



Amherst Wesleyan Church

Annual Meeting 2020

Agenda

- **Call to Order**
- **Opening Prayer**
- **Roll Call**
- **Reading of the Minutes**
 - + Minutes from Annual Meeting 2019
- **Leadership Positions**
 - + Staff Updates
 - + Leadership & LBA Terms
- **Reports**
 - + Department Reports
 - + Financial Report for 2019-2020 & 2020-2021 Budget
 - + Pastor's Report
- **Business from the Floor...**

Membership List

1. Darren Allen
2. Debbie Allen
3. Peter Baxter
4. Tammy Baxter
5. Angela Benson
6. Todd Benson
7. Pat Bishop
8. Linda Borne
9. Carvel Burke
10. Joan Burke
11. Flora Caissie
12. Becky Chitty
13. Karen Coffin
14. Linda Fillmore
15. Stirling Fillmore
16. Wendy Forest
17. Garth Frizzle
18. Tena Frizzle
19. Barry Gould
20. Beth Gould
21. Jarah Gregory
22. Michael Gregory
23. Betty Harroun
24. Gordon Hunsley
25. Brian Kierstead
26. Ivy Kierstead
27. Jocelyn Laurette
28. Dianna Lawless
29. Jason Little
30. Molly Little
31. Jamin Melanson
32. Naomi Melanson
33. Marilyn MacPherson
34. John Martin
35. Sharon Merrill
36. Carman Merrill
37. James Merrill
38. Mark O'Keefe
39. Annette O'Keefe
40. Evan Oxner
41. Heidi Oxner
42. Laura Paugh
43. Susan Rafuse
44. Adam Richards
45. Erin Richards
46. Marilyn Smith
47. Sharon Taylor
48. Carolyn Thompson
49. Elisha York
50. Dwayne York
51. Sheryl York

By the Numbers

51 Members Total

- 46 Members Carried Over from Last Year Automatically due to Pandemic Measures
- 5 New Members
- 0 Transferred Memberships from other Denominational Churches
- 0 Transferred Memberships from other Wesleyan Churches
- 0 Transferred Memberships to other Wesleyan Churches
- N/A Members Declined Reaffirmation

Annual Meeting Minutes

15 May 2019

Call to Order: Pastor Evan Oxner welcomed those in attendance.

Opening Prayer: Jocelyn Laurette (Outgoing LBA Vice-Chair)

Roll Call: 29 Members and 6 Non-members in attendance

MINUTES from 2018 Annual Meeting

- Read & Accepted

DEPARTMENTS & ELECTED LEADERS FOR 2017-2018

- Youth: Michael Gregory
- Seniors: Linda Fillmore
- Small Groups: Evan Oxner
- Outreach: Jamin Melanson
- Missions: Jamin Melanson
- LBA:
 - Mark O'Keefe (Vice-Chairman) (9)
 - Dianna Lawless (Secretary) (8)
 - Darren Allen (Treasurer) (7)
 - Susan Rafuse (3)
 - Sterling Fillmore (3)
 - Debbie Allen (1)
 - Linda Borne (2)
- Kids: Debbie Allen
- Community Care: Sheryl York
- First Impressions: Michael Gregory
- Building Committee: Dwayne York
- Worship Teams: Naomi Melanson
- (LBA Terms – Number shows how many years remain in Possible Term)
- Read & Accepted

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

- Sheryl (Community Care): Add Annette O'Keefe as coordinator for meals.
- All Reports Read

BUDGET FOR 2019-2020

- Annette O'Keefe made a motion, seconded by Tena Frizzle, that the Ministry Honorarium budget of \$5200 BE INCREASED TO \$10,400. Motion Passed by Majority Vote.
- Evan requested permission to review church finances in the future to possibly make a payment of \$20,000 against the mortgage. Motion Passed.
- Revised Budget Read & Accepted

PASTOR'S REPORT

- Read & Accepted

Meeting adjourned

Respectfully submitted,

Dianna Lawless (Secretary)



