



Christian Evangelistic Society Messenger

Growing Churches in Western Pennsylvania

CES Website: ceswpa.org

Celebrating 97 years of serving our Lord.

Issue 53 – fall Issue

September, 2026

A Periodical of the Christian Evangelistic Society of Western Pennsylvania. The CES was founded in 1929. CES is a nonprofit ministry extension of the Independent Christian Church in the greater Pittsburgh region. CES exists to start new churches and to assist area churches in evangelism. We rely on financial support from area churches and individuals. The CES has no paid employees. The three officers and other board members volunteer their services to the CES at no charge.

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CES Fall Conference

Sunday, October 4, 2026

3:00 PM at

Emmanuel Christian Church,

Brighton Hts., Pittsburgh, PA

Theme: 2026 Year of Our Youth/

Future of Our Churches

As Christian adults we need to mentor and encourage our young people to grow in their faith, and make life decisions to serve our Lord in areas of leadership, musicians, teachers, and pastors. They are the future of our churches.

Our speaker will be Richard (Rick) Weiss of Emmanuel Christian Church, who has experience as a Youth Pastor as well as a Senior Pastor, with experience in guiding and mentoring our church youth.

Please plan to attend this Conference and be an encouragement to our young people.

Message from Ed Gratton, CES President

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CES Projects:

The CES relies on your financial contributions to fund various projects in the Greater Pittsburgh area. The CES provides monthly financial help to The Hills, a Christian Church meeting weekly in South Park in the South Hills area of Pittsburgh. This church is the newest Christian church in the Pittsburgh area. The CES also provides monthly financial help to the Hazelwood Christian Church, the oldest Christian Church in Pittsburgh.

Twice a year, in the Fall and Spring, the CES sponsors a conference, with guest speakers, special music, and a time of fellowship with other area Christians.

Your financial contributions to the CES make this work possible to reach people for the Lord. **Please send your donations to:**
Christian Evangelistic Society
224 Cherrydell Drive
Pittsburgh, PA 15220

CES Board Meetings:

The CES Board meets as needed. Members of area Christian Churches are invited to attend. We invite your ideas for future CES conferences and events. Our next board meeting will be our annual business meeting on Saturday, Oct. 10, at Homeville

June 28th was an emotional day for me. Thirty-three years of full and part-time ministry closed. And after 10 years at Hazelwood CC, I retired. My retirement from the CES as President is coming in December when my term ends although I will remain on the CES Board as a Director. It's a bittersweet and yet it's time. So, I want to give a big thank you to my family and friends who were there and of course, a big thank you to my church family at HCC. Your love and support through the years mean so much. I am humbled and deeply grateful. One thing I've tried to remember is something I learned at Kentucky Christian University a long time ago. "You're never as good as they say you are and you're never as bad as you think you are." So, thank you everyone.

I also want to take a second to thank the churches and ministries I've worked with over the years. Monroeville Christian Church, the Mill Hall Church of Christ in Mill Hall, PA, the Blanchard CofC in Blanchard, PA, the West Side CofC in Lebanon, OH, Norwin Christian Church in N. Huntingdon, PA, Cornerstone Ministries, in Murrysburg, PA, and Hazelwood CC.

Many thanks to the Christian Evangelistic Society, Hunter Trust, Urban Fuel, and Hope Missions Pittsburgh, all of which I was honored to have set on the board of directors and thank you to all the churches where I've had the privilege to speak. Thank you to the couples who asked me to perform their weddings, and to the families who trusted me with laying their loved ones to rest. Thank you all for the lessons learned and the ministry we've had together. You are all a part of me that has left an indelible mark on my heart. And of course, I am grateful to God for placing me in the city where I prayed to be able to work since I began this journey.

And now it's on to the next chapter. And leading the way is my farewell thought. Life begins and ends with giving God all the glory and praise and living life in between. My continued prayer and wish is for our churches to be interdependent because we can accomplish much more working together than we can apart. God Bless you. Thank you for nearly two decades of ministry and partnership with the CES and I look forward to what God has in store next.

Next CES Board Meeting

Our next business meeting will be Saturday, October 10, 2026 at 9:30 AM at Homeville Christian Church, Eliza St., West Mifflin. Any contributing individual or representative of any contributing church is welcome to attend this annual business meeting with election of officers, preparation of 2027 annual budget, and plans for future programs. Please contact Joan Kim, CES Secretary if you need additional information.

