



**ABLAZE**

SPRING 2021

# Church in the Digital Era

## FEATURED STORIES:

- *Making A Difference* - Pete & Ginnie Benson
- *A Year Like No Other*
- *He Boldy Went Where Many Won't Go* - Gary Hicks
- *Rising Above the Anxiety of the Technology Era*



**KINGSWOOD**  
UNIVERSITY



# A Word from the President



Isn't it funny how you can find one thing when looking for another? You go up into the attic to find old photos and come down with a treasure you didn't even know you had.

This year has been something like that for me. I anticipated this as the year we would celebrate Kingswood University's 75th anniversary. Instead, we have

been focused on carrying out our mission of developing Christ-like servant leaders during a pandemic.

Yet, what a blessing this year has been. Challenging, yes, but filled with clear proofs that God's favour still rests on Kingswood, just as it has since our earliest days in Woodstock, New Brunswick as the Holiness Bible Institute.


You'll read about some of these blessings in this issue, people like Pete and Ginnie Benson, who graduated from Bethany 40 years ago, and the late Gary Hicks, Class of 1975, whose eternal commencement took place in early 2021. You'll hear about pastors and a graduating senior who are navigating the pandemic with discernment and a servant's heart.

God has been faithful to us as an institution, providing resources that enable us to adapt and advance. This issue describes some of those advances, such as a new podcast from long-time

professor, Mike MacNeil, and new initiatives from Kingswood Extended, such as our robust expansion into online education.

This is our District Conference edition, distributed to those conducting church business. We recognize that not all conferences will physically gather and that even where they do, there may be restrictions in the distribution of material.

That's why we expanded this issue with a special insert. It contains important information about Kingswood programs, both on and off-campus. You'll learn about our Vision Tours for 2022. We are heading back to Israel and Jordan in March and taking our Fall Foliage Cruise in September.

Once you've read through the newsletter and insert, perhaps you could share it with someone who might not already know about Kingswood. You are a vital link, connecting us with those who share our mission. Thanks for spreading the word about 75 years of God's faithfulness to Kingswood University, still committed to strengthening the Church by raising up Christ-like servant leaders, no matter what. 

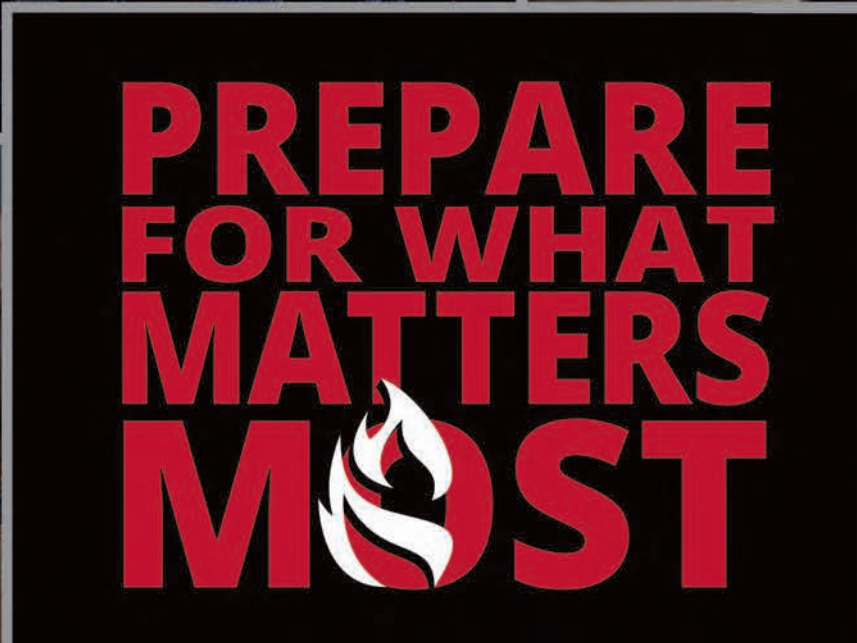
A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Steve".