Leadership Positions

(All positions and terms have been carried over exactly from last year)

Staff

Lead Pastor: Evan Oxner

Assistant Pastor: Jamin Melanson

Pastor of Seniors (Emeritus): Linda Fillmore

Community Care Pastor: Sheryl York

Youth Director: Michael Gregory

LBA

Vice-Chairman

Mark O'Keefe (9)

District Conference Delegates

NA (District Conference Cancelled due to Global Pandemic COVID-19)

Secretary

Dianna Lawless (8)

Treasurer

Darren Allen (7)

NOTE:

**Release Mid-Year Business & Ministry Update
Nov 2020**

Members at Large

Susan Rafuse (3)

Sterling Fillmore (3)

Debbie Allen (1)

Linda Borne (2)

Department Heads

Youth Ministry

Michael Gregory

Kids Ministry

Debbie Allen

Seniors

Linda Fillmore

Community Care

Sheryl York

Small Groups

Evan Oxner

First Impressions

Michael Gregory

Outreach

Jamin Melanson

Building Committee

Dwayne York

Missions

Jamin Melanson

Worship Team

Naomi Melanson

Department Reports

OUTREACH MINISTRY

To provide opportunities for the Gospel to be shared with people who do not know Jesus.

Accomplishments:

- Over 250 attended the Big Give (and 20 plus volunteers involved)
- Elvis was a big hit in the Parade
- That's A Wrap Coffee House with 85 people and \$430 raised for Wrap-Up event
- Family Valentine Concert with over 140 people and \$600 raised for 2020 Wrap-Up

Challenges:

- Canada Event held inside Amherst Stadium due to Rain
- Two team members stepped down.
- Other events took away from volunteer pool for Christmas Wrap-Up

Victories:

- Two more members joined the team
- Won best non-profit float in the Christmas Parade

2020-21 Outreach Goals:

1. Board Game Coffee House in August
2. Hold the Big Give later on in the summer if social gatherings are still banned.
3. Figuring out our own way to do Christmas Cheer Boxes effectively.
4. Have 45 people involved with the Christmas Wrap-Up

The AWC Outreach Team (Jamin Melanson, Paul Theriault, Laura Paugh, Mallareigh Coffin, Dianna Lawless, and Erin Richards) are extremely excited to keep serving with you as we continue to reach out to the town of Amherst. 2020-21 may look like a different year because of the coronavirus, but we are determined to still tell people about Jesus Christ, and His love for them. Continue to pray for our team, and continue to be involved with our outreach events. You are part of the reason they make a difference.

Respectfully submitted,
Assistant Pastor
Jamin Melanson



KIDS MINISTRY

We want all kids and their families to love God’s Word and understand the value of applying it to their lives.

I am so thankful for the team of leaders that freely give of their time, energy, and talents. I am thankful for a church family that sees the importance of investing in the lives of children to give them and their families a solid biblical foundation. Whether you serve once a week or once a year, whether you serve up front or behind the scenes, THANK YOU! Thank you for being obedient to God’s call. It is because of your willingness to allow God to work through each of you that we get to be part of celebrating 9 children who asked Jesus to be the Leader of their lives. WOW GOD!

Here’s some of what happened:

- Sunday Morning KONNECT
- KONNECT leaders conference
- KONNECT @ The Park
- KONNECT Summer Camp
- KONNECT Scoops of Joy
- Trunk or Treat
- OCC Packing Party
- Christmas Presentation
- Christmas treat bags
- Christmas Breakfast
- Cereal Sunday
- Glow Party
- KONNECT on Facebook
- KONNECT on Marco Polo
- Easter treat bags

Wins: 9 salvations, new leaders, improved small group engagement, new faces

Challenges: inconsistent attendance, leaders needed especially midweek/special events

2020/21 What’s new on the horizon?

