

**FINAL CLUSTER GROUP UPDATE REPORT  
FOR  
ANNAPOLIS/DIGBY BAPTIST ASSOCIATION CHURCHES  
JUNE 09, 2011**

Since the fall of 2010 I have travelled throughout the Association to determine the interest of the churches within our Association of coming together to form Cluster Groups. The purpose of a cluster group is that the Baptist churches within an area of our Association, would work together to help provide training, and to support the ministry and events of the Baptist churches within their area. It has been a great learning experience as I have talked with the various pastors and laity throughout the Association as to how we can improve and create ministry by sharing and working together where God has called us.

The Association supports this endeavour, but Cluster Groups are not an Association ministry. The churches in each cluster area own the ministry and the operation of it. However, if a Cluster Group needs funds for a ministry or project in their area, a group may apply to the Annapolis/ Digby Baptist Association for a grant and the Association may be able to help.

Here are the results of my meeting with the pastors and laity of the Cluster Areas in our Association. We will start first with Annapolis County.

In the Middleton Cluster Area (*Churches include, Middleton, Port George, Victoria Vale, Margaretsville, Mount Hanley, Nictaux, Torbrook, Wilmot, Melvern Square*), I had the opportunity to meet with the Middleton Area Baptist Ministerial in Wilmot. The reasons and purpose of the Cluster Groups was presented to those present. After much discussion it was felt that the local Middleton Area Baptist Ministerial was providing opportunities for churches to work together and provide ministry as needed. A Cluster group would be a duplication of what was already being done in the area. The Ministerial hosts a number of special services and ministries throughout the year and all the churches within the area are invited to attend and take part.

In the Bridgetown Cluster Area (*Churches include, Bridgetown, West Dalhousie, Centrelea, Inglewood, Paradise, Lawrencetown, Inglisville, (Port Lorne and Hampton), Clarence* ) most of the Baptist pastors attend the Bridgetown and area Ecumenical Ministerial. However, some felt there were areas in the Ecumenical Ministerial that did not address the needs of the Baptist pastors or churches. The pastors of the Bridgetown Area are going to meet quarterly for fellowship and prayer and address needs as they present themselves. Bridgetown and Paradise Baptist Churches are working together with youth ministry and are planning a joint DVBS this summer. In our conversations during the meetings, it was felt that there needed to be more communication between the churches. The Baptist congregations need to be made aware when events and ministries are happening in one of the area churches. This information would help prevent scheduling events on the same day as a nearby church and give the area churches the option to attend.

In the Annapolis West Area (*churches include, Annapolis Royal, Granville Ferry, Granville Centre, Granville Beach, Port Wade, Port Royal, Victoria Beach, Hillsburn and Parkers Cove*) I

have talked with Rev. Elizabeth Waugh and she was going to make contact with the pastor of 1<sup>st</sup> Baptist Church of Annapolis Royal to see if there were something they could do together.

In Digby County the Digby Cluster Area (Churches include: *Acaciaville, Digby, Culloden, Smiths Cove, Hill Grove, Bear River, Deep Brook / Clementsport, Clementsvale, Bear River East*) has got off to a good start. The cluster group has set up a data bank of local e-mail addresses so that when ministry or an event is taking place in one church the info can be passed on to other churches for those who wish to attend. It also helps with scheduling ministries and events. If known soon enough, churches are able schedule events when they are not in conflict with an event of a sister Baptist Church. In this way it gives an opportunity to support one another's ministries. Many of the events and ministries at Digby Baptist have been announced and supported by the Digby Cluster area churches.

At the present Digby Cluster Area is working on an area wide youth ministry and a monthly combined service with the churches of the area. The pastors are also meeting monthly with the first meeting having taken place in May in Hill Grove and the next meeting on June 14<sup>th</sup> at 11:30 a.m. in Digby. I am hoping that the Digby area Cluster will become an effective tool in ministry for our Baptist Churches in the Digby area. I also hope that the results of this group may be an encouragement to the other Cluster Areas of our Association.

The Weymouth Cluster Area (*churches include, North Range, St. Mary's Bay, Plympton, Ashmore, New Tusket Weymouth Falls (Mount Beulah)*) have not as a Cluster Group. The pastors from Plympton, New Tusket and Ashmore Baptist Churches have been meeting with the Digby Cluster Area. Hopefully in the fall the Weymouth Cluster Area will meet and see if there are events and ministries that can be done together.

The only area I haven't had a meeting with is the Digby Neck and Islands area (*Churches are: Rossway and Centerville, Little River, Sandy Cove and East Ferry, Freeport, Tiverton, Westport*). They have done a good job in the past by getting together on a regular basis for fellowship and special services. I am willing to explain the Cluster Group concept with them if there is interest.

This report finishes my mandate on setting up Cluster Groups. I wish to thank the pastors and laity of the Annapolis/Digby Baptist Association Churches for their willingness to come together, the input given by each one and the support given to this idea. May God bless you all and have a great summer!

Respectively Submitted,  
Rev. Fred Bigelow