

EC LEADER

NOVEMBER 2019

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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:

It is with many emotions that I write this to you to inform you that I will **not** seek another term as Bishop of the Evangelical Congregational Church. It has been my privilege and joy to serve two terms as Bishop. As I approach the end of my second term and approach 45 years in ministry, I believe I have accomplished what the Lord has asked me to do and now it is time for another chapter to begin. Therefore, I will end my service as bishop with the end of my current term on June 30, 2021.

During these years I have been able to visit with many of you and share the Good News about Jesus in your churches. Thank you for giving Gloria and me a warm welcome, your continued prayers and support. I have also had the opportunity to visit our international conferences and I praise God for wonderful relationships with brothers and sisters in the world-wide Evangelical Congregational Church!

Please join me in prayer for the Episcopal Nominating Committee as they will soon begin to receive nominations for the next Bishop of the E.C. Church in the next few months. I know the Lord will be leading each step of this process. May the Lord be glorified and may his Kingdom continue to grow as we faithfully serve the Lord in and through the Evangelical Congregational Church.

In Christ's service,

Handwritten signature of Rev. Bruce D. Hill.

Rev. Bruce D. Hill
Bishop

Bishops Top 10 Prayer & Praise

1. Assuming you read the cover article; please join me in praying for the Episcopal nominating process.
2. Pray for the Stationing Committee and the congregations who are still involved in the stationing process.
3. Ask the Lord to clearly lead as I begin to work on the theme and schedule for National Conference 2020. this will be an important conference as we work on amendments to the Discipline and hold the election of Bishop who will take office July 1, 2021.
4. I guess Thanksgiving officially kicks off our holiday season. Remember to pray for those who are away from home during this time of the year: missionaries and service men and women (including our EC Chaplains).
5. We all pray for revival in the E.C. Church and in America. Ask the Lord to begin that revival in your own heart (after all we are the church).
6. Praise the Lord for the good reports and testimonies I have been hearing of churches who have shown their appreciation for their pastor(s) during Pastor Appreciation Month in October. (And it's still not too late if you forgot!)
7. Praise the Lord for the local congregations who are getting out of their buildings and blessing the people around them.
8. A lot of our congregations are celebrating significant anniversaries this year and next. Thank the Lord for the generations who have faithfully served the Lord and made a way for you to love and serve him today.
9. Praise the Lord for the fellowship that is part of the EC Churches' DNA. Gloria and I are being warmly welcomed as we visit our churches. Thank you!
10. Praise God for the wonderful spirit in each of the ordination services held this fall. God is at work calling people into his service and they are responding. PTL!



News from the Executive Director

The EC Benefits Trustees have renewed the **active pastor's health insurance** with United Healthcare (UHC) effective October 1, 2019. The rates to the local church increased approx. 20%. The rates are listed on the EC Church website. The annual maximum out of pocket for covered medical expenses, excluding co-pays, remains at \$500 with the HRA paying costs above \$500. the maximum out of pocket for prescriptions and outpatient therapy services (physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, respiratory therapy and manipulative therapy) also remains at \$1,800 annually.

If you have incurred medical expenses above \$500 or prescription or outpatient therapy costs above \$1,800 you may be eligible for reimbursement of your out of pocket costs from the HRA. The HRA plan year ends on September 30, 2019 and all requests for reimbursement for the October 2018-September 2019 plan year must be received by PrimePay, our HRA administrator, by December 29, 2019, ninety days after the end of the plan year. If you need assistance with PrimePay please contact Dave King or me at the EC Church Center and we will walk you through the process.

The EC Benefits Trustees are very aware of the tension caused by the cost of health insurance and they are committed to serving the pastors and the local EC church. The US health insurance market is constantly in flux. The circumstances surrounding the annual plan renewal are different each year. However, the trend to push responsibility for healthcare and lifestyle decision onto the individual is continuing with your pocketbook feeling the most pain. Planning for your long term health is just as important as planning for your retirement. Accidents and illnesses are going to happen but many healthcare conditions are preventable and manageable with healthy lifestyle choices.