- Midweek program
- Welcome/first impression reno’s for KONNECT

Statistical Stuff	KONNECT Sunday Morning	KONNECT Summer Camp	KONNECT @ The Park
Average Attendance	19	60	20
Lowest Attendance	6	56	16
Highest Attendance	30	62	24
Trunk or Treat	400		

SMALL GROUPS

Small Groups exist to help people connect honestly with God and others while challenging them to grow in their discipleship to be more like Jesus.

Accomplishments

- A number of new people joined a group for the first time
- New groups started
- Most groups transitioned to online during the pandemic
- New men's group began
- Growing comfort with format
- Growing commitment
- Micro-Groups began

Challenges

- Connecting new people to a group
- Getting parents, shift workers into groups
- Facing pandemic and disconnection

Goals & Plans

- Groups through the summer
- Transition to in-person however we can when allowed
- Continued some online components to help bridge scheduling and distance issues
- Add more people to existing groups
- Grow at least one group to the point it much plant

Small Groups continue to be a foundational part of discipleship strategy at AWC. Coupled with Micro-Groups we are building a system designed to connect down-to-earth people with each other so they can walk this journey of faith together. In our current climate of social distancing there is an even greater need for us to invest in Small Groups as they serve to keep us connected with each other, encouraged, and focused on the mission we have from Jesus to share His love with the whole world. I am committed to finding ways to make Small Groups and Micro-Groups more effective and wider reaching, and welcome any feedback, suggestions or comments that may result in that taking place.

- Evan Oxner

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

To give everyone who comes through the doors of AWC a welcoming experience where they feel the love and acceptance of Jesus.

- We have gotten a new team of greeters created for the two services
 - o Great to see different people greeting.
 - o Gave those coming through the door a welcoming warm greeting whether they have been coming for years or this is their first time.
- We have also started using Maritime coffee to provide coffee supplies for the church.
 - o Improved the quality of the coffee
 - o Faster prep time to make coffee
- Decorated for different holidays and seasons which was a success and a challenge
 - o Good feedback about decorations
- Painted the front railing of the church

Goals

- Increase the welcoming atmosphere of the church
- Continue to work on building a team of volunteers

I also just want to thank the large team who have helped throughout the year and thanks to Brian and Ivy who week after week helped with the coffee and connection centre. As well as the large team of volunteers who helped this year!

- Michael Gregory



MISSIONS

To encourage, challenge, and include the people at AWC with local and global missions.

Accomplishments

- Took a team of seven to Toronto in July to assist with Waypoint Church Plant.
- Video updates for missionaries during service.
- Mission Weekend in November with 6 missionaries represented and 30 people attended

Challenges:

- Jamaica Mission Trip postponed due to CoVid-19
- Still looking for leadership team members

Victories:

- Brought on two new missionary families to support.

2019-20 Budget:

Total: \$9000

Spent: \$7970.39

The numbers appear different than what is reported in the overall budget for a couple reasons. One, I requested \$2500 for the Jamaica Mission Trip, but we only needed \$1500. Two, and the biggest difference, is all our Mission Trip funds pass through the Mission Budget. So it appears we spent over \$14,000 because of money that came in for the various Mission Trips, and then went back out to pay for the Trips.

2020-21 Mission Goals:

1. Mission Trip to Jamaica in September.
2. Have a leadership team of four members plus myself.
3. Hold Mission Weekend in October.
4. Present a five year road map for Missions

Respectfully submitted,
Assistant Pastor
Jamin Melanson

YOUTH MINISTRY

Youth ministry is an evangelistic ministry meant to meet youth where they are and give them the space to interact with Jesus both through word and also through the example of the leaders.

