

EC LEADER

A publication of the Evangelical Congregational Church



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FROM THE DESK

Bishop Bruce Hill



There are many thoughts that flood through my mind when I think about the past eleven years as Bishop. Chief among them are the many opportunities I have had to get to know our local pastors and lay leaders. As a pastor myself, I was able to recognize many of our pastors and leaders, but simple recognition was pretty much the extent of it. These years have provided me with opportunities to sit and talk with pastors, their wives, and many of their leaders. Each one has a personal story, a journey of faith; each one has a unique mix of gifts and graces; but everyone has a deep love for Jesus. I have been so thankful to serve with brothers and sisters like that in the Evangelical Congregational for forty-six years, eleven of those, almost a quarter of my ministry life, as Bishop.

FROM THE DESK

continued...

If you know anything about me, I hope you understand how important team ministry is. It is true: the Holy Spirit gives every follower of Jesus at least one spiritual gift. It is also true that, that gift or more likely, gifts, are to be used in relationship with others, part of a team. The apostle Paul uses the human body to illustrate this truth.

“As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body in healthy and growing and full of love.” [Ephesians 4:16]

I am thankful for the pastors and lay leaders who have used their spiritual gifts as part of the EC team for the strengthening of their church and as a living witness to the lost and hurting world.

Every day I walk into Church Center and see the pictures of all our past Bishops, and there on the end is my portrait. That still just seems odd to me. It really does. The Lord called, I answered (somewhat reluctantly), and tried, with the Holy Spirit's help to follow Him and lead us faithfully. I would like a few “do-overs,” but instead will rely on mercy and grace. Thanks be to God who is so, so, very good. I am blessed far more than I deserve.

I know the Lord will continue to bless the Evangelical Congregational Church with Randy Sizemore as our Bishop. I know the Lord has called Randy to this position and Randy has answered (somewhat reluctantly). I look forward to watching as we take the next steps as a movement of God, leading people to a saving knowledge of Jesus, and living lives of discipleship through the power of the Holy Spirit.

“Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen.”

[Ephesians 3:20]

In Christ's service,



EC National Conference News



Now Scheduling

Meet our new Bishop and hear his heart for the EC Church!

Bishop Randy is now scheduling invitations to visit with our churches and to share his vision for the EC Church.

Please contact Bishop Randy at rsizemore@eccenter.com to schedule.

Special Video Message

Click [HERE](#) for a special video message from Bishop Randy.



Need An Update?

Keeping information updated and correct on the new EC Center website, the database, and the National Conference Journal is an ongoing project. Please reach out to the conference support team at office@eccenter.com with information that may need to be updated for yourself or your church; or be sure to see Dee or Abigail at the EC Center hospitality table during conference!

NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2022

MAY 25-27, 2022

MESSIAH UNIVERSITY, GRANTHAM, PA



Pre-conference Meetings Schedule

Tuesday, May 3

Susquehanna Region at Reich's Church
7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Saturday, May 7

Delaware Region at Allentown Christ Church
9:00 - 11:00 a.m.

Tuesday, May 10

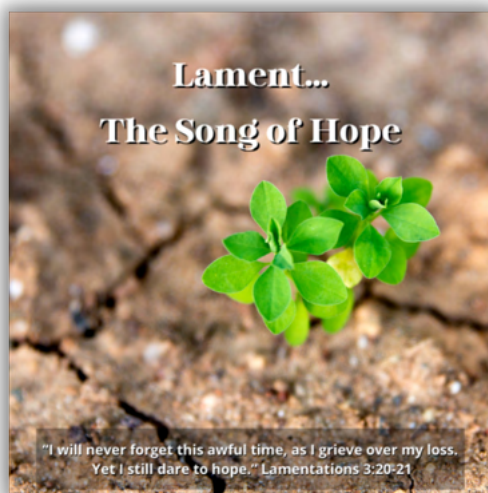
Susquehanna Region at Mohn's Hill
7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Thursday, May 12

Delaware region at Pitman Zion
7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Saturday, May 14

Great Lakes Region at Lakeside w/ Dixon Bethel via video
10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (EST)



Complete Series Now Available

"Lament...the Song of Hope"

is a new video series produced by the National Conference. The complete series of 12 videos is now available for you to view.

