

# BOARD MATTERS

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A PUBLICATION OF THE MARITIME DISTRICT PAOC



# WELCOME!

Welcome to another edition of Board Matters! Our first issue was met with much enthusiasm, so we're particularly glad to share this issue with you. We hope you enjoy hearing from many of our District leaders and pastors. Thank you to all our contributors.

We asked Pastor Rod Bezanson about his ministry in Mahone Bay and how some recent changes have impacted his church and community. If you're curious about the Vitalization process (formerly referred to as Revitalization), you will find Darrell Scheepers thoughts and experience helpful (see page nine). There are currently two spots available for Vitalization in Spring 2018. Reach out to Pastor Kevin for more information about that.

We're happy to have Pastor Mike Miller sharing about the journey of one of the District's newest churches - NOVA Church. NOVA is growing and impacting their city. It's exciting to hear how God is moving in that congregation.

During our "Small Church Big Dreams" conference in October, Pastor Troy Matchett gave an encouraging and challenging message so we asked him to share some of those thoughts for the benefit of leaders who weren't able to attend.

Also in this issue are articles from several of our District staff. Pastor Kevin Johnson shares how the book of Acts gives us insight into characteristics of healthy churches. Pastor Jim Molloy writes about the importance of welcoming guests well. Pastor Greg Bland provides insight into communicating in the midst of a transition. Pastor Luc Poirier shares his experience of pastoring in Beresford for 25 years. Pastor Balan Swaminathan shares resources for prayer ministry. Kathy Kozsukan gives us an update about our Global Workers.

One last thing, have you signed up to receive our e-newsletter "2Minute Tuesday"? It contains District updates, event details, and resources. If not, visit our website or email us at [info@maritimepaoc.org](mailto:info@maritimepaoc.org) to sign up.

I pray these stories and resources will encourage, inspire, and equip you as you lead your congregations. Thank you for serving our Maritime District churches so faithfully.

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# TRANSPARENCY BUILDS TRUST, WHILE SECRECY BUILDS SUSPICION



**BY GREGORY BLAND**  
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Transitions can be scary, emotional, and hard on a congregation and its leaders. But they can also be filled with celebrations and opportunities. Celebrations of God's goodness and provision in the past, as well as opportunities to grasp a fresh vision for the future. One way to ensure a healthy transition for your church is clear, open and consistent communication throughout the search process.

While confidentiality remains of paramount importance during the pastoral search CLEAR and CONSISTENT communication will alleviate FEAR while building UNITY and CONFIDENCE throughout the transition.

Lack of communication from the search team raises a congregation's anxiety and the unknown stimulates the mind to race to worst case scenarios. The role of the search team is to keep the congregation well informed of the process so the congregation understands what is going on and can pray intelligently for the process as it unfolds.

Communicate early and often with the congregation and all prospective candidates. Even if you can't give specifics, you can tell the congregation, "We are still putting the church and community summary together," or "We are still putting the ministry description together,"

or "We are gathering names to consider," or "We have narrowed the field down to three candidates," or "Please keep praying for us as we prepare for interviews."

Simply put, don't leave the congregation or the candidates in the dark. Inform, educate, update. While the final decision about the candidate being called will be a secret until the call weekend, the process doesn't have to be.

#### **Tips:**

- Select a key member of the search team to communicate with the congregation.
- Communicate weekly even if it's just to say, "Please keep praying."
- Communicate where you are in the process but never reveal names of candidates or places of ministry.
- Utilize a prayer calendar to keep the congregation connected to praying specifically throughout the pastoral search.

Communicate clearly and often and you will see fear during the transition diminish while unity and confidence will grow stronger.

## **ONE WAY TO ENSURE A HEALTHY TRANSITION FOR YOUR CHURCH IS CLEAR, OPEN AND CONSISTENT COMMUNICATION THROUGHOUT THE SEARCH PROCESS.**

# NEW TESTAMENT CHARACTERISTICS OF A HEALTHY CHURCH

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
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The older I get, the more challenging it is to remain healthy. When I was younger I was more naturally active, involved in physically demanding tasks, slept easily through the night, and was able to eat whatever I wanted because my metabolism burned off the unnecessary calories. Growing older brought the challenges of being physically active, resting well, and eating wisely. Health requires intentional effort, it doesn't "just happen."

Churches are similar. The older they become, the more challenging it is to remain healthy. They must be intentional on carrying out those activities that foster congregational health.

What are these intentional activities and characteristics? The first few chapters of Acts is an excellent starting point. It gives us some brilliant clues as to the traits of a healthy church.

## **1) A HEALTHY CHURCH IS EMPOWERED BY THE SPIRIT FOR EFFECTIVE WITNESS.**

Jesus "commanded" the apostles to wait in Jerusalem until they were baptized with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-5). He then explained that when the Spirit comes upon them they "would receive power" and they would be "witnesses." What follows in the remaining 28 chapters are accounts of both the Apostles and local churches witnessing with powerful effectiveness.

We sometimes forget that the "initial physical evidence" of Spirit baptism, speaking in tongues, is simply that, "initial" evidence. Jesus says clearly that the evidence of Spirit baptism is that you will receive power and you will be His witnesses. The scriptural emphasis of Spirit baptism is empowerment for effective witness. Sadly, I have heard too often that some think we are no longer pentecostal because only a few churches have "tongues and interpretations" in their services anymore. I think that has little to do with being pentecostal, from the biblical point of view. I have sat in churches that have messages in tongues but have not seen a soul saved in years. We should wonder if we are actually pentecostal when we have lost the empowerment for effective witness.

Empowerment for effective witness is the first trait of a healthy church.

## **2) A HEALTHY CHURCH IS CRYSTAL CLEAR ON CHRIST'S MISSION.**

Jesus left no debate about the mission for the Apostles or the local church. He clearly stated, "...you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (1:8). This is the mission that led the Apostles to "turn the world upside down" (17:6). They knew God could turn lives inside out.

There were both external and internal forces working to prevent the Apostles from pursuing Christ's mission. Externally, after the Apostles witnessed powerfully of the living Christ and healed the sick, the religious rulers opposed their mission with threats and eventual beatings. Amazingly, the apostles remained unmoved in their mission and responded, "We must obey God rather than human beings!" (4:19).

Soon, the church experienced forces, from within, that could have potentially derailed the mission. However, they refused to surrender Christ's mission to the complaints and problems which arose within the church (6:1-7). This is a great reminder to church leaders to never surrender the mission to opposition either inside or outside the church. In a healthy church every decision is made in light of Christ's mission: Does this help us reach the lost and make disciples?