Successes

- This year we have also seen a larger number of junior high students coming out on Friday Nights, as well as to our Monthly Junior High Hangout where we would see students from grades 5-8 coming out.
- Flamingo Season was a fundraiser that we ran for the month of October which was also a huge success. It not only helped support some of our special events that were coming up with the money raised, but was a great way to bring some fun to peoples lawns and get out into the community.
- Some of the special events we did like the youth retreat to Fundy National park and Encounter at Kingswood University allowed us to spend more time with the youth who went, build some deeper connections with the youth, and worship and learn about God right along side them.
- The Christmas party this year led us to see the highest number of youth out in one night with the number at 30 youth on the dot.
- The youth are taking steps towards God which is great to see, and for those who are Christians they are maturing as well.
- The youth small group held Fridays after school is helping them to mature as well. Led by Jamin Melanson and Malareigh Coffin it is helping the youth to interact with the bible and learn how it applies to their lives in a deeper way.

Challenges

- We had a shift throughout this year as many of our older youth got part time jobs which made coming out on Friday nights harder. This did not stop them from coming out when they could and still being involved in the different ministries at AWC.
- This time during the social isolation has been challenging as well, both coming up with new material and keeping the youth involved with the online content.
 - o It has been rewarding and there has been wins throughout! One being that there are certain youth who are really clinging on to the online format. Some who we weren't really reaching before.

Goals

- To continue to adapt the ministry to best reach the youth of Amherst
- Start of midweek sports program to help transition kids into EDGE Youth
- Get the youth who are following Jesus connected with volunteering in other ministries.

Youth overall was a big success. Each Friday Night our team of leaders would be at the church ready to interact and show the love of Jesus to any youth who would come through the doors. Thanks to them and the rest of my leaders at Night on the EDGE each week (Karen Coffin, Naomi Melanson, Jarah Gregory, and Alex MacAloney).

- Michael Gregory

COMMUNITY CARE

To love others in down to earth ways; meeting practical, emotional & spiritual needs.

We have been amazed to watch God work...

- Stephen Ministry began, three trained ministers who are matched with care receivers
- The Frozen Meal Teams made 175 meals for the community
- 30 Grief booklets are currently been sent to grieving individuals (Another 35 have been sent out since we began distributing in 2017)
- 10 Teen Grief Kits and 8 Children's Grief Kits have been distributed
- 3 Grieving Hearts Peer Support Groups were held: one at 10am & two at 6:30pm (24 people attended)
- Christmas is the Worst had an overhaul and 13 bereaved individuals attended.
- We provided many families with funeral reception support
- Planning for Celebrate Recovery is well underway
- Benevolent Food Cupboard began (This is a small pantry of food purchased when items are on sale to meet crisis needs when the foodbank is not open.)
- We have positive, growing connections with the community, Mental Health, Maggie's Place, Schools and the Ageing Well Coalition
- We continued to support After the Bell School program with food donations.

What's Next?

- Celebrate Recovery will Launch September 29th
- Another Training of Stephen Ministers will happen in the fall
- Stronger Together (workshop to train people how to support grieving people) will happen in the fall and in May
- Hot Meals ministry will launch in 2021
- Training Facilitators for Grieving Hearts Peer Support Groups
- Expand reach of Children & Teen Grief Toolkits to Cumberland County Schools

Please Join us as we Pray for...

- Celebrate Recovery: Leaders, Publicity, Training, Launch
- Growth of Stephen Ministry (More ministers and a New Trained Stephen Leader)
- Bereavement Leadership - Grieving Hearts Facilitators and Toolkits Team Lead
- Launch of Hot Meals Ministry

God has used the care team in incredible ways to meet physical, emotional and spiritual needs. COVID-19 changed how we delivered support but we did not stop caring for our AWC family, the people of Amherst and Cumberland County. I am humbled to be part of a church that displays faith in action and loves people as God does; without judgement or reservation. I am incredibly excited to see what He wants us to do in the future. (P.S. The figures show that community care went over budget. Materials were purchased for Celebrate Recovery that were reimbursed - over \$250 was received. Community Care did not exceed its budget.)

- Sheryl York



WORSHIP TEAM

The worship department strives to bring people further into their relationship with Christ through many elements: Scripture, Music, Prayer, Fellowship, and Communion.