YouTube channel;

[Evangelical Congregational Church Center.](#)

From Bishop Bruce Hill:

I continue to be deeply concerned for our pastors, lay leaders, and churches. As David Brooks, a conservative political and cultural commentator for the New York Times has put it, for the past two years and counting we have felt, "disoriented, disturbed, unmoored...in a yawning chasm of mutual incomprehension. The atmosphere within many Christian organizations has grown more tense and bitter. Pastors are exhausted – partly because of Covid but partly because every word they use is scrutinized to see if it passes this or that theological litmus test." And it all happened with startling speed.

It is in response to this burden and concern that one of my last projects as bishop is this series of videos in which I, along with Steve Brubaker, Counseling Pastor at Grace Community Church of Willow Street, and Dr. Ken Miller, retired Professor of Theology, will address how we deal with the hurts and woundedness so many of us are dealing with today. I believe we all can identify in some way with the prophet Jeremiah when he wrote,

*"I will never forget this awful time, as I grieve over my loss." Yet Jeremiah would say with the next breath, "Yet I still dare to hope."
(Lamentations 3:20-21)*

I pray this series of 8-minute videos will be helpful in moving us toward healing hurts, binding wounds, and preparing us all to move forward with overflowing hope at National Conference 2022.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR NEWS

KEVIN HENRY

As always, please email:

David King
Benefits Administrator
dking@eccenter.com

Kevin Henry
Executive Director
khenry@eccenter.com

with any questions
or call
717-866-7581

Past Due Dates

*please remit as soon as possible
if not already done so*

- +Disability Payment - \$100
- +Pastors Compensation Forms
- +Annual Statistical Reports
- +Workers Compensation Insurance Information

+ Participants in the Prudential 403(b) pension plan should have received an email from Empower Retirement/Prudential around April 12, 2022, announcing that Prudential's transaction of selling their retirement plan business to Empower Retirement received the required government approvals and was finalized on April 1, 2022.

Participants should see this as a two-step process. Step one is the re-branding of the Prudential website and quarterly statements with the Empower Retirement name and logo. Participants will use the same Prudential website and login information and the same customer service phone numbers until step two is completed. Step two is the moving of the securities from the Prudential platform to the Empower Retirement platform. A platform is a catch-all phrase for the Prudential customer service team, computer systems, participant account access website and communication networks. When all the individual retirement accounts are moved to the Empower Retirement platform there will be new a website address, account login information and customer service phone numbers. We have been told that the second step in this process will occur in late fall 2022.

During, and after, the Empower Retirement transition, the services of Jennifer Buehler and her team, will remain available to the participants in the EC Church 403(b) retirement plan and housing equity plan.

Empower Retirement is a very large retirement plan provider although nonprofit corporations are a small portion of their business, per the Empower Retirement website. During this transition the Trustees of the EC Benefits Corporation are evaluating other 403(b) plan providers. The providers being reviewed are commercial and church-based plans. It may or may not be in the best interest of the EC plan participants to move away from Empower

Retirement. We do not know until other providers are reviewed. Please keep the EC Benefits Trustees in your prayers during this process. This will not be an easy decision.

+ **Retirement:** As in years past, Jennifer Buehler, Wells Fargo Advisors, had the most visitors during National Conference, but please remember she is available for retirement planning assistance year-round. Jennifer may be reached at 1-855-603-8146. We hope all our pastors are actively planning for their retirement; are making consistent contributions to your 403(b) or Roth account (in addition to your church's contributions); and at a minimum, spending an hour or two annually with a financial professional reviewing your investments and rate of savings. Please do not delay in becoming personally involved in your retirement planning.

+ **Workers Compensation:** We are waiting on the final invoice from our Worker's Compensation Insurance provider, Church Mutual, before we can invoice the churches. Repeating what has been said in previous newsletters, the Commonwealth of PA has increased the complexity and requirements on the audits of workers compensation covered wages. The new audit requirements are slowing down the invoicing and will require more information, and with a quicker due date from EC Churches beginning in calendar year 2023.

