

E. C. Leader

SEPTEMBER 2010

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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A Dream for Today...A Hope for Tomorrow

What is your oasis during the dry times of your spiritual life? At our recent prayer summit, Jeff Byerly compared our strategic initiatives to the refreshing and reviving waters that spring up in a desert oasis. That analogy has captured my imagination in a particular way as I pen this article.



We've all heard it said that we ECers do a good job of "weeping with those who weep," but struggle in "rejoicing with those who rejoice." What would it take for us to start our own in-house "rejoice network"? I invite our churches, pastors, and lay leaders to send "good news" notes to Church Center so that we can post and communicate positive things happening around the National Conference. I admit I don't have all the particulars in place as to what the delivery system of this rejoicing will look like (and I'm open to suggestions), but I do know that as we move forward on this, it will impact both celebration and good communication – two of our strategic initiatives. It may even spur on the beginning of a good news affinity group!

Good communication must be another spring in the desert to help revitalize us and the work of our denomination. For example, we have five commissions which operate under the umbrella of the NC, but function independently of one another. I've become increasingly convinced that we need to find those points of intersection in which we can work interdependently to better accomplish the overall mission and vision of the EC Church. I encourage the chairs of each commission to pray with me and brainstorm on mutual concerns that we might be able to pursue together.

The possibilities are mind boggling, and the affinity groups that could be spun off from such a venture would reenergize our whole body!

Today I'm dreaming about what could be as we focus on Jesus and enthusiastically work together for His glory. 1 Cor. 2:9-10 reminds us that "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him, but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit." Will you dream and trust and walk with me in the Spirit so that we as a Church may move from the anxiety we've experienced to the anticipation of all the Lord has for us?

Expectantly serving you and Him,
Fred Moury, Jr.
National Conference Chair

P.S. Start sending those "good news" items to blong@eccenter.com



NATIONAL CONFERENCE CHAIR PRAYER LIST... (REV. FRED MOURY)

- † Praise God for the blessings and good outcomes experienced by those who attended the Prayer Summit and Twin Pines Bible Conference.
- † Names of potential nominees for Bishop are being submitted to the Episcopal Nominating Committee. Pray for God's leading in the lives of all involved and for the committee as it meets again on October 26.
- † Pray for God's will to be done as Evangelical Theological Seminary appeals the recent University Senate decision of the United Methodist Church. The situation has also brought national media attention to ETS, so pray for the seminary's ongoing opportunity for an evangelical witness in those contacts.
- † October is a very busy month for our Commission and committee meetings. In addition to the National Ministry Team meeting on October 28, remember to pray for these groups also meeting in October: Leadership Commission, Church Planting Commission, Global Ministries Commission, Evangelism and Discipleship Commission, and Prayer Mobilization Committee.
- † Rev. Kenneth Wiest and Rev. Joel Kime will both be ordained during October. Pray for them, their families, and congregations during this time of celebration, and attend the services if you are able.
- † Pray for the Inman family and the Conestoga Bethel congregation in the aftermath of Mark's recent resignation from pastoral ministry there.
- † Your ongoing prayers for Debbie Leibensperger and family will be vital sources of strength, wisdom, and encouragement for them.
- † Pray Ephesians 3:14-21 for the entire Evangelical Congregational Church!



October is Pastor Appreciation Month. Show your appreciation to your pastor and consider sending your pastor's wife to the Pastors' Wives Retreat at Twin Pines, October 29-31.

REGIONAL MINISTERIAL CHANGES...

Great Lakes Region --- “Moving from Anxiety to Anticipation” is the goal of the TIPS (Transitional Interim Pastor) program of New Church Specialties now under contract at our Emmanuel EC congregation in Cedarville, IL. A pilot for what we hope to be a long term relationship in preparing congregations for their new assignments after long term pastorate, the Stationing Committee is hopefully monitoring this ministry in the Cedarville church. The TIPS pastoral couple assigned there by NCS are **Mark and Nancy Sterk**.



The Sterks are from Spokane, Washington. Nancy is a registered nurse with much experience with church life and ministry. Mark is ordained in the Church of the Nazarene and has had a background in public service as County Sheriff and state legislator. He is fully trained in interim ministry. The couple has grown children residing in the Northwest. Nancy's mother lives in the Chicago area.