**Rev. Stephen J. Lennox, Ph.D.**  
*Kingswood University President*



*Due to Covid travel restrictions, some of our graduates were not present for our Commencement ceremonies and were therefore not represented in this photo.*







## Online Undergraduate Degrees

### Bachelor of Arts in Ministry

- Business
- Children & Family Ministry
- Christian Counselling
- Evangelism, Compassion & Social Justice
- Marketplace Ministry
- Pastoral Ministry
- Youth & Family Ministry

### Associate of Arts in Evangelism & Compassion Ministry

### Associate of Arts in Biblical Studies

## Online Graduate Degree

### Master of Arts in Pastoral Theology (MAPT)

## Online Certificate Courses

### Personal Enrichment Courses

### Ordination Studies

## Early Enrolment

### Certificates

Kingswood offers certificate-level courses and whole programs. These can satisfy ordination requirements in The Wesleyan Church. They're also for anyone looking to build their faith. Courses are offered online and in many other formats. The most popular are self-paced courses you can start and finish whenever you like, and virtual classroom courses which incorporate video conferencing technology to provide you with a learning community. We offer certificates in Biblical studies, discipleship, ministry, Biblical theology, marketplace ministry, and church planting & church multiplication.

We can offer certificate-level courses in your church with as few as four students. Take your Sunday School class on a tour through Acts and Romans with the guidance of our expert faculty, or pursue an entire certification in Biblical Studies together. Maybe your board members need more training in Church Management and Leadership. Kingswood can help.

### Degrees and Concentrations

We also offer entire degrees online! Pursue our Bachelor of Arts in Ministry with several available concentrations, as well as an Associate of Arts in Ministry. By doing these programs online, you can pursue a degree while remaining connected to your family, your church, and your community. We also offer all courses required for credentialing in The Wesleyan Church, The Church of the Nazarene, and The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada.

### Early Enrolment

Students in Grade 12 can take Kingswood University courses online. Satisfy high school graduation requirements while earning university credit. Courses are two months long with several options each term and are offered at a steep discount through our Early Enrolment program.

### MA in Pastoral Theology

Take your ministry effectiveness to the next level with our streamlined, 36-credit MA in Pastoral Theology. It is offered entirely online, leverages your current ministry context, and can be completed in as little as 12 months. Kingswood's tuition, grants, and Wesleyan Loan/Grant combine to make this degree very affordable.

We believe students thrive best when their learning includes both 'academic' and 'experiential/hands-on' learning components. Our objective is that your time at Kingswood will result in a passion for God, His Word, His Church, and His mission through:

### **Academic Excellence**

Academic Excellence is more than a catch phrase at Kingswood – it is a commitment to the quality of the education you will receive in any of our high calibre and engaging academic programs. Whether you choose one of our Associate of Arts degrees, bachelor degrees, or our graduate degree, you will be equipped with the knowledge and skills to succeed.

### **Practical Ministry Experience**

With a 12:1 student-to-faculty ratio, we provide a small class environment to effectively mentor students in personal and professional development. And with practical ministry experience built into each degree program, you will graduate with the confidence, skills, and experience you need to step boldly into ministry.

### **Intentional Spiritual Formation**

Our focus on spiritual formation means you will graduate with more than a degree. Be transformed as you discover what God wants you to know, who God wants you to be, and what God made you to do.



## **Bachelor Degrees**

### **Bachelor of Arts in Ministry**

- Business
- Children & Family Ministry
- Christian Counselling
- Church Planting
- Evangelism, Compassion & Social Justice
- Intercultural Studies
- Marketplace Ministry
- Pastoral Ministry
- Worship Arts
- Youth & Family Ministry

### **Bachelor of Theology**

### **Bachelor of Arts in Christian School Education**

## **Associate Degrees**

### **Associate of Arts in Evangelism & Compassion Ministry**

### **Associate of Arts in General Education**

### **Associate of Arts in Biblical Studies**

## **Early Enrolment**







With Dr. Steve Lennox  
& Rev. Joel Gorveatte



## Israel Trip | March 13-22, 2022

10-Day Journey through the Land of the Bible

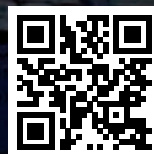
[kingswood.edu/israel2022](http://kingswood.edu/israel2022)

## Kingswood University Vision Tour 2022

September 11-21

10 Night Canada Cruise includes port stops in:

- Sail away from Boston, Massachusetts
- Bar Harbor, Maine
- Saint John, New Brunswick
- Halifax, Nova Scotia
- Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island
- Sydney, Nova Scotia
- Portland, Maine
- Returning to Boston, Massachusetts



