

From the Bishop

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I have to tell you that I am not a very liturgical kind of guy or pastor. It's not that I don't understand the church calendar or have a problem with the observance of holy days or seasons; it's just not been an integral part of my church experience. Yet, I write this knowing that Lent begins on March 1 this year. According to Wikipedia, Lent is understood to be "a solemn religious observance in the liturgical calendar that begins on Ash Wednesday and ends approximately six weeks later, before Easter Sunday. The purpose of Lent is the preparation of the believer through prayer, doing penance, repentance of sins, almsgiving, atonement, and self-denial." It continues, "Many Christians also add a Lenten spiritual discipline, such as reading a daily devotional or praying through a Lenten calendar, to draw



themselves near to God." So here's my question—why is it that we have to declare a special season to practice "a Lenten spiritual discipline" and "draw near to God"? Aren't spiritual disciplines and drawing close to God to be a part of our lives as followers of Jesus every day, all year long? Of course they are; but I know myself and have experienced firsthand the temptation to focus on all the things around me, all the needs, and all the responsibilities, and not pay attention to my soul's needs.

We don't like to admit it but we are fragile people. Pastors

really don't like to admit that. We have to look out for and take care of everybody else. There are so many people to disciple, to lead closer to God, that I don't have time to care for my own soul. It almost seems selfish to set aside time to focus on the needs of my heart's relationship with my Heavenly Father. We say "I was called, and gifted to serve others. I can't take time for myself." "There's too much to do to take time to *be*." It's all understandable and on a certain level makes sense; but it's wrong.

(continued on page 2)

Bishop's Top Ten Prayer & Praise

CALL ON HIS NAME



1. Please join me in praying for the Lord's direction for the Stationing Committee as we continue to work with pastors and churches.
2. Pray for the group that is preparing a new learning experience which will be a significant part of our time at National Conference 2017.
3. Pray for all those involved in our "big week of all-day meetings": March 14—Global Ministries Community; March 15—Conference Net-work Team Strategic Meeting; March 16—National Ministry Team.
4. Please pray for our denominational leaders, our Executive Director and Associates, who are all balancing busy schedules and multiple responsibilities.
5. Pray for our brothers and sisters in Mexico as they prepare to come to our National Conference and we celebrate the EC Church of Latin America.
6. Praise the Lord and pray for our congregations who are reaching out into their communities through missional ministries like Fresh Expressions.
7. I praise the Lord for the growing number of pastors who are taking life-long-learning seriously by participating in conferences, workshops, and seminars.
8. Praise the Lord for the way the pastors in our 13 districts are coming together and supporting each other in fellowship, prayer, and ministry opportunities.
9. Thank God that we begin the celebration of Lent with the full understanding of the victory that is ours through the resurrection of Jesus!
10. Praise God for his Holy Spirit who provides strength and constant encouragement as we love and serve him with our EC brothers and sisters all around the world.

(From the Bishop continued from page 1)

I'm not writing this in order to tell you how to do it for I too am a fellow sufferer. Soul care is vital to the life of every follower of Jesus: bishop, pastor, lay person.

Maybe Lent is like those piles of rock that the Lord had his people set up at various places around Israel in the Old Testament; it reminds us of our need of him. We cannot do this alone, we weren't created to; he longs for an intimate relationship with us.

So join with me in taking extra time this Lent to take care of our own souls; to know him better and love him more. And hopefully some of those Lenten spiritual disciplines will stick with us long after Easter.

In Christ's service,



News from STONERIDGE POPLAR RUN



Living Right Can Reap Benefits

Stephen Holubec has lived a good life. He might say he lived a grace-filled life. He was born on March 17, 1917 in Philadelphia, and soon will celebrate his centenary birthday. When he was three years

old, his family moved to Phoenixville, PA where he grew up. Early in life, he quit school in order to get a job to help the family during the great depression. He did menial jobs working for a meat packing company, but he stayed with it. After a few years, he became a salesman and remained employed there for 25 years. He then worked for the Jones Motor Company as a supervisor until he retired in 1979. Stephen served his country as a corporal in the Army Air Force during WWII. He was stationed overseas in the African nation of Ghana.