Accomplishments

- Rebranded *Night of Worship* to a monthly *Living Room Worship*--a casual night of fellowship and music in the "living-room transformed" sanctuary.
- Christmas Eve services were well attended, and the team gave high commitment—even during the busy season. We added an element of light to the stage using spotlights.
- The team has been willing to learn new songs that can be out of our comfort zone.

Victories:

- During the Fall, team members—Heidi, Michael, and Kate—stepped up to lead weekly practices since I (Naomi) had to be in evening classes. Thank you for your service and leadership.
- We have welcomed four new people to our music ministry team of all ages.

Challenges:

- Injuries, illnesses, and unexpected work schedules that cause last minute adapting
- Leading the team while going back to school and missing practices due to classes
- Double services putting a strain but with scheduling we are trying to minimize this
- Quarantine putting a damper on the last few months of the church year

2020-21 Worship Goals:

1. Have *Living Room Worship* every month (once we are able to meet again).
2. During quarantine, incorporate and share opportunities to worship in different avenues.
3. Make it a priority to pray at each weekly practice for the following Sunday.
4. Incorporate new elements in Sunday morning services.
5. Update and enhance the stage/instruments to help with effectiveness in serving.
6. Re-organize the worship closet and equipment to be more accessible.
7. Make arrangements to keep worship teams running smoothly in midst of future changes.

As I reflect on this past church year, I am beyond grateful for the commitment and level of responsibility that has been seen within the team members. It is amazing to see so many serving with the gifts God has blessed them with. Even though this church year may look different, I am excited to serve with an amazing team of volunteers to elevate our worship to God!

Respectfully submitted,
Worship Director
Naomi Melanson

BUILDING COMMITTEE

We are here to make our building a friendly place to enter and to worship God. We need your help to be able to accomplish this.

I was very encouraged with the completion of various projects this year:

1. Installed bannister going downstairs
2. Got the upstairs bathroom started
3. Front doors have been replaced
4. Carpet has been shampoo
5. Painted the foundation
6. Cleaned the light shade
7. Patched up the driveway

Some projects we are working on:

- repairing the leak in the bell tower
- finish installation of the upstairs bathroom
- paint the lobby
- paint the back stairwell
- clean up the garage
- install a retaining wall
- install moulding
- strip and wax basement floor

Anyone interested in helping improve the appearance of the building, please let me know. We will supply the equipment and materials.

Once again, I would like to thank everyone who has participated in completing our projects

- Dwayne York

SENIORS

The key purpose in this ministry is to serve our seniors in any way possible, through Bible Study, Prayer, Supporting, and Outreach.

Wins

- Micro-Groups
- Everyone now has a N.I.V. Bible
- 13 went for a Sleigh Ride, roasted marshmallows, and had a great bonding time, and had 3 guests.
- had a Christmas dinner at Pattersons in Sackville NB (14 in attendance)
- most are serving in other areas of AWC ministry
- most are more comfortable praying in the group for one another, and the needs of others
- Outreach to Gables at Christmas – carolling and gifts for 97 residents
- monthly meeting at Gables with 6 to 11 taking part as well as myself
- Country Gospel Morning (monthly) did go well.
- Now since isolation our connection is by video chat, but many are still giving cooking – supplied meals, doing things to encourage others.

What's Next plans:

- Encouraging Seniors to not lose heart during this difficult time.
- Seeing more spiritual growth
- Helping them find meaningful ways to participate in group discussions, Bible study and Prayer
- Continued development of closer relationship/accountability through Micro Groups and connections.

