

Annual Congregational Ministry Meeting

Emmanuel Congregational Christian Church of Canada

May 26, 2022 | In-Person and Online



“Know, Grow & Show Christ”



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AGENDA

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- Discussion Points
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 - Where We Are Going – 3 BIG Prayers
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 - Youth
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 - Volunteer Challenges
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 - Small Group Discussion – *see discussion points*
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Small Group Discussion Points

- 1) What are your thoughts about the 'dinner out' idea for our mission allocation? Specifically, what do you anticipate will be our challenges? What fruit can you see come from this? What other ideas should we consider?
- 2) As we look ahead to the coming year, what adjustments to our current ministry, or what new initiatives might help us be more effective in accomplishing our goals?

Pastoral Report – by Sweis Ubels

“...let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.” (Hebrews 12:1b-2a)

When I committed this verse to memory a number of years ago I had no idea of the circumstances we now find ourselves in. Our world is experiencing so much upheaval and the resulting uncertainty is causing much anxiety. Yet the call to us is clear! We, as individuals and as a community, are called to persevere in our following of Jesus. As difficult as this may be, I am convinced that the current turmoil and uncertainty is giving the church an incredible opportunity to represent Jesus in relevant and powerful ways. That said, I want to briefly look back at a number of aspects of my ministry with the hope that it gives you a better idea as to what we are working towards.

Small Groups

As I look back on the past year, I am absolutely thrilled to see that our earlier success with small groups was not short-lived! Year 2 of the pandemic has seen strong small group involvement and much resulting spiritual growth! Praise God! Though this part of the ministry will slow down over the summer months, I look forward to what small groups will launch this fall! Another Abide group? Possibly an Alpha group? 3 Colors of Ministry (about spiritual gifts & the church)? Be assured that I'm praying about this!

Worship

I am so very glad we are able to worship in-person again! Honestly, Easter was a highlight for me in this regard. It was our best-attended service in over 2 years and the congregational singing was so inspiring! Meanwhile, we praise God for some new people who have become involved in this area of ministry. These people are really adding depth to our music ministry! At the same time, I want to take this opportunity to thank Tom MacInnis for all the work he has been doing in the tech booth. Not only does he volunteer regularly, but he has done a lot of 'behind the scenes' research and work that has made the live-stream as good as it is! And yes, you remembered correctly, we weren't planning on live-streaming, but this option is allowing the more 'covid cautious' to worship on Sunday mornings, while it is saving us significant time in editing and uploading the services.

Preaching

Over the past number of years, the themes of the majority of messages have been organized in sermon series. Most of these themes are based on the needs I become aware of as I interact with the congregation. To ensure that I am discerning this correctly, I will bring it up at our Elders' meetings, which often produces valuable feedback and/or affirmation.

Volunteerism

Though the argument can be made that there is no such thing as a ‘Christian volunteer’ (after all, aren’t we all bondservants of Christ?), this is an area that will need serious work if we ever hope to become a church of ‘hundreds that influences thousands’ (as stated in our vision statement). The pandemic really has decimated our volunteer base, and it is going to take time to rebuild it. Would you join us in praying about this? And as you pray, would you pay careful attention to our Father as to what He wants from you?

Being a Church Family

It has been great to see more people return to in-person meetings; whether that be services or small group meetings. Coffee Hour is proving very helpful in breaking isolation as well. There is no doubt, however, that returning to in-person gatherings is a big step after 2 years of isolation. To that end, let us continue to be gracious and patient, always encouraging one another!

Clarifying the Vision

As the pandemic dragged on, the elders spent significant time trying to come to terms with the changed role of the worship service. We obviously recognize the importance of gathering for worship, but we also realized that in the past there may have been an almost singular focus on the Sunday morning experience. The pandemic forced us to re-evaluate. At the same time, we came to terms that as helpful as our motto has been (“Know, Grow & Show Christ”), that the “7-E Statements” had served its purpose. And so, we simplified those statements into 4. Together they lay out what we believe is a healthy rhythm that sets the stage for us to experience God’s love in an increasing manner. “Alone with God”, “Grow with Groups”, “Serve with Power” and “Celebrate with Worship”. Expect to be hearing more about this in the months ahead!