He married his wife, the former Emma Heisler, on July 27, 1940, and he remained ever devoted to her. Together

they had two boys, and now the family has grown to include three grandchildren (Rev. Stephen Holubec, Grace Church, Akron, PA is one of his grandsons) and five great-grandchildren. Stephen and Emma moved into StoneRidge Poplar Run* in 2001. Emma was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, but he made a solemn promise to her, that he would always take care of her, and he did until her death in 2005. They were long time members of the Royersford (PA) EC Church. Stephen enjoys good health, and is as sharp as ever. When asked about his philosophy of life, he immediately stated, "I always tried to live right, eat right and do the right thing." This credo of life has certainly afforded great benefits for Stephen. We wish him well on his 100th birthday.

**StoneRidge Poplar Run is one of four retirement communities comprising StoneRidge Retirement Living. Locations include StoneRidge Towne Centre and StoneRidge Poplar Run both in Myerstown, Church of God Home in Carlisle and Schoolyard Square in Pine Grove. For more information about options available for you or a loved one, please call 717-866-3553. StoneRidge Retirement Living is all about just that—Living!*



Prayer Mobilization Team

Lay Delegates and Pastors' Wives: Be on the lookout for the PRAYER MEETINGS scheduled at National Conference. Our PRAYER MEETINGS will focus on praying for our pastors and their families. Also, plan to checkout the Prayer Mobilization Team's table for some great small group prayer resources.



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, 2017, **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.

Friendly
Reminders

Treasurers please begin using the **2017 Ministry Fund forms** for January offerings. Offerings collected in December 2016 should be remitted on the 2016 Ministry Fund forms.

Pastoral Compensation Forms

To date only about 50% of the pastoral compensation forms have been returned. 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.

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 or problems, 1-800-866-7581.

Kevin Henry
Executive Director

David King
Benefits Administrator



News from GLOBAL MINISTRIES

Delaware Region Missions Brunch

Friday, March 17th, at Hope Community Church in Fogelsville, PA. We will begin at 10:00 am and finish by approximately 11:30 am. Come to hear an update on what's happening in EC missions! Rev. Randy Sizemore will give an update on the international churches, and we will even have a few live missionaries! There is no charge, but an offering will be taken to help cover the cost. Reservations are required. Please email or call the GMC office (1-800-866-7584 or ecglobal@eccenter.com) by March 3rd to let us know if you are coming. This brunch is open to anyone who would like to attend.

GMC Honduras Trip:

Randy and Carla Sizemore will be leading a team to Honduras with missionaries Ed & Val Schubert at the end of this month. Please keep them in prayer as they travel to see firsthand all that the Schuberts are doing in their ministry to families, women and children and the team completes a few work projects.



Janice Stoltzfus had to have surgery in late January for breast cancer. The surgery went well, but she will have to have follow-up treatments for the better part of a year. If you want to send a note of encouragement to Janice, send it to: Mrs. Janice Stoltzfus, 38 E. Orange St., Lititz, PA 17543. Lamar and Janice serve at Rift Valley Academy in Kenya

and are currently on extended home assignment.

Joe Toy had a busy February on the road, traveling to Houston, TX early in the month to do open air ministry at the Super Bowl, and then to New Orleans at the end of the month for Mardi Gras. In between, he planned to head to Daytona Beach, FL for beach ministry to the college students on spring break there.

Beth Grimm will be spending two weeks in Mexico this month to test and assess some MK's. She will be traveling to and from as well as in Mexico.

Dan Moury will be traveling to northeastern Africa early this month to film the story of a translation project which is now celebrating the publication of their New Testament. He will be away for two weeks in an area that has seen some civil unrest, so please keep him and his team in prayer for safety, health and no equipment failures. Also keep Melinda and the children in prayer while Dan is gone for two weeks.

The Global Ministries Commission

will be meeting this month, in addition to many other sub committees. Please keep these meetings and those who serve on these boards in prayer as they do the work of the GMC and the denomination. Many members travel from out of state or the other end of PA, so pray for traveling mercies as well.

News from KINGDOM EXTENSION COMMUNITY

Exponential 2017 Live Stream Event

EXPONENTIAL⁷

- Tuesday, April 25, 2017 ... 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (\$10/person; includes lunch)
- Community EC Church, Sinking Spring, PA
- Register by contacting Les Cool (717-951-8433 or revcool@ptd.net)

Exponential is a growing community of leaders committed to accelerating the multiplication of healthy, reproducing faith communities. They champion church multiplication and equip church multipliers as they seek to help move the needle on multiplication from less than 1% of churches actively reproducing to greater than 10%!

