

Dear Conference Members,

As Vice Moderator to the conference and part of the Annual Meeting Planning Committee, I have been attending quite a few meetings lately. The board travels to different churches in the conference giving us a chance to meet the local congregations. The AM Planning Committee meets remotely online – bringing us together from our individual corners. We talk finances, personnel, programs and processes. We talk churches, camps and committees. We talk about the role of the conference.

One thing that continues to push its way into these meetings is the truth that we, as church, are in a trying, uncertain and challenging time. Many of our congregations are having conversation on how to grow, or balance the budget or maintain their staff and/or facility. There are congregations who are having conversation around how to survive. The big question that we hear again and again is: “What are we to do?” It can all be a little discouraging. I have found myself working hard at staying optimistic.

The theme for Annual Meeting 2015 is “Spring Forth”. Inspired by Isaiah 49: I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

Doesn't that sound hopeful? Doesn't it sound promising?

I would say, now, more than ever we need to come together. We need to gather our congregations from each region and far-reaching corner. We need to share and inspire, explore and celebrate with each other? What are you doing that is making a difference? What are we doing that is drawing us deeper? What are they doing that has found greater meaning?

At home in our own church it is so easy to get caught up in feeling alone and without support. Annual Meeting is a time to enlarge the church family. Together our resources, ideas and conversation are abundant. Together we can begin to answer the question “What are we to do?” Together we can “Spring Forth”.

God is working through all of us, calling us to do a new thing.

Come to Annual Meeting. Come with minds and hearts and hands wide open. Come to fill and be filled. Attend mini-workshops and hear of new and exciting things that are happening around our conference. Enter into creative and meaningful worship. Get a kick of inspiration from Quinn Caldwell as only he can deliver it. Learn of each other and create connections. It is a good place from which to “Spring Forth”.

Scott Ward  
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