A Message From
The Rev. Jim Barnes, National Minister

Is Your Church Too Friendly for Its Own Good?

Never have I visited any church where the people who attend regularly don’t describe their church as a “really friendly group of people.” Particularly in small to mid-sized churches, those who are active in the life of the congregation generally view the church as a place that is marked by friendships that are deep and lasting.

If you look it up, you’ll discover that one of the main definitions of the word “friend” is a person attached to another by feelings of affection or personal regard. Based on that definition, many churches are filled with people who are friends with each other. Most long time church members will often say that Sunday morning is a time when they look forward to worshiping and having fellowship with their friends - with those people they are attached to by feelings of affection or personal regard.

The problem is, what most people in “friendly” churches don’t realize is that there can be a huge difference between being a “friendly” church and being a “welcoming” church. In fact, sometimes the friendliest churches are also the least welcoming churches.

What this means is, in plenty of churches, the people who regularly attend have deep and abiding friendships with each other, sometimes dating back years or even generations. In these highly connected congregations, people can be so close with one another that when a stranger or a visitor walks in the door on any given...
 Samurai, the new person quickly realizes that while the people in the building appear to have very strong friendships with each other, they don’t seem too interested in investing much time in making new friendships. In that situation it doesn’t take long for the visitor to come to the conclusion that they really don’t feel very welcome.

**So how do you tell the difference between a friendly church and a welcoming church?** It’s actually not that hard.

In a friendly church that is not a welcoming church, a visitor or stranger will come through the door on a Sunday morning and may receive a few “good mornings” from existing members of the church. But once that initial friendly greeting is done, the existing members of the church will get busy seeking out their real friends so that they can catch up and spend most of their time connecting with them. The visitor or stranger will spend most of his/her time standing or sitting alone while others are busy talking and having fellowship all around them.

On the other hand, in a church has learned to emphasize the importance of being a welcoming church, when a visitor or stranger enters on a Sunday morning, not only will he/she receive a few “good mornings” from existing members of the church, but those who are long time church members (who have plenty of deep friendships within the church) will be prepared to sacrifice precious time they could spend talking with their existing friends and instead use the fellowship time on a Sunday morning to enter into a real and sincere conversation with the new person who has wandered into the church that day. In a truly welcoming church, visitors and strangers don’t stand alone watching the regular attendees talking with each other, instead, they become the focus of the outreach efforts of established church members who are willing to skip conversations with old friends in order to devote time and effort to getting to know the new person in their midst.

As I have often said, most of the churches in the Evangelical Association are older congregations that have been around for a while. In established churches, it’s all too easy to be friendly without being welcoming. When I first entered the ministry, there was a prominent member of my congregation who would always say to me, “Pastor - our youth are the future of this church.” Whenever he would say that to me, I would often add this amendment to his statement by saying, “Newcomers and visitors are the future of this church.” If your congregation has a desire to experience growth and revitalization, it will be critical that the people in your church become intentional about shifting their focus from maintaining existing friendships on a Sunday morning to welcoming newcomers and strangers who may be taking a huge emotional risk by visiting a church that is new and unfamiliar to them.

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**Receive Your Networker Via E-Mail!**

To sign-up, all you need to do is e-mail your name and e-mail address to ~

[natmin@evangelicalassociation.org](mailto:natmin@evangelicalassociation.org)

You will begin receiving your Networker via e-mail with the next edition.
News from the EA Mission Network

The EA Mission Network is a ministry of the association that allows missionaries who belong to the EA or are endorsed by EA churches to share their ministry with the wider church. During a recent workshop at the national convocation, EAMN coordinator Pastor Steven Darr said that the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) “truly is an extraordinary mission given to us by the Lord. It gives each of us a glorious purpose and definition to our lives as Christians. This message and call is clear in its scope of vision and in the promise that He is there to empower us to complete our mission. Missionaries are called out of their own settings and into the world where God will use them for His glory. They need the support of the local church and others to fulfill the vision they have been given. The support comes in various ways including: prayer, financial assistance, lodging and encouragement.”

Pastor Darr made it clear that the EA Mission Network is not a mission board nor is it a sending agency. The EA does not provide financial support to any of the EAMN missionaries or projects. The EAMN simply seeks to connect local congregations with their brothers and sisters in Christ who have been called to missions throughout the world. That connection allows churches to offer more prayer and financial support for the EAMN missionaries.