Exponential East 2017 is the next event, a gathering of thousands of church planting leaders in Orlando. But you don't have to go to Orlando to experience some of the event, and enjoy serious conversation that just might change your life and the life of your church.

As we have in the past, we will gather more locally (Community EC in Sinking Spring and, hopefully, in other places) to watch live streamed sessions, as well as videos of past sessions, AND discuss what we might do next.

"Dream Big is the theme for Exponential 2017. Jesus Challenged us with a big dream. If He had sketched out His big dream for His Church, we think it would be something like, *"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes up on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."* (Acts 1:8). The dream that Jesus gave His followers was the dream of a movement. Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, the ends of the earth—that is a very big dream! We are here because of that dream. As Christ followers and leaders of His church, Jesus is asking us to also dream big." (by Exponential)

We invite you to join us as we join Exponential East 2017 and begin conversations that focus on "what it looks like to dream big for our churches—and the Kingdom."

AWAKENINGS



- April 27-29, 2017
- Alfred Street Baptist Church, Alexandria, VA

The Holy Spirit.

Promised by Jesus in the Gospel accounts, progressively demonstrated throughout the book of Acts, and at the very core of Paul's own message and ministry, **the Holy Spirit is the presence and power of God at work among us unto the redemption, reconciliation, and recreation of all things.** As those joined to Christ *by the Holy Spirit*, the Church lives as the community *of the Holy Spirit* and thus the means through which God is furthering his mission in the world *through the Holy Spirit*.

Unfortunately, over the last hundred years in Western Protestantism, the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit has either been relegated to obscurity or confined to a handful of streams of the Church. The result is that much of the Church operates without a practical theology of the Holy Spirit for the whole of life.

However, in this new era of mission after Christendom, we observe that many are experiencing different kinds of "awakenings," which call our attention back to the person and ministry of the Holy Spirit of God among us. It's not surprising that the predominant interaction of the early church with the Spirit was for mission. Ours should be the same.

Join us, at Missio Alliance's Third North American Gathering, as for a fresh engagement with the person and work of the Holy Spirit and explore how such an engagement might advance the mission of God among our congregations, through our ministries, and in our own lives.

For more information and to register...

<http://www.awakenings.missioalliance.org>

News from EVANGELICAL SEMINARY

As many of you know, Evangelical Seminary is in collaboration conversations with Huntington University, located in Fort Wayne, IN.

One exciting thing we are collaborating on is the Veritas Theology Institute—with is designed for high school students who will be entering their junior and senior years, who have a relationship with Christ, take their faith seriously, and have leadership potential.



The institute is funded by a grant from the Lily Endowment to develop theological inquiry among high-schoolers. I am thrilled to be one of the undergraduate and graduate faculty chosen to build this week-long course which translates biblical worldview material to high-schoolers in such a way that makes it both engaging and meaningful.

The students who attend the institute will be given an invitation to explore who Jesus is and who He has called them to be, through theological inquiry, Scripture study, worship, service and relationships. One particularly noteworthy benefit to this week long institute is that participants will receive 3 hours of college credit when they fulfill the online and mentoring components after their week at Huntington University—and that will look great on college applications!

I am providing you with a link to the institute's website, and I am available for any questions. The week takes place on the campus of Huntington University, so my hope is to have a van or small bus full of ECers who I can transport free-of-charge to and from Fort Wayne, with stops all across the EC world (we can plan to swing through western PA and Ohio on our way to IN). Sorry, IL folks, last time I checked the map, you are on the far side of Indiana—so we will have to meet interested parties there!

Please think about whether you have a Junior or Senior Higher who can benefit from something like this. The application deadline was just extended to April 1. And again, I'm free to chat about the idea. Call me at my office number, 717-628-2140.

