

E. C. Leader

NOVEMBER, 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.



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"What Do You Leave Behind?"

"Carry out, what you carry in!" I saw a sign to that effect along a hiking trail in a national park. For the sake of wilderness conservation and all those entering the refuge after you, visitors are to leave as few traces of having ever been there as possible.

This principle makes sense for protecting the remaining beauty of God's creation. It doesn't work when it comes to restoring the ugliness of man's fallen world. Christ's followers are meant to leave His footprints wherever they travel. A transformed people will transform the places they occupy. Things should be different if only because we are different.

That was reality for the early church. Even as the "official" view of the new faith hardened into persecution, the popular view moved in the opposite direction. Acts 2:47 says the first Christians were "enjoying the favor of all the people." The Roman Emperor Julian who made a belated attempt to bring back the old gods of the empire in 362 launched a campaign to start pagan charities to match what Christians were doing. "They not only support their poor but ours as well," he complained, "while everyone can see they lack aid from us."

What are we known for? What do we leave behind for others to find? Is it what Paul describes as "the aroma of Christ?" I'm encouraged by the way evangelicals are rediscovering the call to impact this life as well as the next. There's a new abolition movement growing to bring an end to the modern slavery of human trafficking. Where the debate threatens to grow bitter in the controversies over health care or immigration reform, we're learning to speak like heaven's ambassadors and not just citizens of earth.

Personally, I like the impact and challenge of trying to live at what I call the intersection of 85th & 10th streets. It's the place Psalm 85:10 addresses, where "Love and faithfulness meet together" and "righteousness and peace kiss each other." It's not easy to dwell there. But it's where those not content to leave their world as they found it hang out. I'll be looking for you.

In the strong name of Jesus,
Bishop Kevin

ANNOUNCEMENTS ...

• NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2010

- **Theme:** "A New Thing: our future as a movement of God"

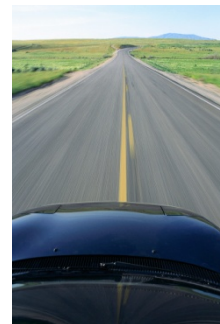
"See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland." Isaiah 43:19

- **Speaker:** Tom Clegg Topic: "Missing in America"
- **Remember the change of date: May 25-28 at Messiah College**

BISHOP'S TRAVELS...

DECEMBER 4-5 Strategic Planning Meetings, Harrisburg, PA
10-11 Supervisory Committee Retreat, Centre Hall, PA
12-13 Wedgewood Park Church, Youngstown, OH
27- Jan 3 Vacation

Bishop Kevin looks forward to the opportunity to visit and preach in all of our churches. If you would like to schedule a 2010 date for him to share with your congregation email blong@eccenter.com



BISHOP'S PRAYER LIST...

- † The ongoing Strategic Planning Process – The District “feedback meetings” have been completed and the input is being evaluated. The planning team meets for the next major work session on December 4-5.
- † For churches and pastors evaluating the possibility of Stationing Changes in 2010. Seek the Lord’s wisdom that all assignments will “fit and flourish.”
- † For an increase in the number of congregations developing an intentional process for disciple making. Ask for God’s blessing on our partnership with the Navigators as one expression of this focus.
- † For congregations that are working through the need to change in order to become more missional.
- † For opportunities to partner with churches that are preparing to plant churches. Pray that plans and dreams to do so become reality.
- † For our international churches and the Global Ministries Commission’s challenge to expand the “root system” of financial support we invest in those life changing ministries.
- † Thanks for praying for healing from my sleep disorder. I’m seeing some improvement.
- † Praise – the safe arrival of a daughter, Natalie Grace, to David & Jodi Earhart. Our adjustment to Jodi’s maternity leave from her Administrative Assistant role has gone well. Keep praying for the headquarters team!

*Thank you for all the cards and prayers with the recent addition to our family. God has truly blessed us with a precious gift.
The Earhart’s
David, Jodi and Natalie*

LOOKING AHEAD... SOME IMPORTANT "DEADLINES" TO REMEMBER.

- ✦ **Retirement – January 1** Pastors planning to retire in 2010 are to communicate their intention to do so in writing to their Conference Minister by the first of the year. (See NC Rule 805.2) This helps insure that all benefits can be arranged in a timely manner and aids in preparing a successful transition for your church to its next pastor.
- ✦ **Stationing – January 15** is the deadline for both churches and pastors to submit their written request for a change to their Conference Minister. (See NC Rule 904.1) Please feel free to contact your CM if you need additional counsel in the matter. If a decision has already been made by either party please communicate that "sooner rather than later."



