



Amherst Wesleyan Church

Annual Local Church Conference Business Meeting 2025

Agenda

- **Call to Order**
- **Opening Prayer**
- **Roll Call**
- **Reading of the Minutes**
 - + Minutes from LBA: Annual Meeting 2024
- **Leadership Positions**
 - + Leadership & LBA Terms
- **Reports**
 - + The AWC Playbook
 - + Department Reports
 - + Financial Report for 2024-2025 & 2025-2026 Budget
 - + Pastor's Report
- **Business from the Floor...**

Membership List

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Darren Allen | 27. Barbara McCabe |
| 2. Debbie Allen | 28. James Merrill |
| 3. Peter Baxter | 29. Sharon Merrill |
| 4. Tammy Baxter | 30. Melanie Morey |
| 5. Linda Borne | 31. Owen Morey |
| 6. Carvel Burke | 32. Annette O'Keefe |
| 7. Joan Burke | 33. Mark O'Keefe |
| 8. Nancy Carson | 34. Evan Oxner |
| 9. Joey Dunsmore | 35. Heidi Oxner |
| 10. Linda Fillmore | 36. Laura Paugh |
| 11. Sterling Fillmore | 37. Adam Richards |
| 12. Garth Frizzle | 38. Erin Richards |
| 13. Tena Frizzle | 39. Marilyn Smith |
| 14. Tonia Hyslop | 40. Joyce Stevenson |
| 15. Linda Johnson | 41. Harold ALLISON Taylor |
| 16. Bradford Jordan | 42. Sharon Taylor |
| 17. Olivia Jordan | 43. Angela Theriault |
| 18. Donna Keirstead | 44. Paul Theriault |
| 19. Brian Kierstead | 45. Carolyn Thompson |
| 20. Ivy Kierstead | 46. Lesley Trudel |
| 21. Dianna Lawless | 47. Patrick Trudel |
| 22. Pam Lomond* | 48. Bronwyn Upright |
| 23. Wesley Lomond* | 49. Gordon Upright |
| 24. Kyle Legere | 50. Sarah Ward |
| 25. Marilyn MacPherson | 51. Elisha York |
| 26. John Martin | |

By the Numbers

51 Members Total

- 3 New Members (* New Members)
- 3 Members Surrendered their Memberships
- 3 Members Died
- 2 Memberships Transferred from AWC

Membership will now be reviewed annually by the Lead Pastor and Reaffirmation Forms will be used every 5 years. It will NO LONGER be an Annual Reaffirmation. Next Reaffirmation will be 2028.

Annual Meeting Minutes

15 May 2024

Call to Order: Evan

Opening Prayer: Evan

Roll Call:

Evan-- After adding Patrick Trudel to the membership list, 23 members answered roll call. Three members were removed from the list leaving a total of 55. Reaffirmation of membership will be in 2028.

Elisha York put forth a motion to peruse the 2023 Annual Meeting Minutes separately. Kyle Legere seconded. Passed.

Reading of the Minutes:

Minutes from the LBA: Annual Meeting 2023 Read & Accepted. Evan asked for comments and/or questions and some discussion followed.

Evan shared that AWC has a Playbook that acts as a guide for AWC as an organization. Answers to questions (eg. Who We Are, What We Do, Who Does What, core values, departments & more) can be found there. AWC's highest level leaders have these core values. See annual report.

Leadership Positions:

- Leadership & LBA Terms (see report)--
- July 11/24 will be Sheryl's final official day with AWC following an extended vacation leave beginning June 3/24. Question: Would Sheryl & Dwayne remain as members of AWC? Answer: No, membership would change to the church they will be attending.
- Outreach as a separate department no longer exists. Community Care will now be the lead for those events, etc. Small Groups will now exist under Discipleship & Evangelism.
- Darren Allen & Erin Richards are the District Conference Delegates.
- Discussion.
- Members voted in favor of accepting this report.

Reports:

- Department Reports: see annual report.
- The AWC Playbook—see above
- Department Reports—see report for individual department reports
- Kids—Debbie Allen
- First Impressions—Annette O'Keefe
- Building Team—Allison Taylor (for Dwayne York)
- Community Care—Lesley Trudel & Sheryl York



2025 Annual Report

21 May 2025

- Senior Ministry—Sharon Taylor
- Worship—Kyle Legere
- Youth—Brad Jordan
- Discipleship & Evangelism—Evan Oxner
- Missions & Church Planting—Evan Oxner

All present were in favor of accepting reports as read. Passed.

