTAIN MEN 2016 is open. Just click this link: <http://mountainmen2016.eventbrite.com>

- **WHEN:** Friday, April 22 at 6:00 pm—Saturday, April 23 at 6:00 pm
- **WHERE:** Twin Pines Camp, Conference & Retreat Center

The speakers this year are:

- **ART REMINGTON**—Pastor Art has been blessed to serve with many national men's ministries; as the Staff Pastor with Promise Keepers & Men At The Cross, as a speaker with Christian Men's Network, Encourage Men To Pray, Iron Sharpens Iron, and has had the opportunity to speak and interact with Pastors and Men's Leaders all across our nation and the world. He wants to see the Holy Spirit bring an end to "Spiritual Fatherlessness" by awakening every Christian man to their high calling to "make disciples of all nations" and fulfilling the Great Commission.
- **DALE MILLER**—Pastor Dale Miller grew up in Douglassville. He attended Central Christian College of the Bible in MO, where he had the opportunity to serve in youth ministry for two years. After receiving this Bachelor of Arts degree in Preaching, he became a student at Dallas Theological Seminary and graduated with a Master's degree in Pastoral Counseling and Spiritual Formation. While in Dallas he worked in youth ministry at Northwest Bible Church as well as college ministry at Southern Methodist University. Dale has a desire to see students grow in their knowledge of and passion for Jesus Christ. Through teaching and discipleship balanced with evangelism and outreach he strives to encourage students to discover their personal walk with Christ.
- **REV. DR. GARY KUEHNER**—Prior to being elected as Conference Minister of the Delaware Region of the Evangelical Congregational Church in 2011 he served as the pastor of the EC Church in Lenhartsville. He also served as pastor of EC Churches in Frackville and Hamburg. Dr. Kuehner has served as a Delaware Region Stationing Elder. Prior to entering pastoral ministry, Gary taught math in the public school system and worked as a carpenter and cement finisher. He enjoys reading non-fiction Christian books, walking, and weight training.

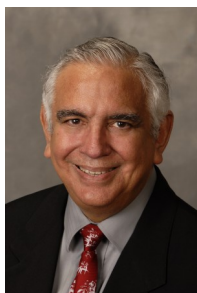
News from Evangelical

Faith in the Marketplace

On Thursday, March 17, 7:00-8:30 am, Kevin Mosser MD, President and CEO of WellSpan Health, will be our Faith in the Marketplace speaker in Zinn Commons. Invite business leaders in your network to join others in the local business community as they share ways to live their faith in the context of the workplace. Register online at www.evangelical.edu/fim-mosser Co-sponsored by Arthur Funk & Sons, Inc. and WellSpan Health, Good Samaritan Hospital. If you have questions, contact Ken Nafziger at knafziger@evangelical.edu



Wesley Forum 2016



Evangelical Seminary is honored to welcome Dr. Justo L. Gonzalez to present at our 2016 Wesley Forum. He will discuss, “Can Christianity’s past be a road map for a hopeful future?” Evangelical alumni may remember him as the author of the book, *The Story of Christianity*, the two volume tome that Dr. Schwenk, Dr. Blair, and other profs have used as the Church History textbook. We would love to have you join us for the day. For more information and to register, visit www.evangelical.edu/wesley. The event is sponsored by Boehm’s Chapel. If you have questions, please contact Ken Nafziger at knafziger@evangelical.edu

2006 Evangelical Seminary Golf Tournament

Get ready for Spring and Golf. Mark your calendar for Evangelical Seminary’s 31st Annual Golf Tournament, May 19 at Fairview Golf Course. Watch for more details to follow. If you have questions, please contact Ken Nafziger at knafziger@evangelical.edu





Evangelical Congregational Church

E.C. Church Center
100 West Park Avenue
Myerstown, PA 17067

Phone: 717-866-7581
Web: www.eccenter.com
Email: eccenter@eccenter.com



“For there is **one** body
and **one** Spirit, just
as you have all been
called to **one** glorious
hope for the future.

There is **one** Lord,
one faith, **one** baptism,
and **one** God and Father,
who is over all and in all
and living through all.”

EPHESIANS 4: 4-6

2016 National Conference

May 25-27

Messiah College, Grantham, PA

Registration forms will be available soon on the
denominational website—www.eccenter.com

Once again, we can expect a rather busy National Conference as we deal with amendments to the DISCIPLINE and amendments to the Rules of Conference, in addition to our normal times of prayer and worship (and that’s what we know about now!). Therefore we are planning on a series of **pre-conference meetings** this spring. Here are the dates and times. Locations will be announced later. The agenda at each meeting will be the same so simply choose the meeting that suits your schedule best.

- April 7 @ 7:00 p.m.—Susquehanna Region
- April 9 @ 9:00 a.m.—Delaware Region
- April 14 @ 7:00 p.m.—Delaware Region
- April 16 @ 9:00 a.m.—Susquehanna Region
- May 7 @ 10:00 a.m. (eastern)/9:00 a.m. (central) - Great Lakes Region

March 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Ministry Funds to: E.C. Church 100 West Park Avenue Myerstown, PA 17067	1	2	3	4 Day of Prayer for the E.C. Church	5	
6 FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT Day of Prayer for Church Planting	7	8 Spring GMC Mtg.	9	10 NMT Mtg.	11	12
13 PASSION SUNDAY Self Denial Offering	14 National CRC Mtg. EC Leader Articles Due	15 Church Pension Contribution due Health Insurance Premium due	16 Church Health Commission Mtg.	17	18	19
20 PALM SUNDAY	21	22	23 Church Center In-Service	24 MAUNDAY THURSDAY	25 GOOD FRIDAY Church Center closed	26
27 EASTER SUNDAY	28 Church Center closed	29	30 Self Denial Offering to: E.C. Church 100 West Park Avenue Myerstown, PA 17067 (designate—Self Denial Offering	31	Medical/Insurance/Pension Payments to: Benefits Corporation 100 West Park Avenue Myerstown, PA 17067	

April 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 Day of Prayer for the E.C.Church	2
3 Day of Prayer for Church Planting	4	5	6	7 Pre-Conference Mtg.	8	9 Pre-Conference Mtg.
10	11	12 ETS Wesley Forum Evangelism & Disci- pleship Mtg.	13	14 Pre-Conference Mtg.	15 Church Pen- sion Contribution due Health Insurance Premium due Estimated tax due <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">Mountain Men Retreat</div>	16 Pre-Conference Mtg.
17	18 E.C. Leader Articles due	19	20	21 ETS Praise Dinner	22	23
24	25	26 Stone Ridge Bd. Mtg.	27	28 ETS Bd. Mtg.	29	30

Ministry Funds to:
E.C. Church
100 West Park Avenue

Insurance/Pension Payments to:
Benefits Corporation
100 West Park Avenue