Pastors, one of the most productive activities in which you can be involved is the coaching of the people of the congregation that you serve. I say this beginning with a couple of assumptions: 1) you want to see the people you serve grow as individuals, and 2) you want to see the congregation you serve grow as an organization (or is it an organism?)

If these assumptions fit you, then may I recommend a book? I have been reminded of this book as one of our pastors has entered into the cohort training through the Center for Leadership Impact. Paul Munday is leading this particular cohort group using the book which he has written, *Unlocking Church Doors*.

This book is ten chapters, and each chapter explains one principle that is very helpful if you want to coach your congregation and help them become all that God is calling them to be. There is much to glean in this book, but it seems to me that a line from the first chapter is a great starting point, "To paraphrase Gandhi: We must become the change we wish others to become."

So how are we doing??? Are we leading the way to becoming a movement of God???

NEWS FROM BENEFITS AND COMPENSATION...

2010 AETNA/Highmark Health Insurance

Premiums: December Health insurance premiums that are due by Dec. 15 and paid to the Benefits Corporation are to be remitted at the new 2010 rates. For churches whose pastor has coverage with AETNA, please refer to the Health Insurance premiums chart on the EC Church website under the Benefits Corporation. For churches served by a retired pastor and wife, the Highmark Freedom Blue PPO premium is \$139/mo per participant. For

questions, call Ken Wiest, Benefits-Compensation Administrator.

ALLONE participants & \$75

Gift Card: Please remember that the deadline for completing the criteria to receive the \$75 gift card is December 31, 2009. You must have completed the Health Risk Assessment online at www.myallonehealth.com; have your doctor complete the physician's form and mail it to ALLONE; and you



must have 2 coaching calls from ALLONE. If you haven't had your second coaching call, you can call your coach, that counts too!

2010 Pastoral Compensation Forms are due to Ken Wiest, Benefits-Compensation Administrator, as soon as 2010 salary package is approved, with the deadline on January 15th. For instructions and copies of the forms, see the EC Church website, under Pastoral Compensation.

2010 IRS Mileage Rates: As of Friday, Nov. 13, the IRS has not announced the rates for 2010. We will make them available as soon as the IRS releases them. The current rate is 55 cents/mile continues in effect through Dec. 31, 2009.

Contribution Limits for 2010 Announced by the IRS: The Internal Revenue Service recently did announce the new pension plan contribution limits for 2010. While there are many different limits that impact pension plans, the main limits that effect participants in the EC Church 403(b) Pension Plan are as follows:

- The salary reduction limit for 2010 will stay the same as in 2009 - at \$16,500. This limit is available to all participants regardless of age.
- The catch-up contribution for individuals age 50 or over will stay the same at \$5,500 per year.



NEWS FROM THE GLOBAL MINISTRIES COMMISSION...

GMC Strategic Planning Update

Recently the Global Ministries Commission met for our regular fall meetings to help direct the current mission work in the EC Church and to continue strategic planning for the future. One of the definitions for strategy is, "a plan or method for achieving a specific goal" (Webster's American Family Dictionary, 1998). While the GMC lists four specific areas of mission initiatives: *Empowering National Churches*, *Facilitating Mission Workers*, *Ministering To The Marginalized*, *Creating Global Christians*, our over arching goal – the reason we exist – is to network the 600 or so local EC Churches in order to effectively fulfill our mandate to make disciples of Jesus in all people groups.

Much of this networking depends on communication and motivation, sharing with the churches in the United States the challenges and victories of our 57 deployed missionaries and 500 international churches while encouraging your participation with them in various ways. In the past we tried to communicate and motivate through event-based venues like the World Out-Reach Day on the last Saturday of April and the fall World Fest gatherings in September and October. If you've attended any of these gatherings in the last few years, you know we haven't been successful.