Financial Report

Financial Report for 2023-2024 & 2024-2025 Budget (see report)

Budget presented has approved by the LBA. Discussion followed and covered expenses & costs for various repairs, improvements, grants, new boiler, mortgage, BRH, personnel for cover Sheryl's duties when she leaves, praiseworthy giving—from someone who does not attend AWC, etc.) Evan noted that one aspect of leadership is mentoring others to take your place when you are no longer available or able to fulfill the duties of your role. Sheryl has done this remarkably well; people are stepping in and up to assume these responsibilities. Above all, God's got this, and He's putting people in place as they are needed.

Pastor's Report

Pastor's Report—Evan Oxner presented his report for Year 9 (included in the annual report). AWC needs to keep moving in the right direction, be down-to-earth people following Jesus in down-to-earth ways, searching boldly, connecting honestly, serving humbly, and worshipping fully.

All in favor of accepting the 2024 Annual Business Report? Passed.

Business from the Floor...

Expression of appreciation & love to Dwayne York for all his service to the people of AWC and care for the church building.

June 2 will be Farewell Sunday and Sheryl will give her final message at AWC. A gathering will be held following the morning service. Letters will be distributed to church attendees so they can make plans to attend.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Dianna Lawless, Secretary

The AWC Playbook

WE ARE:

down-to-earth people
following Jesus
in down-to-earth ways

What does that mean?

WE EXIST TO:

Help people follow Jesus.

WE ALWAYS:

- **Are everyday people**
- **Get better and better**
 - **Go together**
- **Follow Jesus everywhere**

WE MAKE IT EASY TO:

- **Search boldly**
- **Connect honestly**
- **Serve humbly**
- **Worship fully**

WE DO IT BY:

- **Relevance**
- **Discipleship**
- **Outreach**

Note from Pastor Evan:

We have been working on these questions and our department structure for a number of years and continue to develop it. Our departments have shifted, as evidenced on the next page, and the format of the above answers has matured. This content guides our leadership and helps us see the people we want leading our organization.

Leadership Positions

Staff

Lead Pastor: Evan Oxner

Assistant Pastor: Brad Jordan

LBA

Vice-Chairman

Mark O'Keefe (4)

Secretary

Dianna Lawless (3)

Treasurer

Darren Allen (2)

Members at Large

Laura Paugh (1)

Owen Morey (1)

Erin Richards (3)

Linda Borne (2)

District Conference Delegates

Darren Allen

Erin Richards

Department Heads

Youth Ministry

Brad Jordan

Discipleship & Evangelism

Evan Oxner

Missions & Church Planting

Tena Frizzle

Kids Ministry

Debbie Allen

Community Care

Lesley Trudel

First Impressions

Annette O'Keefe

Building Committee

Wesley Lomond

Worship Team

Kyle Legere

Department Reports

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Target: Ensure it's Easy for Newcomers to Experience Jesus and Engage AWC.

Responsible for:

- Sunday morning Connection Centre & Coffee
- Connection Cards
- Special Service & Event Support
- Decorations
- Always looking at things as a newcomer
- Helping other departments make appropriate adjustments
- Team Recruitment & Training

Accomplishments

- We have added 4 new team members.
- We have had many new connections again this year and some have even joined our team!
- We have been more intentional to pray before the weekly service as a team.

Challenges

- Creating a team for special events, because the focus has been filling our weekly teams
- Last Spring it was challenging to find a replacement for decorating but God answered prayer and provided someone who has been a blessing to our team!
- Last Spring I was also struggling to find a replacement to look after the flower beds around the front of the church. Previously this had been part of the Building Maintenance. God provided for this too.

Goals & Plans

- Add to our team so that we have spares
- Create a team of volunteers for special events
- Have 2 team meetings throughout the year to connect, encourage, build our team.