DAY 1 Boston, Massachusetts Sun, Sep 11, 2022 Depart: 8:00PM  
DAY 2 Bar Harbor, Maine Mon, Sep 12, 2022 Depart: 7:00AM to 8:00PM  
DAY 3 Saint John, NB Tue, Sep 13, 2022 Depart: 8:00AM to 8:00PM Visit Kingswood  
DAY 4 Halifax, Nova Scotia Wed, Sep 14, 2022 Depart: 11:00AM to 8:00PM  
DAY 5 At Sea - Cruising Thu, Sep 15, 2022  
DAY 6 Charlottetown, PEI Fri, Sep 16, 2022 Depart: 8:00AM to 8:00PM  
DAY 7 Charlottetown, PEI Sat, Sep 17, 2022 Depart: 8:00PM  
DAY 8 Sydney, Nova Scotia Sun, Sep 18, 2022 Depart: 9:00AM to 8:00PM  
DAY 9 At Sea - Cruising Mon, Sep 19, 2022  
DAY 10 Portland, Maine Tue, Sep 20, 2022 Depart: 7:00AM to 8:00PM  
DAY 11 Boston, Massachusetts Wed, Sep 21, 2022 Arrive: 7:00PM

*Boston, Maine  
& Atlantic Canada*



For more information or to register, visit:  
[kingswood.edu/vision-tour](http://kingswood.edu/vision-tour)



# Pete & Ginnie Benson

## Making A Difference



### **Tell us about your experience as students at Bethany.**

*At the time we were married, we worked several jobs each and were raising our daughter, Ginger Jo. For two of those years we pastored Head of Millstream Wesleyan Church.*

*Even though we lived off-campus, we enjoyed a lot of social interaction with those on-campus. We spent time in the student centre playing many games of foosball. We also played basketball and hockey. The chapel services were impactful and life-changing.*

*It was at Kingswood that we developed a passion for church planting and were forced to learn how to handle personal finances.*

### **Briefly describe the path of your lives after graduation.**

*We served for three years at Perth-Andover Wesleyan as assistant and youth pastor. Then we planted Island Wesleyan Church on Prince Edward Island and served there for five years. From PEI we were called to plant a church in Huntsville, Alabama where we stayed for six years.*

*At that point we felt God calling us in a different direction. We moved to Nashville, TN and eventually formed Beacon Capital Management. This has been our ministry for the past 20 years.*

### **How did your education at Bethany/Kingswood prepare you for the ministries to which God called you?**

*Because of the intimate size and individual attention given by the professors and staff at Kingswood, spiritual development along with a high priority on practical experience on what you are learning were key aspects of the university's ability to equip students.*

### **You've given generously to various aspects of Kingswood, including the Benson Athletic Complex. What motivates you to support Kingswood University?**

*A love for all things athletic has been important for both of us. Even with limited facilities when we attended there, sports and athletics played an important role for us. We always dreamed of having facilities at Kingswood that could help attract students, but never thought we could play a significant part in making that happen.*

### **What message would you have for Kingswood students and alumni?**

*Kingswood University is a very unique place that serves a specific purpose in building the Kingdom of God. As students and/or alumni, we need to ensure that purpose continues and is available for generations to come. There is no substitute. So get involved, stay connected and invest generously as God enables.*

### **What would you most like to be remembered for?**

*We hope to be remembered for our investment in people – not just financially (that's typically the easiest thing to do) but spiritually through mentoring, discipleship and prayer, physically with our time and energy, and through our life experiences. 🏈*



# Church in the Digital Era

## Broadening the Reach of the Local Church

Church as we know it changed abruptly last spring with the arrival of COVID-19. Pastors and congregations had to quickly adjust to the new, uncertain reality. Even those who had already been livestreaming services found themselves having to adapt to government restrictions. Others had to implement massive changes virtually overnight.

One glaring realization for all churches during the pandemic was the importance of technology. On one hand, this meant added expense and increased complexity. A quality online presence requires money and lots of volunteers. In some rural settings, internet quality is weak.