The relatively small attendances at these events are predominately the individuals already involved in missions in their church. While this isn't necessarily a bad thing, it underscores the point that we are not communicating nor motivating a large majority of our church members when it comes to missions! I am convinced that there are many people in our churches, who would be interested in what God is doing around the globe through the EC Church, and they probably would participate to one degree or another but, they will never attend a Saturday mission event. Based on this conviction the GMC is committed to bringing the message to the people instead of bringing the people to the message. Beginning in 2010 the following changes will occur:

1. World Out-Reach Day replaced by "Spring Training" component

Usually held the last Saturday in April and originally designed to be a District event, W.O.R.D. has been officially discontinued. In its place we are prepared to offer a "Spring Training" component. The churches in the Illinois, Ohio, Western PA, Eastern PA, New Jersey and Maryland areas are encouraged to check their calendars and find a day in the spring (January-June) when they can get mission leaders, pastors, lay delegates or any interested people together for a day of training. This training will/can include subjects like; starting, re-starting or fine tuning a mission committee; developing your churches mission giving portfolio and budget, how to incorporate missions in every area of your church,

how to communicate with your missionaries, developing a missions vision for your church, how to better connect with the GMC, partnering with an international EC Church, and more!
(See 2010 Spring Training Syllabus below).



Global Ministries 2010 “Spring Training” Syllabus

Block 1. Building Missions Into Your Congregation’s DNA:

This seminar will explore creative ways to overcome the current attitudes, perceptions and real-life reasons that keep the people in your church from being excited, interested and involved in missions. Teaching material based on the workbook, “How To Get Your Congregation Involved In Missions” by David Mays. Copies will be available for purchase.

(Seminar approx. 4 hours including registration and breaks)

Block 2. Money, Missionaries & Missions:

This seminar explores how congregations gather, raise and distribute support funds for missionaries and mission projects. Topics include:

- Where does our mission money come from?
- Who is responsible for our mission budget?
- How do we determine which missionaries/ministries to support?
- How do we decide how much support we give each missionary or ministry?

(approx. 4hours including registration and breaks or 3 hours if held in conjunction with Block #1)

**Suggested format for both blocks :8:30am – 4:00pm (including registration, breaks and lunch)*

How To Host A GMC Spring Training Event:

1. For maximum impact network with other area EC Churches.
2. Form a task force or committee to plan and execute the training event.
3. Determine the location, time frame and several tentative dates.
4. Contact Director Randy Sizemore to confirm date, location, time, etc.
5. Begin promotion and planning of training event.

2. WORLD FEST replaced by localized “Fall Mission Conferences”

World Fest was the regional “fall missionary rally” created a few years back because many people expressed a desire to have a “big event” where they could connect with other ECers and missionaries. My experience has been that the desire to connect at a big event must have passed! We had about 25 in attendance in Western PA/Ohio, about 50 in Illinois and about 120 at the Myerstown gathering. If my math is correct, out of 131 chartered EC Churches with over 17,000 members, we had a grand total of 195 people at our “big event” this year. I have also discovered that many churches have their own mission conferences and rallies that have a greater attendance than when we’ve tried to put them together. So, there will not be a WORLD FEST in 2010 as we know it. I am asking churches in every region to consider how important networking and getting together is to them. If churches in a particular area want to combine and hold a fall mission conference, the GMC office will be happy to help facilitate EC missionaries and if my schedule permits I will be glad to attend as well. The Eastern PA WORLD FEST scheduled for October 8, 9 2010 at Salem EC will be held as scheduled as a Fall Missions Conference.

3. Bringing The Message To The Members

As I already mentioned, we are not doing well at getting our members to the mission message so we have taken steps to get the mission message to our members. On any given Sunday morning there are a little over 10,000 of us in morning worship. These people are already gathered and prepared to hear what God is doing and how they can join Him in His

plans. The GMC has decided to annually produce four professional quality DVD's (one per quarter) no longer than 10 minutes, containing pertinent information about the mission movement in the EC Church. If pastors will be generous enough to give just 10 minutes of worship time per quarter, at least 10,000 people will know what God is doing through the EC Church to fulfill the Great Commission and how they can be involved.

We believe that these strategic adjustments along with the recruitment, training and deployment of "Mission Mobilizers" (see website, www.ecglobal.org/resources/downloads), will allow more of our members to know what is happening in missions in the EC Church and motivate them to become actively involved.

By Randy Sizemore



Giving Catalogs: Don't forget to utilize the GMC Giving Catalog in your Christmas giving this year! Access it online at www.ecglobal.org or call the GMC office for your copy today!

