



OCTOBER 2014



connect

"We loved you so much that we shared with you
not only God's Good News but our own lives, too."
- 1 Thessalonians 2:8

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From the Bishop

Whoever said the summer is the "slow season" must not be involved in ministry! It took a while but I am pleased to say that I was able to meet with the members of the Covenant Implementation Team for a kick-off retreat on September 8-9. The implementation Team members are: Bishop Bruce Hill, chair, Lewie Bennett, Jeff Byerly, Chuck Campbell, John Friedlund, Kevin Henry, Gary Kuehner, Gordy Lewis, Kirk Marks, Deb Patterson, Ted Rathman, Becky Reigle and Randy Sizemore.

Our task is to discuss, plan, and discover how we can implement the changes needed to fulfill the commitments made in the Covenant adopted during National Conference. The four points of the Covenant are:

1. We will move to a regional shared ministry and leadership model.
2. We will re-evaluate our denominational relationships with affiliate ministries.
3. We will substantially reduce denominational operating expenses.
4. We will significantly reduce ministry fund asking from local churches.

Our challenge will be how to implement those points into the life of a denomination consisting of over 60 sub-groups that are interconnected within a larger puzzle frame, (including committees, commissions, elected NC personnel, paid employees, district churches, ministry affiliates, and others). I'd like to say we're done, we have it figured out. While I can't say "we're done", I can

say we're off to a good start.

I am pleased to report that as the Team met we experienced a strong conviction that the Lord would lead us in this work. There was unanimity that is rare for that type of gathering. Praise the Lord! We believe the Lord is revealing a way forward where we can reduce our denominational operating expenses and our ministry funds, while at the same time establishing a strong denominational community that can strengthen our local churches, enhance communication, and deliver vital ministry resources. We are working together to see a denomination in which local congregations can expect their relationship with the denomination to be one in which the local church enjoys enhanced opportunities to bless the world through denominational connections and receives resources. It is these connections that will enable the local church to fulfill its commission. That is our challenge, but we believe the Lord is showing us the way forward.

Please join me in praying for the Covenant Implementation Team. We have a lot of work to do. We are not equal to such a task, but we know the Lord is! May he, through his Holy Spirit, give us the wisdom and the strength to fully implement the Covenant into the life of the Evangelical Congregational Church for the glory of his eternal Kingdom.

In Christ's Service,

Bishop's Top Ten Prayer & Praise

1. Please be in prayer as Past Strain, Randy & Carla Sizemore and Gloria & I travel to Japan to preach and celebrate the EC Church of Japan becoming a National Conference. Our trip is September 22-30.
2. Continue to pray for our dear Liberian brothers and sisters who are dealing with the Ebola virus. We know of a least one pastor, his wife, and brother who have gone home to be with the Lord after contracting the disease. Pray for those who continue to minister and live in very difficult circumstances.
3. Pray for the Lord's clear leading of the Covenant Implementation Team as they seek the Lord's leading for the future of our denomination.
4. Join with me in thanking the Lord for your pastor and asking our heavenly Father to bless your pastor, his family and min-



istry, especially during October, which we celebrate as Pastor Appreciation Month.

5. Ask the Lord to bless the National Ministry Team (NMT) meeting which is scheduled for October 23. The NMT does the work of the National Conference between the sessions of conference.
6. Praise the Lord for all the wonderful "first day of school" pictures (including some of our grandchildren) that filled Face-
7. Praise God for the churches who have invited me or a Conference Minister to come and share in leadership and strategic training exercises and retreats.
8. Thank the Lord for the growing number of congregations who are looking for real and practical ways they can touch their neighbors with the Good News of God's wonderful grace.
9. Praise the Lord that we can see his faithfulness in the changing seasons, his creativity and his eternal will are seen in very real ways in nature. This is my Father's world!
10. Praise God with me for the congregations who are investigating opportunities to plant a new church or launch a fresh expression of church.



Pastor Appreciation Month is a special time that congregations set aside each year to honor their pastors and pastoral families for the hard work, sacrificial dedication and multiple blessings provided by these special people. It is also important to remember that appreciation, affirmation and prayer support of our spiritual leaders is appropriate throughout the entire year.

Often the main work of a pastor is thought to be the time in front of the congregation on Sunday, but many of these pastors not only serve their church but also their community throughout the year. Recognizing the commitments and sacrifices of those who lead churches and care for communities is behind Pastor Appreciation Month.

That's why God has instructed us to recognize His servants, *"The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching"* (1 Timothy 5:17).



Pastors' Wives Retreat
 October 24-26, 2014
 Twin Pines Conference and Retreat Center

Speakers - Jean Ross & Tawn Battiste
 "JOY!"