Prayers/Needs/Asks

- Peace for the “single” seniors

Submitted by Pastor Linda Fillmore



Budget 2020 - 2021

Amherst Wesleyan Church					
Budget for 2020 - 2021					
Income 2019 - 2020			Needed Income 2020 - 2021		
Regular	\$145,366.63		Regular		\$151,441.40
Missions	\$13,167.70		Missions		\$7,000.00
Mission Trip	NA		Mission Trip		\$0.00
Building Fund	\$9,183.00		Building Fund		\$9,300.00
Other	\$1,850.00		Other		\$0.00
Total	\$169,567.33		Total		\$167,741.40
Expense		BUDGET 19-20	ACTUAL 19-20	BUDGET 20-21	
Alarm		\$820.00	888.46		\$820.00
Bank & App Fees		\$1,400.00	1,303.79		\$1,400.00
Benevolence		NA	6,714.60		NA
Blue Cross		\$4,000.00	3,600.00		\$4,000.00
Building		\$20,000.00	11,087.63		\$9,300.00
Community Care		\$2,500.00	3,708.82		\$2,500.00
Conference/Ministerial		\$1,500.00	1,669.75		\$1,000.00
CPP & EI		\$2,994.42	3,882.63		\$3,000.00
Electricity		\$5,800.00	5,393.68		\$5,800.00
First Impressions		\$1,800.00	741.26		\$1,500.00
Insurance		\$4,953.00	4,953.00		\$5,000.00
Janitor		\$2,600.00	2,600.00		\$2,600.00
Kids Ministry		\$4,800.00	3,733.91		\$4,900.00
Leadership		\$500.00	629.20		\$500.00
Lift Service		\$500.00	0.00		\$500.00
Ministry Honorarium		\$10,400.00	10,600.00		\$2,600.00
Miscellaneous		\$1,500.00	1,562.33		\$1,500.00
Missions exp		\$9,000.00	17,887.95		\$7,000.00
Missions Trip		NA	NA		NA
Natural Gas		\$13,000.00	12,946.32		\$13,000.00
Office		\$2,200.00	2,213.19		\$2,400.00
Outreach		\$1,200.00	1,149.56		\$2,000.00
Pastor		\$38,450.36	38,497.24		\$38,450.36
Pension		\$4,614.04	4,536.08		\$4,614.04
Phone & Internet		\$1,900.00	1,738.43		\$1,900.00
Photocopier		\$1,400.00	377.86		\$1,000.00
Seniors		\$200.00	147.86		\$200.00
Small Group		\$350.00	176.69		\$100.00
Snow Removal		\$2,000.00	1,656.00		\$2,000.00
Specials		\$250.00	0.00		\$250.00
USF		\$16,409.00	15,041.58		\$16,593.00
Water/Sewer		\$800.00	1,583.57		\$800.00
Website		\$738.30	725.30		\$740.00
WIF Mortgage		\$7,824.00	7,824.00		\$7,824.00
Worship Team		\$1,300.00	1,328.79		\$1,350.00
Youth		\$5,000.00	2,507.04		\$5,000.00
Youth Director		\$16,042.26	\$15,600.00		\$15,600.00
Total		\$188,745.38	\$189,006.52		\$167,741.40
Opening Church Year		Church Year End		Break down	
May-2019		Closing April 30,2019		Savings	\$2,955.01
Regular	\$35,578.67	Regular	\$23,670.91	Operating aact	\$20,715.90
Missions	\$18,091.54	Missions	\$7,718.35	Benevolence	\$2,733.00
Building Fund	\$5,323.24	Building Fund	\$8,165.00	Missions	\$243.70
				Missions Trips	\$4,741.65
	\$58,993.45		\$39,554.26		



Pastor's Report

Rev. Evan Oxner

Year Five

Before I go into anything else, I need to acknowledge one very important reality for us: we're still here. I am still here as your Lead Pastor, and you are still here as the Body of Christ. You are still here as individuals! We Are Still Here! God has not abandoned us, the Church has not closed, the world has not ended, the sky has not fallen, and the enemy has not won! This must be firmly established as our story before we tackle anything else. We have some tough things to face, but we are not facing them from the place of defeat or being victims. We are charging into the fray as agents of the reigning KING.