The **Christmas Missions Offering** is December 20th. Bulletin inserts and envelopes are on the way or you can download yours at www.ecglobal.org. This offering helps raise the \$300,000 needed to keep the GMC staffed and administrating EC missions around the world!



CREATIVE EVANGELISM IDEA

Sonrise Fellowship in Bethlehem, PA has used a "bags of blessing" distribution as a way to connect with their neighborhood. Church Planter Rick Sergi describes it as a means of "making the most of every opportunity" to build relationships and to show a skeptical world, that God desires to share His love. Church members deliver the bags in person to between 100-150 nearby homes. Inside they have given away books, flowers, snacks, ready to go meals, and brief notes explaining the reasons for the outreach. The most recent package included a coupon to request a Thanksgiving turkey. Rick reports that over time their efforts have generated interest in the church and are contributing to a positive reputation for Sonrise among those living close by. One family that now attends the church saved information given out last Christmas before making a first visit this August. The church's repeated "low key" yet "high touch" contacts over time made the difference.



Blue Christmas...

A Service of Comfort and Hope

Sunday, December 6, 2009 ~ 4 PM

Community Evangelical Church

51 Green Valley Road, Sinking Spring, PA 19608



I would like to inform you of a ministry that we are offering that you might want to share with your parishioners and families who you feel may have a difficult time during the holiday season because they have experienced some type of significant change or loss in their lives in the past year. It may be that they are grieving the loss of a loved one, a job, their health, or a marriage. These individuals may be angry with God or feel alone and just can't deal with Christmas and all the reminders of those and that which are now gone from their lives.

We are hosting a ***Blue Christmas Service – a Service of Comfort and Hope on Sunday, December 6, at 4 PM.*** (Snow date: Sunday, December 13 at 4 PM.) This service is designed to provide encouragement to these individuals by recognizing and validating their loss, and providing elements of comfort and healing through prayer, Scripture, meditation and music. There will also be an opportunity to light a candle to represent a loved one or situation that has brought them sadness, but also to seek light in their dark times. Rev. Randall Sizemore, Director of Global Ministries for the Evangelical Congregational Church, will present a message of hope for this service. There will also be light refreshments following the service.

For more information, please contact Margie Miller, Parish Nurse, at Ph: 610-670-1942.



Immanuel E.C. Church –

Adamstown has 13 black, 10 red and 18 green choir robes available. They also have 100 old red hymnals. All of these are free to whomever wants them. If interested they can contact Pastor Lewie Bollinger or Gary Russell at the Adamstown Church.

Bridgeville EC Church in

Narvon has an old upright piano if someone would like to have it. The cost is free; you will just



need to come and haul it away. Contact Pastor Phil or Karen at the church 717-354-8459 or bridgevilleecchurch@juno.com

Faith EC Church, Lancaster is currently has a part-time Director of Music, and is looking to transition that position into a part-time worship leader. They envision this leader as the person who leads the congregation in worshiping the Lord through song during the worship services. But as they are beginning to put a job description together, they are



looking for examples from other churches that might already have such a position/job description that they can learn from. Please contact Rev. Joel Kime at joel.kime@findfaithhere.org

Rev. Ken Hoffer (610-372-9334) has a mahogany Kimball console piano with a solid sound board. It would be good for use in a classroom or sanctuary. It will need to be tuned and needs to be picked up at the following address: 808 Margaret Street, Reading.



Each year, the US Commerce Association (USCA) identifies companies that we believe have achieved exceptional marketing success in their local community and business category. These are local companies that enhance the positive image of small business through service to their customers and community.

A copy of the press release publicizing the selection of Bethany Evangelical Congregational Church has been [posted on our website](#).

Sincerely,
Ashley Carter
Selection Committee Chair
US Commerce Association



www.eccenter.com

The EC denominational website offers a lot for your use. Forms for Stationing, Benefits Corporation and Pastoral Compensation are all available online.

Copies of the newsletters (HeartCry; EC Scene; Window on the World; National News; EC Leader) are also available online. They can also be sent to you by email if you are interested. Just email Brenda at blong@eccenter.com



As the Annual Congregational meetings are being held and the electing the Lay Delegate and Alternate Delegate for 2010 is taking place, **PLEASE** remember to let us know the results of the election at Church Center. We need to know their name, address, email address, phone number and occupation. This information can be emailed to Brenda at blong@eccenter.com