Cost: \$138.00
 Register online at www.eccenter.com
 Registration Deadline: October 19

PASTORAL ASSESSMENT CENTER

January 14-17, 2015

Do you have a man in your congregation who is sensing a call to ministry? Is he struggling to know if the call is a call to pastoral ministry? Is he open to exploring what God wills for his life? Please talk with him about the Pastoral Assessment Center. If he would like more information, please call your Conference Minister. **Pastors, please contact your Conference Minister for a Pastoral Assessment Center application.** There is no cost for E.C. Church members.

Registration Deadline: October 1, 2014

Retiree Recognition Day
 Wednesday, October 29
 12:00 Noon
 StoneRidge, Poplar Run Community
 Registration Deadline: October 4
 Contact Rev. Dana Logan, 440 E. Lincoln Ave.,
 Myerstown, PA 17067



**The 2014
 National
 Conference
 Journals are
 ready!!!** If you

placed an order you can either pick it up at Church Center or it will be mailed to you as you indicated.

If you did not place an order you can still do so by calling or emailing Brenda at 1-800-866-7581 or blong@eccenter.com

Each church will be sent a Journal on CD FREE of charge.

Cost:
 Binder—\$7.00
 Indexes—\$4.00
 Printed Contents—\$14.00
 Additional CD—\$5.00

Please DO NOT in-



News from Evangelical



Dr. Kyle Strobel, Assistant Professor of Spiritual Theology and Formation at Talbot School of Theology, will be our speaker at the 2014 Friends of Evangelical Banquet on October 17 at Calvary Church in Lancaster. Dr. Strobel is a dynamic and engaging speaker. Also, a prolific author, his third book will be published in October. If you did not receive an invitation but would like to attend, you can register online at our website (www.evangelical.edu) or contact Marsha Conley at 717-866-5775, ext. 2130.

The Institute for Church Leadership is offering two classes this fall. There is still time to register for the second class, Preaching, which will be offered October 28-December 9. Classes meet from 6:30 pm to 9:15 pm. For more information and to register, please visit our website www.evangelical.edu/lifelonglearning.

Faith in the Marketplace events will be held at LMH in Lancaster on October 29 and December 2 in Myerstown at StoneRidge: Theatre on Main at Poplar Run. For more information and to register,



please visit our website at www.evangelical.edu/faith-marketplace.

The Center for Lifelong Learning in collaboration with StoneRidge Retirement Community and Mel-livora Group will present a seminar, "Gifts of Aging: Honoring the Legacy of Our Elders" on November 6, 2014 at StoneRidge: Theatre on Main at Poplar Run in Myerstown. For more information and to register, visit our website www.evangelical.edu/lifelonglearning.

Dr. Amos Yong, Professor of Theology and Mission at Fuller Seminary, will be the speaker for our Ritter-Moyer Lecture on November 11, 2014. He will speak on the subject "Renewing Evangelicalism: Contributions from the Pentecostal Movement". More information will be available on our website, www.evangelical.edu/lifelonglearning.



News from Global Ministries

- A *Spain Vision Tour* group of five people will be going to Spain in early October for a week with Ron and Brenda Anderson and BJ and Rachel Whitaker. The idea of a vision tour is to see the missionary's work and encourage them. There will be prayer walks and English classes as a form of outreach, as well as fellowshiping with the evangelical Christians in several churches.
- *Ken Sears* spent several weeks in August visiting his family in Texas. Due to the escalation of the tensions between Ukraine and Russia, in addition to some health issues, Ken postponed his return to Ukraine until early this month. Please keep Ken and the situation in prayer so that he can return safely to his duties in Zaporozhye Bible College in eastern Ukraine.





Bishop's Speaking Schedule

The Bishop is planning his preaching/ speaking calendar for 2015. If you are interested in having Bishop Hill speak at your church, now is the best time to contact Church Center.

No church is too big or too small for him to schedule a Sunday but it is first come-first serve and you need to invite him. So as you plan your congregation's 2015 church service schedule see when it would be good to have the bishop come preach. He enjoys meeting new friends, is a pretty good preacher, and is even willing to wear socks and a tie if necessary.

If you'd like to schedule a date please email your requested date(s) to his Administrative Assistant Jodi Earhart (jeahart@eccenter.com) and she will work with him in developing his schedule for 2015. He hopes to see you soon!



DISCIPLESHIP & MISSION WORKSHOP

A 3D AND Navigator Event

October 24-25, 2015
Columbia Presbyterian Church
Columbus, MD

Registration and more at:
3dmovements.com/workshops
Or 843.237.3800

\$149 — register early and save

According to *BUILDING A DISCIPLING CULTURE*, p. 21ff, there's three ways we ALL learn. 1) Classroom info, 2) Apprenticeship, 3) Immersion. We've been talking and doing some reading. A few of us have also been huddling together. And now, an opportunity for an entry-level immersion experience is available to you. **Rev. Al Giles**, St. Matthew's EC Church, Emmaus, will be a part of the presentation team and leadership for this event, and he'd love for you to consider participating and bringing folks from your congregation along who have any interest or passion for making disciples AND connecting with the world OUTSIDE THE CHURCH.