The early church did not exist for itself. It existed to complete Christ's mission to seek and save the lost - at all cost!

## **3) A HEALTHY CHURCH EQUIPS AND RELEASES PEOPLE FOR MINISTRY.**

The Apostles understood that they were not to meet all the ministry needs of the church. (There were many needs.) However, through the members of the church, all the needs could be met and the church could be advanced. When complaints arose about needs not being met, individuals were chosen to carry out important roles (6:1-7).

A healthy church is willing to equip and release people for ministry in all areas, whether setting up chairs or mobilizing the church for evangelism.

#### **4) A HEALTHY CHURCH EXPERIENCES A VIBRANT PRESENCE OF GOD.**

The first church experienced a vibrant presence. It began in the upper room (2:1-4). They were filled with awe (2:43). The Lord added to their number daily (2:47). The place where they were meeting was shaken (4:31). Great fear seized the whole church when they heard what happened to Ananias and Sapphira (5:11). Stephen's face was like the face of an angel (6:15). There were miracles, demons cast out, paralytics healed, conversions, visions, and dreams.

The presence of God was not just a "feeling" that people had when they were together singing songs and raising hands. Rather, the presence of God was experienced in the transforming work of the Spirit, conversions, miracles, healings, prophecies, and words of knowledge.

Two key factors were associated with a vibrant presence of God: prayer and fresh fillings of the Spirit.

Repeatedly, they were in prayer. They understood that through prayer they encountered the living, powerful Christ. Repeatedly, they were filled with the Spirit. They were filled with the Spirit on many occasions. As a result they spoke the Word of God boldly (4:31). The presence of God caused some to be afraid and stay away while others were drawn in (5:13-14).

#### **5) A HEALTHY CHURCH MAKES SACRIFICES FOR THE MISSION.**

When you are clear about Christ's mission, and you see that the Spirit's power is at work to change lives, sacrifices become a normal activity. Who wouldn't dig deep if they've seen the tangible presence of God showing up in life transforming ways?

The early church sold their possessions to give to those in need (2:45) and they shared everything they had (4:32). Barnabas sold a field and gave the money to the Apostles (4:36-37). Churches made collections to help other churches (1 Cor. 16). Many sacrificed the safety of their homes to carry out Christ's mission. Some were imprisoned, beaten, and stoned. These sacrifices were made because they had witnessed the power of God to change lives.

#### **6) A HEALTHY CHURCH WILL SACRIFICE IT'S SACRED COWS.**

The early church had sacred cows, even as young as they were. Jewish Christians expected Gentiles to follow their ways. There were debates of meat offered to idols and what day should be considered the Sabbath. In a vision, the Spirit told Peter to kill and eat his "sacred cows!" If he didn't, his sacred cows would prevent a Gentile revival from taking place (Acts 10).

We all have them. We all have traditions and practices we consider untouchable. But in a healthy church we are willing to sacrifice our sacred cows. We should be willing to sacrifice everything except the Gospel message. Our songs, style, service time, location, programs, positions, everything. You name it! Sacrifice everything except the Gospel message.

#### **7) A HEALTHY CHURCH IS A SENDING/ GOING CHURCH.**

The Apostles were extremely active in going throughout Jerusalem. Philip went to Samaria (8:5). Peter went to Lydda, Sharron and Caesarea. The church at Jerusalem sent Barnabas to Antioch and then to Tarsus. The church in Antioch sent out Paul and Barnabas. There were the missionary journeys of Paul, Barnabas, Luke, Silas and John Mark. Church history records many of the Apostles travelling throughout the known world and dying for Christ and His mission.

A healthy church is willing to go and send because that is required to fulfill the mission. We see little evidence of the early church protecting their attendance numbers or their turf. They sent and went because the kingdom that mattered was God's, not theirs.

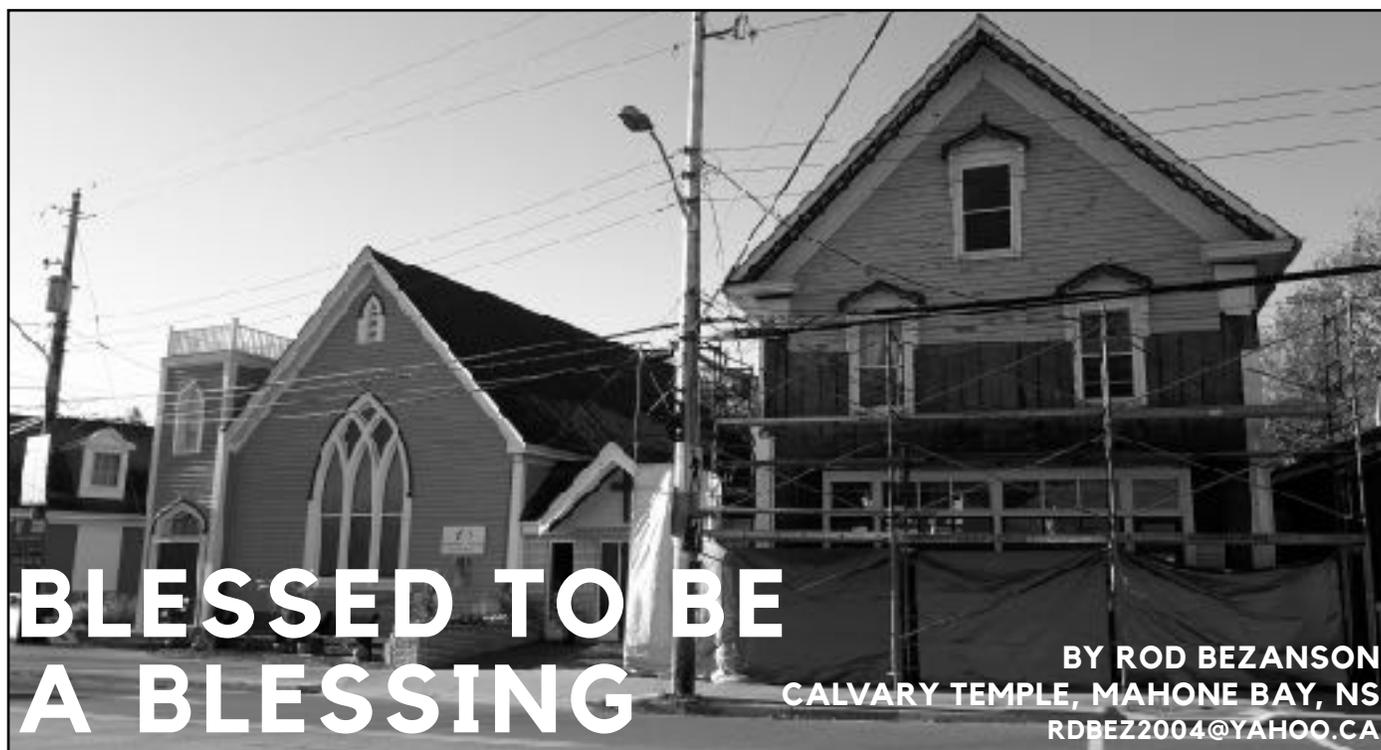
#### **8) A HEALTHY CHURCH FOLLOWS ITS LEADER.**

Although the Jerusalem Counsel was established by the Apostles (among others such as James, Jesus' brother), the church moved forward as "apostolic" leaders took new ground for Christ.