Senior Ministry – By Bob and Pat Keith

For many in the congregation who are reading this report, the Seniors Ministry no doubt seems to be the silent ministry at Emmanuel. We have been living with the impact of COVID-19 for the past two years. Lockdowns and now cautions have closed down our seniors luncheons, however it has not shut down our outreach to the seniors in Middleton and surrounding communities and the seniors at Heart of the Valley Long Term Care Facility.

A brief outline of the activities undertaken throughout the 2021 year included:

- Continued effort to keep in contact by telephone and other social media avenues
- Many, many “Thinking of You Cards” were sent out
- Thanksgiving cards and in many cases a pumpkin craft was delivered
- Again this past year, each senior on our list received a Christmas basket filled with jams, jellies, books, a hand made snowman, day planner, treats, prayer cards, etc.
- At Easter, to the fullest extent possible, each person received an Easter card and an Easter bunny craft.

- Throughout the year, due to COVID restrictions, our study group remained small in number, however our study, entitled “Aging in the Grace of God” was an inspirational study and was well received.
- Throughout the year flowers and/or prayer shawls were sent to a number of seniors in hospital or shut-in at home.
- While the nursing home was shut down for most of the year, such items as prayer shawls, fidget muffs, lap blankets, Christmas crafts for each individual and many cards were delivered to the facility. In addition, as part of the Seniors Ministry, Bob alone was asked to continue his classes with the residents.
- When needed, transportation to medical appointments in Halifax, Kentville, Bridgewater, etc were provided.

Looking to the future, our prayer again this year is to be able to gather together, to share the love of Jesus Christ with all seniors in our communities and to be able to provide activities that meet both their spiritual and daily needs.

Children & Youth Ministries - By Kyla Whalen

“Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up” (Deuteronomy 6:7)

Children’s Small Group

The goal of children’s ministry is to equip our children (ages 2-11), to become disciples of Jesus. This is accomplished by helping them know Jesus, grow in His likeness through their relationship with Him, and learn to share their faith throughout the community.

This year began with “Family Worship” as our discipleship tool and as restrictions loosened, we began our in-person Children’s small group. Unfortunately, due to the number of children attending we have had to merge the two small groups into one. Though the numbers fluctuate we currently have two to three children regularly involved going through “The Way: Abide a discipleship pathway for kids,” curriculum. This curriculum focuses on the children learning to hear, talk to, and have a relationship with Jesus. Each Sunday, this curriculum allows us to journey through four categories: planting the seed (lesson), watering time (lesson), grow time (scripture) and fertilize (challenge). Pending on the duration of the lesson and the age of the group, we are also able to enjoy some worship time and colouring. Thank you to Mike and Paula for guiding the children of Emmanuel.

Youth Small Group

The goal of youth ministry is to equip our youth (ages 12-18) to become disciples of Jesus. This is accomplished by helping them know Jesus, grow in His likeness through their relationship with Him, and learn to share their faith throughout the community.

This year we facilitated a Dive Deeper group with the assistance from Middleton Baptist Church. We began meeting at the Whalen’s household, which then shifted to the church building. This was due to the numbers in attendance, as well as, maintaining boundaries. The Dive Deeper group has been quite effective as it is a small group of ten people who are diving deeper

together into their faith, their understanding and their relationship with Jesus. The Youth are encouraged to read a chapter in the Bible daily, meditate on scriptures and journal. Weekly we come together to share a meal, discuss our readings, watch a video with prompted questions, pray, and fellowship. This has helped to equip the youth with tools to assist them along their spiritual journeys.

Three weeks a month the youth met as a small group and the fourth we attended Youth Rally at Middleton Baptist Church. This allowed both youth groups to come together and be apart of the larger Body of Christ. At youth rally there were three main components, Worship, Teaching, and Games. The highlight of this year was the Fall Retreat weekend at Kingswood Camp. We joined with Middleton Baptist youth to share in games and teachings. Daily we gathered in our Dive Deeper groups to share in conversation, to pray and of course, eat.

Throughout this pandemic maintaining relationships with our youth has been of the greatest importance, ensuring support where, when and how it was needed. While the year has had various degrees of restrictions social media has played a huge part in maintaining contact with them. The venues utilized were: Facebook Messenger, Instagram and SnapChat.

Looking forward, the Dive Deeper group will continue as they have richly blessed us through assisting in our relationships and our conversations, while developing great habits and most importantly, guiding to Christ. Thank you to Mike for guiding the youth of Emmanuel.

Envisioning Children & Youth Ministries

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:19-20).

