

E. C. Leader

April, 2009

Our Vision

The Evangelical Congregational Church will be a dynamic movement of God that is led by pastors and laity who have a burning passion for God and a missionary zeal to reach the lost. We will creatively obey the Great Commission by transforming plateaued and declining churches into healthy, disciple-making churches that are committed to evangelizing the communities to which God has called them. Healthy churches will reproduce themselves by planting churches in least-reached communities.

Interdependence will be the distinguishing mark of the Evangelical Congregational Church as local churches network with one another and ministries beyond the E.C. family to proclaim the Gospel to the world.



Location is Everything

We live just a few blocks up from what was once one of the busiest stretches of highway in the county. Except for a short rush hour surge, however, there's no longer a problem with traffic volume and road noise. The vehicle count is light and most of the businesses on the strip are closed and empty. A few others host a rapid succession of failed start ups. It has nothing to do with changed demographics or the economy. It's the "fault" of the by-pass.

What was once the "main drag" is now a long exit ramp. The majority of travelers race by on the new four lane highway a quarter mile away. The remnant of "Business Route 222" became a backwater without going anywhere. It was the people that moved not the place.

A similar effect may impact your ministry, and I'm not referring to your neighbors moving out of the neighborhood. People don't have to change where they live to change the way they think, believe, and behave. For a host of reasons many have moved away from the church emotionally and spiritually. Cultural and moral changes have left a good number of ministries feeling like they've been by-passed. If outsiders "drive by" on their way to making their life, it's as if they don't see Christianity standing by the road side.

The solution isn't as simple as a bigger, brighter sign out in front of your building, though that may not hurt. It may not even require the relocation of your facility. What it requires most is that we as the followers of Christ reposition ourselves back at the main intersections of where our unsaved friends travel. We need to bring the message of the cross back into the crossroads of daily life by loving our community enough to participate in it. Being there to care, take part, and just make it a better place to live, without strings attached, erects a living billboard pointing to Jesus by a busy roadside where most of the "traffic" goes.

How well are you located missionally? Do you occupy the "prime real estate" of involvement in the lives of non-believers? Or are you content being cut off in a religious cul de sac of your own making? Don't wait around hoping that they'll put the road back where it was. Go where the people Jesus died for are.

"Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven." Matthew 5:16

Bishop Kevin

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Evangelical
Congregational
Church

SPECIAL EVENTS – MARK YOUR CALENDAR

May 2, 2009

**Join us for Disciple 2009
Sustaining The Turnaround**

by making disciplemaking missional. Designed as follow up training to the “Discipling Others Seminar” this event will feature Mildred Minatrea, author of “Shaped by God’s Heart” as the plenary session speaker, Several additional leaders from EC churches and the Navigators involved in the Life2Life disciplemaking process will serve as workshop presenters. Trinity EC in Harrisburg will be hosting this great commission oriented gathering. Registration brochure is available on the EC website, www.eccenter.com

**Pre-Conference Meetings
7:00 – 9:00 pm**

FOCUS: Health Insurance

- Monday, May 4 – Winnebago, IL
- Thursday, May 7 – Arlington, Red Lion
- Monday, May 11 – Tallmadge, OH (Restart)
- Tuesday, May 12 – New Zion, Emlenton
- Thursday, May 14 – Bethany, Clayton
- Monday, May 18 – Trinity, Frackville
- Tuesday, May 19 – Bethany, California

**These events are FREE! No registration required!
For all pastors & lay delegates**

OTHER DATES TO REMEMBER

May 7 – National Day of Prayer

May 16 – Evangelical Theological Seminary Commencement

May 26-29 – National Conference

- Tuesday, May 26
 - 11:00 am – Registration
 - 3:00 pm – School for Lay Delegates
 - 7:00 pm – Service of the Lord’s Supper
- Wednesday, May 27
 - 10:15 am – Episcopal Address



BISHOP’S TRAVELS:

MAY	3 AM	Bethel EC, Dixon, IL
	4	Pre-Conference Meeting, Winnebago, IL
	7	Pre-Conference Meeting, Red Lion
	10	First EC, Canton, OH
	11	Pre-Conference Meeting, Tallmadge, OH
	12	Pre-Conference Meeting, Emlenton
	14	Pre-Conference Meeting, Clayton
	17AM	St. Paul’s EC, Reamstown
	18	Pre-Conference Meeting, Frackville
	19	Pre-Conference Meeting, California (Morgantown, PA)
	24	Home
	31	Home





- † For the completion of the stationing process and the effective matching of churches and pastors.
- † For wisdom and vision in guiding churches that are wrestling with the need to close and possibly be evaluated for restart potential.
- † For the formation of a Strategic Planning task group and the development of a planning process that will help transform us into a movement of God.
- † That honoring God by making disciples be the purpose running through everything we do.
- † That a new team of church planters will emerge, eager to launch new congregations where they are most needed.
- † That ministries and people who are “stuck” in their spiritual growth due to hurts and resentment from the past might be released to move forward.
- † That we will all find ways to turn the challenges from the economy into rich opportunities to grow in faith and extend Christ’s Kingdom

A word of thanks... for the significant improvement this year in the timely submission of annual reports. This helps us considerably in assessing our progress and making plans for the future.

