

Fall ~ 2023

networker

.....WORKING THE NETS FOR KINGDOM ADVANCEMENT



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

The Importance of Honest Evangelism

If you've been keeping up with the trends in technology, you know that with the growing influence of artificial intelligence and the ability of computers to create "deep fake" videos and photos of people that have been manipulated with software, we can all be easily deceived into **believing that fake things are real**. I heard a report just the other day suggesting that it won't be long before criminals will be able to make fake phone calls using artificial intelligence that will sound like our loved ones conversing with us on the other end of the line in order to try and con us out of money.

That's the deceptive and deceitful world we're living in right now - and in that kind of environment where people are **learning they can't really trust anything or anyone**, if Christians are going to be able to share their faith with those who are not following Jesus, we need to be brutally honest, sincere and truthful in every aspect of our lives with the people we're trying to reach with the good news of Jesus. To put it more concisely, we need to make certain we're practicing "honest evangelism."

In II Corinthians 2:17 the apostle Paul says this, *"Unlike so many, we do not peddle the word of God for profit. On the contrary, in Christ we speak before God with sincerity, like men sent from God."* The key word in that passage that we need to remember these days is **sincerity**. To do something with sincerity means to do it without pretense, deceit or hypocrisy. If we as Christians are going to take seriously Jesus' command to share Him with the world, it's more important than ever that we do it with complete sincerity because nobody likes a phony or a hypocrite or someone who comes to them with a hidden agenda or under false pretenses.

So what does it look like to do "honest evangelism?"

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. Paul's of Holyrood
Holyrood, Kansas

St. Paul's UCC
Fort Branch, Indiana

St. James - Charlotte
Owensville, Missouri

St. Paul - Cooper Hill
Bland, Missouri

Wesley Chapel of Fairfield
Fairfield, Pennsylvania

Gary Franke
St. Louis, Missouri

Rev. Chris Hirschy
Decatur, Indiana

Rev. Michael R. Zwernemann
Caldwell, Texas

Rev. Michael Trollinger
Burlington, North Carolina

Rev. David Johnson
Edwardsville, Illinois

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New Desk Calendars Now Available

The *Evangelical Association 2023-2024 Desk Calendar & Ministry Planner* is the official desk calendar of the Evangelical Association. The 17 month calendar (August 2023 through December 2024) 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:

\$18.00 each for 1-2

\$16.00 each for 3-5

\$14.00 each for 6 or more

(Prices include packing and shipping at no extra charge)

You can order the EA Desk Calendar(s) 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 314-347-9994. 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!

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.

What's Happening with Missions in the EA?

by Shirley Briggeman, EAMN Team Coordinator

The Evangelical Association Mission Network (EAMN), a standing committee of five EA affiliated volunteers, will be reorganizing over the next few months, updating our policies and procedures and brainstorming about how to build up mission involvement within the EA churches.

In the annual EA Desk Calendar, you will find a list of various overseas and stateside **missionaries** who are directly affiliated with the EA or have been endorsed by an EA church. Another page in the calendar lists overseas and stateside **mission projects** that have a direct EA contact person in the United States who is involved in or endorsing the project. This provides a useful tool for mission committees and individuals who want to expand their global vision and choose missionaries/mission projects they want to support with prayer and finances.

It is our hope that more EA churches will invite any missionaries and mission project leaders that they support to submit a **missionary** or **mission project** application which can be found on the EA website: <https://evangelicalassociation.org/network/missions> in order to be added to our growing network.

In order to remain on the list in the EA Calendar, the missionaries and mission project leaders must send us their newsletters or updates regularly, so that we may also pray for them as well as promote mission support throughout the EA. If you have any questions regarding how to establish a mission committee in your local church or how to encourage your congregation to develop a relationship with an active missionary, please send an email to our EAMN team: missions@evangelicalassociation.org and you will get a response. It is our goal to increase the number of opportunities for EA affiliates to become involved in missions!