It was bold, daring, adventurous leadership, under the direction of the Holy Spirit that propelled the church forward. The early most common usage of the word apostle was in verb form (apostello) and was used to describe the sending of a fleet. The word took on the meaning of someone being sent as an authorized agent, an ambassador.

*Article continues on page 17*

**CHURCH HISTORY RECORDS MANY OF THE APOSTLES TRAVELLING THROUGHOUT THE KNOWN WORLD AND DYING FOR CHRIST AND HIS MISSION.**



**New beginnings can be exciting and filled with expectation. Tell us how you and your family felt about transitioning to Mahone Bay? What were you looking forward to?**

It was a big change for our family because our two sons moved out when we moved to Mahone Bay. After pastoring a church for 6 yrs, it was bitter-sweet to leave. We had a great time of ministry in the church, school, and community, but also knew it was time to move on. Even with the "Ceremony of Release" by the District, it wasn't easy to leave. Tammy had left her job at a convenience store.

Change is hard but is exciting when the Lord is directing. We have seen it as a great opportunity to trust God and be led by His Spirit.

I am also historically coming home. Both sides of my family settled in this area in 1753, eight generations ago. We are looking forward to the friends we will make, the challenges to lead a new church family, and the opportunities to reach out to another community.

**What's your church's mission and vision in regards to the community of Mahone Bay?**

We established that the mission of Calvary Temple is "To lead people into a growing relationship with Jesus," which is based on the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. We accomplish this by worship, ministry, evangelism, fellowship and discipleship. We emphasize this a lot. People and a church need to have purposes. Two of our themes are "We are better together" and "We are blessed to be a blessing" both of which

hang as banners in our worship center. From our first service, we established these themes, and began to intentionally focus on practical ways to implement them.

We knew, and declared, that we would pray as Jesus asked us, for labourers to come alongside us all, to build a foundation of ministry to reach others. We pray in every service for our communities.

**What was the biggest challenge for you in coming to Mahone Bay?**

The biggest challenge were non-ministry situations. The church was purchasing a parsonage, which had its own difficulties. The church building was also being reconstructed on the exterior and we had to deal with town permits and historical integrity. Working with town bylaws and agencies can be challenging. Much prayer for wisdom has been on the daily menu. These challenges have been opportunities to live out the love of Jesus. Ministry wise, our biggest challenge will be to connect and minister to the younger generations.

**How did participating in the Healthy Church Network (HCN) help prepare you as you stepped into this new chapter of ministry and leadership?**

Participating in HCN prepared me for this new ministry by strengthening my purpose and ministry values for ministry and for the church. Through the teachings, the books, sharing, and praying for each other, I was more prepared for this new work. I was better equipped in order to better equip others. While attending HCN for 2 years, some training I used right away, and some I knew I would use in the future. I'm thankful for the ministry of the District to its pastors.

# WE MUST BE WILLING TO HONOR THE PAST BUT NOT LIVE THERE. WE MUST BE WILLING TO PRAY AND WORK. WE MUST BE WILLING TO TREAT PEOPLE WITH GRACE AND TRUTH, LIKE JESUS DID.



## **What changes/improvements did you identify needed to be made in order for the church to move forward? How did you go about doing that?**

The leadership was totally convinced Calvary Temple needed to change in order to survive and reach people. They were willing and ready to be led by a pastor who wasn't interested in maintaining or playing church. This was also in our hearts to lead change, and in ministry to equip and encourage the church to do the work of the ministry. We needed to bring the church up to date in every way. We discussed every change as a leadership team. They were in full agreement with every idea.

We re-established the nursery, changed the church service time, purchased MediaShout 6 for songs, made the foyer welcoming, built a sound room, got rid of relics like old, big platform chairs, the huge pulpit, the huge communion table, and an organ that hadn't been played in 4 years; things which either weren't used, or were in the way. We also established a café in the banquet hall which we use before church and for outreach, since we are in the center of town. We added plants, banners and electronic drums. We are blessed to have many carpenters, interior decorators, cooks and, most of all, people with servant hearts. We've also established Team Ministries, identifying areas where people can minister. Everyone works together in a team.

## **There have been many changes to the church in Mahone Bay since you were installed as lead pastor in August. Talk to us about the process of change/development (the steps you took). How did you**

## **gain 'buy-in' from your church leaders and congregation?**

In establishing trust, both the leadership of CT and we ourselves did our homework. They knew about me, my history, my passion, and my purposes for the church. As we met, we heard their heart for change and knew this union would be a great fit. They had to trust that we would only do what in the greatest interest for the church and Christ's mission. Again, with every change, we discussed it as a leadership team. They had many questions but never challenged me with "attitude." So much has been accomplished because of the unity of the leadership to move forward. Everything is flooded in prayer.

## **How have the changes you made to the physical church impacted the spiritual life and ministry of your congregation?**

It has been established the only thing that is non-negotiable is the message of the Gospel. Methods of ministry and outreach change. We cannot hold onto petty, iconic things that have no eternal value. There is a culture of change for God's purposes to be lived out. We are together seeing what is really important to God: Loving God and loving people.



## **How has using social media impacted your ministry?**

I have always used social media to promote messages, special events, volunteer appreciation, ministry and building upgrades. Social media needs to be used to engage

engage in an ever-increasing media culture. The pictures and information we post help connect people to each other and what is happening. I also use it with my sermons to help communicate more effectively. Everyone gets excited about the positive changes and it generates anticipation for the future. I pray God uses all the information I send out.