The EAMN continues to reach out to churches and pastors within the Evangelical Association, encouraging the churches to bring to the attention of the EAMN coordinators the missionaries and mission projects currently being supported by the local churches in the EA. The goal of the EAMN for 2020 is to double the number of missionaries and projects that are currently part of the network. If your church has a project or missionary you are supporting and would like to see included in the EAMN, please contact Pastor Darr at missions@evangelicalassociation.org with the contact information for the missionary or project coordinator. He will then send them a packet that contains the necessary forms and application that need to be submitted to be recognized as an EAMN missionary or mission project.

The EAMN would like to take this opportunity to welcome R & T (anonymous due to sensitivity of their work), Rev. Dr. Abiade and Rev. Dr. Howard Law who are engaged in the newest missions in the EAMN.

Dr. Abiade has set up “International Abiade Marriage Ministries”. The goal of this ministry is to bring healing to marriages through the Word of God in their seminars. These seminars are designed to help couples understand their wounds so they may find healing in their relationship with God and then their spouse.

Dr. Law’s mission field is based in Tzaneen South Africa and reaches into Zambia and other neighboring countries. They distribute food and medical supplies to needy communities. The sending agency is “Missionary Ventures” with offices located in Orlando, Florida.

R & T serve in Southeast Asia ministering to refugee children through education and helping with medical clinics. More information is available by contacting the EAMN at missions@evangelicalassociation.org
CONVOCATION 2019
St. John’s Christian Church in Archbold, Ohio
September 20th—22nd

“Equip and Empower Theme for Convocation 2019”

This year’s national gathering of the EA happened in September at St. John’s Christian Church in Archbold, Ohio. The event began on Friday morning with the first ever “Company Retreat” organized by the EA Company of Pastors which focused on prayer and spiritual refreshment for ministers and church leaders. Later that afternoon, host pastor Erich Christman stepped in and led a session on long range church planning after receiving news that the keynote speaker’s flight had been cancelled and he was now in a car driving nine hours to get to the meeting.

With the keynote speaker arriving at the church just in time, the main event began with Friday opening worship and a talk by Nathan Rittenhouse of Ravi Zacharias International Ministries entitled “The Gospel in Our Time.” In discussing the challenges of relating the timeless message of Christ to people in this generation, Nathan stated, “The best evangelism is a Christian in his own community who is living a faithful life.”

Saturday was a full day of worship, fellowship and workshops. Various missionaries in the EA Mission Network led workshops
discussing their ministries and how local churches can be involved. Pastor Gene Bell of First Reformed Church in Bluffton, Indiana conducted a workshop on equipping local church leaders through annual retreats and Pastor Chris and his wife Carolyn Thurow took on the topic of how to be pro-life when helping people face end of life issues in an aging population. Alex Young, associate pastor at St. John’s shared a workshop on Stephen Ministry as a way of providing care to those in the church and community. Evening worship concluded the day’s events with a message from Matt Pardi, Network Director of the H2O Network entitled, “Equipping and Empowering Tomorrow’s Leaders on the College Campus.”

On Sunday morning the twenty-first annual convocation of the Evangelical Association concluded with morning worship and a message from EA National Minister Jim Barnes on the topic of spiritual gifts, reminding Christians that God has already equipped His people for the work of ministry. As people prepared to depart for home, they were treated to a Chicken Barbecue Dinner provided by the host church.
**Is It Time for You (or your Church) to Join the Evangelical Association?**

Affiliation with the EA is open to entire congregations as well as to individual pastors, students and lay people. Perhaps you’ve been reading and hearing about the EARCCC for a while, but you’ve never stepped across the line to actually affiliate with the association and become a part of the network. The EA is only as strong as those who choose to affiliate with us each year, so if you have never signed on, please visit our website at ~

www.evangelicalassociation.org

where you can download and print an application form. If you need to know more about the EA or if your church would like to have an informational presentation, please contact the national minister’s office at ~

namin@evangelicalassociation.org

or 877-424-1472.

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**BULK COPIES OF THE NETWORKER ARE NOW AVAILABLE**

If you would like a bulk shipment of ten copies of each edition of the Networker to make available to the members of your church, just contact the national office:

namin@evangelicalassociation.org

or toll free at 877-424-1472.

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**Important Dates for Your Calendar**

*(Remember: Anyone from any church is welcome to attend any gathering of the EA anywhere!)*

The next **National Gathering** of the Evangelical Association will be held **October 16-18, 2020** at First Congregational Church in Torrington, Connecticut. The theme of the meeting will be **You Are Living Stones** based on I Peter 2:5. This is the first convocation of the EA held in New England and it has been moved to October to give people the opportunity to view the famous autumn foliage in that part of the country.