I'm sure every department feels this way, but I have the best team to serve with. God continues to use the First Impressions Team to make all who come to our church feel welcomed and to make our space inviting. Our greeters are friendly and enthusiastic and even when it isn't their week to serve you will often find them connecting with others in the sanctuary. Our coffee area continues to create a warm environment creating a great space to connect with newcomers and regular attenders alike. Thank you, team for your faithfulness and genuine desire to make people feel connected and welcome!

Annette O'Keefe (2025-2026)

- Annette O'Keefe

KIDS

Target: To help children up to age 12 follow Jesus.

Responsible for:

- Sunday Morning Konnect Kids
 - Wednesday Konnect Play
 - Trunk-or-Treat
 - Konnect Camp
 - Outreach to Kids
 - Shepherding of Kids
 - Team Recruitment & Training
 - Playgroup
-

Accomplishments

- First Family Camp Night
- First Full Christmas Presentation (over 50 kids!)
- First Easter Family Event
- 13 Salvations
- Bibles given to **ALL** camp kids who had need
- Fourth Small group added to Sundays
- 4 New leaders
- Youth leaders in Konnect
- Konnect Play with New Head Coach
- Several Sundays with over 35 kids present!
- 5 new leaders
- Trunk or treat with lots of TREATS
- Glow Party!

Challenges

- Lots of kids
- Space
- Leaders needed again!

Goals & Plans

- 5 Elementary Groups and BA group
- Increase training for leaders
- Add ages1yr (long term goal)
- Create YouTube page

This past year has been full of exciting growth for Konnect as we witnessed kids and families take new steps of faith. We continue to be amazed at the work of the Holy Spirit as He sends both families and leaders. We do all we can for the “one” as we prepare for the many, and leaders took on more responsibilities or new roles this year to reach many families for Christ.

Thank you to everyone who is a part of KONNECT Kids! Whether you lead others, cut freezes, tie shoes, jump up and down, prepare crafts, give treats, stack chairs or quietly pray for us, THANK YOU!

I am humbled and blessed to be a part of this ministry with you.

- Debbie Allen

SENIOR MINISTRY

Target: To help adults aged 55+ to follow Jesus.

Responsible for:

- Outreach to Seniors
 - Senior Community Building
 - Directing Seniors to Sunday Morning Attendance
 - Evangelising Seniors
 - Team Recruitment & Training
-

Accomplishments

- We had 5 senior lunches with 40 -54 people attending
- The team has really stepped up to help with the lunches.
- We had 1 lady came to the senior lunch and has ask Jesus into her heart and been coming to church on a Sunday morning and another lady got Baptist

Challenges

- That each person involved with the ministry would be passionate about seniors
- Connect more with Seniors
- Look for what else God would like us to do.

Goals & Plans

- That seniors would know the love of God and want to learn more about Jesus

I am so glad that we had the senior's lunch once a month. This allows seniors to get out of the house and meet new people. We have seen more people coming out to the lunches and bringing friends with them. I enjoyed seeing all the senior coming out to the lunch. Just to see their smiling faces was a blessing to us. We see them now coming out to Soul Harbour lunches.

- Sharon Taylor

COMMUNITY CARE

Target: Care for the Needs of People in the Amherst Area.

Responsible for:

- Grief Care/Resources
- Stephen Ministry
- Lay Visitation
- Christmas Wrap-Up
- Love Week
- The Big Give
- Food Bank Service
- Meals Ministry
- Other Care Events & Programs in the Local Community
- Team Recruitment & Training

Accomplishments

- We had 3 attendees for Grieving Hearts this year.
- The AWC church family supported one grieving family this year by providing a funeral reception lunch.
- This year we gave out a couple grief tool kits for teens/kids to the community.
- This last year we gave out Grief booklets to 24 individuals.
- Meals Ministry gave out many meals this year to support people in crisis. However, now there is a bit of a change with Souls Harbour coming to serve our community even more people are able to benefit with their hot lunches.
- ESL started last April and we have seen it flourish under the leadership of Olivia Jordan, with up to 10 attendees.
- Sharon Taylor lead a team of volunteers from AWC at the food bank up till January showing God's love and kindness to the less fortunate in our community.
- Annette O'Keefe continues to provide excellent leadership with Christmas is the Worst providing support to individuals during difficult times in their lives.
- The Christmas Wrap-Up and bake auction was a great success this year. We continued all our normal activities for this event and provided a Christmas Dinner for over 20 people at the homeless Hub.
- Last June at the Big Give we saw several hundred people come through our doors. They were excited to receive free items and have a pancake brunch. Emerson packing joined with us for this event and some of their employees came to help out with face painting, helping in the kitchen, and helping load peoples vehicles, they were blown away by the generosity of the event.