A prayer card for Bishop Kevin and Deborah Leibensperger is now available at Church Center. Your intercession is needed and cherished!



The 2008 DISCIPLINE is available online at the EC website, www.eccenter.com. The printed copy of the DISCIPLINE and the ABRIDGED DISCIPLINE will be available at the National Conference.

The Governance Manuals will be ready for distribution at the Pre-conference meetings!

Rev. Ramon Mendez is collecting used MEN'S CLOTHING for a special event down in a prison in Santo Domingo, D.R. for Father's Day. Churches or individuals are welcome to bring the clothes to Reading or we can make arrangements for pick ups. Please NO winter clothes. More info: Call Pastor Mendez (610)468-6888.

A GETTING HEALTHY NATIONAL CONFERENCE



GET OUT YOUR WALKING SHOES!

Don't forget to pack your walking shoes as you prepare to come to this year's National Conference. Watch

your mail for more information!

ALLONE's Online Health Risk

Assessments. ALLONE personnel will be at National Conference with computers on Wednesday, Noon-6:00 pm and Thursday, 12:45-3:00 pm to assist any eligible pastor or wife who needs help with their online Health Risk Assessment. If you complete the HRA at National Conference and are eligible to receive the \$25 gift card, it will be awarded to you at that time. Look for ALLONE in the National Conference exhibit area.

VISA GIFT CARDS

will be awarded at National Conference to those Pastors/NC employees/ETS & GMC personnel who have met the requirements of completing the ALLONE online HRA for the first \$25 gift card and a \$75 gift card upon completion of 2 ALLONE health coach calls and the return of your doctor's health physical form to ALLONE. June 30, 2009 is the deadline for completing the HRA to receive the \$25 gift card. December 31, 2009 is the deadline to meet the requirements for the \$75 gift card. Stop by the Benefits Corporation's table in the exhibit area to see if you are eligible to receive the gift cards. (Spouses are not eligible for the gift cards, only the employee.)



ALLONE ONLINE Health Coach: If you have registered online at www.myallonehealth.com and have completed your online Health Risk Assessment, don't forget to go back to the website, login and click your Online Health Coach (This is different than the health coach that calls you.) Your Online Health Coach has detailed health information for you relevant to how you answered your Health Risk Assessment. Remember that through your login at www.myallonehealth.com you can access a nurse 24/7, check out medications on the Drug Guide, research medical conditions with the online medical encyclopedia, use one of the online "trackers" for meals/calories, exercise, your medications, and complete your own personal health record. This is just a short list of some of the health, wellness and medical features available to you.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE EXHIBIT

AREA: The Benefits Corporation will have representatives from Corporate Synergies (our insurance broker), Aetna Health Insurance (Health insurance carrier for our active pastors & their families), Highmark and Freedom Blue (Health insurance carrier for our retired pastors, wives and widows), AllOne Health Management Solutions (the wellness program carrier for our active pastors & families) and Wachovia Securities (our investment advisor for our 403(b) pension plan.) In addition, the National Conference Healthy Pastor Task Force will also have a table with us in the exhibit area. They have partnered with the Benefits Corporation to promote the health and wellness of our pastors and their families. Please stop by the exhibit area and visit with any of these.





NEWS FROM THE GLOBAL MINISTRIES COMMISSION

1. Here are the latest and final dates for World Fest 2009: September 12, 2009 Ohio/ September 19, 2009/ Illinois/ October 9 & 10, 2009 Pennsylvania.
2. Thanks to all who contributed to purchasing a replacement laptop for the mission director of the EC Church of India! Your generosity is much appreciated in both countries!
3. DVDs of the Launch Liberia update will be available at National Conference at the GMC display table. If you want one to show before National Conference contact the GMC office. The DVD is 20 minutes long.
4. Thanks to all who have and are giving to the Launch Liberia Project! We still need to raise about \$70,000 to complete our commitments.
5. Randy and Carla have settled on a town home at the Gables in Myerstown and are planning to move mid-June. Please continue to pray that their house in Lykens sells soon.
6. **Randy's speaking schedule:**

May	3	Willow Street EC; 8:30 & 10:30
	10	Mother's Day at Zion EC, Pitman (Carla speaking...Randy cheering!)
	16-17	Clarion EC mission conference
	31	Lancaster Faith EC, Stoltzfus Commissioning

"A Time for Everything"

God's wisdom reminds us there is "a time to be born and a time to die." Ecc. 3:2 The life cycle of humans parallels the birth, growth and death of individual congregations. New ministries come into being. Old ones run their course having served the Lord in their season. We rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep. All the while Christ's work continues with the opportunities of tomorrow emerging from the legacy of the past and present.

