

April, 2007

E.C. Leader



Evangelical
Congregational
Church

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.

National Ministry Team

The National Ministry Team of the Evangelical Congregational Church met for its spring session March 29th, 2007 in the Zinn Commons of the Evangelical School of Theology. Dale Reber opened the session with devotions and Bishop Sigman reported on "Just 7 of the many wonderful blessings God has brought into the life of the Evangelical Church. Rejoice and be glad in his gracious provision for our Church—for His Church!" Bishop Sigman also reported on our denomination's relationship with NAE, Mission America, the Christian Holiness Partnership and the Denominational Leaders' Fellowship. The NMT received brief reports from the National Conference secretary, treasurer, and several committees but most of the session was dominated by the consideration of the Amendments Committee Report.

The Amendments Committee had gathered 56 amendment recommendations from various entities of the National Conference which were presented for the NMT to either recommend that the National Conference consider or that they recommend that they not be considered. Several other amendment recommendations were presented to the NMT in addition to the Amendment Committee's report. The NMT developed a list of recommended items that will be sent out to National Conference Delegates in the beginning of April. Items that were not recommended will also be reported.

The NMT also acted on recommendations from the District Ministry Team Summit. Some changes were recommended in the process of organizing districts that, it is hoped, will make our districts more efficient and effective in carrying out our mission. On the Bishop's recommendation the NMT vote to dissolve the National Conference Investment Committee and redesign its responsibilities to various finance committees of several National Conference entities. This will give individual groups (such as Global Ministries or the Benefits Corporation) the flexibility to handle their investments in the manner that is most beneficial to their individual needs. The NMT also acted on a request from the Capital/Lebanon District seeking permission to experiment with a policy that departs from *Discipline* regulations. The NMT will meet again in the fall of 2007.

Kirk Marks, Secretary

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Leadership Notes

- **Rev. Harry Dow** (Lititz Trinity) has been appointed vice chairman of the Leadership Commission.
- The Great Lakes Region Conference Minister Nominating Committee will be chaired by **Rev. Mike Soltis** (Youngstown OH Wedgewood Park). **Rev. Chris Mowery** (Associate, Transfer Lakeside) will serve as secretary. The members are: **Jason Anderson** (Dixon IL Bethel), **Rick Glauthier** (Akron OH Cottage Grove), **Diana Micklos** (Fern Trinity), **Rev. Ken Schmoyer** (Winnebago IL) and **Bishop Mike Sigman**

Merger & Name Change

Allentown Boulevard and Whitehall Grace Worship Center have merged and selected the name Christ Church.

2007 New Appointments (effective July 1, 2007)

*pending approval for license from National Conference



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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robert S. Mavis
From Allentown St. John's to Dixon IL Bethel • Stephen T. Holubec
From Associate Leesport Bethany to Associate Akron Grace • Barry S. Zimmerman
From Martindale Bethany to Shillington St. Luke's • Brent M. Martin
*To Allentown Seibert • Matthew A. Hill
To Associate Sinking Spring Community • Norman W. Dixon
From Plymouth Meeting to Part-time Rock Manbeck's Zion • Robert A. Brown
From Related Fields to Plymouth Meeting • Nelson A. Wilhelm
From Interim Akron Cottage Grove to Part-time Delightful • Brian K. Parker*
To Associate Harrisburg Trinity • David F. Wood
From Cressona, Bethany Fellowship to Leesport Bethany • Dennis W. Snyder
From Assistant, Ashland Bethany to Cressona, Bethany Fellowship • Robert W. Zetterberg
From Rock Falls IL to Retirement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michael G. Knapp
To Clark's Valley Zion • Dennis V. Buss
From Assistant, Cedarville IL Emmanuel to Part-time, Rock Falls, IL • Ramon E. Mendez
From Reading Vida Nueva to Sr. Pastor, Reading Vida Nueva & First • John P. Ragsdale
From Interim, Reading First to Associate, Reading Vida Nueva & First • Robert W. Shuey
From East Weissport People's to Akron OH Cottage Grove • Richard D. Reigle
From Bethel IL Dixon to Allentown Boulevard/Whitehall Grace merger • C. Gerald Berrier, Jr.
From Assistant, Mt. Joy Trinity to Part-time Interim, East Petersburg Grace • Bryan K. Dever
From Ashland Bethany to Annville Zion • Gary C. Luckenbill
From Clark's Valley Zion to Whiting NJ Christ Community • Brian W. Smith
To Part-time, Williamstown Ebenezer • Timothy S. Hart
To Assistant, Mohn's Hill Mohn's Memorial |
|--|---|