On the other hand, technology has broadened the reach of the local church. Congregations have expanded to other countries and even other continents. More people are able to tune in to more services on Sunday, or watch these at more convenient times.

Pastor Brady Bond (KU 2018) of Victory Highway Wesleyan Church's Elmira Campus, in Elmira, NY, told of someone viewing their service from a city about two hours away. When this parishioner learned that the church was having a baptism service that afternoon, he drove the two hours to the church to be baptized.

Journey Church in Fredericton, New Brunswick, has a vision to become a multi-site church. According to Lead Pastor Matthew

Maxwell (KU 1993), *"technology has proven to us that we can now carry the gospel to these small towns where the church is leaving."*

Technology not only extends the reach geographically, it also allows the church into homes and hearts right next door. People who might never darken the doorway of a church are now attending online.

Some viewers have become attenders. Rev. Mike Agrell (KU 2007) of The Ridge Church in Maple Ridge, NB, tells of a family that began listening online, and now attends regularly in-person. This phenomenon has prompted some like Carey Nieuwhof to compare online ministry to an online dating service, giving people a low-risk chance to get acquainted. Rev. Brent Ingersoll (KU 2006), Lead Pastor of Kings Church, describes technology as the new church lobby; Brady Bond calls it the church's *"front porch."*

Technology extends the reach of the church in other ways. A volunteer in Pastor Ryan Genereaux's (KU 2017) youth group at The Ridge set up a YouTube channel for the teens. The channel then ended up being played in a local middle school during lunch.

Another benefit of technology has been the need for more volunteers. According to Agrell and Genereaux, leaders at The Ridge have stepped forward out of a desire to contribute during challenging times.





Journey Church has a saying: *"every mounted camera is one less volunteer."* Taking this philosophy, they actively reached out for more volunteers when COVID struck. The response, according to Maxwell, has been *"explosive."* *"You just try and tell them they can't come and serve."* In the face of technology's complexity, wise pastors have turned to digital natives—young adults—who are now providing leadership.

Although it is not entirely clear what church life will be like after the pandemic, pastors recognize more clearly than ever the value of technology as a tool. It is as indispensable as *"a hammer to a carpenter,"* said Agrell, *"like oxygen,"* according to Ingersoll.

Brady Bond pointed out that the importance of technology means that all ministry leaders, even those in smaller church settings, need a good understanding of technology. People now expect church services to look and sound professional, both in the room and online.

While understanding the value of technology as a tool, pastors also recognize it is only a tool. The goal is not technology, but relationships. According to Pastor Sydney Bond (KU 2018), co-pastor at Victory's Elmira Campus, this year has demonstrated

*"the beauty of community."* In Mike Agrell's words, *"corporate worship is here to stay."*

The pandemic has also clarified the essence of the church. *"It flushed out a lot of consumer Christians,"* says Ingersoll. More than attracting Christians, the goal of the church should be *"making attractive Christians."* If technology is the *"church lobby,"* the goal is *"to move people into the gathering."*

Pastors have always been committed to discipling believers, but recognize anew the centrality of Christ's command. *"Making disciples needs to be done more holistically,"* says Ingersoll, *"and with greater urgency."*

The pandemic has also raised questions. What is a gathering? How do we determine who is part of a church? What does spiritual fruit look like in an online community? How does the church reach out evangelistically in a socially distanced age?

Although the church will look different in a post-pandemic world, many congregations are emerging with renewed clarity in what matters most, and a passion to utilize available tools toward the fulfillment of the Great Commission. 🔥

## How does the church reach out evangelistically in a socially distanced age?



Images courtesy of Kings Church, NB



# A Year Like No Other

## When Life Gives You Lemons...

This was always supposed to be a special year in the life of Kingswood University, since it marked 75 years of serving the Church by raising up Christ-like servant leaders. It turned out to be special for another reason: the year of the pandemic.

Thanks to the excellent planning and leadership of Kingswood staff, students were able to return to campus both in the fall and spring semesters, something many colleges could not offer. Students signaled their gratitude by careful compliance with provincial public health regulations so that, at the end of the spring semester, no student or staff had come down with the virus.



