

Annapolis-Digby Baptist Association April 25, 2015
ANNUAL MEETING 2015, LAWRENCETOWN BAPTIST CHURCH

Rev. Patty Beals, Pastor of Lawrencetown Baptist Church, Lawrencetown, NS, welcomed all the delegates and guests to the church and to the 2015 Annual Meeting of the Annapolis-Digby Baptist Association. Registration, conversation and coffee were enjoyed as all gathered and assembled in the Sanctuary. Rev. Beals opened with the reading of Psalm 100 followed by prayer for this special day. The Church Worship Team presented some new musical selections and then some familiar choruses, asking all to join in, to worship our Lord and Saviour with them. This was followed by an offering for our Association.

Rev. Beals introduced our special speaker for the day, Rev. Dr. Stephen McMullin. Stephen is Director of Doctoral Studies at Acadia Divinity College, and he also serves as Associate Professor of Evangelism and Mission, and Director of the Simpson Lectures. Stephen has experience in rural, small town and urban ministries. Patty prayed for him and his message on **“The Life of Christ and the Life of the Church”** which he has for us today.

Dr. McMullin began by asking us to think back to the 1980's when our churches were going relatively well with members and Pastor working together. Everyone at that time claimed the church as his or her own. People claimed the community church as “my church”, even if they were not a member. So much has changed since then! We can't seem to get out into the communities and we continue to tell others that it is difficult for us to share our values and our faith. An old pastor told Stephen, “I don't think I'd be able to be a Pastor today as I wouldn't know what to do! Everything is changed!”

Our Speaker, Dr. McMullin pointed out that life is very different in our world today, but Christ's message is still as vital as it always was, and the message of Salvation has not changed. We must be willing to reach out to others who do not know the Lord, welcoming and including them in our fellowship. We depend too much on what WE have accomplished, but we must realize that we have to go back to depending solely on Christ; to be open, welcoming, and inclusive of those whom we think may be culturally and socially different. We must remember that Jesus is present in all our cultures, but people may not know Jesus as their Lord and Saviour. We need to think anew because church life has changed drastically, just as the world has changed drastically! Many of our churches have “died” or are in the state of “dying”. Dr. McMullin pointed out that people are confused by the rapid changes in our world and are often frustrated by change and old traditions. Younger people wonder why the church **can't**, or **won't**, change. We certainly have people to reach! Our speaker said that Jesus, in Matthew 16:18, was building His church on the Solid Rock and He turned the world upside down with His teachings.

We were reminded by Dr. McMullin that Jesus commissioned all of us, in Matthew 28:19-20 to “Go”, not “Come”, to be witnesses as a church and as an individual, as He commanded in Acts 1:8. Our mission is a calling from God. We were also reminded that we are **not volunteers**. We must be **followers** and do the work God has called us to do.

Dr. McMullin spoke of the fact, based on Ephesians 2, that the church does not belong to us, but to Christ, the head of the church. We are not a religious club, and we must be seen as people in our churches, which God, by His grace, is still working on us. No person should be an outsider, because Christ died for everyone. The church must be relevant and we need to relate the message to the people. Why would young people want to come to most of our churches? We want to do the things we have always done because we don't like change, but the world is changing all the time and those under 25 relate best on-line and with social media. We need to change our thinking and find ways to build bridges to allow “outsiders” to be “insiders”, so everyone can focus on faith and growth, rather than just on “maintenance”. We need to embrace technology for social and personal identity to grow our faith. We need to transfer power to our younger members and let them be leaders. We also must let go of traditions that no longer work and stop having the church building to be the church's identity. The church is the **people** in the building!

We need to learn to communicate clearly and reverently to a changing, Biblical-illiterate society, without using “Christian Talk”, which is not understood by most people under 25, because they did not grow-up in the church. Many of our traditions and ceremonies are not part of their lives.

Dr. McMullin told us that we must make changes! We have to be missional: make disciples, teach them, baptize them and work with the new Christians. We need to start from scratch, making relationships and focusing on “disciple-making” because concentrating on the church buildings tends to drain money and resources while making church leaders too busy to form relationships and to witness to the “flock”. We must be at the Master’s work at all times, witnessing to the lost and claiming them for Christ.

Our Moderator, Rev. Patty Beals thanked Dr. McMullin for the Morning session of his presentation. This was followed by a short break and then the Annual Meeting.

ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION:

The 2014 Annual Business Meeting of the Annapolis-Digby Baptist Association was called to order by the Moderator, Rev. Patty Beals, who then opened the meeting with prayer.