Churches not included in the denominational workers compensation group policy; Ohio, Illinois and Kentucky churches, your individual state mandates workers compensation coverage. Please confirm that all employees of the church are covered by workers compensation insurance. Per EC Benefits Corporation policy H.3.b, churches not covered by the denomination group workers compensation policy shall submit proof of workers compensation coverage by July 1 of each year. Please submit proof of your workers compensation coverage to: EC Benefits, EC Center, 100 W. Park Ave., Myerstown, PA 17067, or email Dave King, dking@eccenter.com.

GMC

Global Ministries Community of the Evangelical Congregational Church



Empowering National Churches

The EC Global Ministries Community (GMC) continues to seek to enable our international churches to be self-governing, self-sustaining, and self-propagating through the leadership we provide, and the support of the local EC Church in the United States. This mission demands a strong connected relationship between the EC Church USA and our international partners.

This month we highlight the ministries of our EC churches in India.



A new prayer request and special project is connected to the need for a vehicle for the General Director of our EC Church in India that can handle the rough terrain of Northeast India. Rev. Singson has increased his efforts to get to churches and pastors for the sake of encouragement as they still struggle with the effects of Covid on the community, are suffering from low morale, and are in need of delivery of necessary materials, training supplies and food subsistence for the efforts to reach surrounding communities with the Gospel of Christ, not the least of which is to bring hope and encouragement to those needing it most.

As you can see from the picture, the current office vehicle (red) for the ECCL is very inadequate. It's our prayer that through the generosity and the support from the EC Church USA, the GMC will be able to provide a new all-terrain vehicle (white) for our fellow ministers in India. This campaign will run through EC National Conference at Messiah University.

Click [HERE](#)
to donate now.

FROM THE DESK

Rev. J. Ted Rathman, Global Ministries Associate

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes 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

We believe a healthy church places a high priority on proclaiming the gospel and demonstrating the love of Jesus Christ to a hurting world beyond its immediate neighborhood. This outward focus compels the church to cross cultures and to cross borders in an effort to fulfill the Great Commission to the ends of the earth.

If you want to help local EC churches build this into their DNA then [CONTACT US](#) about being part of the team we call the GMC.

To know how your church can partner directly with an International EC Church, call the GMC office at 717-866-7581 or email ecglobal@eccenter.com.

Ted Rathman



Kingdom Extension

Community News

TRANSITION . . .

Serving as your Kingdom Extension Associate has been one of my personal delights. Getting to know you and to learn of your desires to press the edges of the Kingdom has been just plain fun! Watching so many of you attempt big things for Jesus has inspired me. And your stories have become the motivation for others to go and do what you have done. Press on.

As I approach the last few weeks of my ministry to, and with you, I find myself rehearsing where we have been together and imagining where we might go next. I delicately hold a few Kingdom ideas that might birth new Kingdom ministries. I say "delicately hold" as I prepare to hand them to Mike Snedeker, our new Kingdom Extension Associate. These new ideas, and so many more, will belong to others.

I invite you to listen to Mike . . . his first words to us, a glimpse at Mike and his thoughts about future ministry, are on page 8.

Please join me in praying for a smooth transition and the development of a healthy pace for Mike and his Ministry Community.

Les Cool



MINISTRY REMINDERS . . .

The Art of Neighboring: Connecting with our Local Communities

This hands-on workshop is designed to help you explore how to identify points of intersection between the DNA of your church and that of the surrounding community. The goal is to leave each church team with solid plans and action steps toward missional connections with their communities.

Powerful Leadership and Prepared Members

God empowers His Church through spiritual gifts and holy enablements given to each believer. Identifying and developing our spiritual gifts are steps toward impactful ministry. A Leadership Grip workshop would provide insights on building a better church leadership team, as well as help you equip your congregation, for powerful ministries.

Cash for Missional Coaching

The Kingdom Extension Community (KEC) would like to partner with you (pastor) or your leadership team or congregation to make sure your next learning experience becomes ministry. The KEC would like to help pay for up to six months of coaching attached to training and ministry that is missional or Kingdom focused.