We welcome with “anticipation” this pioneering initiative by the Conference partnering with the congregation. The Sterks began their ministry at Cedarville September 1, 2010.

Susquehanna Region --- **Barry Bradley** has resigned as pastor of Grace E.C. Church, Lancaster as of August 1, 2010. Mark and Terri Ammerman will begin pastoral ministry at Grace beginning October 1st, 2010, under the Conference Minister. Mark will also be applying for transfer of his credentials to the E.C. Church.



On September 12, 2010, **Mark Inman** resigned his position as pastor of the Conestoga Bethel congregation, and is returning his credentials to the EC Church due to mental and emotional illness issues connected with sexually inappropriate behavioral choices. No one from the Bethel congregation or the Conestoga community has been involved. Please pray for Mark, Jeannette, and their children, as well as the Bethel congregation during this difficult time.



NEWS FROM BENEFITS CORPORATION...

Our 2011 Health Insurance Renewal was a mixed bag of results. While we did keep the renewal rate increase under ten percent we had to concede some benefits. The changes in benefits were mandated by Aetna mostly in response to healthcare reform legislation and some to our plan experience in 2010. We did not have a good plan year. Comparing the twelve month period of May 1, 2008 - April 30, 2009 to May 1, 2009-April 30, 2010, the number of hospital admission, days of care, inpatient surgeries and emergency room visits all more than doubled from the year before; on average: 23% of our members were admitted to a hospital, 92% made a trip to the emergency room, 3.2 surgeries (inpatient and outpatient) per member, and 17.6 physician office visits per member. All of these statistics reflect 26 less members in 2009-2010 than the year before. And, our AllOne utilization this year is abysmal.



Please do not deny yourself medical care. Accidents and illnesses are going to happen. But, health issues that are ignored do not get better and can require more intensive treatment and longer recovery time. Be proactive with your health; follow your doctor's orders, take your medications as prescribed, do your therapy exercises at home as instructed, eat right, talk to your doctor and your AllOne health nurse about what makes you feel good or what makes you feel bad. The internet has many resources available for managing your health but not all of them are trustworthy. You have the greatest control over your health; please help yourself with wise health choices.

If you have not started with AllOne yet this year let's get those online Health Risk Assessments (HRAs) completed and contact our health coaches. Completing all of the requirements to qualify for the VISA gift card incentive will be difficult but not impossible. If you have started the process this year, we thank you and encourage you to complete the process.



The **2011 Health Insurance rates** are available on the website (www.eccenter.com). The first payment due under the new rates will be on December 15, 2010. The 2011 rates for the Highmark Senior Blue retiree plan are not available at this time. We will update those rates as soon as they are received.

Also, on the website are the **2011 Pastoral Compensation forms**. The forms are the same as last year, and please contact us with any questions.

Kevin Henry (khenry@eccenter.com), 1-800-866-7581
Controller

*You are invited to attend the
2010 National Conference Ordination Services*

*The ordination of Rev. Kenneth P. Wiest
Trinity Evangelical Fellowship
(Formerly known as Trinity E.C. Church)
300 Lyman Avenue (new location)
Womelsdorf, Pennsylvania
Preacher: Rev. Richard W. Kohl
Sunday, October 17, 4:00 p.m.*

*The ordination of Rev. Joel A. Kime
Faith Evangelical Congregational Church
2124 Old Philadelphia Pike
Lancaster, Pennsylvania
Preacher: Dr. John V. Tornfelt
Sunday, October 31, 4:00 p.m.*

AWAKEN

Eastern Regional Conference of the
Prayer Leaders Network
October 29-30, 2010
Trinity E.C. Church, Lititz, PA

More information is available on the EC website: www.eccenter.com



1. The Global Ministries Commission meetings will be held at Church Center, October 5-6, 2010.
2. Fall Mission and MMK Rally: October 8-9, 2010 at Salem EC, Lenhartsville, PA
 - Friday, October 8th : Pastor's Luncheon & Program (11:30 – 3:30)
 - 11:30 am Registration, lunch and program begins at noon.
 - Presentations by: Ken Sears, Kurt & Nancy Graff, Randy Sizemore

Saturday, October 9th: Adult & Children's Rallies (8:00 – 3:30)

- 8:00 am Continental breakfast & registration
- 8:50 program begins
- Presentations by: Dana Abernathy, Dr. David Brock, Ken Sears, Kurt & Nancy Graff
- Updates by DGM Randy Sizemore
- **MMK Rally will meet simultaneously with adult rally!**
- Inserts & posters were sent to your church. More are available – call the GMC office.