Here are just a few current prayer requests from missionaries in the EAMN:

Zach & Bethany Firsick (serving at Maryville University in St. Louis) – Having a young family (three children ages 7, 5 and 3) and being Cru missionaries in a college setting has its challenges. Pray especially for their seven year old son who has severe ADHD, Autism Spectrum Disorder and also an exceptionally high IQ. He is entering into a special full-time gifted education program. Also, pray for the freshmen students at Maryville University to be curious about Jesus during their transition to college life, and for the student leaders to have inspiration as they study the Bible with their peers each week.

Pat & Tammy McLeod (serving at Harvard University) – There were over 50 Harvard students at the weekly communal meal with more guests than regulars in attendance before the large group meeting. The Lord is actually bringing more students than McLeod's can personally follow up. Pray that God will make the Cru "Christian Impact" community at Harvard University to be Christ-centered and transformational; that the students hear, understand, and believe the Gospel, and that they will continue to attend and bring others who may also be led to Christ in the large and small group meetings.

Lion of Judah Academy (in Tanzania, Africa) – To learn more, sign up for updates, or sponsor a student, please visit: www.thelionofjudah.info. A work team will be visiting the school in July 2024. If you would like to join them, please contact our USA office for more information: hartinlow@gmail.com

Pray for relief from food shortages and high prices, rain and financial support for more of their students, the children of poor Tanzanian pastors and indigenous national missionaries



*Tanzanian pastor's daughter
and Lion of Judah student,
Magreth Francis*

“For Such A Time As This”

Reflections on Convocation 2023 by Roberta Seaton



Keynote speaker Dr James Emery White offers a challenge to rethink the way we do church in order to more effectively reach those who are completely unfamiliar with the claims of Jesus.



Sharing communion & bringing prayer concerns for specific people to the Cross were highlights of Saturday evening worship

Five excited ladies from Loyal Evangelical church in Loyal, Oklahoma packed a seven-passenger van at three o'clock Thursday morning, and headed for Faith, North Carolina. We had been with the Evangelical Association for 20 years and were eager to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the EA.

The first day we drove 933 long, hard miles and passed the time singing every song we knew along with a lot of laughing and praying! We made it to Knoxville, Tennessee by 9 pm.

We were up and moving by 7:30 am on Friday, and made it to Charlotte, North Carolina by noon where we toured the Billy Graham Library Museum and all agreed it was an awe inspiring place.

After securing our lodging for the weekend, our group headed to Shiloh Reformed Church where we were greeted by the wonderful people of the church. Their delicious food and southern hospitality was overwhelming!

The worship services were amazing with music that made us want to praise and clap for not only those who presented, but for our Lord and Savior. The host pastor, Richard Meyers entertained us and kept us on schedule. Worship speakers, pastors David Bitler and C.E. Holt reminded us that we have been called “for such a time as this” (which was the theme of the convocation) to go beyond the church doors to bear witness to the love of Jesus. The break-out session leaders helped us understand

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Pastor Shane Roberts of First Reformed in Landis, North Carolina leads workshop dealing with the tough issues being faced by youth and children.

“And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this.”

Esther 4:14

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how we must stand up and share the truth of the Gospel in ways that can be understood by people living in our current culture.

Keynote speaker, Dr. James Emory White challenged us to rethink the way we do church. He focused on the need in so many churches to start focusing outward toward the people we need to reach rather than inward toward the people who already know Jesus. He encouraged us to look for ways to minister to the unchurched as our commission is to seek and save the lost.

A special treat was the Saturday evening service with the Shiloh Church Bell Choir and the ministry of Ashley Creek who gave her testimony of being an angry, violent teen who made a series of bad choices that eventually landed her in jail! She shared her journey of finding a relationship with Jesus, but also challenged us to be welcoming of people who are down and out and are frequently shunned by churches. The service concluded with communion and a time of commitment as we nailed our prayer needs on the cross.