Please join us as we pray for...

- Fall and Winter sessions of Grieving Hearts saw some interest but unfortunately little to no attendance.
- The same was seen with our Christmas is the Worst event. However the materials were able to get into the hands of those not able to make the event.
- It has been a year of transition and change with a few people in different roles, and with God's help we are meeting the needs in our community in such amazing ways as we allow God to work through us.

What's next in Community Care?

- We will keep our Fall and Winter Grieving Hearts sessions available and continue to connect with our community as a place of comfort and healing for bereaved people.
- We will continue all our normal activities for the Christmas Wrap-Up, Christmas Bake Auction, Christmas is the Worst, and Christmas Dinner at the Homless Hub showing our love and care for our community during the Christmas season.
- Annette O'Keefe and I are developing a team for lay visitation to provide emotional and spiritual support for people.
- The Big Give is coming up in a few weeks. We are excited to have Emerson packing partnering with us again in meeting the needs of the people in Amherst.

Thank you to all of you who serve in this ministry. It's a beautiful thing to see everyone of you showing our community the deep love of God. I pray you are blessed as you generously give of yourself to these outreach events. It does make a difference and it does change lives!

- Lesley Trudel

BUILDING TEAM

Target: Ensure Our Facilities Support Our Ministries.

Responsible for:

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| • Maintenance of Physical Facilities | • Planning for maintenance and upgrades | • Recruiting and Engaging Volunteers |
| • Upgrades to facilities | | • Planning and Running Workdays |

Accomplishments

1. New washroom upstairs
2. Upgraded electrical
3. New boiler system
4. Apartment renovated for rent

Some projects we are working on:

- Washroom upstairs
- New windows on both buildings
- Radiator upgrades
- And many more things...

I am very excited to have Wesley Lomond taking on leadership of the Building Team moving forward. He is gifted in discipleship, leadership and as a contractor. He will bring an expertise and focus that I have not been able to bring this past year and I am looking forward to how he works with the team to help them accomplish many projects and become better men!

- Evan Oxner

WORSHIP TEAM

Target: Train, Lead & Direct in Worship.

Responsible for:

- Sunday Morning Content
 - Worship Practice
 - Worship Nights
 - Musicians, Media & Sound
 - Team Recruitment & Training
-

Accomplishments

- Monthly worship nights
- New volunteers on-boarded
- New songs added to list
- PAD being used
- New leader mentored
- Volunteers served humbly

Challenges

- Drum Volume

Goals & Plans

- "Less is more" musical approach
- Monthly worship nights
- Family worship event

Solid year for the Worship Dept. Seeing how people are using the music we selected and how the set lists consistently line up with each sermon, has been a confirmation that we as a church and leaders are being sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit. Our monthly worship nights have gone well, therefore we plan to continue them. In the fall, we plan on holding a family worship event, the details are being figured out at the moment but we look forward to what God has in store for this special event. Upon approval, I plan to install a drum shield and sound proofing materials to address the volume of the drum kit. Lastly, I look forward to working closely with our volunteers this year. God has given me a vision and some insights into how we can improve our worship services which I'm excited and nervous to share with the team in the coming months.

- Kyle Legere

YOUTH

Target: To help Students in Grades 6-12 follow Jesus.

Responsible for:

- Friday Night Youth Gathering
 - Special Events for Teens
 - Outreach to Teens
 - Shepherding of Teens
 - Team Recruitment & Training
 - Christmas Parade
-

Accomplishments

- Had 53 students on one night - had to dye my hair pink
- Launched new program/curriculum for grades 6-7 (Loop); proving effective
- Participated in Town Christmas parade, won best charity award
- Expanded our social media presence - creating community amongst teens
- Created newsletter for parents, better communication
- Our grade 8 girls group is launching their own separate bible study with their leader outside of youth nights
- Handed out several Bibles to new students
- Started a new mentorship program
- Celebrated 1 baptism
- Created a new "Code of Conduct" for students to follow while at EDGE Youth
- Did our first fundraiser and brought in ~\$2500
- 113 Teens at Rally for Impact