The Spring **Mid-Atlantic regional gathering** of the Evangelical Association will be held on **Saturday, March 28, 2020** at St. Thomas Church in Bernville, Pennsylvania. The theme of the meeting is **“Not Leaving – Just Not Showing Up: Dealing With the Decline In Church Attendance.”** Host Pastor Dan Lute states, “If you’re part of the national average, you’re in a church that is experiencing decline in attendance. Members are not going somewhere else; they’re simply not going. At our Mid-Atlantic conference we want to explore the false expectations that may be contributing to this concern. Come and be prepared to question, to wrestle, to be encouraged, and to leave with some concrete prayer requests for your leadership and your church family.”

The Spring **North Carolina regional gathering** of the Evangelical Association will be held on **Saturday, April 25, 2020** at Eagle Rock Christian Church in Wendell, North Carolina. The theme and additional information will be coming soon.

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**The EA is Now on Facebook!**

Want to connect with other EA members around the country?

Check out the EA's “Group” and “Fan” pages on Facebook. Just search for **Evangelical Association of Reformed & Congregational Christian Churches** and check us out!!
Ministry and Employment Opportunities

First Congregational Church
Buena Park, California
Part-time Pastor
An EA affiliated congregation in Buena Park, California is seeking a part-time Pastor for an historic church. The ideal candidate will possess the ability to translate scripture into common everyday language, and the character traits and behaviors required for church leadership (Titus 1:6-9). Our next pastor will be capable of leading the congregation by example, energizing, and equipping the members to build Christ’s Kingdom. Furthermore we expect our pastor to demonstrate strengths in leadership and management skills and to be available for hospital, home, and concordance calls for our congregation when needed. The pastor will provide supervision to staff members, worship leaders, Christian education, and Diaconates. The pastor will be available for occasional evening activities as well as Sunday morning worship services and other special events is discussed and coordinated with the Pastor prior to rehearsals. The Music Director works under the supervision of the Pastor in conjunction with the Music Committee. He or she will reinforce our tradition of faith and friendship while keeping us relevant in today’s world. Our pastor will inspire, encourage and guide us with passion and courage into the future.

FCUCC’s New England-style church building was built in 1957 and is located in a residential neighborhood on 10 wooded acres. Decatur, the agribusiness capital of the world, is an ethnically diverse community with a population of nearly 75,000. It is within easy driving distance of three major cities — St. Louis, Indianapolis and Chicago. The community’s cost of living, especially housing costs, is one of the lowest in the Midwest. We offer an excellent compensation and benefits package, which includes a combined salary and housing allowance, based upon education, skills and experience. For more information about this position and/or to submit inquiries, please contact: pastoralsearch@firstchurchdecatur.org

Pleasant Ridge Christian Church
Greensboro, NC
Part-Time Music Director
The PRCC Music Director is a salaried, part time position that is responsible for the overall music program of the church, initiating programs, arranging for rehearsals, special music, etc. The Music Director also provides piano accompaniment when needed. He or she works closely and cooperatively with the Pastor in planning music appropriate to the church’s liturgy and to the service. Music for Sunday morning worship services and other special events is discussed and coordinated with the Pastor prior to rehearsals. The Music Director works under the supervision of the Pastor in conjunction with the Music Committee. He or she must have an appreciation for the mission, values and theology of PRCC and a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and encourage the spiritual growth in persons she/he works with and serves. The Music Director plans the music for Sunday morning worship services, in coordination with the Pastor, arranges for choir or other rehearsals, solos, special music, handbells, youth programs, etc., and directs the choir on a regularly scheduled basis. The Music Director will provide musical leadership for public worship and be responsible for and direct a graded choir program inclusive of all ages; young children through young and old alike. He or she will reinforce our tradition of faith and friendship while keeping us relevant in today’s world. Our pastor will inspire, encourage and guide us with passion and courage into the future.

New Life Fellowship Church
Newton, NC
Full-time Pastor
New Life Fellowship Church is non-denominational and functions as a self-governing local congregation. Our doctrinal position finds its roots in the warm-hearted tradition of Methodism. We endeavor to be cooperative in spirit with all Bible-believing churches. Our church was founded in 1989 with the purpose of promoting the worship of God among believers and Christian fellowship. Our goal along with our pastor is to build up believers in their faith and to see the conversion of the world to Jesus Christ. We are searching for a candidate who sees himself as the shepherd of the current and future attendees of New Life Fellowship. As we look to the future, we pray our next pastor will help us develop and grow not only in number but in our faithfulness to our Lord Jesus Christ. To learn more, submit your inquiries to our search committee at New Life Fellowship, 3607 Spring Valley Drive, Newton, NC 28658 or rick.caulder@gmail.com

Loyal Evangelical Church
Loyal, OK
Part-Time Pastor
We are located 45 minutes northwest of Oklahoma City and 20 minutes from Kingfisher. We are a small, caring, rural farming community. The Loyal Evangelical Church is actively seeking a candidate who accurately and dynamically proclaims God’s Word, while meeting congregational needs and inspiring the church to live for Christ. A successful candidate will be a wise leader who studies the Bible diligently, spends hours each week in prayer, is involved in the community and the association, who is also a faithful family leader and who is always available for counseling, home and hospital visits. The Loyal Evangelical Church Pastor will be a leader who knows how to best meet the needs of every age group; is biblically faithful, and enthusiastically encourages the congregation to seek God’s wisdom in all situations. Ultimately, the church is seeking someone who is capable and always willing to help build the church and attend outreach gatherings to bring more people closer to Christ. The Loyal Evangelical Church has been newly remodeled and has a clear vision to see the church grow and prosper in the Holy Spirit. Interested candidates seeking more information may contact the Loyal Evangelical Church at loyalchurch2019@gmail.com

Friedens Reformed Church
Tripp, SD
Full-Time Pastor
Our vision for our pastor is for them to be an inspiring and compelling leader, one who exemplifies the Lord’s compassion and understanding of others’ needs. In addition, the pastor needs to be effective in planning and leading worship, making sound decisions, and delivering ministry based on Biblical perspective. Outreach beyond the church such as pastoral calls to hospitals, nursing homes, and residences are important to our congregation. For more information about the position, please contact the search committee at friedensreformedchurch@gmail.com or visit the church website at: https://www.friedensreformedchurch.com/ and click on *Pastor’s Page* to access the Pastor Search Information.

Immanuel Evangelical Church
Needville, TX
Full-Time Youth Pastor
We are a theologically conservative church, with a traditional style of worship in search of a Youth Pastor to take our church to the next level of purpose-driven student ministry. The focus of our children’s and youth ministries is teaching our students to be disciples of Christ who will, in turn, impact their friends and families with the love of God. Our church is affiliated with the Evangelical Association of Reformed & Congregational Christian Churches (EA). We are seeking a candidate who works well with children, youth and adults, has a passion to bring non-church children and youth into the life of the church, is a compassionate and caring person, sensitive to others’ needs, who continues to grow in knowledge and skills important to youth ministry. To learn more, and to download our youth pastor application, please visit: www.immanuelevangelicalchurch.org/youth-pastor-search
Desk and Digital Calendars Now Available

The Evangelical Association 2019 - 2020 Desk Calendar & Ministry Planner is the official desk calendar of the Evangelical Association. The 17 month calendar (August 2019 through December 2020) features useful tools to enhance your church’s ministry including lectionary readings for Sundays and major Christian holidays, liturgical colors, a pictorial listing of missionaries in the EA Mission Network, a listing of valuable ministry resources, along with contact information to connect you with EA officers and ministries. The EA Calendar is a great ministry tool not only for pastors but also for church council leaders, mission committees and worship planning teams. Make sure you order enough copies for all of the ministry team leaders in your congregation.

The calendars are priced as follows:
$15.00 each for 1-2 / $13.00 each for 3-5 / $12.00 each for 6 or more
(Prices include packing and shipping at no extra charge)

The EA also offers a 2019-2020 Digital Calendar & Ministry Planner that can be utilized on an iPad or other mobile device. The Digital Calendar is a PDF version that contains the same information as the spiral bound print edition, but also allows the user to read the lectionary readings powered by Bible Gateway, and add notes and appointments to editable calendar dates. A free Adobe Acrobat Reader App needs to be downloaded on your mobile device for full functionality.

The “digital only” version is $10.00

You can order the EA Desk Calendar by:

1. Sending an email to natmin@evangelicalassociation.org or calling toll free 877-424-1472. Be sure to indicate quantity and the address to which you want the calendar(s) shipped. No advance payment is required. We will enclose an invoice with your order from which to pay – we trust you!

2. Visiting the online store found on our website http://evangelicalassociation.org. There you can place your order making a secure payment with a credit/debit card through PayPal and we will then send the calendar(s) to you and/or you will receive the required link to download your digital copy.