Highmark Freedom Blue

The retiree Medicare supplemental plan, Highmark Freedom Blue, is increasing by \$11/mon to \$245 per person per month, effective January 1, 2020, with no changes in coverage levels.

As approved by the members of the EC Benefits Corporation at the May 2015 EC Benefits Annual Corporation Meeting, beginning in 2016 and annually through 2019, the EC Church contribution to the cost of Medicare Supplemental premium will be reduced by 20% until, in 2020, the entire contribution by the EC Church has been eliminated. The retiree is responsible for the remaining portion of the premium not paid by the EC Church.

Cost Sharing Amounts for 2020 (single policy)

Year of Medicare Eligibility	Current	January 1, 2020
2015 or before	\$187.20	\$245.00
2016	\$198.80	\$245.00
2017	\$210.60	\$245.00
2018	\$222.30	\$245.00
2019 and after	\$234.00	\$245.00

For a husband and wife on Freedom Blue double the amounts above.

The open enrollment period for the Highmark Freedom Blue plan is from October 15, 2019 through December 7, 2019. Retirees enrolled in another Medicare supplemental plan or not in any Medicare supplemental plan may join the Freedom Blue plan only during the open enrollment period. The open enrollment period does not affect pastors that plan on retiring after December 7, 2019. Medicare eligible pastors may join Freedom Blue at the time they superannuate from pastoral service.

(continued on next page)

News from the Executive Director (continued)

It is very important that the retiree does not fall behind on payments to Highmark Freedom Blue. If a retiree is having difficulty paying the monthly premium the Manna Fund is available for financial assistance. Please contact David King in the EC Benefits office for a Manna Fund application.

There are many Medicare Advantage plans available even some at no cost to the participant. However each plan will have positives and negatives in terms of participating providers and benefits provided. Please thoroughly investigate any Medicare Advantage plan before switching plans. If a retiree does not have the financial means to assume a larger portion of the Freedom Blue plan the Manna Fund is available to financially assist the retiree.

Manna Fund

The Manna Fund was established to assist our retired clergy and surviving spouses with financial needs. The income limits to qualify for a Manna Fund distribution were recently changed to 200% of the federal poverty level as defined by the US Department of Health and Human Services, the current Manna Fund income limits are \$24,120 for a single and \$32,480 for a couple. If you are aware of any of our retired clergy or surviving spouses that could benefit from a Manna Fund distribution please encourage them to complete an application for assistance. Manna Fund applications are mailed to retired clergy and surviving spouses in April and an application can also be received from the Benefits Administrator at the EC Church Center.

We are quickly approaching the end of the calendar year and we are encouraging all the local church pastors, treasurers or administrators to begin planning for the required year end reporting. Required reporting includes year end tax forms, giving statements, denomination annual reports and pastor compensation forms. A small amount of preparation and planning early in the process will save time and frustration later. Due dates for the year end reporting:

Due to EC Church Center—Compensation and Benefits Administrator

Pastor Salary Forms	January 15, 2020 (copy to Benefits Administrator, Dave King)
Annual Reports	January 24, 2020

Please note the earlier filing deadlines of W-2s and 1099—MISC forms:

Form W-2 (pastors and church employees)	January 31, 2020
Filed with Social Security—January 31, 2020 (paper and electronic forms)	
Form 1099-MISC (independent contractors)	January 31, 2020
Filed with Social Security—January 31, 2020 (paper and electronic forms)	

Pastors are employees of the local church and should receive a W-2 with federal, state and local taxes withheld from every paycheck.

Please contact Dave King, dking@eccenter.com or myself, Kevin Henry, khenry@eccenter.com , 1-800-866-7581, with any questions or problems.

Pastoral Compensation

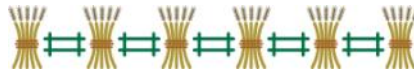
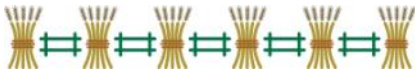
Per the approved Pastoral Compensation report the annual Social Security Administration Cost of Living Adjustment (SSA COLA) will be used as the 2020 annual recommended pastoral salary increase. The Social Security Administration released their 2020 COLA increase at 1.6% (.016).

