

networker

.....WORKING THE NETS FOR KINGDOM ADVANCEMENT



*A Message From
The Rev. Jim Barnes, National Minister*

Getting Back to Normal?

During my many years serving as a local church pastor, one thing that would occasionally frustrate me was when someone on our “shut-in” list (a person who said they couldn’t come to church due to health reasons), would then be spotted during the week out to lunch in a restaurant with friends. This kind of behavior would immediately cause me to wonder if the person really couldn’t make it to the church service or if it was more a matter of priorities and interest.

The global pandemic of the past year essentially made everyone a “shut-in” (at least for a while depending on where you live and what you do for a living). Now that the vaccines are readily available and gathering restrictions are lifting in most parts of the country, the question many pastors and church leaders are asking is, “Will people return to the church for



Pastor Ron Regular and his wife Carol remind their congregation that they miss seeing them at Rowland Chapel Christian Church in Henderson, North Carolina

Welcome to the Association!

During the past several months the following churches, pastors and individuals have chosen to become new affiliates of the Evangelical Association:

St. John Church
Hebron, North Dakota

Rev. James Neese, Jr.
Lexington, North Carolina

Trinity Church of New Lebanon
New Lebanon, Ohio

Rev. Allen D. Thompson
Kannapolis, North Carolina

Rev. Dr. Paul E. Isaacs
Greenwood, Delaware

Lyons Evangelical Church
Lyons, Texas

Rev. Larry R. Danghenbaugh
East Earl, Pennsylvania

Marshall Ray Porter
Oakdale, Illinois

Rev. Izi Lewis Obi
Mebane, North Carolina

Rev. Dennis E. Whitmore
Clear Spring, Maryland

Steven Britt
Sugar Land, Texas

Networker

Summer—2021
Publishing Staff

Editor: Rev. Jim Barnes

Design Editor: Leslie Spanyer

Networker is published periodically as the official newsletter of the Evangelical Association of Reformed and Congregational Christian Churches. Inclusion of an article or advertisement does not indicate endorsement by the Evangelical Association.

Subscription:

Networker is a free publication. To receive a copy of the *Networker*, e-mail circulation at:

natmin@evangelicalassociation.org

Printed in the United States.

To reprint any *Networker* content, contact the editorial office by e-mail:

natmin@evangelicalassociation.org

Order:

To order back-issues or additional copies of the *Networker* e-mail:

natmin@evangelicalassociation.org

Board Officers:

Rev. Dr. John Richter
President

Rev. Dr. Tom Hendershot
Vice President

Rev. Rich Dubbs
Secretary

Rev. Ed Briggeman
Treasurer

continued from page 1

worship, Christian education and other activities?” The answer I’m hearing from many pastors in EA churches across the country is, “Sort of.”

These days, the vast majority of churches in our association are having live, in person worship in their church buildings. Many have also restarted Sunday School, youth activities and other fellowship events. The frustration being expressed by many pastors and church leaders however, is that a significant number of church members who were shut-in by the virus are still not returning to the church building. This frustration for church leaders is only compounded by the fact that many of these believers no longer appear to be particularly concerned about the virus as they can regularly be found in restaurants, grocery stores, sporting events, etc. - just not in church.

One of the benefits of the pandemic is that it has forced many churches to move quickly into the 21st century by upgrading their technology and offering better internet access to worship services and other church activities. On the upside, this has allowed our churches to expand their ministry to touch the lives of those who live both near and far from the actual building. On the downside, many who were once regular church attenders are now opting for what some friends of mine refer to as “*the church of the couch*,” in the comfort of home in front of the TV. One pastor recently told me that the “in person” worship at his church is about 65 percent of what it was before the pandemic. Of the remaining 35 percent, he said that some appear to be completely disconnected, but that the rest were still choosing to connect with the church online at home, just not in person.

Again, as people are no longer “shut-in” by the pandemic, the next challenge for many churches will be figuring out how to encourage people to return to the corporate life of the congregation. While online ministry can be a fairly effective tool for delivering a sermon to people, it can hardly replace the joy of hearing a room full of believers singing as one to God and receiving the Lord’s supper together. Beyond that, the crisis in education during the past year reminds us that for children, online learning is no substitute for in person interaction with teachers and fellow learners. And of course, most of our congregations love to eat together - which again, is something that can only happen live and in person.

As our churches move forward into what we hope will be the “post pandemic” reality, my prayer is that we will continue to use the new tools we discovered during the past year to spread the Gospel in exciting and creative ways. Furthermore, I hope that as we do that, we will also be able to remind one another of the truth of scripture in Hebrews 10:25 which says, “*Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another....*”

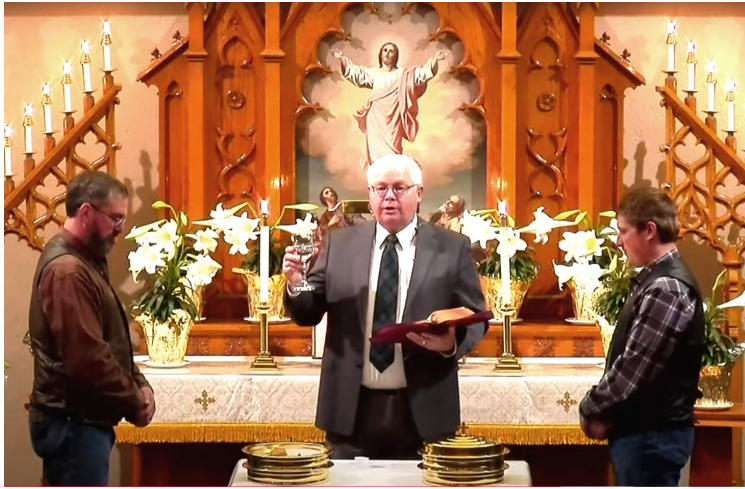
Receive Your Networker Via E-Mail!

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

natmin@evangelicalassociation.org

You will begin receiving your *Networker* via e-mail with the next edition.

Returning to the Table - Celebrating the Sacrament



Pastor Gaylund Olson leads communion at St. John Church in Hebron, North Dakota

While some pastors continued offering the Lord's Supper "virtually," by asking congregants at home to find their own bread and wine (or juice), some churches simply postponed the event all together for many months. Yet the admonition found in Question 125 of the old *Evangelical Catechism* says this: *The Lord's Supper is the sacrament by which we receive the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ as the nourishment of our new life, sustain and confirm the communion with Christ and all believers, and proclaim that the Lord has died for us.* And of course, in scripture we read these words of the apostle Paul in I Corinthians 11:26, "For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you

Many congregations in the Evangelical Association spent much of the last year worshipping "online" with pastors preaching to a camera in an empty sanctuary. In this unusual environment, one thing that often went missing from the regular worship routine in many churches was the celebration of the Lord's Supper. As restaurants were busy closing their buffets and everyone was concerned with "touching" things that might spread the virus, one of the first casualties of the pandemic in the church was the celebration of the sacrament of communion.



Pastor Adam Cork shares words of institution at Grace Church in New Braunfels, Texas



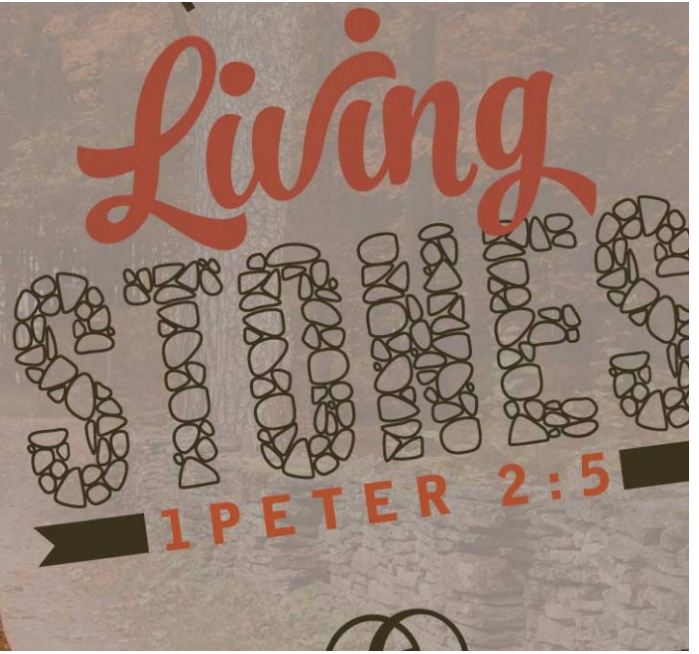
Pastor John Thiele of Zion Church in Clifton, Texas celebrates Easter communion

proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

The truth is, most Christians believe in the importance of sharing in communion on a regular basis, regardless of their particular theological views surrounding the sacrament. On a positive note, this Spring seemed to be the time when many churches across the EA began "coming back to the table" corporately speaking, with Easter Sunday being a big day for many congregations to share the Lord's Supper together.

2021 EA CONVOCAATION

OCTOBER 15-17, 2021
FIRST CHURCH
TORRINGTON, CONNECTICUT



Karl Vaters



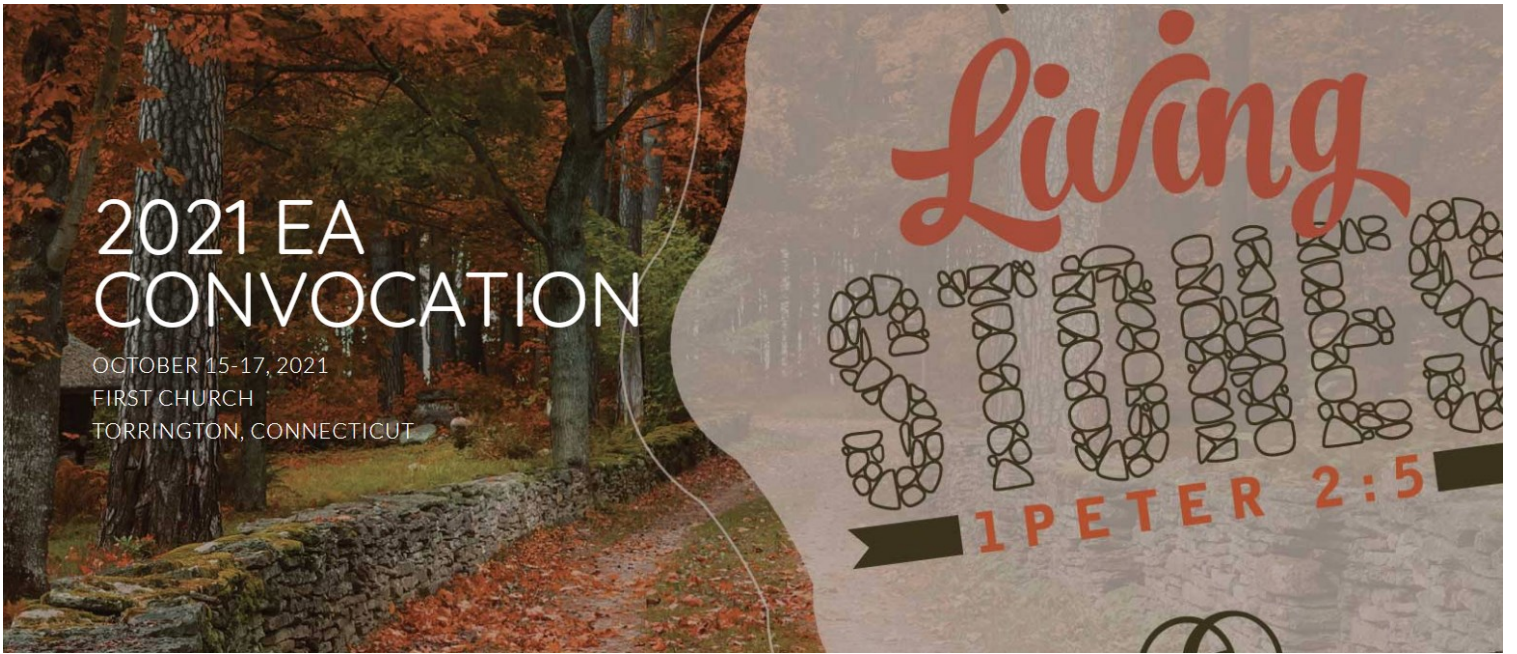
Cliff Knechtle

Plan to Attend Convocation in New England in October

After being postponed during the pandemic, **First Congregational Church of Torrington, Connecticut** is getting ready to welcome EA pastors and laypeople from all across the country to a convocation at their historic church in New England from **October 15-17, 2021**. The planning team has been working for several years to organize this year's EA convocation and they have lined up a slate of excellent speakers and workshop leaders for the three day event.

One of the speakers this year, Karl Vaters is author of the book *Small Church Essentials* and is recognized by many as an expert in helping small churches thrive. Karl believes that as our society comes out of the trauma of the recent pandemic, it will provide a unique opportunity for smaller churches to help people reconnect with one another following a year of isolation. Since most congregations have less than 200 people in worship and many more have less than 100, Karl offers encouragement that God has a plan to use the smaller church to build His Kingdom.

Another keynote speaker, Cliff Knechtle serves as pastor at Grace Community Church in New Caanan, Connecticut and works with a ministry called *Give Me An Answer* that helps college and university students find answers to their tough questions about Christianity. Currently, scheduled workshops cover topics such as how to navigate a church through a pastoral transition, revitalizing local churches, activating lay people for ministry and many others.



2021 EA CONVOCATION

OCTOBER 15-17, 2021
FIRST CHURCH
TORRINGTON, CONNECTICUT

Living

STONES

1 PETER 2:5

Celebrate Your Connection to the EA this Fall

(continued from page 4)

The purpose of the EA annual gathering is to have a time of worship, fellowship, teaching and building relationships among the wide variety of pastors, church leaders and lay people from churches **who enjoy connecting with the wider body of Christ through the Evangelical Association**. Since the Evangelical Association does not conduct business meetings, churches **can send anyone they want** to the annual convocation (a few years ago one of our smaller churches sent close to half of their congregation to convocation!) It's a wonderful opportunity to network and get new ideas for how to do more effective ministry in your own local church.

Detailed information about all of the speakers and workshops as well as registration, lodging and travel information can be found and printed out by visiting the special convocation website which is:

<https://eaconvocation.weebly.com>



*First Congregational Church
of Torrington, Connecticut*

If you do not have internet access and need a paper copy of the convocation brochure, please contact: First Congregational Church of Torrington at (860) 482-4705. Give them your name and mailing address and a brochure will be sent to you.

**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.

**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:

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

evangelicalassociation.org

or toll free at 877-424-1472

Consider Charitable Giving from an IRA

Local churches and ministries like the Evangelical Association rely on the **generosity of donors** in order to carry on their work. While most people know that giving to a church or qualified 501c3 organization like the EA is tax deductible, **many older people no longer itemize their deductions** when filing their tax return and thus do not benefit from the charitable deduction.

There is a **solution allowed by the IRS** for older people called an "IRA Direct Rollover." Since many IRA owners must take a minimum distribution each year, they can meet this requirement by having all or part of their required minimum distribution (up to a certain defined limit) go straight to a qualified charity. That way **the distribution is not counted as taxable income to the IRA owner**. This is a particularly useful way to give for those who own a traditional IRA because much of the money in these accounts is eventually taxable.

If you would like to make this type of contribution to the Evangelical Association or any other charitable group, contact your financial advisor to learn more. **Contributions to the EA can be sent directly to the national office** and may be designated for the General Fund or the National Minister Support Fund.

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

To learn more about the following ministry & employment opportunities,
please visit our website: evangelicalassociation.org

Zoar United Church of Christ

Evansville, IN
Full-time Pastoral Leadership

Middleton Congregational Church

Middleton, MA
Senior Pastor
www.middleton.org

Redeemer Evangelical Church

St. Louis, MO
Full or Part-time Senior Pastor
www.redeemerstl.com

Shiloh Reformed Church

Faith, NC
Part-time Organist
www.shilohreformedchurch.com

St. Paul's Reformed Church

China Grove, NC
Full or Part-time Pastor

Beulah Congregational Church

Beulah, ND
Full-time Pastor
www.beulahcongregational.com

Salem Church

Waynesboro, PA
Full-time Pastor
www.salemchurchpa.org

St. John's Morgan Hill

Easton, PA
Full-time Senior Pastor

Peace and St. Peter's UCC Churches

Just North of Harrisburg, PA
Full-time Pastor
www.sites.google.com/site/peaceucc0316/home

St. Paul's Church

Stowe, PA
Full-time Pastor
www.stpaulschurchstowe.com

Immanuel Leidy's Church

Souderton, PA
Senior Pastor
www.leidyschurch.org/jobs

Redeemer United Church

Zuehl, TX
Full-time Pastor



revitalize.reproduce.
EVANGELICAL ASSOCIATION



EVANGELICAL
ASSOCIATION

NONPROFIT ORG.
US POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT NO. 2828
ST. LOUIS MO

RETURN SERVICE
REQUESTED

Contact Information:

National Minister

**Evangelical Association
of Reformed and Congregational
Christian Churches**

**9051 Watson Road #241
St. Louis, MO 63126**

E-mail:

natmin@evangelicalassociation.org

Web

evangelicalassociation.org

Toll Free Number

877-424-1472

If you are no longer interested
in receiving the Networker
Newsletter, please tear off this
address page and return it to:

**Evangelical Association
9051 Watson Road #241
St. Louis, MO 63126**

New Desk Calendars Shipping End of July

The Evangelical Association 2021-2022 Desk Calendar & Ministry Planner is the official desk calendar of the Evangelical Association. The 17 month calendar (August 2021 through December 2022) 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)

You can order the EA Desk Calendar by:

1. Visiting the store on our website at [EA Online Store](#). 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.
2. 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!