We celebrate the official "launch" of the restart of our church in Gratz, PA. On Easter Sunday a new fellowship, "The Dwelling Place" was birthed after nearly a year of "low key" preparatory work in the facility that once housed Good Shepherd church. Be sure to encourage church planter Robert Stoner, his wife Robin and all the "ministers" of this new work with your prayers, visits, and financial support of the Church Planting Commission.

We also share in the sadness of the people of First Church in Easton, PA who made a difficult but necessary decision on the same day to close that work. Lives have been changed for eternity and workers sent out to serve Jesus in countless places through that ministry. However a combination of circumstances has made even the support of a part time pastor impractical. Potential "next steps" will be evaluated. Pray also for the members and friends of First as they seek God's guidance. Express your concern and prayers for Pastor Paul and Connie Barber as they wait on the Lord for re-direction.

Together let's commit ourselves to revitalizing existing churches and planting new ones. It's an essential part of fulfilling the Great Commission.

Grace to you,

Bishop Kevin

Launch Information

The former Good Shepherd E.C. Church of Gratz, PA is ready to launch a new ministry: The Dwelling Place Regional Worship Center, an Evangelical Congregational Church Family. Our launch season began with a Holy Thursday Communion and a Resurrection Sunday Celebration. During our launch season (3 weeks) our morning service was preceded by a light continental breakfast. Each morning worship service featured special activities and a message further defining our ministry. A Men's Breakfast is scheduled for Saturday, April 25, and a potpie supper will be served from 4:30 until 5:30 on Sunday, April 26, followed by a unique worship night, Sunday Night Rain, at 6:00 pm featuring Gary Shelton as worship leader in this night of "soaking worship."

One additional note... The Dwelling Place will host a National Day of Prayer Regional Prayer Rally on Thursday, May 7, on the front lawn. We are expecting a great turnout from the region, including all the Anthracite District congregations. If you are free, consider joining us for the 7:00 pm rally as we stand in the gap in prayer for our nation.

Our new website will be up and running soon. You can reach us at www.thedwellingplacerc.org

Thank you for all your prayerful support as we launch this new work for the glory and the furtherance of God's kingdom.

Blessings all,

Bob Stoner, Pastor



Join us for Breakfast
Tuesday, May 12, 2009



Featuring
Dr. Dennis P. Hollinger, President
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary

Topic: "Ethics in the Marketplace"

We are pleased to welcome our former President and Professor of Christian Ethics to Evangelical Theological Seminary. Over the years Dennis has served in administrative, pastoral and seminary teaching ministries, including Vice Provost at Messiah College, Pastor of the Washington Community Fellowship on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. and Associate Professor of Church & Society at Alliance Theological Seminary in Nyack, New York. He has served as an adjunct or visiting professor at several seminaries internationally, including Moscow Theological Seminary in Russia, Union Biblical Seminary in India and the Eastern European Seminary for Evangelical Leadership in Ukraine. He is also a visiting professor of Christian Ethics at Trinity International University in the graduate program in Bioethics.

Dennis is a frequent speaker in churches, pastors' conferences, seminaries, colleges and academic forums. He is the author of three books, including his most recent, *Head, Heart, Hands: Bringing Together Christian Thought, Passion and Action* (InterVarsity Press), and *Choosing the Good: Christian Ethics in a Complex World* (Baker Books). Baker will be publishing his next book, *The Meaning of Sex: A Framework for the Moral Life*. He has authored over sixty-five articles, mostly in ethics (including bioethics), church and society, and preaching. He is a board member for the C.S. Lewis Institute in Washington, D.C., is a Fellow with the Center for Bioethics and Human Dignity in Bannockburn, IL and for many years was a member of the Health Care Ethics Committee at Holy Spirit Hospital in Camp Hill, PA.

Dennis received the B.A. from Elizabethtown College, the M.Div. from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, the M.Phil. and Ph.D. from Drew University and did post-doctoral studies at Oxford University. He and his wife live in Beverly, MA and have two adult daughters.

Time: 7:00 a.m. Where: Evangelical Theological Seminary, Zinn Commons

R.S.V.P. by Friday, May 8, 2009 Pre-Registration is requested.

For additional information – 717.866.5775

Faith in the Marketplace Event – Dr. Dennis P. Hollinger, May 12, 2009 – Registration

Cost: \$15.00 per person

Names of Attendees: _____

Business _____ Phone _____

Address _____ Email _____

City/State/Zip _____ Amount Enclosed _____

Please make check payable to **Evangelical Theological Seminary**

Return to Marilyn Taylor, Evangelical Theological Seminary, 121 S. College Street, Myerstown, PA 17067