This year we have faced a number of challenges, and they have been particularly heavy challenges after coming off of such an incredible year before that. We decided it was time to make some renovations to the building, bring on a part-time youth director, provide an honorarium for some of our ministry leaders, and lean heavily into our ongoing ministries. That budget was risky to begin with, and then at the Annual Meeting a discussion took place that increased our budget even further. We took the risk, and giving didn't match what was needed to meet the budget. It must be noted here that I do not feel we acted wisely and that we did not follow-through on our commitment to support the budget that was voted on and accepted. I believe we should be taking risks and pushing further, but we must do those things as God directs. I do not feel our budget last year was appropriately discerned from God's will. We need to face this, and we need to repent of this. This is not meant as a comment towards those who brought up the motion, or those who spoke towards the question. This is something that we as a church discussed and voted on. This rests on all of us.

Yet, God did not abandon us or fail to provide. For months I prayed, and was burdened by our financial situation, and month after month I saw God sustain! No, giving never came up to where it should have been to match our budget, but in the months when giving should have been significantly reduced due to storms and the pandemic, it remained steady! In January when we had all those snow storms on Sundays, our giving actually was higher than the previous year! We ended our business year still with a healthy amount in our bank account, and we are still in a place where we can take bold steps to advance the Kingdom of God! We must not take foolish risks, but we will be bold in following God wherever He leads us.

We have replaced the front doors, and almost completed the installation of our upstairs washroom! We have endured a hurricane, snowstorms, cancelled on-site services, and are now in the middle of restrictions to contain the spread of a pandemic. Small groups have gone online, giving has gone online, services have gone online, kids and youth ministries have gone online. We are working hard to stay connected and continue to serve and reach out to people, but there is a glaring reality that being online for everything is driving us to desperately crave being offline. We will continue to find ways to use technology and to serve in ways that are permissible in these times, but we are also very much committed to finding ways to connect face-to-face the moment there are effective and permissible



2020 Annual Report

17 May 2020

methods available. I really can hardly wait to see you all in person again and sit with you and drink coffee with you and just BE with you.

Our staff and leadership team are consistently providing excellence in their ministries and are pushing into innovation, delegation and striving to get better and better. Each one of them have been pushed to do things out of their comfort zones this past year and each one has had their own struggles. From learning new ministries, losing their jobs, moving, medical complications, changing how they do ministry, expanding their area of responsibility, to dealing with a cranky boss, they have all grown and come out honouring Christ. I can honestly say that one of the most frustrating things for me pastoring this church is that we have such high calibre leaders and volunteers and yet haven't grown to match their ability.

I think I have shown over the past 5 years, and especially over the past year, that I will do what's necessary to build and lead the church so that it really is the church and not just some other organization or charity. Vulnerability, holiness, honesty, commitment, discipleship, obedience and sacrifice are all characteristics that we need to embrace as the church. The matter of established authority and freedom need to be processed and we need to face the fact that we personally need to be surrendered to Christ, then we need to lead our families in surrender to Christ, and then we can lead our church with authority. I cannot over-stress the importance of this. We are at war for the lives and eternities of our loved ones, our neighbours, and our enemies.

The only reason I can determine for why we have not grown more, and reached more people, is that we still have limitations on our authority. Don't get me wrong, growing average Sunday morning attendance by 9% annually is really quite good, especially compared to many other churches. But judging by the talents that God has provided here, 9% is too low. We can't blame the pandemic, bad weather, inconvenience, cultural norms, or the lack of funds. None of those things stopped the Church before us, and they won't stop us now. It is time to embrace our responsibility, to lean hard on Jesus, and take back what the enemy has stolen and is trying to steal again. I know this is a bit harder hitting than previous annual meeting reports, but the time is now. We are the Body of Christ. We are not victims. We are not losing. We are agents of the King of kings!

It's time for us to walk in that.

We will be down-to-earth people following Jesus in down-to-earth ways.

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

Let's get to it.

Evan Oxner - Lead Pastor