RSVP: September 27th 717-866-7584

A voluntary offering will be received to cover expenses.

3. The voluntary "Thank Offering" is not listed in your planner this year but is usually received in October or November. This offering is used to help meet the unbudgeted, unexpected mission needs that occur in the lives of our missionaries and mission fields. Offering envelopes are available upon request.
4. Please note the passing of Rev. Dr. John Masuda, Director, E.C. Church of Japan



Here is the announcement from Rev. Nubuo Abe, the new Director:



We are grieved to inform you that Rev. John Masuda passed away Saturday morning, September 4th. He had been in a comma a couple of days before he passed away. Please pray that God would give His peace to Pastor Masuda's family.

The memorial service took place at Kyodo Grace Church on Sep. 5th from 5pm.

The funeral service took place at Kyodo Grace Church on Sep. 6th from 1pm.

*Address: 156-0051 Tokyo-to, Setagaya-ku, Miyanosaka 2-14-12 Japan
Tel & Fax: 81-3-3427-5361*

If you would like to send a note to Kyodo Grace Church, their email address is:

churchkyodo@hotmail.com.

Any notes for John's daughter, Ruth, can also be sent to Kyodo Church at the email listed. Rev. Sudo, now pastoring there, will make sure the notes are forwarded to Ruth. Please keep Ruth and her family in prayer; this is very hard for her after also losing her mother to cancer not many years ago. We know that John is home with the Lord he loved and served, and also with his beloved Machi.

New academic year. ETS began the fall semester with 175 students enrolled. Thirty-four of those are new, including 17 in the M.Div. degree and 10 in the MAMFT track.

Faith in the Marketplace Breakfast. WGAL news anchor Anne Shannon keynotes the first breakfast of the new season on September 30. EC pastors are reminded that they and a business person from their church are invited to attend one breakfast a year as guests of the seminary.



Leadership Contact. The second course of the fall, “Studying and Interpreting the Bible,” meets for seven Tuesday nights from October 26 through December 14. Anyone interested in personal spiritual enrichment or leadership development is welcome. Register online at www.center4li.org or call Katie at Evangelical by October 12.

Do you know a potential ETS student? Tell them about our Fall Encounter Event on Thursday, November 11, at 6:30. Prospective students can sit in on a class, get to know the campus, and sense how Evangelical might help them prepare for God’s calling in their lives. All the information is available at admissions@evangelical.edu.

Fall Leadership Forum. Henry Cloud, renowned author and psychologist, will keynote this daylong event on November 18 and also speak at an earlier FIM breakfast. Credentialed EC pastors may attend the forum at 50% off the usual registration fee. Get all the details and register online at www.center4li.org

Continue to pray for Evangelical as we appeal the recent decision of the UMC’s University Senate.



“GRACE IS the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit, enabling me to be all that God has created me to be and to do all that God is calling me to do.” This understanding of grace is at the heart of what we refer to as coaching within the Supervisory Committee. It is the opposite of mentoring. Is it biblical? Is it God centered? That is for you to decide.

Here are some implications of this understanding of grace as I see it:

1. God created all of us, and He created us good.
2. We are all less than we should be through the Fall of Man and our own sinfulness.
3. God wants us to return to Him and provided the way for us to do so in Jesus.
4. God wants us to be all that we can be by His strength working in and through us.
5. As God walks with us to set aside our sinfulness, we can grow closer to Him and we can do more by His strength.

There are certainly more implications than this, but this is enough for the moment. Coaching, then, is walking with another person to help them discover God’s grace at work in their heart and life. Is this biblical? Is this God centered? What do you think???

*Bruce Wagner
Church Health Commission*