Sunday morning concluded with more beautiful music and the ministry of our national minister, Jim Barnes who challenged us to do “Honest Evangelism,” recognizing that we must share Jesus with sincerity and honesty about His greatness and our own brokenness.

Was it worth the long ride and hours of lost sleep? You bet it was! Thanks to Shiloh Reformed for hosting (They even packed us to go boxes for our trip home.) We will be praying for the church in Edwardsville, Illinois as they prepare to host Convocation 2024.



Praising the Lord together during worship.



Practicing hospitality during a convocation worship service



Music team from Shiloh sings praise during Friday night worship.



Green Level Christian Church choir from Haw River, North Carolina sings praise on Saturday morning.

Ministry & Employment Opportunities

These churches and organizations are seeking to fill the following positions:

Independent Congregational Church

Sharon, CT

Full-time Pastor

bobslagel@yahoo.com

First Reformed Church

Bluffton, IN

Full-time Senior Pastor

firstref@adamswells.com

The Fort Branch Yoked Parish

Ft. Branch, IN

Full-time Pastor

ftbranchucc@gmail.com

Salem UCC

Huntingburg, IN

Youth Pastor or Youth Director

jdonihue66@yahoo.com

St. Paul's of Holyrood

Kansas

Part-time Pastor

maxineradenberg@gmail.com

St. John Evangelical Church

Florence, MO

Part-time Pastor

peggy.rupe1215@gmail.com

Amber Congregational Church

Syracuse, NY (rural community just outside Syracuse)

Pastor

gailfrary@gmail.com

Grace Lower Stone Reformed Church

Rockwell, NC

Pastor

gracelowerstone@charlotte.twcbc.com

St. John Church

Hebron, ND

Full-time Pastor

stjohnhebronnd@gmail.com

Emanuel's Christian Church

New Bavaria, OH

Part-time Pastor

emanuelscsearchcomm@gmail.com

Jacob's Church

New Tripoli, PA

Part-time Youth Leader

<https://jacobschurch.org/careers>

Historic Host Church

Bernville, PA

Pastor

hostchurch@outlook.com

St. Thomas Church

Bernville, PA

Senior Pastor

<https://stthomasbernville.org>

Congregational Christian Fellowship Church

Winchester, VA

Part-time Pastor

alexanderjeanie@gmail.com

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

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!!

Cont. from page 1 - "The Importance of Honest Evangelism"

Well, Paul shows us in II Corinthians 4:2 when he says, "...we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." Then continuing in verses 5-7 he goes on to say, "For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us."

There's a lot in those verses. Paul reminds us that if we're going to share Jesus with people we can't use deception to try and manipulate people into following Christ. Instead, we need to speak the truth plainly and let people make up their own minds. But beyond that, Paul ends by reminding us and himself that the treasure of the Gospel is carried by people like us who are "jars of clay" to remind us that **it's all about Jesus and not about us.**

And quite frankly, I think that's the heart of what it means to do "honest evangelism."

We need to be committed to sharing the amazing person and work of Jesus who is glorious beyond all measure, but we need to make sure we do it in a way that makes it clear to the people we're trying to reach that we're just ordinary, broken people who've been allowed to share an extraordinary message about a perfect Savior who loves us and who loves them.

In a world filled with deep fakes and all kinds of technological manipulations, people are only going to listen to what we have to say about Jesus if they know we're coming to them with complete honesty and authenticity.

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 314-347-9994.

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@evangelicalassociation.org
or at 314-347-9994



EVANGELICAL
ASSOCIATION

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National Office Phone Number Changing

The new phone number for the EA National Office is **314-347-9994**. Please make a note of this new number in your records as we will eventually be phasing out the old toll free 877 number which we have had for many years. The cost of maintaining a toll free number has nearly doubled in recent years and these days, most people have cell phones which generally include free long distance calling.

If you have EA promotional items that you use in your churches (brochures, ink pens, etc.) with the toll free number and need them replaced, contact the office at the new number or by email: natmin@evangelicalassociation.org