Interested in these ministry enhancing offerings from the Kingdom Extension Community?

Let's talk. Contact Les Cool (717-951-8433 or revlescool@gmail.com).

FROM THE DESK

Rev. Mike Snedeker, KEC Associate

Kingdom Extension Community News

Hello Friends!

I was recently asked why I was interested in this new role as the Kingdom Extension Associate. I believe Bishop Hill has done great work developing a structure that makes the EC Church nimble and able to quickly adapt to the changing culture we live in without compromising the truth and hope of the Gospel that we have been commissioned to display to the world. I am excited about the future of the Evangelical Congregational Church under the leadership of our new bishop. I also am so thankful for the leadership of Les as he has helped shape the Kingdom Extension Community for the past years and the amazing things God has accomplished through its efforts. I believe God has uniquely positioned the EC Church to lead into the future and to build on the shoulders of generations of faithful kingdom pioneers who have reached their communities with the Good News of the Gospel.

Allow me to introduce myself to you and share a little about my vision for the future of the Kingdom Extension Community. I have been a part of the EC Church since moving to Pennsylvania from Michigan in 1993. As part of one of the churches that merged to form Community EC, this denomination has become home to me and has become my tribe. I have loved watching the commitment to the authority of scripture guide our path, while being sensitive to shifts in culture and how we can best navigate the intersection of the Gospel with our world. I am married with two adult daughters. My time at Community Evangelical Church has given me the opportunity to serve in several staff roles from Youth Pastor to Family Life Pastor to Discipleship Pastor to Lead Pastor. I think this gives me a unique perspective on Kingdom Extension.

Since becoming the Lead Pastor in 2012, I have believed strongly that healthy things multiply. This includes churches! This belief catapulted us down a road of experimenting with different strategies and initiatives designed to reach people who did not claim a faith story or a church home. We ventured in partnership with GROUP Publishing and with a sister EC Church to start one of the nation's first Life Tree Cafés. Soon we connected with Fresh Expressions US and began exploring what micro churches and affinity-based churches would look like in our context. This led to several experiences and opportunities that have reached people with the life-transforming power of the Gospel.

Through our partnership with Fresh Expressions US, God has given me the opportunity to work with groups across the country providing training and coaching to help churches and denominations strategize and implement plans to expand beyond their walls to meet the needs of their community and see new works come to fruition.

Since then, we have continued to dream new opportunities to reach our community through Fresh Expression churches, as well as begin to research some opportunities for more traditional church planting in our community. My hope is to lead the KEC, and the denomination as a whole, and see her begin to flourish in its vision for expansion. I see this happening through both Fresh Expressions of church, as well as some traditional church planting opportunities.

I look forward to meeting with individuals, churches, and districts to dream and scheme how we can partner together to reach each of our contexts and communities with the unchanging message of the Gospel.

Mike Snedeker



msnedeker@eccenter.com

610-698-6482

Ministerial Development Community News

2023 Pastoral Assessment Center (PAC)

Although January 2023 seems far off, NOW IS THE TIME to register for the 2023 Pastoral Assessment Center (PAC). In fact, I currently have nine of the ten available slots for the center potentially filled. So don't delay in reaching out if you have someone sensing a call to pastoral ministry.

The Pastoral Assessment Center is designed to help applicants for ministry understand and discern the calling that God has placed on their lives. All Christians pursue the call of Christ; the Pastoral Assessment Center is specifically intended to clarify that calling, and direct the applicants toward utilizing their gifts, abilities, and graces in God's greater kingdom—and often times that involves pastoral ministry.

The purpose of the outward or external call to ministry is to examine and confirm the preliminary intuition of an inward call by deliberately testing and assessing the candidate's potential for service in the body of Christ. The agent by which the external call is made is the visible church – that means fallible, ordinary, people in the living body of Christ – through duly authorized pre-ordination procedures.

Thomas Oden, *Pastoral Theology*

Enrollment for PAC closes in June, so if there is someone who is sensing a call, and needs some discernment in the process, please reach out to me.

Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Byerly
Ministerial Development Associate
jgbyerly@eccenter.com / 570.294.3467



WHAT'S HAPPENING AT

Spring Spruce Up

May 3-5, 2022

Volunteer during a mid-week to help the ministry “spruce-up” camp and prepare for summer ministry! Projects include both indoor and outdoor sprucing-up. There are always tasks for volunteers of any skill level! You may choose to participate for all or part of the time.

To register: please call the office-570.629.2411.



For Ladies Only Retreat

May 10-12, 2022

An exciting mid-week retreat “for ladies only.”

Enjoy fellowship, worship, and in-depth Bible learning as the retreat looks at what it means to be a woman of God. And back by resounding demand is Sue Duffield; singer, writer, comedian, and speaker. Registration and more information is available at bit.ly/2022LadiesOnly.



Summer Staff

Twin Pines Camp needs people to fill ministry roles so others can become a disciple of Jesus Christ. These roles are:




Summer Staff: Counselors, Kitchen Help, Lifeguards, and Recreation Staff are needed. If you know of an older teen or young adult who can fill any of these ministry needs, refer that person to bit.ly/2022tpcapp for more information and to apply.

Medical Personnel: in this role, a person distributes medications, performs basic first aid, and determines health needs. If a someone is interested, the person can contact Shawn by calling 570-629-2411 or sending an email to shawn@twinpines.org.


Cook: a person to share meal duties, supervise kitchen staff and oversee the cleanliness of the dining room and kitchen. If a someone is interested, the person should contact Shawn by calling 570-629-2411, or send an email to shawn@twinpines.org.

Please notify people in your church, either in PA or other states, of these ministry opportunities and needs. Thank you!

MAY 2022

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	
Ministry Fund to: E.C. Church Center 100 W. Park Ave. Myerstown, PA 17067		Insurance Payment to: Benefits Corporation 100 W. Park Ave. Myerstown, PA 17067		Mother's Day Offering to: StoneRidge Retirement Living 440 East Lincoln Ave Myerstown, PA 17067			
1 <i>Day of Prayer for Kingdom Extension</i> White	2	3 * <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: fit-content; margin: auto;">Twin Pines Spring Spruce-Up</div>	4	5 NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER	6 <i>Day of Prayer for the E.C. Church</i>	7 *	
8  White	MOTHER'S DAY <i>Mother's Day Offering</i>	9	10 * <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: fit-content; margin: auto;">Twin Pines For Ladies Only Retreat</div>	11	12 * <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: fit-content; margin: auto;">Twin Pines For Ladies Only Retreat</div>	13 Health Insurance Due Evangelical Seminary Commencement	14 *
15 White	16	17	18	19	20	21	
22 White	23	24	25 	26 ASCENSION DAY	27 	28	
29 White	30 MEMORIAL DAY Church Center Closed	31	NATIONAL CONFERENCE				

* Pre-Conference Meetings
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SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Ministry Fund to: E.C. Church Center 100 W. Park Ave. Myerstown, PA 17067		Insurance Payment to: Benefits Corporation 100 W. Park Ave. Myerstown, PA 17067		Student Aid Offering to: E.C. Church Center 100 W. Park Ave. Myerstown, PA 17067 (designate: Student Aid Offering)		
1 White			1 Registration Deadline for PAC 2023	2	3 <i>Day of Prayer for the E.C. Church</i>	4
5 PENTECOST <i>Day of Prayer for Kingdom Extension</i> Red	6	7	8	9	10	11
12 White	13 <i>Student Aid Offering</i>	14	15 Health Insurance Due	16	17	18
19  Green	FATHER'S DAY	20 EC Leader deadline (July/August Edition)	21 Loan & Investment Committee Mtg.	22	23	24
26 Green	27	28	29	30	1	2
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 100%;">Camp ECCO Senior Camp</div>						

JUNE 2022



Overflowing Hope

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may OVERFLOW with HOPE by the power of the Holy Spirit."
Romans 15:13

Evangelical Congregational Church Center
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717-866-7581
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Office Hours: Monday - Friday
8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.



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