

SPRING ~ 2015

networker

.....WORKING THE NETS FOR KINGDOM ADVANCEMENT



What Does Your Church Believe About Marriage?

A Message from The Rev. Jim Barnes, National Minister

She found our church in a phone book and showed up on a weekday with her tape measure. When I asked the young woman what she needed, her answer was, “I’m looking for a church to get married in and I want to measure your building to make sure my wedding party will fit up front.” I then attempted to redirect her into a discussion of what it would mean to have a Christian marriage ceremony in our church, but she was firmly resolved to go into the sanctuary and take measurements - so I let her go.

After the bride-to-be had completed her analysis of our building, I talked with her for a while, explaining what our church believed about the **nature of Christian marriage**. I then handed her a copy of our church’s wedding policy, told her to read it with her fiancé and then call back if she wanted to move forward. I didn’t hear from her again, **nor did I hear from any lawyers complaining that our wedding policy discriminated**

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Advancing the Kingdom at Spring Gatherings

Each year members and friends of the Evangelical Association come together for worship, fellowship and spiritual growth in various locations across the country. Beginning in April there are several EA events scheduled. If one of these regional gatherings is near you, please make plans to attend.

North Carolina Regional

Saturday, April 18, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m., at Pleasant Ridge Christian Church in Greensboro, North Carolina. The event is titled “Advancing the Kingdom – As We Stand Firm,” and will include workshops, worship and lunch. Cost is \$10 per person and registration information can be found at www.pccgreensboro.org. If you need more information contact Pastor Bill Meredith at 302-521-5066.

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Common Ground Christian Network Focuses on Religious Freedom

At a recent meeting of the Common Ground Christian Network in Arlington, Virginia (CGCN is an ecumenical gathering of Christians pulling together evangelical believers from many strands of mainline church tradition), participants heard from a number of speakers addressing the theme of religious liberty around the world.



Believers lay hands on and pray for Juliana Taimoorazy

With the recent atrocities committed against Christians and other religious groups in the Middle East by ISIS,

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National
Convocation of
the Evangelical
Association

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Swamp Christian
Fellowship
Reinholds, PA

What Does Your Church Believe About Marriage?

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against people who wanted to marry in our church who were not prepared to affirm our statement of faith, attend worship regularly and agree to practice abstinence and stop living together if they were already cohabiting prior to the wedding day (which were all written requirements for a ceremony in our church).

My assumption is that either our church didn't measure up, or, the religious convictions regarding faith, worship and sexual behavior expressed in our wedding policy were not acceptable to this particular bride and groom. Regardless of their reasons for not pursuing a ceremony at our church, **at least this couple respected our right to have policies based on our religious convictions** which they would need to abide by if they chose to have their ceremony in our building. *I wonder if their response would have been the same these days?*

In recent years, florists, bakers, photographers and the proprietors of wedding chapels and other venues have been challenged and in some cases sued if they refuse to provide services that violate their deeply held religious convictions regarding the nature of marriage. While some believe churches would be exempt from such attacks if our society changes its definition of marriage, the question is, will the right to the free exercise of religion guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution be able to hold up against the newly perceived rights people believe they have to unrestrained sexual expression and the practice of gender fluidity?

I recently attended a meeting of the Common Ground Christian Network on the theme of religious freedom (see article on page one). A featured speaker was constitutional and church law attorney Scott Ward who suggested that many churches are unprepared for what may be coming if the Supreme Court rules against natural marriage later this year. Ward stated, "The best way to protect your rights will be to clearly articulate your religious identity in all important organizational documents."

Since most of the churches affiliated with the Evangelical Association are independent, the question I would ask is, **"Has your church taken the time to clearly articulate what it believes about Christian doctrine and morality?"** If your church's right to the free exercise of religion eventually does come under attack, it will be very important that congregations have taken the time to state what their religious convictions are and why they hold those convictions.