Bishop's Travels-May

May	1	ECCRV Board
	2-3	Lancaster County National Day of Prayer events
	4	EST Board
	6	Plymouth Meeting
	7	Pre-NC meeting, Dixon IL St. James
	8	Pre-NC meeting, Royersford Trinity
	14	Pre-NC meeting, Canton OH First
	15	Pre-NC meeting, Clark's Mills Countryside
	17	Pre-NC meeting, Clark's Valley Zion
	19-20	Illinois District
	20	Hooppole IL Calvary
	22	Pre-NC meeting, Willow Street Grace Community
	24	Pre-NC meeting, Tamaqua Bethany



News from the Compensation Committee & the Benefits Corporation

“FAQ of the Benefits Corporation:

April Question: What is the Manna Fund?

The Manna Fund was established to provide supplemental income as funds are available for Benefits Corporation Pension Plan beneficiaries who have at least 10 years as a pension plan participant, who do not reside in a nursing care facility and whose total income is below \$13,000 for singles and \$18,00 for a couple. (These are the poverty level income standards for 2006 as established by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.)

There are 55 pension plan participants on our Defined Benefits Plan with an average monthly pension amount of \$175. They are the ones most likely to qualify for the Manna Fund. All of our active pastors are now enrolled in the Benefits Corporation's Defined Contributions (403b) Plan that is managed by Wachovia/Prudential Securities.

Each year our retirees are sent an application/financial disclosure form to complete if they desire to apply for consideration for that year's Manna Fund distribution. This mailing was done in April. The Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees of the Benefits Corporation then reviews each application to determine if that applicant qualifies for the Manna Fund. For 2006, we had 3 applicants qualify. The difference between their total incomes and the established poverty level incomes was \$10,912, but we only had \$7300 to distribute. The amount distributed was pro-rated based on our distribution formula. The Benefits Corporation has not held over funds from one year to the next. Our By-Laws prescribe that should we have a balance that exceeds two years projected need, solicitation of funds would be stopped.

The Manna Fund does not have a specific means of funding, except from the donations from churches and individuals. The Manna Fund is not one of the mandated National Conference offerings. This month every pastor and lay delegate received information on how their church can help the Benefits Corporation to fund the Manna Fund for 2007. We hope that every church will consider an offering for the Manna Fund. Please send your offerings to the Benefits Corporation, attention Rev. Ken Wiest at Church Center.

May Question: Who are the members of the Board of Trustees of the Benefits Corporation?

News from the Compensation Committee & the Benefits Corporation

(Continued from page 3)

Telephone Excise Tax Refunds for Churches:

As you completed your tax return for 2006, hopefully you noticed that you were entitled to a refund dealing with telephone excise taxes that were previously charged. However, not only are individuals entitled to this refund, but churches and church-related organizations that have telephone service in the organization's name may also be entitled to a refund. While churches normally are not required to file any tax forms with the IRS, a simplified Form 990-T will need to be filed to claim the telephone excise tax refund.

For churches to claim the refund, the Internal Revenue Service has instituted a simple three-step process, explained in detail on the flyer at <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p4589.pdf>. Depending upon the level of phone service used by the church, this refund could amount to several hundred dollars—and therefore, would be well worth the time needed to complete the Form 990-T.

In most cases, the Form 990-T must be filed by the 15th day of the 5th month after the end of the organization's tax year. (Since the E.C. Church closes its financial year on Dec. 31, our churches have until May 15, 2007 to apply for the Telephone Excise Tax Refund.)

Taken from: "In the Know" Newsletter, March 30, 2007
Art Rhoads, Church of God, Cleveland, TN



E.C. Church Center

Recently the E.C. Church Center staff met to revisit our Purpose/Mission/Values/Vision Statements that we had adopted a few years ago. The following describes what was agreed upon:

Purpose: To know Christ and make Him known.

Mission: Serving Jesus by motivating, connecting and resourcing E.C. pastors, missionaries and churches worldwide.