**What has been some of the feedback your church has received over the past few months?**

The feedback is so positive, especially from the town's people. They have been watching the exterior upgrades for a year and are excited to see the finished work. I am blown away by the feedback and it gives me opportunity as the new pastor, to meet so many people. We are in the center of the town, so the location is excellent. We have blessed the town during their festivities, and the church people have connected more, and have heard the positive feedback as well.



**What advice or thoughts would you share with pastors and leaders who are facing potential change and development to their building and ministry?**

When the pastor and leadership are in total unity of purpose and mission, mighty things can take place. There needs to be an evaluation of what is really important to the Lord.

We must be willing to honor the past but not live there. We must be willing to pray and work. We must be willing to treat people with grace and truth, like Jesus did. Establish a culture of teamwork, filled with love, patience and compassion. Believe God for labourers and be obedient to do what He wants you to do. Be determined to go forward. Engage the community with the love of Jesus. Start with small projects. Be a blessing church. Do servant evangelism. Pray and believe for God to do the impossible.

# A VITALIZATION STORY



**BY DARRELL SCHEEPERS**  
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WE'RE ENCOURAGING ALL OUR PASTORS AND CHURCH BOARDS TO CONSIDER BEING PART OF THE VITALIZATION PROCESS. FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT PASTOR KEVIN JOHNSON.

## **What would you say to pastors and churches that are considering whether to engage in the vitalization journey?**

"Fear Not." It might seem daunting at first but once you start it is amazing to see how God undertakes. We experienced people who were low-key in the church, getting excited by the fact that there was going to be a positive change, and that they could be part of it. There will be those who are afraid of the change and will dig their heels in; don't let them influence your forward momentum.

One word of caution, before you start the vitalization process, get the church moving with small things so when you start the vitalization process it won't be a standing start, so to speak.

## **Where have you noticed the biggest changes or results?**

The biggest thing is people wanting to get involved, as they see things happening. Even the skeptics are even becoming more positive. For instance, the introduction of a coffee bar received a lot of skepticism in the beginning. In fact, the first Sunday it was in operation I think only two people used it. Now we have to make sure that we pack away the coffee when the service starts and we open again after the service. It has become a real "Connection" point in the church.

Also, since September we have made contact with 28 moms and their children. That is basically 28 new families that know about us and whom we have touched in some way.

## **How did the process challenge and change you as a leader?**

Well maybe the best word is "humbled", it has made me realize how often we as leaders follow what we think God wants us to do, instead of spending time and asking what HE wants us to do. I came to realize that not only did the church need vitalization but that I and my leadership skills also need vitalization. So this has become a personal journey as well as a journey for the church body.

As a leader, it has made me aware of my need of the support from other pastors who are in the same position as myself and has given me more of an appreciation of the diversity of the Body of Christ.

I am very excited that at my age God is still busy teaching and forming me.



# PRAYER THAT ALWAYS WORKS

BY BALAN SWAMINATHAN  
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I remember a day from last year when our board meeting turned into a prayer meeting. When we came together, our hearts were overburdened with some of the personal and ministerial challenges. No one had any desire to discuss anything so we decided to lay ourselves down at the altar. After an hour of pouring out our hearts, this is what happened to us:

- A renewed commitment to serve
- Grace to deal with personal challenges independent of ministry
- A softened heart towards each other
- A spirit of unity to work together

## PRAYER WORKS.

The question that often comes to our minds is this: Why should we sit and pray when there is so much to be done? We need to realize prayer does certain things which cannot be accomplished with our physical and intellectual abilities.

- The first and foremost thing prayer does is that it changes our own lives and prepares us to get the job done.
- Certainly, prayer makes us depend on God.
- Prayer causes disturbance in the spiritual realm such that the purpose of God will be accomplished, forcefully pushing away the darkness.
- Prayer helps to achieve the results effectively and efficiently.
- Prayer always brings long-lasting results.
- Prayer gives us a burden for souls and this burden for souls aligns our vision and helps us to work without considering our limitations, abilities, setbacks and oppositions.

Do you remember what Nehemiah did when he decided to build the wall even though there was opposition and discouragement? ***With one hand they worked at construction, and with the other held a weapon, Neh. 4:17.*** One of the weapons they held was prayer. That is why when Paul talks about the armor of God, he mentions the importance of prayer by saying ***“pray always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit.” Ephesians 6:18.***

**WE NEED TO REALIZE THAT PRAYER DOES CERTAIN THINGS WHICH CANNOT BE ACCOMPLISHED WITH OUR PHYSICAL AND INTELLECTUAL ABILITIES.**

## A NATIONWIDE PRAYER MOVEMENT

The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, a fellowship who believes in prayer, has initiated certain steps to promote prayer. Prayer bulletins are sent out periodically to all the districts across the nation. These prayer bulletins can be subscribed to by anyone to receive periodic updates on the prayer needs.

Following are the different types of prayer bulletins and the links where you can view them:

1. **PAOC International Missions Prayer** - <https://paoc.org/missions/global-view/prayer>  
PAOC International Mission Prayer is a weekly communication of prayer requests from and for the global workers.
2. **PAOC Prayer** - <https://paoc.org/family/general-superintendent/news/>  
PAOC Prayer is a weekly communication of prayer requests sent from The PAOC International Office
3. **My Global View** - <https://paoc.org/missions/global-view/murray>  
My Global View is a periodic update on international missions that comes a few times in a year from the desk of Murray Cornelius, Executive Director of International Missions.

## PRAYER CONNECTION TEAM

The prayer connection team, comprised of District prayer representatives, is set up to discuss various prayer implementation strategies and initiatives that are taken by the districts. This team comes together through video and web conferencing every quarter under the leadership of Rev. Les Markham and Pat Markham to discuss and to encourage each other.

## PRAYER INITIATIVES OF THE MARITIME DISTRICT

Our District has taken the initiative to promote prayer within the District churches by inviting them to participate in this prayer initiative. More than 25 churches volunteered to join in this initiative by signing up to receive weekly prayer updates. The latest District prayer needs can be accessed or one can sign up to receive periodic updates on prayer needs from our District website: <http://www.maritimepaoc.org/prayernetwork>.

This prayer initiative is designed in such a way that participation should not cause any extra effort to the District churches. Incorporating this into any of the existing prayer practices such as fasting prayers, small group prayer, monthly prayers, etc. should not be that difficult. Churches can make this link available to the prayer leader/coordinator or the prayer team members and encourage them to pray for the District. Providing printed copies of this list to the seniors who are interested in prayer will certainly help them to make the best use of their available time.

