

E. C. Leader

JULY, 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.



The Universal Language

In a magazine published by a mission's organization I read of a church planting group sending out workers to contact unreached tribal groups. Each planter is equipped with a small electronic translator that includes key scriptures recorded in a variety of dialects the missionary is most likely to encounter. The theory is that even if the individual can't communicate with those he contacts – the device and God's word can.

It's possible that technology may become so sophisticated that it supplies us with a cell phone size gadget that can translate for any people in any place. But we really needn't wait for more innovation to convey the good news in everyone's heart language. Jesus showed us long ago what the universal language of His Kingdom is. "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." John 13:35 His followers are fluent in love, a vocabulary as far ranging as the multi-lingual miracle worked by the Holy Spirit in Pentecost.

We know that without love we're just so much noise and a message without meaning. (1 Cor. 13:1) What we're rediscovering is that love's a language that can't just be talked about, it must be acted out. Love that's only spoken and not lived cannibalizes its own testimony. A "word's only" love is heard as empty gibberish that's unable to conceal the truth behind it. "I don't really care."

What kind of love do you walk, not just talk? That we can't love without relationship was portrayed as I listened to stories of changed lives at the Chartering Celebration of Living Hope Lighthouse Church in Palmerton, PA. How were new believers convinced that Jesus is Lord and life? Not by arguments or events, but by people, believing friends who loved them as Jesus does. Being truly cared about by Christians is the proof Christ cares too.

The universality of love's lingo is underscored in a book by Tom Clegg and Warren Bird "Missing in America." For others to come to Jesus it's just as important for them to realize they are loved as it is to find out they are lost. The interaction they have with Jesus' followers is how that discovery is made. Clegg writes "I need to stop believing that evangelism is something Christians do to people. Instead evangelism is what happens when Christian are *with* people." If we let Him, Christ in us will draw those we befriend to Himself.

So I've been asking, "Who do I love enough to be with and care for?" My good intentions and warm feelings can't touch or reach them. Only my presence and that of Jesus living through me can. "Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth." 1 John 3:18

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ANNOUNCEMENTS & REMINDERS...

- The Leadership Commission would like to assemble a roundtable discussion and eventually a task force to address the opportunities and challenges of Bi-vocational Ministry. If you are a “tent making pastor” or have a heart for those who are serving part-time and their congregations contact Bishop Kevin.
- Church Planters are reminded that the Church Planting Commission budget is developed in fall. The Commission will be needing information on your current and projected budget and ministry goals by August 31st to commence its work.
- People are informed and motivated by “stories”. Please send us your stories of Christ at work in the ministry of your local church. Contact blong@eccenter.com

BISHOP'S TRAVELS...

AUGUST	2	Rosedale Campmeeting AM & PM
	9	Church Planting/Restart Visit
	16	Church Planting/Restart Visit
	23	Vacation
	30	Vacation



BISHOP'S PRAYER LIST...



- † For the “Transformation - strategic planning process; the finalization of the team and timetable as well as preparations for the 1st meeting on September 26
- † For the identification of new church planting, church restart, and church revitalization opportunities
- † That our commitment to living as “sent people” going into our communities to disciple people to Christ by being with and among them continues to deepen.
- † That our recent training event in “Transformational Coaching” will enhance our ability to make disciples, equip leaders, and empower ministry.
- † That congregations will continue to weather the financial adversity of our times with faith and grace.
- † Praise for an excellent response on the part of our pastors & families to the appeal to participate in the Wellness Initiative designed to help manage insurance care costs and improve personal health. Pray for those not yet signed up to join in.
- † For my family and I to experience a genuine time of “Sabbath” rest and renewal during vacation.

DENOMINATIONAL STORE...

Call the Church Center (1-800-866-7581) or email (blong@eccenter.com) to place your order for the following:

- The **2009 National Conference Journal** will be available soon. IF you have not already placed your order to it today. The cost is:
 - Binder w/cover & spine insert \$7.00
 - Section Dividers \$3.50
 - Printed Contents \$12.00
 - Additional CD - WORD format \$5.00(One (1) copy of the Conference Journal on CD will be sent to each church FREE of charge.)
- The DVD of Bishop Leibensperger's **2009 Episcopal Address** is available. Cost: \$2.00 The transcript and power point presentation are available on the EC website (www.eccenter.com)
- The 4-CD audio set of Gene Wood's sessions at the National Conference. Cost: \$6.00 This will also be available on the EC website in the near future.