The **RULES of ORDER** were read by the clerk.

OLD BUSINESS:

MOTION # 1: M. Billard/B. MacLean, that the Minutes of the Annual meeting of April 2014/15, held at Nictaux Baptist Church, be accepted as printed. **CARRIED.**

MOTION # 2: M. Billard/C. Batson, that the Annual Financial Report of the Association be accepted as printed, with the corrected change of date from April 27th to April 26th in the Balance line of the Chequing Account Financial Document. **CARRIED.**

MOTION # 3: M. Billard/E. Waugh, that the Proposed Budget for the fiscal year of 2015/16 be accepted as presented in the Annual Booklet. **CARRIED.**

PASTORS’ REPORTS from Churches:

Inglewood Church: Pastor Cathy Batson reported on activities at Inglewood Church where the AUBU Youth held their Youth Rally last Sunday at 3pm, with a good turnout.

New Tusket: Rev. Quincy Collins has been called to the New Tusket Baptist Church and his induction service will be held on June 7th at 3:30 pm in that church.

Paradise Baptist Church: Rev. Mark Reece told of taking their Youth Group, which serves Paradise and Bridgetown churches, to **Spring Forth** in Moncton. There were 27 youth and 6 leaders. The church is exploring with the Convention and Paul Carline, who works with refugees, about bringing a Syrian Refugee family of 6 to the Paradise area by late fall.

Middleton Baptist: Bernice MacLean reported that all is going well at the church with a large Youth Group; Muriel Bent is in Lebanon, and the church is also exploring the possibility of bringing in a refugee family from Lebanon.

Wilmot Baptist: Rev. Julia Howard spoke on plans for the church for a 4 day outreach programme, “Christmas in July” from July 23-26th, with activities, worship and music, and everyone is invited to come and be blessed.

Bridgetown Baptist: Rev. Brian Wallace announced that the church has set up a Community Garden in the central area of the town. This is a place for people to plant some veggies and interact with people from the town. It is also a good way of building friendship and community.

Lawrencetown Baptist: Rev. Patty Beals told of the Outreach programme in this church - “Feed My Sheep”, where the Church prepares a meal every Friday evening for people in the area, along with a message for those who come. They feed up to 70 people and run the programme from Fall to spring. There is also an active Youth Group in the Church.

OTHER REPORTS:

Oasis Delegate Reports: Pastor Linda Demone, and Shelley Illsley-Martin were our delegates to Oasis 2014 and Linda gave a report of the highlights of her time at Oasis at Crandall University. She thanked the Association for allowing her to be one of our representatives to Oasis.

OASIS 2015- There is opportunity for two Association members to be delegates for this year, 2015.

Moderator's Report: Rev. Patty Beals read her report for 2014-15 and highlighted the activities carried on by the Association Council. She asked why people don't want to join with our brothers and sisters in Christ and worship the risen Lord. She noted that in the ten years she has been attending our Association Annual meetings, that the number of people attending has been declining. She went on to say that she wondered if it might be lack of commitment, and noted that we are each responsible for our own growth. She stated that we may have placed Christ at the bottom of our weekly list because everything else in our lives has taken over our time and there is little or no time for Him.

Patty informed us that we must CHANGE. We must grow in our faith and start loving the people we meet if we are going to reach people for Christ. She advised us all to read Matthew 25:31-46. Until we love one another as Christ loves, nothing will change. A relationship with Christ equates to changed lives, and changed lives will speak to the world around us.

Patty thanked the Association members for continued support and asked for prayer for all Pastors as they serve our churches in the next year. She asked God to bless us all as we serve Him.

ASSOCIATION LICENSING COMMITTEE:

Mrs. Bernice Mac Lean, Chair of the Licensing Committee presented a printed list of all the Candidates for Renewal of Association Licences to Minister:

MOTION # 5: B. Mac Lean/ Linda Demone, that **Pastor Shelly Illsley-Martin** be granted a Renewal of her Association Church Licence to Minister. (Chaplain at Dykeland Lodge Nursing Home, and Windsor Elms.) **CARRIED**

MOTION # 6: B. Mac Lean/ Janice Roscoe, that **Pastor Mark Cress** be granted a Renewal of his Association Church Licence to Minister. **CARRIED.**

MOTION # 7: Bernice MacLean/ Anne Littlewood, that **Pastor Virginia Hurlburt** be granted a Renewal of her Association Licence to Minister. **CARRIED.**

MOTION # 8: B. Mac Lean/J. Hirtle, that **Pastor Joe Chiasson** be granted a Renewal of his Association Licence to Minister. **CARRIED.**

MOTION # 9: B. MacLean/J. Hirtle, that **Pastor Linda Demone** be granted a Renewal of her Association Licence to Minister. **CARRIED.**

MOTION # 10: B. MacLean/ E. Bent, that **Pastor Herb Anderson** be granted a Renewal of his Lay Pastor Association Licence to Minister. **CARRIED.**

The Assembly gave a round of applause for all these candidates.