In November 2017, my wife and I got an opportunity to participate in the prayer event hosted by the French churches of our District. I personally realized that there is a deep burden among our churches to stand in the gap and intercede. A few days after we returned, I got an update from the host pastor of the event saying, "Most of the people who were there have kept that teaching. And now we are working more actively in the direction of intercession." What an incredible opportunity we have in our District to implement intercessory prayer ministry.

As we take some more initiatives in this year towards prayer and intercession, I would ask you to keep your church doors open for the same. I believe God will do great and mighty things in our District because He has already promised in **Jeremiah 33:3: Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.**

**CALL TO ME, AND I WILL ANSWER  
YOU, AND SHOW YOU GREAT AND  
MIGHTY THINGS, WHICH YOU DO NOT  
KNOW.**

**JEREMIAH 33:3**



**BY JIM MOLLOY**  
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A plumber showed up at my house this week, at my request. We had a few laughs and shared a few stories, but I never invited him to sit on my couch, put his feet up, and watch an episode of Gilmore Girls. After all, he was a temporary visitor, not a guest. I had no intention of inviting him to stick around. Later that same day, someone else showed up. A friend. He didn't knock. He just cracked open the door and yelled, "Anyone home? You decent?!" He came on in. He plopped down on the couch, and waited for us to eventually join him in the living room. He was a guest.

New people to our churches are not visitors. They are guests. This is a simple nuance in terminology, but profound in implication. We treat guests different than visitors. Visitors are afterthoughts and accidental; visitors aren't expected to stay. Visitors aren't expected to belong. Guests, however, are anticipated and honoured. They are welcomed to come... and stay.

We should invite them to belong. So, rather than telling a guest we are here to serve them (which usually seems cliché and falls on deaf ears), we should find creative ways to invite them to join the mission. For example, "On Saturday, we're doing a community clean-up in the downtown core. This is our next serving event - we'd love for you to join us."

Preparing our church for guests is one of the most important things we do as a missional community because receiving guests is actually the easiest type of outreach. People are coming to us (often because we've invited them) so let's be ready and welcoming!

Here are common mistakes churches make when receiving guests.

## 1. DECIDING TO BE UN-PENTECOSTAL.

I am disturbed by the growing trend to minimize spiritual things because we think it will soften the environment enough to keep guests around. However, let us never sacrifice a spiritual approach for a systems approach. To be clear, it's not one or the other. It's both! We should have all the systems and processes ready, but also be Spirit-driven! Sometimes, even the "weird" stuff is attractive. Tongues, for example, is said to be a sign for unbelievers, not believers. True Pentecostalism is not always repulsive. It can be attractive. We can make the church experience comfortable, inviting, and non-threatening to guests AND still be fully operating in the gifts the Spirit provides.

**PREPARING OUR CHURCH FOR GUESTS IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS WE DO AS A MISSIONAL COMMUNITY BECAUSE RECEIVING GUESTS IS ACTUALLY THE EASIEST TYPE OF OUTREACH.**

Church growth is not the point. Bulking the numbers is not the agenda. Transformed lives are the goal. If the Spirit is drawing someone, nothing is more attractive and welcoming than the obvious demonstration of God at work in people's lives in the service.

## 2. NOT COLLECTING THEIR CONTACT INFORMATION.

We have to get people's information. We must. There are

all kinds of ways of harvesting it. Connection cards work great - especially when they are announced properly. Another way is to say, "We want to send you a gift. A \$5 Tim card. Stop by the Connection Centre and we'll send it off to you this week." At events, have a "registration." Even capturing just their email address, with permission to send them information later, is a win. We need to have multiple ways to gather contact information. Without it, there can be no follow-up, and follow-up is key.

### **3. NO FOLLOW-UP.**

Churches that do not follow-up with guests are missing an important strategy. If our churches do not have an intentional, automated/automatic strategy for follow-up, it just won't happen. There are all sorts of ways to do the follow-up: Email surveys, note-cards, phone calls, lunches, coffees, and visits are all ways to get the job done. Most effective churches have a 3-point follow-up system.

There are a few things for all of us to remember: First, act quickly. The quicker the follow-up, the better. Secondly, be personal. A generic email communicates that we really don't care. But, if we use their name, and recall some details about them, it shows that the communication is meant just for them. Lastly, remember the kids. Kids love getting things in the mail. A \$10 McDonald's goes a long way to showing kids they are loved.

### **4. PEOPLE ARE HUDDLING.**

We cannot welcome guests if we are clumped together with other church-goers. People must be taught to behave differently when guests are present. Church regulars should have an outward posture. Effective greeter teams, especially, are proactive and intentional.

### **5. EMBARRASSING THE GUEST.**

We should never point-out or otherwise embarrass a guest. Most guests want to get in and get out, anonymously. We should offer them that privilege.

There are some clever ways to let people know who the guests are. I know one church that gives guests a different coloured coffee cup after they are ushered to the coffee/snack station by a greeter. Some churches give guests a different coloured bulletin. This little

technique helps regulars make an extra-special connection with first-timers.

### **6. NOT PAYING ATTENTION TO THE LITTLE THINGS.**

Like homes that are welcoming to guests, buildings must be well-kept. Many churches have outdated aesthetics, dirty bathrooms, poor/ugly signage, garbage strewn about, clutter stored everywhere, expired literature, burnt-out light bulbs, broken fixtures, unattractive bulletins, and general untidiness. We can do better. We can show our guests that we care about them by having our facilities ready to welcome them.

### **7. NO TRAINING OF CONNECTION TEAM.**

Some churches call this team the "First Impressions" team. Some call them the Greeter team. Some, the Connection team. In any regard, they should be trained and re-trained a few times per year. This can be done in 30 minutes after a church service. It gives us the opportunity to pass on the "why" behind our "what." It helps us get better at welcoming and receiving guests.

### **8. USING INSIDER LANGUAGE.**

"If you want to sign up for the dinner theatre, see Susan." This is a terrible way to announce things. It tells the guest that they are an outsider; at least until they figure out who Susan is. Let's send people to a place, not a face: i.e. "Sign up at the Connection Centre in the foyer."

Christianese is a real thing, and it's awful for guests; especially those who are unfamiliar with following Jesus. Unbelievers don't know what fellowship, a hedge of protection, life group, hallelujah, the body of Christ, anointing, covered in the blood, laying on of hands, sanctuary, and the altar mean. We can still use these terms, but we should simply take a few minutes to explain what they mean.