Challenges

- New leaders finding their confidence
- Growing number of students has made "gametime" difficult. When many teens show up we start to feel cramped in our space
- Disruptive students during worship/small groups

Goals and Plans

- Considering a second night geared for younger students
- Greater engagement with mentorship...see teens "want" these rather than Pastor Brad just present them as good ideas...have students take greater initiative towards our mission
- have a single night of over 60 students

This past year we saw the most growth ever, potentially in AWC's history. With a record high of 53 students on a single night; which led to Pastor Brad dyeing his hair pink, and an average attendance of ~30 students, EDGE Youth continued to take ground and help teens follow Jesus. Not only did we see numerical growth but we saw amazing spiritual growth in many teens. God is clearly doing a work but the work isn't done. Back in February, the Lord made it clear that a deep work is what's next. We've spent the last 4 years building a reputable program and drawing teens together but need to take their faith in a deeper direction. We hear reports of teens struggling to defend their faith, understand their faith, and share their faith; all key fundamental principles for believers. The battles teens face in their day-to-day lives are difficult and with the right tools and relationships, our teens are going to be used by God in ways to transform our community. - Bradford Jordan

Discipleship & Evangelism

Target: Drive D&E Engagement and Effectiveness.

Responsible for:

- Overcomers
 - Christmas Parade
 - Leadership Pipeline & Mentorships
 - Small Groups
 - Seminars
 - Evangelism Training
 - Membership
 - Integration & Assimilation
 - Coffee with the Clerics
 - Prayer Development
 - Canada Day
 - Volunteer Appreciation
 - Team Recruitment & Training
-

Our small group ministry seemed to find their stride this year, with a number of groups gaining momentum and effectiveness. The addition of RightNowMedia has already become a welcome addition to people in our church. Next year I hope to lean more into additional groups and mentoring. Maybe I will even find someone willing to lead this department!

- Evan

Missions & Church Planting

Target: Support Efforts to Expand God's Kingdom Outside of Amherst.

Responsible for:

- International Mission Trips
 - International Mission Team Support
 - International Mission Team Connection
 - Service Projects with Aid Groups Outside of Amherst
 - Development & Support of Church Planting
 - Coordination with AWC & New Church Plants
 - Driving Church Planting
 - Team Recruitment & Training
-

Missionary Support Commitments:

Albania: Stevens family - \$750

Japan: White family - \$750

Vienna: Rogers family - \$750

World Hope: Various projects - \$500

Youth for Christ: Gregory family - \$500

Teen Challenge: Addiction rehabilitation - \$500

Finally, we have someone stepping into the role of Missions Department Lead! I am so excited for Tena Frizzle to be taking on this role and to be a passionate driver for bringing the gospel beyond Amherst and around the world. I think it is time for us to rekindle our desire to missions, and I hope that short-term mission trips will become both a way to serve others and also help our people understand the heart of Christ.