Part -Time Minister Opportunity – Hazelwood Christian Church, Pittsburgh, PA

Hazelwood Christian Church, a non-denominational congregation located in the Hazelwood neighborhood of Pittsburgh, PA, is seeking a part-time minister to begin in July. We are a Bible-centered church holding to conservative, Scripture-based doctrine. We are looking for a man who is committed to preaching and teaching the Word of God faithfully, without compromise, and who aligns with a non-denominational, New Testament model of the church.. This position has worked well as a **bi-vocational role** for our current minister and may be ideal for someone serving in ministry alongside other employment. **Responsibilities include:** Sunday preaching (primary responsibility); Occasional teaching or filling in for our existing Wednesday evening service. This is a **preaching-focused, part-time position**, and due to the limited salary, expectations beyond filling the pulpit on Sundays are minimal. We want this role to be a blessing, not a burden. While Sunday preaching is the primary responsibility, there is **flexibility when time off is needed**. We have a **backup preacher within the congregation**, ensuring the pulpit is always covered. This is not a rigid position, but one supported by a willing and cooperative church body.

Position Details:

- Part-time (preaching-focused role)
- Compensation provided (not a full-time salary)
- Inner-city ministry setting

Qualifications:

- Must love Jesus Christ and put Him first
- Strong knowledge of and commitment to the Bible as the sole authority
- Sound, conservative doctrine
- Ability to clearly communicate Scripture
- Heart for ministry and serving a local body of believers

If you feel called to this opportunity please contact:

Ed Provident Sr. – 412-726-7580

Jim Cominotti – 412-523-1710

We are prayerfully seeking the Lord's guidance in this process and look forward to hearing from those who are led to serve.

Photo of The Hills, a Christian Church baptism at the Cascading Water Falls in South Park.

See The Hills Church news item on page 4 for details.



News from The Hills, a Christian Church, Tom Fodi, Lead Pastor

Just like every living thing on the planet, churches experience seasons. Right now, The Hills Church is experiencing what I like to call a season of growth and a refined identity. We have a growing congregation with new people joining us most weeks as we continue our outdoor worship at Forbes Pavilion in South Park. We are preparing for a unified worship service and picnic with our friends from Hazelwood Christian Church soon. We are launching some new ministries soon. However, most importantly, we celebrated yet another baptism.

One of my favorite things we do as a church is publicly baptize new believers in the cascading waterfalls in South Park. There's almost always a crowd of onlookers. Most of them are clearly not church going people because they're in the park on Sunday morning. And, yet, a lot of them gather around and applaud when they see someone getting baptized. I recently stumbled on some comments in an online South Park forum where people were openly talking about "the church of South Park" (that's us!!). Word is getting around that God is up to something here in southern Allegheny County and we couldn't be more excited.

We continue to thank CES for their ongoing support of our ministry. Through your prayers and contributions, you are all making a true difference in the lives of people who might otherwise be far from God and His Kingdom.

News from Hunter Christian Memorial Trust Fund

This has been a very busy and exciting year for the Hunter Christian Memorial Trust Fund. The Trustees voted to set up a college scholarship program for students who are members of a Christian Church or Church of Christ in Western PA and are attending a Restoration Movement college or university. We were able to help four students attending Johnson University. They include Jedidiah Persall from Norwin Christian Church, Milla Harrington from North Hills Christian Church and Patrick Reed and Ethan Hoover from Altoona Church of Christ. These four students will receive a total of \$ 34,000 for the 2026/2027 school year. The Hunter Trust also continuing to support eight local churches with grants totaling \$ 36,500.

We also want to remind you that the original purpose for the Trust was to loan money to churches. We currently have just over one million dollars available for loans to churches at interest rates well below the bank rates.

We are very thankful to God that He has allowed this fund to grow so that we can give grants to churches, especially small churches that may be struggling financially. We are also grateful for the opportunity to assist students who are planning to go into full-time ministry and those who are not planning a full-time ministry will be using their education to support their local churches and communities with what they have learned in college.

The money spent today will bless God's work in the future.

If you have questions about any of these programs, contact John Wolfgang at 724-787-1744 or email at johnwolfgang@comcast.net