Of course, there is much more that could be said about making sure guests are loved and honoured. However, to sum it all up, let's think through our guest experience, and make intentional strategies to follow-up well.

We can connect you with some churches that do the guest experience well. Contact the District office and we will do our best help.

## **CHURCHES THAT DO NOT FOLLOW-UP WITH GUESTS ARE MISSING AN IMPORTANT STRATEGY.**

# YES! BOARD MATTERS!

**BY LUC POIRIER**  
**FRENCH MINISTRIES COORDINATOR**  
**LPOIRIER@MARITIMEPAOC.ORG**

Can you believe it? This will be my 25th year of pastoral ministry at Centre Chrétien Évangélique in Beresford, NB! And, I still enjoy very much serving the Lord in this church and in my community! Actually, I love the people even more than I did many years ago, and I still have a burning passion to win as many people as I can for Jesus. (However, my energy level reminds me that I am not the 33 year old “young” pastor that I was when I arrived in 1993.)

I remember saying to our people, in my first year in Beresford, that our church was like a Jaguar car. It was a great and precious church, with a lot of potential for Jesus, and I had the privilege of leading (driving) it. I still believe that today; and I still mention it once in a while. You may think that our church is a super church and that I never had any problems or struggles in our “almost perfect church!” Well, not exactly! We have had some tough years; especially at the beginning, and then a few bumps at year number 7, 14, 21, etc.

A church is a church. It can be French or English, Canadians, Acadians, or multicultural; it is made with people and people are sometime carnal, mean, selfish, proud, immoral, etc. People are people, but God loves them anyway and Jesus died for His Church and loves her, so should we! People are also loving, forgiving, merciful, kind, gracious, giving, have pure motives - even with a mix of weaknesses and questionable behaviors. People can hurt you, deeply, but they also can bring you much blessing and healing to your life. I believe it is worth loving them with all your heart - even the difficult ones, and even if it means tough love.

Last month a pastor asked me: “Luc, how have you been able to stay that long at the same church?” My first answer might have surprised him when I said that it hadn’t been a smooth ride like one may think. For two years, I preached with the police phone number in my Bible. I was always ready to call the police in case of an eruption of violence in

**I LOVE THE PEOPLE EVEN MORE THAN I DID MANY YEARS AGO, AND I STILL HAVE A BURNING PASSION TO WIN AS MANY PEOPLE AS I CAN FOR JESUS.**

the church. I had a man threaten to beat me up and put my entire library out in the parking lot. This is not the smooth church life you would expect. No, it hasn’t been easy and if I was to start all over again, I would certainly do a few things differently, and I would add a couple more things to the agenda.

When I think of it, there are three reasons why I believe I have been able to stay this long in the same church. First of all, and by far the most important, is the grace of God that gave me strength, courage, love, endurance, and all that I needed. Thank you, Lord!

Secondly, I had the support, encouragement, and the words of wisdom of District pastors and peers in ministry, like David Slauenwhite, Doug Moore, Kevin Johnson, Russell Knowles, and many others. Without them, I would not have made it. Thank you!

Thirdly, I have had good Boards over the years. I have to be honest: At first it was not easy for the board to have a young pastor (I was the youngest on the Board) who

wanted to take the leadership and move the church ahead with a new vision. It wasn’t easy for the Board to let go and trust a young “Timothy” with his new ideas. For the health and growth of the church, I believe that we both had to grow in the respective positions the Lord had given us in His church. I had to learn to listen carefully and to lead the board and the church well; and the Board had to learn to listen and to trust their new pastor. We had our challenging moments over the

years, but by far I can say that I had great Boards and enjoyed serving God with them. I had men and women that had a great love for God and a willingness to learn, to try new things, and to make changes when necessary, for the cause of Christ. At certain times, when I was tired and exhausted, or even facing personal challenges, my Boards were a support and an encouragement. Today, I can say that I was able to stay in my church because I had good Boards. Thank you to all my Board members!

One more person that helped me to stay this long is my wife, Valerie. Her love and willingness to support me through the good and difficult years have allowed me to continue to serve in the ministry I feel the Lord had called me to. Words like, “You’re the best pastor I know,” have helped me realize that even if I am not the most talented or successful pastor, my heart is in the right place with Jesus, and that is what matter the most. Thank you, Val!

Well, I hope I can stay another 25 years, if Jesus carries. And yes, Board matters greatly!

# DIG YOUR DITCHES

**BY TROY MATCHETT**  
**GRACE CHURCH, BOUCTOUCHE, NB**  
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I live in a constant tension. Actually, I live in many tensions: the tension between security and insecurity, the tension between pleasing people and pleasing God, the tension between work and rest. Each of these leads to one main tension: the tension between my effort and God's effort. For me, that tension is a balance between giving my best and realizing that Grace Church does not rise and fall in my efforts.

A few months ago I came across this story, again, in the Scripture. It's found in 2 Kings 3. Here is the context of the story: Three kings come together to go into battle together against the Moabites. They believe it will be an easy win, but the battle does not turn out like they expect. They are ready for battle, but they find themselves in a bad situation: their army has no water to drink. They are pointed towards Elisha as a source of help.

Elisha was in his rookie year as a prophet. I am sure they already heard of Elisha's past miracles. The next part of the story is amusing: Elisha is ready to prophesy and says, "Go get me a harp." In other words, "go get the biggest most awkward instrument you can find." So, the kings and crowds are waiting (with mood music) for Elisha's powerful words of encouragement; waiting for "the answer" to their problem.

I can almost see them grabbing their canteens or goats bladders and waiting for water because they are so thirsty. The music plays and Elisha says, "Make the valley full of ditches."

Try to put yourself there for a moment. You are tired, thirsty, prepared for a solution, and echoing through the valley come the words, "Make the valley full of ditches."

They have no water and are waiting to hear from a God that can do anything and that is what they hear. God could have filled their bellies with water or filled their water containers, but He didn't. Instead, He instructed them to, "Fill the valley full of ditches."

It was like God was saying, "You dig the ditch and I'll send the rain." It was like God was saying, "Show me your faith, and I'll show you my faithfulness."

This scripture has brought me great comfort in my tension. It has become clear to me that only God can send the rain, but it is up to me to dig the ditch. It is teamwork between me and God. It is a push out of my comfort zone and into the understanding that praying is not enough, God is a god of action, and faith works.

There is a double meaning in those two words:

Him for the rain. Digging every ditch starts by removing one shovel full.

First, faith works: we need to have faith that our Almighty God can do anything. Secondly, faith works: we are not afraid to pick up a shovel and dig the ditch and wait for God to send the rain.