The Zion Choral Society will be presenting a benefit concert on Sunday, August 16 at 7 p.m. at Rosedale Camp Grove, 1616 Vine Street, Laureldale, PA. A love offering will be taken and will go towards the ministry of Rosedale Grove. The concert is free and open to the public. For more information call 484-797-8792 or visit www.rosedalegrove.com

NEW E-MAIL ADDRESSES:

Rev. Nathan Fry – nathanfry7@gmail.com

Rev. Norman Dixon – dixonnorm@comcast.net

Free to good home: The Global Ministries Commission was given a brass cross (18 inches high) and two brass candlesticks (8 inches high) to be used in any church that wants them. First come, first served. They are on the counter in the GMC office. If no one is around, take them and please leave a note.

NEWS FROM TWINPINES:

Twin Pines is hiring an Assistant Director. Applications and job descriptions are available by calling the Twin Pines office at 570-629-2411 or by emailing the Executive Director, Shawn Fetterhoff at shawn@twinpines.org. Applications will be accepted until September 4th with interviews to follow. Twin Pines is a year round facility in Stroudsburg, PA, affiliated with the Evangelical Congregational Church. During the summer the focus is on the twenty different summer programs run by the camp. During the remainder of the year, Twin Pines is a retreat facility focused on providing a place for people to retreat from the hustle and bustle of everyday life and focus on hearing the still, small voice of God.



The position will include event planning for the camp, assisting in the administration of the camp, assisting in promotion of the camp, and general oversight of camp operation. Camp experience is preferred. Administrative experience is a plus.

NEWS FROM BENEFITS AND COMPENSATION...

ALLONE HEALTH MANAGEMENT ENROLLMENT AT 65%

As of June 30, we have 82 pastors who have completed their Health Risk Assessment (HRA) and will receive a \$25 VISA gift card for completing their HRA by the June 30th deadline. These 82 pastors represent 65% of our possible enrollees. ALLOne's first year goal for our group was 35% (with the 1st year national average being 26%). With several months to go until our first year is complete, we have the opportunity to more than double our goal or maybe even reach 100%.

Although the deadline for the \$25 VISA gift card is past, all eligible pastors who enroll in ALLOne, take the HRA, have the physician's form completed by their doctor and take 2 coaching calls from their health coach by December 31, 2009, are still eligible to receive the \$75 VISA gift card. Five pastors have already qualified for the \$75 gift card and we have 15 more that just need to complete their 2nd coaching call. ALLOne's 1st year goal for the \$75 gift card was 38. We hope we can meet and even exceed it by the end of the year!!

In addition to the 82 pastors, we have 32 dependents that have also enrolled, completed their own HRA and are talking to their health coaches. Our dependents comprise about half of the total number that we insure. Their health and wellness is just as important to help curb our health care costs, as are the pastors.

As the Benefits Corporation works on our health insurance renewal for 2010, we are already seeing results in our renewal rates because of the E.C. Church's commitment to the ALLOne program. More information on this will be announced in the August E.C. Leader.

ALLOne Walking Program

The 6 week walking program that was a follow-up to the National Conference walking contest is now over. Hopefully, you have gotten into the habit of wearing and recording your steps each day as you go about your daily activity. Remember, the goal for most people is 8,000-10,000 steps per day. If you participated in the 6 week walking program, please go online to the

www.surveymk.com/EvangelicalCongregationalChurch

[WalkingProgram](#) to complete a survey for ALLOne. It will take you about 1 minute. KEEP YOUR PEDOMETERS - we will ask you to bring them to National Conference again next year.

Have you visited the Aetna website?

For our participants in the denomination's health insurance plan through AETNA, their website at www.aetna.com has a lot of valuable information for you. If you haven't been online at aetna.com, login to the Aetna Navigator, click the Benefits tab. There is information on their 24 hour nurse line, discount programs available, Health Connections Disease Management and the 100-page plan document outlining in detail what is covered or not covered by our Aetna insurance plan. You can also change your primary care physician online or print off a temporary Aetna I.D. card.

Some may have received a call from Aetna Disease Management asking for your participation with their program and their health coaches. Your participation is totally optional. The call to you was probably prompted by a prescription that you recently filled for one of the following: a heart related problem, diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol or asthma. This program is very different from our ALLOne wellness program. ALLOne is much more interactive between the health coach and participant and much more comprehensive involving your total overall health. Aetna's disease management focuses only on the problem related to the prescription that prompted the call to you. If you haven't had a call from Aetna, you can sign-up for Aetna Disease Management on the website.

Also, click the tab on the Aetna website marked: "Take Action on your Health". You will find your personal health history based on your insurance claims. You can also estimate the cost of an upcoming test or surgery. You will find a database of Aetna providers, information on staying healthy and a guide to better health.

To our AETNA participants, we hope you make use of all that is available to you by going online at www.aetna.com