Thanks for your consideration, and take care,

James Ehrman

Dean of Academic Programs, Interim

Assistant Professor of Leadership and Culture

Check this out for more info: <https://www.huntington.edu/veritas-theology-institute/veritas-theology-institute-goals>

News from TWIN PINES

Summer Camp

Now is the time to register for summer camp at Twin Pines. There are camps for kids and adults for all ages. For fathers and sons there is Dads 'n' Lads camp and for moms and daughters there is Moms 'n' Gals camp! Both programs are only half a week and provide a great opportunity for parents to connect with their kids. For the whole family Twin Pines offers Family Camp with activities for every member of the family. If Family Camp sounds like fun but you would just like to try it, there is the half-week Family Camp. This program has all the same great activities but is only Sunday through Tuesday. Another opportunity for adults is Adult camp, a special week for spiritual renewal, fun, fellowship, and interaction with other adults and the Twin Pines' summer staff. Twin Pines has brought back Music Camp! This year campers can come for a music focused week of camp and growing closer to Jesus. Twin Pines really does have a program for everyone! If you would like someone to come and share about Twin Pines and summer camp contact Shawn Fetterhoff to come to your church and share about all the opportunities of 2017 summer camp. More information is available about the camp schedule on the Twin Pines website, www.twinpines.org.

Summer Staff

Twin Pines is currently in search of young people interested in Christian service. There are opportunities for summer staff available. The areas of need include male and female counselors, lifeguard, and kitchen helpers. If you or someone you know may be interested in serving on summer staff in 2017 please contact Shawn Fetterhoff at shawn@twinpines.org. If you are looking for a life changing service experience, don't hesitate and apply today!



Summer Volunteers

Are you looking for an opportunity to volunteer this summer? Are you 21 or older and willing to help in the kitchen or on maintenance? If you answered yes to these questions you may be interested in signing up to volunteer for a week at Twin Pines this summer. If interested in volunteering, please contact Shawn Fetterhoff at shawn@twinpines.org.



Summer Fling

As spring celebrates renewed life of creation, it also is a time to celebrate the renewed life available through Jesus Christ. Spring Fling Retreat for children's groups inspires children to consider their own renewal because of Christ's transformative love and grace, through Bible study, worship, fellowship and fun!

Take part in this life-changing weekend! Just add adult leaders and children to the program planned by Twin Pines. We take care of the rest for you! Adults get to spend time building-relationships with the children. From faith-challenging active-learning sessions, to enjoyable worship songs, this weekend will change children's lives!

Weekend leaders:

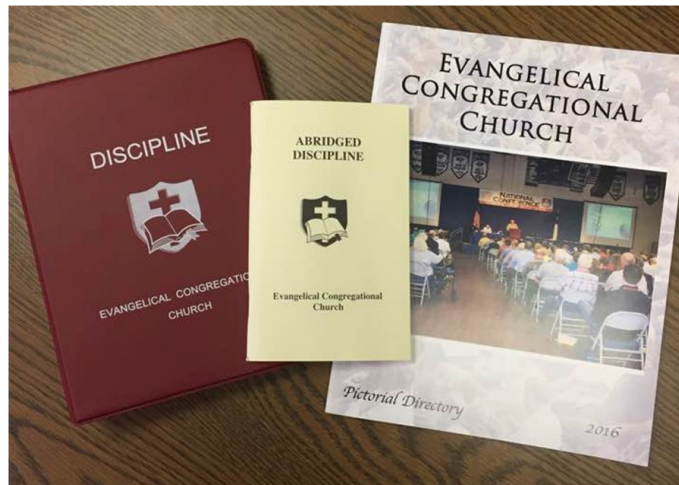
Ms. Lois Matarazzi—Sonshine Praise Puppet Ministry, Camp Director

Ms. Cindy Raezer—Elementary School Teacher, Camp Director

Ms. Hannah Raezer—Summer Staff Leadership team

More information and registration materials available at www.twinpines.org.

THEY'RE
HERE!!!



2016 issue of the DISCIPLINE—\$23.00

Inserts only—\$13.00

8 1/2 X 11 size—\$10.00

2016 issue of the ABRIDGED DISCIPLINE—\$3.25

2016 PICTORIAL DIRECTORY—\$5.00

Contact the EC Church Center to get these new publications!

What happened to the 2016 DISCIPLINE?

A number of people who have received their copy of the brand new *EC Discipline, 2016 Edition*, have noticed that it still contains all the rules and references to our former denominational structure, including references to Conference Ministers, Commissions, etc. What happened to all the restructuring work we did at National Conference?