**WE MUST PREPARE. WE MUST WORK, PLAN, AND PRAY. IF WE ARE FAITHFUL IN DOING OUR PART, GOD WILL SHOW UP AND DO HIS. IT COULD BE THAT WHILE WE ARE PASSIVELY WAITING FOR A MOVE OF GOD, GOD JUST MIGHT BE WAITING FOR A MOVE OF MAN.**

Later in this story, in verse 17, "For this is what the Lord says. You will see neither wind nor rain yet this valley will be filled with water and you, your cattle, and your other animals will drink." In verse 18, He says, "This is an easy thing in the eyes of the Lord." In other words, you have no idea how powerful, how strong, how mighty our God is. Not only did He send rain, He delivered them from the Moabites.

First, only God can send the water but sometimes He wants us to dig the ditch. **What does that mean for you today?** What ministry or idea has God placed in your heart that you have not done? Where have you heard God but not responded to him?

Secondly, real faith believes BIG but is willing to start SMALL. I believe that faith IS action. Faith, without works, is useless. What small step can you take today? Do not be afraid of the things you cannot control.

There is no point to us simply waiting around, expecting God to do all the doing. We must prepare. We must work, plan, AND pray. If we are faithful in doing our part, God will show up and do His. It could be that while we are passively waiting for a move of God, God just might be waiting for a move of man.

What step is He asking you to take? Maybe it is time for you to pick up the shovel, and dig, and just depend on

# BOARD BEST PRACTICES

## DO YOU WANT A RECEIPT FOR THAT?

Improper issuing of donation receipts has gotten a few charities in trouble. Be cautious and careful when issuing receipts. Do not issue a receipt unless you are certain of the exact value of the donation (ie. the exact cash amount, or something in writing that shows the true value - like a legitimate and official appraisal). Never give a receipt for someone's donation of time or work. Never give receipts for donated gift cards. Never give a receipt for donations that, in the end, are for another organization. Never give a receipt when the funds given are in exchange for goods or services.

## LET'S GET POLITICAL?

Sure, there are a lot of concerns with many of the political issues of the day - and you've probably got some concerns about the behaviours and/or philosophies of some politicians. Tread carefully. There are some limits on what charities (especially churches) can do in the political arena. Remember, churches are not permitted to publicly endorse a particular candidate, nor are they are they permitted to invite a PARTICULAR candidate for public office TO SPEAK TO THE CONGREGATION without also inviting the others to do likewise. Churches are also not permitted to give money or gifts to a candidate or political party. A person, acting as a representative of a church, is not permitted to attend a political fundraiser for a candidate or party. Lastly, using the charity's website to post (or link to) statements made by a third party that support a candidate and party (or oppose a candidate or party) are prohibited.

Be socially active, but be cautious. The above does not mean that you cannot communicate to the public that a law, policy, or decision of any level of government should be retained, opposed, or changed. Be socially active, but be cautious and stay within the limitations. Remember, political issues do not easily fit within your stated charitable purposes - the ones you have presented to the government. Before you get too deeply into any political arena, do some research and operate accordingly.

# DISTRICT MISSIONS UPDATE

BY KATHY KOZSUKAN  
DISTRICT MISSIONS REPRESENTATIVE  
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**Rev. Harlyn and Helene Purdy** continue to serve in Malawi having some time ago moved to Blantyre from Lilongwe. The Purdys serve as pastors of the International Church in Blantyre and also oversee the Bible School and the TELTAC program. They are seeing many healings and miracles during their ministry there. Helene works with the children's feeding program where they regularly have ~ 200 children. They are currently funded to 65-75% of their \$110,000 budget and would love to hear from individuals and churches with regard to partnering with them in prayer and financial support.

**Rev. Helen MacMinn**, who served on the Kenya field for 43 years and returned to Canada in August, has recently been approved as a Global Volunteer and is looking forward to returning to Kenya from January to April 2018 to continue working on some projects within the Transformational Church and Youth Leadership Program. Helen's two priority projects are the Kindle digital library and the TLC project, training pastors at the grass roots level. This past November, 327 students graduated from the TLC program. Helen is waiting on information from

PACU in order to complete her budget for 2018, but is expecting it to be in the area of \$30,000. The majority of those funds are for ministry projects.

We are pleased to welcome **Rev. Andrew Bauer** to the Maritime District as Lead Pastor at Evangel in Bathurst, NB. Andrew has been approved by International Missions as a Global Volunteer and made his first trip to the PAOC partnered Korosten Bible School in Ukraine in March 2017. The Korosten school was started with sponsorship from PAOC and Rev. Craig Pitts. Korosten is 1.5 hours from the capital of Kiev. Due to the large number of conversions in Ukraine, Church Planting remains a high priority. Andrew taught 24 students two courses during his two weeks in Korosten, a Leadership course and Ephesians. Andrew is looking forward to hearing from the school with regard to course needs and is planning another two week trip in the Fall of 2018; anticipating the cost of that trip to be in the range of \$2,500 to \$3,000. Andrew would be appreciative of prayer and financial assistance.

## *New Testament, cont'd*

The New Testament church honoured pastors. Deacons understood the importance of their role in supporting their pastors so they could fulfill their God-given calling to lead the church. Wherever deacons and congregations support and work with their pastors, the church becomes strong and effective.

Healthy churches recognize they need bold and daring pastoral leadership that does not settle for status quo.

Such leadership takes the church into uncharted waters. It does not settle for the safety of the shoreline. As we look at history, the church we remember with pride is the church that was led by bold, daring, adventurous leaders that urged the church to cross the boundaries of safety.

We have a vision for a movement of healthy churches throughout the Maritimes. Let's pray and work together to see our congregations become all that Christ wants us to be.

# THE NOVA JOURNEY

BY MIKE MILLER  
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Every good Nova Scotian knows Nova is Latin for “new” as we live in New Scotland (Nova Scotia). On September 17th, 2017 we launched a brand new church in Halifax called “NOVA Church”

The launching of NOVA Church has been a challenging but rewarding one and we wanted to share a glimpse of the journey with you

## PRE LAUNCH

We announced our plans to plant NOVA Church publicly in August 2016 and started working towards launch. With the help of the District and our training through ARC (Association of Related Churches) we calculated we’d need \$100,000 to launch, and a launch team of 50 adults. As of September 2016, we had zero in both of those categories.