Churches unable to give at least a 1.6% salary increase must notify their District Field Director prior to any official action taken to set the pastor's salary for 2020.

Churches that are financially able are encouraged to give either a larger percentage increase or to consider an additional increase as a merit raise in salary for each pastor. This merit raise would be in addition to the approved percentage salary increase.

Most if not all denominations are struggling with pastor salaries. There are many reasons (controllable and uncontrollable) why this has occurred and pointing fingers and affixing blame is not the solution. The credentialed men and women of the EC Church are good people and the lay leadership in the local EC Church are men and women of integrity. Both groups are encouraged to prayerfully work together with open honest dialogue on pastoral compensation. The answer may not be financial. Maybe the church can offer an extra week of vacation (also encourage the pastor to take the extra week of vacation) or ease the pastor's workload by the congregation assuming a time consuming duty. Be careful with cash gifts or bonuses, any cash payments to a pastor is taxable income. Please treat your pastoral staff with the appreciation and admiration they deserve. The National Association of Evangelicals "Bless Your Pastor", www.blessyourpastor.org, has some great suggestions to increase your pastor's compensation without breaking the church budget.

Please remember to use the new pastor salary forms available on the EC website.



The Evangelical Congregational Church is partnering with the National Association of Evangelicals for their national **Bless Your Pastor and Staff** campaign, <https://blessyourpastor.org/resources/leaders/>. EC Church lay leadership is encouraged to follow the link above and download to watch the introductory video and download the toolkit for churches. All information, graphics and resources on this page are free. You may use some of the material or you may use none of it. Please use whatever material would best fit your church. Please take special note of step 5 on the "5 Simple Steps to Bless Your Pastor" page of the toolkit for churches.

Although October 13, 2019 was designated as Pastor Appreciation Day, it is not restricted to one day or one month. The National Conference is encouraging churches find a fall 2019 weekend in their church's calendar to honor their pastor(s) and staff. If fall 2019 does not work then winter 2020 is good too. The Bless Your Pastor and Staff initiative is more than a Sunday morning event, it is designed to develop a year round culture of blessing your pastor(s) and staff by everyone in the church. One of the free resources is a list of *50 Creative Ways to Bless Your Pastor*.



Global Ministries Community

- **REMINDER:** Joe Toy needs your Christmas stockings by the end of this month. You can go on Joe's website, www.oamphilly.org for information and a pattern for making the stockings. To arrange drop off for the stockings, contact Joe at oamphilly@aol.com.



- Chris and Deb Bowers and their daughters will be finishing a visit in Australia and returning to PA at the end of this month. The Bowers have been visiting friends, supporters and Deb's family for the past several months. They will spend December with Chris' family and finish their deputation. The Bowers will return to Washington at the end of the year.



- We wish to offer our sympathies to retired missionary Jane Heck on the passing of her mother on September 7th. Peggy Heck was very active in the missions program of her church, Delightful EC in Southington, OH as well as holding other positions. She was also a member of the Western Branch

Missionary Fellowship. Jane came off the field to care for her parents, and continues to care for her father. You can send a note to Jane at janeheck@yahoo.com, or to 3096 State Route 934, Southington, OH 44470.

- Congratulations to Dan Quigley, who was granted missionary status at the fall Global Ministries Community board meeting. Dan has served for nine years in Nicaragua, working in ministries to children and youth, many of them 'street kids.' You can read more about Dan and his work in our Fall/Winter edition of Window on the World.
- **CHRISTMAS GIFTS FOR MISSIONARIES:** This is the annual reminder for individuals or churches who wish to give monetary Christmas gifts to our EC missionaries. If the missionary serves overseas, it is better to give the monetary gift through either the GMC office or the mission agency with which the missionary serves. Cash-

ing checks overseas always costs the recipient a lot in fees, plus it may open your check to being altered and cashed for a much higher amount than you intended.