With discipleship being one of our “Big Prayers” it is important that we realize that the responsibility for raising up the youth and children falls to every one of us. All are called to fulfill the role of spiritual aunt or uncle, sister or brother, mother or father, or grandparent to affirm our youth and children, communicating to them that they are an important part of our family, as the body of Christ.

Discipleship is a relationship and a journey, one where we come to know each other as family, journeying together, not separately. It’s a process that takes time, must be intentional, and involves adults and children alike. We must acknowledge that children and youth are our future and they are also our ‘right now’. Each child and youth contains the light of Christ, has spiritual gifts, and is able to hear the voice of the Father. With this knowledge, we must be willing to develop relationships with our children and youth seeing them as an integral part of our community.

My vision for Children and Youth Ministries is as simple and as complex as this: for our children and youth to be involved in a small group (same as the adults) to learn, worship, and share their lives. A place where they are accepted, find belonging, and receive guidance. This will require adults to be willing to take two or three young people and invest in their lives, being willing to walk with them through life’s challenges. Directing these young people in their relationship with

Jesus and growing in that is one of the most important responsibilities we have as the body of Christ. These relationships can have many formats from nurturing new believers to going for coffee, hiring them for yard work, tutoring, reading, being pen-pals or having phone conversations. Every person, regardless of age or where they are in their spiritual journey, is our Christian family. We are on this journey together. I invite you to please pray for our Lord to show you what part you can play in this new vision for our children and youth.

Prayer Ministry- By Joanne MacGregor

“It is written, Jesus said to them, my house will be called a house of prayer...” (Matthew 21:13). Prayer is the heart of Emmanuel Church and, if you take the pulse of our church family, it is growing stronger and stronger by the day. Every aspect of our community life and activity flows from prayer - seeking God’s wisdom, guidance, and voice. The essence of prayer is having our hearts aligned with the Father’s heart so that we do only what we see the Father doing.

The foundation of Emmanuel’s prayer ministry begins with our Prayer Partners. This is a small group of people who have committed to consistently pray into the life of our church. Each month an update is prepared and sent to these individuals and they faithfully pray for each item included on that list. The Prayer Partners play a critical role in supporting and bathing every ministry, as well as the leadership, at Emmanuel Church in prayer.

Pre-service prayer is another focus that has grown over this past year. This opportunity is open to everyone who would like to join in and has proven to be a sweet and precious time in the Lord’s presence for all who attend. Each week a different person gives direction to the prayer time and it’s been wonderful to see how Holy Spirit has directed these individuals who have been willing to step out. Pre-service prayer has been a beautiful way to prepare for our corporate worship services and we truly encourage all to consider taking part in the future.

The congregational prayer time, during our worship services, continue to evolve and grow into just that - a congregation-led prayer. Shifting from having just one person pray each week to having different members participate, during that prayer time, more accurately fulfills the purpose of this important aspect of our family life. We will continue to provide opportunity for all to take part in this privilege.

Also, now that we are back to in person services the prayer teams will be available to pray for anyone desiring prayer following the service. Our goal is to stand as a family with each other to bear each other’s burdens and to seek God’s grace and mercy for all.

Over the past year there has been another aspect of Emmanuel’s prayer ministry that we have seen God’s power at work in. There have been many small prayer gatherings (mostly via zoom) that have focused on world circumstances or on individual’s concerns. Several early morning prayer meetings were held to prayer into topics like the pandemic, as well as, the war between Russian and Ukraine. Also, as individuals have requested prayer for different loved ones or struggles in their lives, we have encouraged them to gather a few of their friends and family members to have a concentrated prayer time. Many who have followed through with this have been truly blessed and we have seen wonderful answers flow out of those prayer times.

Looking to the future, plans are in the works to initiate another aspect of prayer ministry called the Prayer Summit. This will be an evening of worship, listening to God's voice, and following His leading in prayer. Details on this new ministry avenue will be coming out in the weeks to come, so stay tuned.

As lovers of Jesus, we are called to follow His example and become people of prayer. Let's continue to seek God and grow in our expectation of what He can and will do when we intercede for every person, situation, and concern! Oswald Chambers said, "Prayer does not fit us for the greater work, prayer is the greater work." Praying is our highest calling and privilege. The hope is that all of our hearts would embrace this truth, and when we do, we will see God's power resulting in signs and wonders!