Values:

- Graciousness
- Servanthood
- Leadership
- Confidentiality
- Efficiency
- Inter-connectedness

Vision: The Church Center staff will excel at serving the needs of the pastors, missionaries and congregations of the Evangelical Congregational Church worldwide. We will provide support services that enable the commissions, committees, task forces, pastors, missionaries and congregations to function with excellence as they fulfill their appointed missions.



2007 Pre-National Conference Regional Meetings

7:00 p.m.—9:00 p.m.

For pastors, delegates and other interested E.C. laity

Great Lakes	Dixon, St. James	Monday, May 7th
Great Lakes	Canton	Monday, May 14th
Great Lakes	Clarks Mills	Tuesday, May 15th
Delaware	Royersford	Tuesday, May 8th
Delaware	Tamaqua	Thursday, May 24th
Susquehanna	Willow Street	Tuesday, May 22nd
Susquehanna	Clarks Valley	Thursday, May 17th

THANK YOU!!

In mid-March, I authorized a reminder notice (a plea, really!) to secure delinquent forms. Thank you for responding to the plea and submitting the necessary forms to Church Center.

Please forgive us if you submitted the forms previously. We didn't have a record of receiving them but we make mistakes. When statistical report forms are received, Pat Wolfe makes two copies of the original—one copy for the statistician and one for your Conference Minister. She files the original in the Controller's office. The lay delegate and treasurer information forms go directly to Brenda. Brenda records the receipt of the form and updates the database. She uses red to indicate updated information. We are reviewing these systems to assure great accuracy. Thank you for your grace and patience.

We also recognize the problems associated with e-mail. During the February 14th snowstorm, we experience an interruption with e-mail service. This problem was quickly resolved and hundreds of backlogged e-mails arrived in our "boxes." It is possible your forms, if sent on February 13-14, were lost in cyberspace. Again, we apologize.

Some also wondered why a reminder notice went out under my signature. The answer is simple. It gets everyone's attention. With nearly 70 forms from 35 churches delinquent by two months, the staff felt we needed action. Thankfully, the response has been encouraging.

Sincerely yours,
Michael W. Sigman, Bishop



National Conference—Special Points of Interest

Tuesday, May 29

- 3:00 p.m. School for Lay Delegates
- 7:00 p.m. Lord's Supper
Preacher: Rev. H.B. London, Vice President, Focus on the Family

Wednesday, May 30

- 9:00 a.m.—Worship Rev. H.B. London
- 10:15 a.m.—Episcopal Address
Bishop Michael Sigman
- 1:45 p.m. Worship & Season of Prayer for the Election
Rev. H.B. London
Election of the 13th Bishop

- 7:00 p.m. Conference Relations Committee

Thursday, May 31

- 8:00 a.m. Worship Rev. Rich Stevenson
- 1:45 p.m. Worship Rev. Rich Stevenson
Retirement Recognition
- 5:30 p.m. Annual Lay Delegate's Dinner
- 7:00 p.m. Global Ministries Celebration with Carolyn Miller, International President of SIL

Friday, June 1

- 8:00 a.m. Worship Rev. Rich Stevenson

New

National Conference May 28-June 1 Messiah College, Grantham, PA

- **Delegates staying on campus in a DORM or APARTMENT** will register at the Sollenberger/Mountain View Dorm on Tuesday. (Please see the map of the campus for directions.) PLEASE MAKE NOTE that the DORM registration will be open from 11:00 am until 10:00 pm. ALL WEDNESDAY registrations will be moved to the Eisenhower Center lobby.
- **Communion Service** on Tuesday evening, 7:00 p.m., will be held in the Grantham Brethren in Christ Church NOT at the campus chapel. The BIC Church is located just before you enter the campus. Shuttle service will be available from the Eisenhower Center lobby.
- There will be two **designated computer areas** within the conference boundary in the Brubaker Auditorium for those with laptop computers. There are only 24 outlets and this will be on a daily first come, first serve basis. There is no internet access in the Brubaker auditorium, so be sure to download all the conference reports. There is internet access in the Falcon Express Snack Bar.
- Help celebrate the **Fifth Year Anniversary** of the National Conference on Wednesday evening in the Falcon Express! A special cake will be available for all!