You can see a description of the Discipleship & Mission Workshop here: www.eventbrite.com

News from Benefits Corporation

Housing Allowance

The information below is an excerpt from an email update by Art Rhoades, President and CEO of the Church of God Benefits Board, Inc.

“The Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals in Chicago heard oral argument in the housing allowance case (Freedom From Religion Foundation vs. Lew) on Tuesday, September 9, 2014. From knowledgeable court room observers, there was agreement that the arguments to maintain the ministerial housing allowance went rather well and received a fair hearing from the appellate court. The attorney for the government, speaking in support of Section 107 of the Tax Code and in favor of keeping the housing allowance, was experienced and well-prepared...”

From listening to the questions posed by the three-judge panel (Judges Rovner, Flaum and Hamilton), it was clearly obvious that the judges had read the briefs, including our amicus brief, and were ready with their questions. The questions seemed to reflect the judges understanding of the magnitude of the matter before them—and the potential impact that their decision could have on ministers.

While court observers have differing opinions on how the Seventh Circuit might rule in this matter, it is expected that a decision could be handed down well before the end of 2014. With the judges expressing so much familiarity with the written arguments in the case, it is expected that they will release an opinion sooner rather than later. As soon as that opinion is released, we will ad-

vised you of such.”

The overall tone of the email was positive but also cautious. The legal arguments made by the FFRF in this case were technical and hinged on a couple points of the law. I do not have enough experience with the law to clearly explain the legal arguments however, what can be gleaned was that while a positive outcome in this case will bolster support for the housing allowance, the FFRF will continue to fight this issue. There is a lot of historical legislative actions and court decision that support the legality of the housing allowance. But, there are many practical inconsistencies in the application of the law resulting from how different faith groups and denominations certify ministers of the Gospel, pastors that stretch the housing allowance rules and what is the definition of a church or religious order, that will make further defense more difficult.

Please contact Dave King, dking@eccenter.com or Kevin Henry, khenry@eccenter.com with any questions or problems.

Kevin Henry	Dave King
Controller	Benefits Admin.



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

Phone: 717-866-7581

E-mail:

eccenter@eccenter.com

We're on the Web
www.eccenter.com

We've attached calendars for October and November and will attach subsequent calendars in the future issues so you can keep up-to-date with what is happening in the EC denomination. These calendars are also available on the EC website

www.eccenter.com.

If there is an event you would like to have included on the calendar please contact Brenda at blong@eccenter.com or call 717-866-7581.



October 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3 Day of Prayer for the EC Church	4
5 WORLDWIDE COMMUNION Day of Prayer for Church Planting	6 Leadership Commission Mtg.	7 Church Planting Commission Mtg.	8	9	10	11
12 Home Missions Offering (Church Planting)	13 Supervisory Retreat	14 CRC Retreat	15 Church Pension Contribution due Health Insurance Premium due	16	17	18
19	20	21 Twin Pines Celebration Banquet	22 GMC Meeting	23 National Ministry Team Mtg.	24	25 Pastors' Wives Retreat
26 REFORMATION SUNDAY Pastors' Wives Retreat	27	28	29 Retired EC Pastor Banquet	30	31	

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

Insurance/Pension Payments to:
Benefits Corporation
100 West Park Avenue
Myerstown, PA 17067
(designate Church—4th Quarter/Pastor)

Home Missions Offering to:
E.C. Church
100 West Park Avenue
Myerstown, PA 17067
(designate—Home Missions Offering)

November 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
2 Day of Prayer for Church Planting	3	4	5	6	7 Day of Prayer for The EC Church	1 8
9	10 VETERAN'S DAY	11	12 Church Health Commission Mtg.	13	14 Berks District Mtg.—Mohnton	15 Church Pension Contribution due Health Insurance Premium due
16 HERITAGE SUNDAY	17	18 StoneRidge Retirement Village Bd. Mtg.	19	20	21	22
23 THANKSGIVING SUNDAY Thank Offering (Voluntary)	24	25	26	27 THANKSGIVING DAY Church Center closed	28 Church Center closed	29
30 FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT						

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

Insurance/Pension Payments to:
Benefits Corporation
100 W. Park Ave.
Myerstown, PA 17067
(designate Church—4th Quarter/Pastor)

Medical/Pension Payments to:
Benefits Corporation
100 W. Park Ave.
Myerstown, PA 17067