- Evan Oxner

Budget 2025-2026

| BUDGET INCOME 24-25 | | | ACTUAL 24-25 | | NEEDED INCOME 25-26 |
|---------------------------|----------------------|--------------|----------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Regular | \$ 200,250.00 | | \$ 169,191.93 | | \$ 174,650.00 |
| GST | \$ 8,000.00 | | \$ 1,231.17 | | \$ - |
| Missions Offering | \$ 3,750.00 | | \$ 5,377.95 | | \$ 3,750.00 |
| BRH Rent | \$ - | | \$ 3,675.00 | | \$ 12,600.00 |
| Church Bldg Rent | \$ - | | \$ 25,000.00 | | \$ 25,000.00 |
| Building Fund Offering | \$ - | | \$ 9,530.00 | | \$ - |
| Other Offerings | \$ - | | \$ 25,931.91 | | \$ - |
| TOTAL INCOME | \$ 212,000.00 | | \$ 239,937.96 | | \$ 216,000.00 |
| EXPENSES | | BUDGET 24-25 | ACTUAL 24-25 | | BUDGET 25-26 |
| Bank Fees | \$ 550.00 | | \$ 517.50 | | \$ 550.00 |
| Conference/Ministerial | \$ 750.00 | | \$ 215.00 | | \$ 750.00 |
| Leadership | \$ 1,000.00 | | \$ 382.73 | | \$ 1,000.00 |
| Office | \$ 3,000.00 | | \$ 2,594.26 | | \$ 4,200.00 |
| Tithe.ly Fees | \$ 800.00 | | \$ 676.43 | | \$ 700.00 |
| USF | \$ 16,785.00 | | \$ 16,784.90 | | \$ 16,920.00 |
| Website | \$ 400.00 | | \$ 358.31 | | \$ 400.00 |
| WIF Mortgage | \$ 12,192.00 | | \$ 12,240.00 | | \$ 12,240.00 |
| Alarm | \$ 854.02 | | \$ 818.97 | | \$ 819.00 |
| Electricity CHURCH | \$ 3,500.00 | | \$ 3,015.22 | | \$ 3,500.00 |
| Electricity BRH | \$ 1,000.00 | | \$ 1,142.97 | | \$ 1,200.00 |
| Insurance | \$ 7,100.00 | | \$ 7,317.44 | | \$ 7,500.00 |
| Lift Service | \$ 1,200.00 | | \$ 762.30 | | \$ 1,000.00 |
| Building | \$ 15,000.00 | | \$ 52,873.35 | | \$ 15,000.00 |
| Natural Gas | \$ 22,000.00 | | \$ 23,608.10 | | \$ 24,000.00 |
| Phone & Internet | \$ 2,400.00 | | \$ 2,446.98 | | \$ 1,250.00 |
| Snow Removal | \$ 1,200.00 | | \$ 3,588.00 | | \$ 1,300.00 |
| Water/Sewer | \$ 650.00 | | \$ 575.71 | | \$ 650.00 |
| Benevolence | \$ 1,500.00 | | \$ 567.91 | | \$ 1,500.00 |
| Community Care | \$ 2,500.00 | | \$ 1,154.59 | | \$ 1,950.00 |
| First Impressions | \$ 1,200.00 | | \$ 978.25 | | \$ 1,200.00 |
| Kids Ministry | \$ 4,425.00 | | \$ 3,673.55 | | \$ 4,325.00 |
| Missions exp | \$ 3,750.00 | | \$ 6,940.00 | | \$ 3,750.00 |
| Missions Trip | \$ - | | \$ - | | \$ - |
| Discipleship & Evangelism | \$ 2,596.33 | | \$ 992.51 | | \$ 1,333.46 |
| Seniors | \$ 500.00 | | \$ 25.58 | | \$ - |
| Worship Team | \$ 2,000.00 | | \$ 1,077.79 | | \$ 2,785.00 |
| Youth | \$ 4,000.00 | | \$ 3,946.33 | | \$ 4,000.00 |
| Miscellaneous | \$ 1,000.00 | | \$ - | | \$ 1,000.00 |
| Pastor | \$ 43,385.64 | | \$ 45,109.28 | | \$ 46,913.65 |
| Assist. Pastor | \$ 27,957.76 | | \$ 28,816.57 | | \$ 27,514.55 |
| CPP & EI | \$ 4,697.70 | | \$ 6,572.79 | | \$ 4,978.38 |
| Ministry Honorarium | \$ 865.35 | | \$ 2,865.35 | | \$ - |
| Blue Cross | \$ 9,798.00 | | \$ 9,798.00 | | \$ 9,798.00 |
| Pension | \$ 8,483.24 | | \$ 8,468.48 | | \$ 8,862.96 |
| Janitor | \$ 2,959.96 | | \$ 3,109.96 | | \$ 3,110.00 |
| TOTAL EXPENSES | \$ 212,000.00 | | \$ 254,015.11 | | \$ 216,000.00 |
| | | 01-May-24 | 30-Apr-25 | | |
| | | Opening | Closing | | Break down |
| Regular | \$ 58,585.86 | \$ 48,094.11 | ► | Housing Incentive | \$ - |
| | | | | Savings | \$ 14,905.16 |
| | | | | Operating acct | \$ 33,188.95 |
| Missions | \$ 2,850.79 | \$ 2,482.88 | ► | Benevolence | \$ 1,166.73 |
| Building Fund | \$ 3,223.49 | \$ - | | Missions | \$ - |
| TOTAL | \$ 64,660.14 | \$ 50,576.99 | | Missions Trips | \$ 1,316.15 |

Pastor's Report

Rev. Evan Oxner

Year Ten

Well, where do I even start with this past year? We started the year with changes coming, having to say goodbye to Sheryl and Dwayne, then Pastor Brad bought a house and we started on the renovations of the apartment. Then there was the boiler. Then there was the electrical. Then I became the chaplain for the Amherst Police Department. Then the chairlift died. Then our finances plummeted while our heating bill went up and we almost had to lay off Pastor Brad. Financially and with the building it has been a lot.