MOTION # 11: P. Beals/B. McLeod, that we give a vote of thanks to Mrs. Bernice MacLean for her work over the past three years as Chair of the Licensing Committee. **CARRIED**

Rev. Patty Beals will be the new chair of the Licensing Committee with Mrs. Elaine Bent and Rev. Libby Amirault.

Camp Kingswood: David Longley presented the Report of Kingswood Camp Society and the letter from Vincent Leung, Director of the Camp Society Board of Directors. David stated that there were 90 first-time campers this year. The Executive Director, Nichole Metcalfe, has done great work with designing camp programmes and camp Brochures as well as visiting churches and taking on many duties associated with her responsibility as Administrator and Director. David has been involved with other volunteers in harvesting logs to build a Worship and Activity Building at the camp, and stated that there is lots of work to do at the camp, but not enough workers. He also asked us to explore ways we might help the camp financially and physically, and to pray for the ministry that is so effective to the young people who attend the camp.

MOTION # 12: D. Longley/M. Reece, that the report of the Kingswood Camp Society be accepted as presented by David Longley and as printed in the Annual Booklet. **CARRIED.**

David spoke of the controversy that Kingswood was having with Canada Revenue Agency. The Camp is now under the Eastern Valley Baptist Association and any cheques and/or donations to camp must be made out to that Association, with a note that the donation is for Kingswood Camp.

Presentation to Rev. Donald Robertson: Rev. Robertson has pastored for 58 years and has now retired from the Digby Baptist Church. He was presented with a gift from the Association and was wished God's blessings on his future.

MOTION # 13: Bernice Mac Lean moved that the Business meeting be adjourned.

A hymn was sung, "Be Thou My Vision" and Rev. Patty Beals closed with prayer. The morning session concluded and after the blessing, we were served a delicious lunch by the ladies of the church.

Worship & Praise:

After lunch, the Worship team opened with prayer and sang worship songs with a message in each of them for us. There was an offering for Acadia Divinity College and we joined in singing "Be Thou My Vision". Patty gave the closing prayer before praying for Dr. McMullin.

At this time Dr. McMullin continued with the second part of his lecture, "The Life of Christ and the Life of the Church." He spoke on why change is so difficult for all of us. We don't like change and he said, "We want what we want!" He told us that we want to get our own way, as long as we don't have to change. He said we will be ineffective in witnessing to others, because life gets more difficult and we feel more comfortable when things stay the same, so our churches tend to die a slow death. We have forgotten the legacy of faith that has been passed down to us. Our legacy is not a tradition or a building, it is the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Dr. Mc Mullin gave us Biblical references to new life in Christ: John 15:5, "I am the vine...", and in Matthew 9:14-17 he spoke about putting patches on old clothes, and mentioned many other references for us to check out.

Dr. Mc Mullin told us why change is hard: we don't like change; it is costly and may make us feel like outsiders if we don't get our own way. We want what we want! Change might make us feel like an outsider, **but** it is what we need! Satan opposes change and it makes Satan very happy! Satan loves it because when we don't change, it makes us ineffective about witnessing to others- just what Satan wants!

Dr. Mc Mullin went on to point out that we must see the lost people of the world and all those around us, with the eyes of a missionary. It takes only one or two key leaders to make change possible. Preaching, teaching, prayer and lives of the key leaders are all essential to renewal. He stated that strong-willed people or groups in a church are often the ones who are determined to have their own way. They think they are protecting the church while they actually may be destroying the church. We have to realize that God is doing great things, and they may be new ways and new ideas. We cannot go back to the way things used to be. Those days are gone because we live in very difficult and changing times. We have to first have a relationship with Christ in order to change our old ideas and then begin to see the great opportunities that God is showing us - opportunities to change ourselves and our church so that real renewal can happen! We need to let Christ change us before we can change the church!

COURTESIES AND CLOSING PRAYER:

Moderator, Rev. Patty Beals thanked Dr. Mc Mullin for his insightful presentation today and thanked all those who came and took part in the various activities. She then closed with prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Billard, Clerk