DO NOT SEND CARDS TO THE GMC OFFICE TO BE FORWARDED TO MISSIONARIES. If the missionary is in the USA, either permanently or on furlough, then mail the card, check and/or gift directly to them. If you need current mailing addresses, contact Pat at the GMC office for that information. Thanks!

- A number of our missionaries are struggling with severe support shortages. If you would like to help them, even with a one-time gift, please contact Pat at the Global Ministries office for a list of needs. You can email to ecglobal@eccenter.com or call 717-866-7584. Thank you for your prayerful consideration of these needs.
- Rev. Ron Anderson will be leading a delegation of pastors and Christian leaders to Athens, Greece in early November. The purpose of the visit to Athens Nov. 4-6 is to observe Movement Day in that city. Movement.org is a ministry linked to Lausanne which gathers key Christian leaders in each city and works on developing a collaborative vision. Its objective is to make a holistic change to the city and not just plant new churches. www.movement.org. Ron is taking a delegation to Athens from Madrid to observe and discern if this is something that God wants to do in Madrid.



Kingdom Extension Community

Item #1

Better Together: melding church to grow the Kingdom



The multi-site movement, normally associated with larger churches, also creates an option for small and mid-size churches. Where two (or more) sister churches are located in relative proximity, people and resources can be combined and interfused to create one stronger church in several locations.

Evangelical Seminary and Barnabas Initiatives are planning a one-day seminar to assist churches exploring a church-meld strategy for optimum health, growth, and mission.

Ryan Brown, lead pastor of new Life Community (BIC) Church, will tell the story of blending New Life in Carlisle with Mt. Holly Springs, a sister church six miles away. Others involved in the process will contribute snapshot perspectives: Bishop (at the time) Doug Sider and lay members from the leadership teams of both churches. A break-out time will allow participants from churches considering a church meld to talk together about the potential application of the things learned at New Life to their situation and circumstances.

The seminar will be held on Saturday, November 16, at Manheim Mennonite Church, 201 West High Street, Manheim. The cost is \$35/person. Lunch will be provided. For more information and/or to register, go to www.evangelical.edu/together. Church groups can register directly by email to knafziger@evangelical.edu.

Item #2

Fresh Expressions National Gathering 2020

- Wednesday, April 1, 2020, 9:00 AM—Friday, April 3, 2020, 12:30 PM
- Heritage Fellowship Church, 2501 Fox Mill road, Reston, VA 20191
- Cost... \$149/person
- Register... <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/fresh-expressions-national-gathering-2020-tickets-67103346917>

Description

This is a moment of hopeful opportunity for the Church in America. Perhaps you feel the pain of a dwindling congregation or denomination. Perhaps this makes you concerned for the future. But we have evidence that God is at work future-fitting the church. We see the unfolding of Present Future Church that is breathing life and hope into existing congregations and the neighborhoods and networks around them.

This gathering will reconnect you with hope for the Church

- Hope for facing tomorrow's difficulties with 2,000 years of missionary experience
- Hope from practitioners who have blended new and inherited forms of Church

Three days of immersive learning, expert advice and missional inspiration, including:

- Introductory training for people who are new to fresh expressions
- Advanced, strategic training for those who have already begun to pioneer new expressions of Church
- Immersive experiences that model what a fresh expression can look like
- Peer-level meetups to learn from others who have similar needs
- And much more!

Join us and catch the vision for a church that is filled with hope and anticipation as we journey into the mission landscape where God's Spirit beckons us.

(Continued on next page)

Kingdom Extension Community

Item #3

The Art of Neighboring: Connecting with our Local Communities

The Kingdom Extension Community would like to partner with your church or your district to provide a hands-on workshop designed to help you explore how to identify points of intersection between the DNA of your church and that of the surrounding community. With these insights, participants will examine ways to build missional “bridges” between church and community. The aim of the interactive sessions will be for each church represented to generate action steps to build relationships and ministries with your neighbors.