There was The Big Give, the biggest we have ever done. We held our Konnect Camp, Trunk or Treat, Christmas Wrap-up, Christmas Eve, Easter celebrations and our Baptism events! Actually, we had an extra baptism this year because someone unexpected wanted to take that step of faith!

We officially started partnering with Souls Harbour, received a grant for the chairlift replacement, and after a hard message on giving saw our finances jump back to life! I had felt like I needed to take a step of obedience by preaching that message, even though I really didn't want to. I felt the obedience was more important than the risk, and even if the money didn't change, I knew the path forward is only forged by obedience to our God. I feel like I actually held our church back by not preaching that message sooner.

I have been slowly working my way through meeting with the families in our church. I don't have everyone schedule in, and finding a time when families are free can be a real challenge, but the conversations I have had have been so good and so refreshing. If I haven't met with your family yet, please reach out to me so we can set up a time.

Looking back, so much of this year was taken up by the projects and events I have already mentioned. I don't know how many hours I put in helping with the boiler installation and the apartment renovation. Those two things alone consumed most of my Summer and Fall. I didn't feel like I even got into the swing of things until sometime in January, and even then we were still adapting ministry at AWC without Sheryl. Celebrate Recovery became Overcomers, Overcomers became The Olive Branch, and now The Olive Branch has withered. We tried to host our grief ministries and they never got traction.

Our people have been phenomenal though! You have served this year with incredible sacrifice, passion and excellence. You have taken steps of faith and have worked to share Jesus through your life with those around you. People have been reached and changed because of your faithfulness and obedience. Our community continues to see this church as a place of life and are amazed by what is happening here. In spite of all the problems we have faced and all the weird changes we have attempted to navigate over this past year, our attendance has grown, our teen ministry has grown and our kids ministry is starting to feel the restrictions of physical space! That's not my doing; that's the Holy Spirit working in you!

I don't know what this next year brings with it, though I do hope fewer infrastructure projects! We have new leadership for our building team and new leadership for our missions team too. Our attendance is the highest it has ever been and the work that Souls Harbour is doing in our basement is incredible. Depending on how the vote goes at Connection Church in Truro this Sunday I may or may not be taking on leadership of another church, on top of my responsibilities here. We just have to wait and see on that.

Our team is working on a visitation ministry and looking to ramp up our discipleship/mentoring ministry too. Pastor Brad is taking Pat-Leave this Summer and we are hopeful that our finances will remain strong enough to commit to keeping him on long-term when he returns.

Whatever this next year looks like and wherever God is taking us, I feel that His authority is resting on this church to set the captives free and to bind the enemy. I sense a growing anointing of God's favour on this church and when challenges have arisen you have consistently chosen to do it God's way and not your own. I have no expectation that this next stage of the journey is going to be easy, but I do expect the harvest to be large. The challenges may actually increase for us, but the payoff will increase as well. I think we have fought many hard battles for small increases time after time. Now, I think we will be fighting hard battles for larger and larger victories.

None of this is sustainable if we try to do it on our own. I mean, we can't do it alone, as individuals, and we can't do it without the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. We need to do this together and we need to do this God's way and by His power. The mission is before us and I really don't want to flinch at whatever comes next. I want us to lean in.

Wandering around the desert is hard, but taking the promised land is harder.

I don't plan to run from any giants that get in the way, and I'm guessing you plan to run right through them too. I believe this is where God has led us and is leading us to next.

So...

Be down-to-earth people and follow Jesus in down-to-earth ways.

Search Boldly, Connect Honestly, Serve Humbly and Worship Fully.

Let's get to it.

Evan Oxner - Lead Pastor