According to Student Council President, Reint-Jan Rammeleare, *"students have been grateful for the opportunity to come back and enjoy in-class sessions, and on-campus living."* He also voiced appreciation for staff, *"who have put in the time and effort to see this happen, even despite the inconveniences that COVID and the regulations can bring."*

A safe on-campus experience was not accomplished without sacrifices. Personal and school trips were limited as were some favourite on-campus activities. When the spring semester began, New Brunswick was restricting gatherings to no more than 50, eliminating the possibility of gathering everyone for chapel.

With quick thinking from Dr. Janet Starks and the cooperation of student leaders, chapel moved to micro-sites. Small groups of students, led by their peers, gathered across campus to experience worship and preaching, with the opportunity for discussion and prayer. What began as a restriction turned into an opportunity for student growth.

Meanwhile, the pandemic provided an impetus for other new initiatives. The generosity of donors made possible the upgrading of classroom and chapel technology. Recognizing the extra stress on local church pastors and congregations, the university provided a "care package" including online resources such as sermons and seminars.

The most ambitious undertaking was the expansion of several programs into an online format. Starting this fall, students will be able to take any of these programs entirely online:

Associate of Arts in Biblical Studies

Associate of Arts in Evangelism and Compassion Ministry

Bachelor of Arts in Ministry degree with majors in

- Business
- Children and Family Ministry
- Christian Counselling
- Evangelism and Social Justice (Praxis)
- Marketplace Ministry
- Pastoral Ministry
- Youth and Family Ministry

Master of Arts in Pastoral Theology

While the pandemic overshadowed Kingswood's 75th anniversary celebration, it actually confirmed that the same God who has been faithful to this university for three-quarters of a century, is faithful still. 🍋





# Gary Hicks

## He Boldly Went Where Many Won't Go



Gary Hicks (KU, 1975) began prayer-walking the streets of Frederick, MD, seeking God's direction in how to reach the outcast and marginalized. He provided food and tents for the homeless, took time to learn the names and stories of those he served, drove them to appointments, and spent nights in the hospital by their side.

Eventually, Gary sought a central place to bring together those he served, where they could fellowship, worship, and study the

Word. He felt led to approach the owner of a local bar about holding a weekly service in the dart room. The owner agreed, and so began the Downtown Christian Fellowship (DCF).

In January 2021, in the midst of COVID-19, a group of former addicts and homeless people, parishioners from DCF, stood on Gary's deck and sang "He's Still Working On Me". Each life represented God's redeeming power and a testimony to Gary's faithful obedience to share Jesus with others. They came to do more than sing, they came to say goodbye to the man who had given selflessly. On January 23, 2021, Gary Hicks passed away following a short battle with cancer. He will be remembered for his heart of worship, selflessness, ability to dream big, belief in God's faithfulness, and love for the least, last, and lost. 🔥

## Rising Above the Anxiety of the Technology Era



At the beginning of 2021, Julia Mark, a Christian Counselling student, class of 2021, began her semester-long, supervised ministry experience at Boaz Lighthouse International Ministries in Fredericton, NB. Eager to practice the counselling skills she had learned at Kingswood, Julia was unsure how the pandemic would impact her ability to connect with

clients. The thought of using technology to reach those in need raised legitimate concerns.

Seeking to honour God, plant seeds of hope, and bring healing to others, Julia got on her knees and committed her path to God. From a small rented room, armed with her computer and

the internet, Julia employed a video conferencing platform to counsel Haitian girls living in the Dominican Republic. She also counselled girls in Honduras, as well as single mothers and young girls living in Fredericton. In addition, she made phone calls and sent texts to check on those who were isolated.

Through this season, Julia discovered that a little goes a long way in reminding people they are loved. *"We serve a God who has no boundaries. COVID can't stop the God of our Universe."*

Rather than a drawback, Julia discovered that technology opened up a wider ministry than what might otherwise have been possible. God is able to work effectively through any technology. 🔥

## New Podcast

Season one of "Open Mike Ministry Podcast" is well underway. Check out Kingswood University's Professor Mike MacNeil as he engages with ministry leaders from all across North America about things that matter most.