Attorney Scott Ward gives practical counsel and action at the CGCN meeting in Arlington, VA

continued on next page

Furthermore, if your congregation is part of the Evangelical Association, you need to make sure your affiliation is current since **each year a church belongs to the EA is another year that they have gone “on the record” as affirming the religious belief that marriage is the union of one man and one woman.** Since the EA keeps a record of signed renewal forms, we have the paper trail your church might need at some point to prove your position on these matters.

Back when the congregation I served created their first written wedding policy nearly fifteen years ago, we never anticipated the changes to the definition of marriage that would happen in our society just a decade later. At the time, some in our church even thought we were putting things in writing that were **so obvious** that we were actually being **overly cautious**. In hindsight, it’s clear that in order to adequately articulate the beliefs of an orthodox, evangelical church, that policy probably needs a few more paragraphs!



I Believe in the Church

A Message from The Rev. Jeff Siems, EA Board President

In spite of her imperfections, I believe in the church—I really, really do! There is nothing like the local church when it’s working right. In the words of Pastor Bill Hybels:

“Its beauty is indescribable. Its power is breathtaking. Its potential is unlimited. It comforts the grieving and heals the wounded and the abused in the context of community. It builds bridges to seekers and offers truth to the confused. It provides resources for those in need and opens its arms to the forgotten, the downtrodden, the disillusioned. It breaks the chains of addictions, frees the oppressed, and offers belonging to the unwanted. Whatever the capacity for human suffering, the church has a greater capacity for healing and wholeness.” No other organization on earth is like the church.

In spite all of her flaws and shortcomings, I believe in the Church—I believe in the local church—and that includes the churches of the Evangelical Association!

Our journey in Christ was never meant to be a solo adventure—we were meant to be “networked”. Scott Peck wrote: “We can never be completely whole in and of ourselves. We are inevitably social creatures who desperately need each other—not merely for company but for any meaning to our lives whatsoever.” The New Testament Church did a great job of realizing that we must be a family on a mission rather than just a collection of acquaintances. Truth of the matter is that we were created to have relationships. God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone.” And when Jesus sent out His disciples, He sent them out two by two. The church was not meant to be a building, but to be a family that collectively builds the church.

How do we build the church? **As a family, we gather others.** We are called to reproduce ourselves by bringing others to Christ. **As a family, we are called to give life.** If you have Christ in your life, then you have eternal life—eternal life means that you will never die! Doesn’t that excite you?! It should—and we should be excited enough to share it. **As a family we encourage one another.** We should develop the kind of a relationships

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Is It Time for You (or your Church) to Join the Evangelical As- sociation?

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 web site 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 natmin@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 at natmin@evangelicalassociation.org

or toll free at
877-424-1472

CGCN Focuses on Religious Freedom *continued from page 1*

the freedom of minority religions to even exist in many countries is now in question. Juliana Taimoorazy, an Assyrian Christian who escaped persecution in her native Iran talked in great detail about the current persecution occurring in Iraq and other areas with historic Christian minority populations where believers are literally being killed or forced out of their homes and villages for identifying with Christ.

Frank Wolf, a retired congressman, shared the story of a Christian husband who attempted to take his wife of 28 years to Mosul for her breast cancer treatments after ISIS had seized the city. When they arrived at the hospital, they were met by a guard who refused to allow them in because they were Christian. They were told that the price for entrance and medical treatment was conversion to Islam. The wife responded, "I am not going to leave the cross of Christ. I will not abandon it. For me, a love of life is not as important as the faith. The desire to go on living is not as important as my faith." The couple, a construction worker and his wife, returned to their small village. Ten days later, the 45 year old mother passed away with her husband and two sons, ages 19 and 8 at her side.

Throughout the two day meeting of the CGCN, several speakers reported on how religious liberty is under assault in the Middle East and in various nations of the world. In reflecting on the two day meeting, EA National Minister Jim Barnes said, "It's so easy for Christians in the West to lose perspective when we use the term 'persecution.' Here in the United States, we Christians get upset and sometimes say we're being persecuted when our friends and neighbors make disparaging remarks about our faith. We need to put all of that in perspective as we remember our brothers and sisters around the world who are literally losing their lives for the Lord."

Advancing the Kingdom at Spring Gatherings

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Mid-Atlantic Regional

Saturday, April 25, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m., at St. Thomas Church in Bernville, Pennsylvania. The focus of the day will be the "New Life for Old Churches" seminar given by our National Minister, Jim Barnes. Cost is \$10 per person and includes lunch. For more information call Pastor Bill Miller at 610-488-6702.

New Life for Old Churches Seminar

Saturday, May 2 at Wolverine First Congregational Church in Wolverine, Michigan. For more information call Pastor Mike Sanders at 231-238-7889

Upper Midwest Regional

Saturday, May 9 at Cross Community Church in Berne, Indiana. For more information call Pastor Chris Kruchkow at 260-589-2752.

Virginia Area Pastors Gather for Fellowship

Left to right—Steven Szelmeczki, Judy & Cliff Poirot, Gina & Robb Cypher, Caroline & Joe Penick, Patsy & Bob Stainback gather in Strasburg, VA for EA Pastor and spouse fellowship dinner.



For more information about future gatherings along the I-81 corridor in Virginia, contact Rev. Cliff Poirot at 540-896-3747 or poirotcs@gmail.com

I Believe in the Church *continued from page 3*

with others where they know beyond any shadow of a doubt that they are in your corner and that you are in their corner, that we are a family — that we are brothers and sisters rooting for each other and spurring one another on to love and to good works. **As a family, we minister together through spiritual gifts.** I tell you—Jesus is so smart, isn't He? He designed His church to be led by people with leadership gifts, taught by people with teaching gifts, shepherded by people with shepherding gifts, healed by people with discerning gifts, and administrated by people with administrative gifts. It is such a neat plan, and where churches have taken hold of it, it is bearing fruit.

We are a family on a mission: to gather others, to give life, to encourage, and to go forward with the ministry of Jesus. I believe that the Church is special, but not perfect—yet she is always worth everything we can give her—as is the case for each and every local church of the Evangelical Association!

Motivational speaker Zig Zeigler was playing a game of golf with his son. On one hole, his son sank his first birdie. Zeigler followed with a birdie of his own. As they were walking to the next tee box, Zeigler put his arm around his son and said, "I've got a question for you, son. Were you rooting for me?" And Zig Zeigler's son looked up at his dad and he said, "Hey, Dad. I always root for you."

I will say it again—I believe in the Church—I believe in the local church—including **this association of churches**—and I will always root for you!

Ministry and Employment Opportunities

AFRICA – Chingola, Zambia. Mature Christians who are called as missionaries are needed to work as Secondary School Teachers, Primary School Teachers, Dorm Parents and support staff. Willing to raise financial and prayer support to serve at Amano Christian School in Chingola, Zambia. Seeking one or two-year commitment to 140 students Grade 1-12 Christian school in Central Africa. Email to frank.wittmann@amanocs.org. Visit our website www.amanocs.org

ALABAMA – St. John's Evangelical Protestant Church in Cullman, Alabama is seeking a full-time youth minister to use his/her skills to bring organizational and visionary leadership for youth ministry within the dual context of family life and the church's larger ministry. For more information contact Rev. Dr. John Richter at john.richter@sjepc.com or at 256-734-0344.

OHIO – Director of Music Ministry. We are an EA church seeking a part-time director of Music Ministry at Jerusalem Church in New Philadelphia, Ohio. We hold 2 services (Contemporary and Traditional). At the Contemporary Service the responsibility is as Worship Leader. At the Traditional Service the responsibilities are Adult and Children Choirs. Please send resumes to the ATTN: Search Committee via email jerusalemchurch12@yahoo.com or via mail: Jerusalem Church, 1417 Stonecreek Rd SW, New Philadelphia, OH 44663.

MICHIGAN - First Congregational Church, an independent congregational church located in Traverse City, Michigan, is searching for the Senior Pastor who is theologically evangelical, homiletically superior, a committed spiritual leader and a visionary with a servant's heart. FCC is a 300 plus active member church that currently offers a weekly Sunday traditional service and a twice monthly Saturday evening contemporary service. Our ideal candidate will have a Master of Divinity degree from an accredited seminary and 10 years of pastoral experience or equivalent. Please also see: <http://www.fctc.org/> and <http://www.traversecitymi.gov/about.asp> A church profile, expectations and opportunity for this pastoral position, and an application packet may be requested by emailing pastorsearch@fctc.org

NORTH CAROLINA – Boger Reformed Church is seeking a full-time pastor who will passionately teach/preach the Word of God and present the Gospel. We are looking for a pastor who will provide vision and guidance to the church. Boger Reformed Church is located in a rural community located outside of Concord, NC in Cabarrus County. There is a parsonage, playground, fellowship hall, barbecue hut and a traditional sanctuary located on approximately a fourteen-acre campus. There are 80 active members. Interested applicants should email questions and resumes to mike@tridenteng.us

NORTH DAKOTA – Beulah Congregational church is seeking a full time pastor. Beulah congregational church is a historic church in Beulah N.D. and belongs to the Conservative Congregational Christian Conference. We are a diverse congregation of all ages, from many different backgrounds, and from several different towns, but we find unity in our common faith in Jesus Christ. We are a reformational and evangelical church. We uphold key reformational beliefs such as the inspiration and authority of the Bible, salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. We observe two sacraments-Holy Baptism (including infant baptism) and Holy Communion. We are a family church. Our worship is inter-generational, we have an active Sunday School for all ages, youth programs for our children and children of the community (who don't attend our church) and educational opportunities for men, women, youth, and children. To obtain a full profile of the church or to submit an application, please contact Marvin Sutherland, Box 242, Zap, N.D. 58580, Phone (701)948-2805, or msutherland@yahoo.com. Our Church website is www.beulahcongregational.com

PENNSYLVANIA – Grace Church, 12 Dromgold Road, Shermans Dale, PA is seeking a part-time pastor (perhaps a retired pastor who lives in our area). Our web site is www.graceatdromgold.org Exact duties and time could be determined after discussion and would depend on your desires and our ability to pay. Initial contact can be made to Dr. Bob Gasull at 717-582-8671 or bgasull@embarqmail.com

PENNSYLVANIA – Salem Evangelical & Reformed Church (an Evangelical Association affiliated congregation) in Reamstown, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, is seeking a full-time Senior Pastor. Salem has 110 active church family members. Interested candidates should visit the church website at www.salemchurchreamstown.org to view our church statement of faith and mission statement. Should you be in agreement with these foundational doctrines, please send your resume and introductory letter to: Salem Evangelical & Reformed Church, Attn. Carl Haberman, PO Box D, Reamstown PA 17567 or email to cychaberman@dejazzd.com.

PENNSYLVANIA – Swamp Christian Fellowship of Reinholds, PA www.swampcf.org is seeking a part-time Music Director to lead worship through music in blended services. The candidate must enjoy and be able to lead both traditional hymns and contemporary praise, working with both choir and worship band. Other responsibilities include oversight of special music events. Please contact Ted Reimel at 717-203-8620 or tedreimel@gmail.com

KNOTS IN THE NET

Getting to know the Congregations, Clergy and Laity of the Evangelical Association

The “Boy” Pastor and His Call to Five Churches (at the same time!)

The Rev. Wayne Wright - Mt. Olivet Christian Church, Elkton, Virginia

It was the late 1950s and Wayne Wright was a high school student called to ministry. With a license to preach from the Methodists, Wayne was referred to by many of the parishioners in the four churches he served while still in high school as the “boy” preacher. When asked how he could serve as pastor of four churches at the same time, Wayne explained, “One of the churches had a Sunday night service and in the others I preached every other Sunday morning.” Following his graduation from high school in 1958, Wayne increased his responsibilities to five Methodist churches that were his sole responsibility; however you do the math, Pastor Wayne was preaching at three to four services every single Sunday.