The new structure was approved during National Conference 2015 and work then began to prepare amendments to the Rules of Conference. The amendments to the Rules were adopted at NC2016. The new structure was effective July 1, 2016 and the 2016 National Conference Journal has all the current structural rules for our new Teams, Communities, Committees, Associates, District Field Directors, etc. Please use the 2016 Rules of Conference when looking for clarification regarding our new Conference structure.

So what happened to the *Discipline*?

The *Discipline* can only be amended every five years and is a rather long process, really a three year project. In order to have amendments ready for discussion and adoption we would have had to know in 2014 what decisions Conference was going to make in 2015. Our crystal ball doesn't work that well. According to the *Discipline* paragraph 409.11, the National Conference is allowed to make structural changes for up to five years without changing the *Discipline*. The process to bring the next edition to the *Discipline* up to date with our new structure will begin in 2019 when the Amendments Committee works on proposed amendments. Those proposed amendments will be presented to NC2020 and then again to NC2021 for the final vote. The *EC Discipline, 2021 Edition* will then include all the required changes to accurately describe our denominational structure.



Evangelical Congregational Church

100 West Park Avenue

Myerstown, PA

717-866-7581

www.eccenter.com

eccenter@eccenter.com

ONE
ONE
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ONE

“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

Mountain Men 2017
April 21-22
Twin Pines Camp, Stroudsburg PA

Mountain Men
The Men's Ministry of the Evangelical Congregational Church

STAND FIRM

An awesome time for guys to get together. Featuring Bishop Bruce Hill, Rev. Gary Kuehner and others. Worship by Andy Whittemore. Recreation and good food. Don't miss it!

Register online at
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2017-mountain-men-retreat-registration-31517116544>

Mountain Men 2017 is coming April 21-22

Join other guys for a weekend of worship, great speakers and (of course) food, fire and throwing weapons.

Stand Firm as men, on Faith, on the Word, in Purity and in Prayer.

Speakers include Bishop Bruce Hill, Rev. Gary Kuehner, Rev. Wayne Houck, Rev. Nathan Kennedy and Geoffrey Clow. Worship will be led by Andy Whittemore.

To register go to:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2017-mountain-men-retreat-registration-31517116544>

National Conference 2017

May 24-26

Messiah College, Grantham, PA

The Countdown
Continues

Press on

“I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.” PHILIPPIANS 3:13-14

March 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Ash Wednesday Church Health Community Mtg.	2	3 Day of Prayer for the EC Church	4 Kingdom Extension Community Mtg.
5 First Sunday in Lent Day of Prayer for Church Planting	6	7	8	9	10	11
12 Second Sunday in Lent Self-Denial Offering	13 Prayer Mobi- lization Team Mtg.	14 Global Ministries Community Mtg. Heritage Comm. Mtg.	15 *Church Pen- sion Contribution due *Health Insurance Premium due *Conference Net- work Team Mtg.	16 National Ministry Team Mtg.	17	18
19 Third Sunday in Lent	20 EC Leader Info Due	21	22	23	24	25
26 Fourth Sun- day in Lent Buckeye/Allegheny Women's Retreat	27	28	29 National Conference Reports Due	30	31	

Ministry Funds to:
E.C. Church
100 West Park Avenue
Myerstown, PA 17067

Self-Denial Offering to:
E.C. Church
100 West Park Avenue
Myerstown, PA 17067
(designate Self-Denial Offering)

Medical/Insurance/Pension Payments to:
Benefits Corporation
100 West Park Avenue
Myerstown, PA 17067

APRIL 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
2 Passion Sunday Day of Prayer for Church Planting	3	4	5	6 Wesley Forum— ETS	7 Day of Prayer for the EC Church	1 8
9 Palm Sunday	10 Prayer Mobiliza- tion Team Mtg.	11	12	13 Maundy Thursday	14 Good Friday Church Center Closed	15 Church Pension Contribution due Health Insurance Premium due Estimated Tax
16 EASTER Sunday	17 Church Center Closed	18 EC Leader Info Due	19	20	21	22
23	24	25 StoneRidge Retirement Bd Mtg.	26	27 Evangelical Seminary Bd. Mtg	28	29 Mountain Men Retreat
30						

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