Our plan was to gather people by hosting a few evening meetings where we’d share the vision. We called these meetings “Interest Socials.” At the two we held, we saw over 100 people each time. Many people we didn’t know. From there we’d meet for coffee with anyone who filled out a form stating they’d like a chance to talk more.

By June 2017 we had key roles filled such as Kids Ministries, Production, Youth, and Worship and started meeting as a team to build unity, train, and prepare for launch day. The summer was full of new relationships and a lot of lists, emails and texts.



## LAUNCH DAY

Launch Day arrived and it was memorable in every way. We like to say it was far from perfect but full of perfect moments. There was such excitement in the air.

We launched with 70 adults on our team (we call them our Dream Team) packing the truck at 6:00 AM and finishing the day at 2:00 PM. We exceeded our fundraising goal and had 372 in attendance with friends and guests travelling to join us for our big day.

## FALL 2017

We had a great Fall season and enter 2018 encouraged and hopeful as we continue to work hard on building our culture around the vision God gave us for Nova with our efforts going toward.

## NEXT STEPS CLASS

This is a four-week class held right after each service for anyone who wants to move from merely attending to contributing as a member. We want to make it easy for someone to connect and serve and to date over 20 people have completed all four classes and over 60 in the process of finishing.

## THE DREAM TEAM

We believe people want a seat at the table of decision not just be in the loop of information! We also believe the vision is too big for just a few to run and do it all so we have focused our efforts on building, equipping and leaning on our Dream Team. To date, the team has grown to 106 adults from all walks of life and levels of faith and we are pouring finances and time into knowing them and growing them.

## COMMUNITY

We want to be a community and also reach the community around us. We often say we are building a church for people we’ve never met who are far from God. We aim to build an atmosphere that unchurched feel safe in. A part of that is our cafe which is the hub of activity each Sunday. It costs is \$140.00 in coffee each week but



it is invaluable for the conversations and connections it has fostered. We continue to look for ways to connect with and influence the community around us. After meeting with the principal of the school we meet in, we decided one endeavour would be to help fund the feeding program which was in desperate need. NOVA Church stepped up and gave \$14,000 to help feed students and we ended up being able to help 3 different schools. We believe people are open to the Gospel and our people are wanting to invite people to church, as of today we have seen over 60 salvations and an average Sunday attendance of just over 200.



We are honoured to be part of the PAOC community and value the relationships within it. We are excited to be giving monthly tithes knowing that from it more churches will be planted and existing ones given help where needed.

What we've seen happen with NOVA doesn't happen without a lot of support from many people. I want to thank the many who helped us financially get off the ground and those pastors who sowed good leaders to come alongside us to help.



People like the District Executive who met with us, prayed with us, advised us all along the way. Thanks to Pastor Keith Wells who offered his building for meetings and worship practices. Thank you to Pastor Tim Stevens who rallied his church to give a generous offering to help launch us. Thank you, Faith Tabernacle, for giving us a home church while we were preparing and for being a safe place for my family.

We are thankful for what God has done and excited to see what's next from the God who makes all things NEW (NOVA).

**HE WHO WAS SEATED ON THE THRONE SAID,  
“I AM MAKING  
EVERYTHING NEW!”  
REVELATION 21:5**



*Promotional materials for many of these events will be sent to churches in the coming months. Details for our events are also available through our website and our Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/maritimepaoc](http://www.facebook.com/maritimepaoc). You can also contact us at any time at [info@maritimepaoc.org](mailto:info@maritimepaoc.org).*

### **VITALIZATION DISCERNMENT WEEKEND SPRING 2018**

There are still two openings for churches who wish to begin the vitalization process. The process begins with a discernment weekend and is for congregations that want to increase health, vibrancy, and growth by effectively reaching unbelievers and making growing & maturing disciples of Jesus Christ.

### **DISTRICT EXECUTIVE MEETING - FEBRUARY 12-14**

Every few months the members of our District Executive meet to make decisions regarding District operations, vision, and strategy. These meetings take place at the District office in Truro, NS.

### **YOUNG PASTOR RETREAT - FEBRUARY 25-27**

Every few years we conduct an event specifically designed for young pastors and leaders. Invitees are credential holders or staff persons who are under age 35, or leaders whose are the primary leader of children's or youth ministry in our PAOC churches. This year's guest will be Rev. Kevin Sawatsky from Saskatchewan.

### **FRENCH PASTORS RETREAT - MARCH 19-20**

This is an annual retreat for pastors of our French churches. It takes place in Matane, QC.

### **ACTIVATE LEADERSHIP ENHANCEMENT - APRIL 13-16**

Activate is a weekend that helps "soon-to-be" leaders orient themselves for maximum Kingdom impact and leadership effectiveness. You may nominate any person in your assembly who is between the age of 17 and 25.

### **CHURCH PLANTING SUNDAY - APRIL 22**

On this Sunday, all of our churches take a special offering to contribute to planting more churches in the Maritimes. Promotional materials will be arriving at your church in January. Contact the District office if you require additional materials.

### **DISTRICT CONFERENCE - APRIL 23-25**

District Conference is the annual meeting of Maritime credential holders to deliberate concerning District business, as well as be refreshed and inspired in ministry sessions. This year's guest is Karl Vaters. Additional information will be sent to churches in February.

### **PAOC GENERAL CONFERENCE - MAY 7-10**

Every second year, the PAOC hosts its' annual General Conference. This year it is being held in Victoria, BC. For more information visit <https://paoc.org/events/general-conference-2018>.

### **MARITIME YOUTH CONVENTION 2018 - MAY 18-20**

MYC is one of the most exciting weekends of the year, where teenagers can learn and have life-changing moments with God! This year's event will be held at Glad Tidings Church in Moncton, NB. Information and promotional materials will arrive in churches soon.

### **KIDS KAMP - JULY 5-8**

Kids Kamp is an annual Christian camping event for children ages 7-11. It takes place at Camp Evangeline in Debert, NS.

### **FAMILY CAMP - JULY 15-29**

Family Camp is a time of rich fellowship, spiritual encouragement and exciting entertainment. For more information go to [www.campevangeline.ca](http://www.campevangeline.ca) or call 902.662.2700.

### **YOUTH CAMP - AUGUST 6-11**

Youth Camp is an annual Christian camping event for teenagers ages 12-18. It takes place at Camp Evangeline in Debert, NS.

### **MYMISSIONS - JULY AND AUGUST**

MYMissions is a leadership and ministry development experience for teenagers/young adults. There are two stages: The first stage is a week of ministry training. The second stage is a week-long missions trip where students serve alongside a local church. Every second year, there is an international project and coinciding training.