In 1960, Wayne married his wife Joyce and set off on a career selling life insurance. During his 40 years with Met Life, he worked as a regional sales manager, all the while remaining involved in bi-vocational ministry serving as pastor of various churches. His ministry to Mount Olivet UCC began in 1982 when the church worship attendance was around 30 people on a Sunday morning. According to Wayne, “Seven of the thirty who showed up for church back in those days came in my car - my wife, our five kids and me.”

Although members of the congregation had called Wayne to serve as their new pastor, some of the denominational leaders seemed uninterested in having him take the position. “I believe they simply intended to let the church go out of business,” stated Pastor Wayne, “however they finally stopped resisting and one denominational leader even said, ‘We’ll be closing the doors of that church in six months anyway.’”

At age 75, Rev. Wayne Wright still serves as the pastor of Mt. Olivet Christian Church which averages between 130-150 in worship each Sunday. He was ordained by the congregation on September 27, 2009.

The church itself was formed in 1899 under the leadership of Rev. W.T. Herndon who was a native of Chatham County, North Carolina. Herndon began his ministry as an ordained elder in the Christian church and staff member at Elon College.

During the 1930's the church participated in the merger with the Congregationalists and the name of the church became Mt. Olivet Congregational Christian Church. In the late 1950's they became part of the United Church of Christ and in 2008 they departed from the UCC. Shortly thereafter the congregation joined the Evangelical Association.



KNOTS IN THE NET

Getting to know the Congregations, Clergy and Laity of the Evangelical Association

Church Planting in Cajun Country

The Rev. Paul T. McHenry III

Trinity Evangelical & Reformed Church, Cottonport, Louisiana



Trinity ER Church storefront and Pastor McHenry

Paul McHenry grew up “everywhere” as a self-proclaimed military brat. Following in the family tradition, he became a naval officer as a young man and was deployed. While serving on board a ship, he was approached by the captain one day who noticed that he was the only officer who regularly attended church. After making this observation, the senior officer said, “You will be in charge of the Protestant services on board since we have no chaplain.” With that, Paul’s call to ministry was initiated.

After leaving military service, Paul enrolled at Reformed Theological Seminary where he received his divinity degree and began serving in various congregations affiliated with the Presbyterian Church in America. In 2002, while living and

working in Atlanta, he began dating a woman who would eventually become his wife. It just so happened that she lived in Cottonport, Louisiana.

Phil moved to Cottonport to get married and then began a new career as a middle and high school Social Studies teacher in the local public system. While teaching teens, he also continued ministry work by serving as bi-vocational pastor of a small Presbyterian church in a nearby community.

In recent years, Pastor McHenry began to sense that God was calling him to plant a Reformed church in a parish in Louisiana with very few Protestant churches. In September of 2014 he and a small group of believers began renting a storefront in the center of the town to conduct Thursday night Bible studies and Sunday evening services.

Through his work with the public school system, one of the dreams Pastor Paul has for the church is that the Lord would call some young people with a missionary heart from nearby Christian colleges to come to the area to serve as school teachers (the rural community desperately needs qualified full-time teachers). These young teachers would then have the means to live in the community and minister to the unreached.

Trinity Evangelical & Reformed Church is a church plant of the Evangelical Association having recently joined the EA as an affiliated congregation. For more information, you can contact Pastor Paul at paultmchenryiii@yahoo.com or 318-308-0761.



Rev. Paul McHenry and the communion table built by students at the school where he teaches

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Welcome to the Association!

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

Grace Memorial Church
New Braunfels, Texas

Rev. Jeff McCarty
Louisville, Kentucky

Rev. Lew Newton
Louisville, Kentucky

Rev. Jody Guerrero
Thomaston, Connecticut

**New Bethel Community
Christian Church**
Wendell, North Carolina

Liz Miller
Sinking Spring, Pennsylvania

Rev. Blake Deibler
Quarryville, Pennsylvania

**Trinity Evangelical
and Reformed Church**
Cottonport, Louisiana