Three teaching sessions (Who are we? Who are they? What bridges can be created between us?) are followed by hands-on workshops (church teams actually processing the material that was shared). The final session is designed to leave each church team with solid plans and action steps toward missional connections with their communities.

Workshop attendees have said: “...very practical and applicable to a variety of congregational settings... For our ministry team, it was a day well spent.” (Ken Nafziger) “...we were able to gather a group of people from our church to attend an Art of Neighboring seminar...a valuable source of information and inspiration...The Saturday we gave to attend was time well spent!” (Tim Seiger) “I and five other members of my church attended the Art of Neighboring workshop...good information as well as time for setting goals and developing plans...My group left with a group of six to seven ideas that we can implement over the coming year.” (Pat Strain)

Contact Les Cool (717-951-8433 or revcool@ptd.net) for more information or to schedule an event for your church, district, or community (local congregations).



You are invited to attend the 2019 National Conference Ordination Services

The Ordination of *Marisel Mieses*
Buenas Nuevas Evangelical Congregational Church
Hazleton, Pennsylvania
Sunday, November 3, 1:00 p.m.



Looking to 2020



LOCKED IN



WT-A: January 17-19

JANA SNYDER

Youth Speaking Enthusiast



WT-B: Jan. 31-Feb. 2

JUSTIN WATKINS

*VP of Development
Men of Iron*



WT-C: February 14-16

JONNY RADCLIFF

*Student Ministry Director
Storehouse Church/Men of Iron
(Individuals welcome)*

Teenagers often hear they are to be committed to Christ yet what does that look like for a *teenager*?

How can a teen be
*committed
to Christ*

at school, work,
activities, with family?

After the weekend,
your teens will be
challenged
in concrete ways to be
committed to Christ!

"And may your hearts be fully committed to the Lord our God, to live by his decrees and obey his commands, as at this time."

1 KINGS 8:61 (NIV)

 **WT20**

More Information @ <http://bit.ly/2020WT>

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



I will give thanks
to you, **LORD,**
with all my heart;

I will tell of your
**WONDERFUL
DEEDS.**

Psalm 9:1

November 2019

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1 Day of Prayer for the E.C. Church	2
3 Marisel Mises Ordination Day of Prayer for Kingdom Extension	4 Retired Pastors Banquet	5 ELECTION DAY	6	7	8	9
10	11 Prayer Mobilization Team	12 StoneRidge Board Mtg	13	14	15 Health Insurance Due	16
17	18 Info for the December EC Leader is due	19	20	21	22	23
24 THANKSGIVING SUNDAY Thankoffering (voluntary)	25	26	27	28 THANKSGIVING DAY Church Center Closed	29 Church Center Closed	30

Ministry Funds to:
EC Church
100 W. Park Ave.
Myerstown, PA 17067

Thankoffering (Voluntary) to:
EC Church
100 W. Park Ave.
Myerstown, PA 17067
(designate: Thankoffering)

Insurance Payments to:
Benefits Corp.
100 W. Park Ave.
Myerstown, PA 17067

December 2019

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT Day of Prayer for Kingdom Extension	2	3	4	5	6 Day of Prayer for the E.C. Church	7
8 SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT	9	10	11	12	13 Health Insurance Due	14
15 THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT	16 Info for the January EC Leader is due	17	18 Church Center Christmas Party	19	20	21
22 FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT Christmas Missionary Offering	23	24 CHRISTMAS EVE Church Center Closed	25 CHRISTMAS DAY Church Center Closed	26 Church Center Closed	27	28
29	30	31 NEW YEAR'S EVE Church Center Closed				

Ministry Funds to:
EC Church
100 W. Park Ave.
Myerstown, PA 17067

Christmas Missionary Offering to:
EC Church
100 W. Park Ave.
Myerstown, PA 17067
(designate: Christmas Missionary Offering)

Insurance Payments to:
Benefits Corp.
100 W. Park Ave.
Myerstown, PA 17067