### Episodes include interviews with:

**S1E1** - Brent Ingersoll

**S1E3** - Mick Veach

**S1E5** - Austin White

**S1E7** - Rachel Wilson

**S1E2** - Nick Doyle

**S1E4** - Nathan Maskery

**S1E6** - Jeff Eckart

**S1E8** - Brady & Sydney Bond

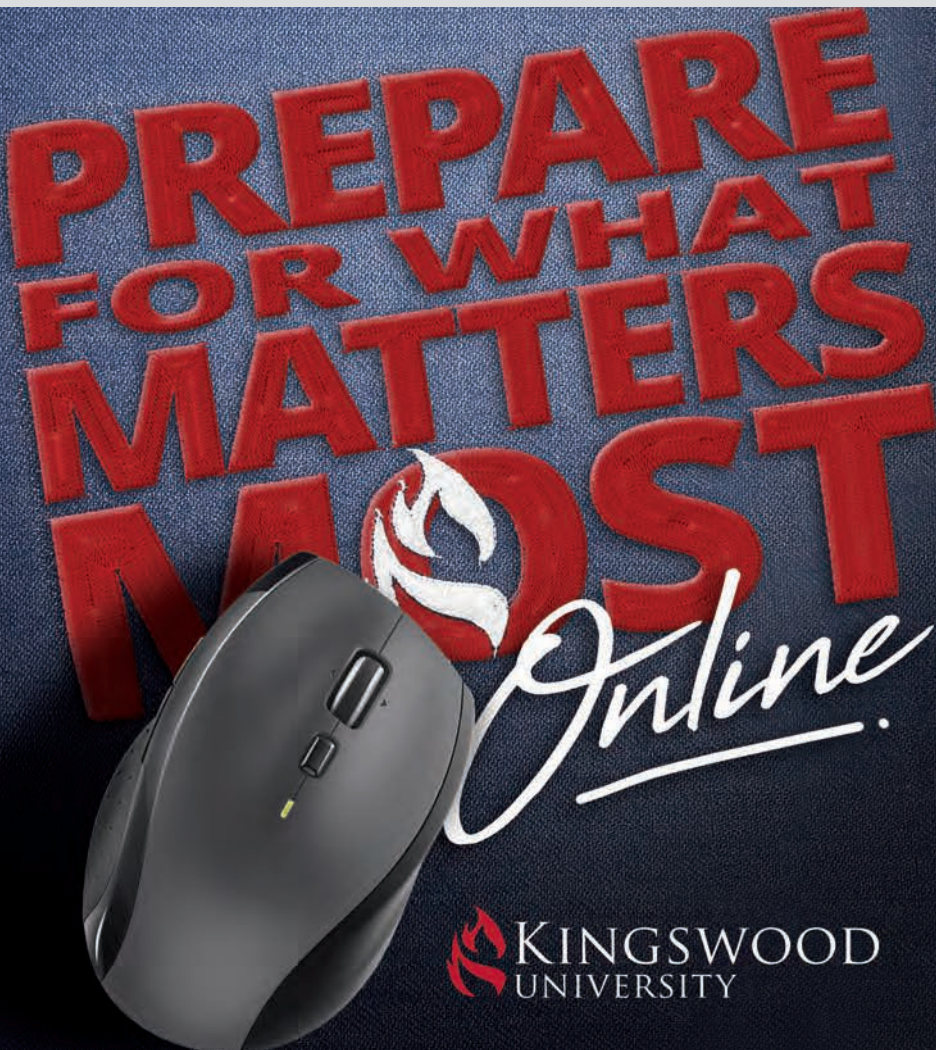
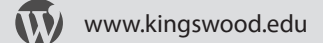
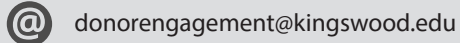
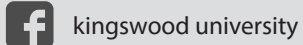
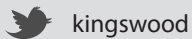






Newsletter

SPRING 2021



## Earn Your Ministry Degree Online!

*Experience the quality education you expect with the flexibility you need.*

### Bachelor of Arts in Ministry

Business  
Children & Family Ministry  
Christian Counselling  
Evangelism, Compassion & Social Justice  
General Ministry  
Marketplace Ministry  
Pastoral Ministry  
Youth & Family Ministry

### Associate of Arts

Biblical Studies  
Evangelism & Compassion Ministry

### Master of Arts in Pastoral Theology

### Courses Required for Credentialing

The Wesleyan Church  
The Church of the Nazarene  
The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada