

PowerChurch Software Newsletter - Summer 2010**Welcome to the first issue of the PowerChurch Software Newsletter**

Those of you who have been around for a while probably remember our "Tales from Tech 2" newsletter. Unfortunately, we haven't heard from Tech 2 in a while, but have decided to carry on the tradition without the silly puns and notably fewer chicken jokes. It's not that we think we're better than that; we just aren't funny enough to pull it off. If you miss him badly enough, or have no idea what we're talking about, you can [browse the Tales from Tech 2 archive](#) on our web site.

We sincerely hope that you enjoy this newsletter and that you find it useful. The plan is to keep 'em coming quarterly, so you should be hearing from us again in about three months. Of course, if you don't want to hear from us again, [unsubscribe options can be found here](#).

Drop That Mouse!

Those of you who are fairly new to working with computers may find using a mouse to be second nature and wouldn't know what to do without it. However, those that have been around a while longer can tell you, navigating data entry programs like PowerChurch Plus is much easier using the keyboard. Much time is wasted, moving your hand back and forth between the keyboard and mouse, every time you need to move to the next field.

In the 25 years that PowerChurch Plus has been in development, many changes have been made. What remains the same, though, is the keyboard's role in properly navigating the program. Here we will only be covering some of the lesser known shortcuts that PowerChurch Plus uses, but for your own reference, the program also accepts most common keyboard shortcuts, such as CTRL+C (copy) and CTRL+V (paste).

Most date fields in PowerChurch Plus have a lookup button, which is a small downward arrow, located to the right of the date field. You can click this button to choose the date from a calendar. This tool is widely used to help keep date fields standardized. There are keyboard shortcuts that can be used in the date fields to auto-fill dates from one keystroke.

Press	To
+	Add one day to the date showing in the field
-	Subtract one day from the date showing in the field
T	Today's date
M	First day of the month
H	Last day of the month

Y	First day of the year
R	Last day of the year
S	The prior Sunday's date
W	The prior Wednesday's date

These shortcuts can also be used in combinations. For example:

Press "Y" then "-" then "Y"

This gives you the first day of last year

("Y" takes it to the first day of this year, "-" takes it to December 31 of the previous year, then "Y" takes it to the first day of that year)

Press "M" then "-" then "M"

This gives you the first day of last month

("M" takes it to the first day of this month, "-" takes it to the last day of last month, "M" takes it to the first day of last month)

These are just a couple of examples of combinations you can use for the most commonly entered dates in PowerChurch Plus. Get creative with it! It will save you a few keystrokes, a few extra clicks of the mouse, and will make you feel like a data entry master!

Class Promotion

The Class Promotion assistant is a new feature in PowerChurch Plus Version 11 that makes it easy to move people from one activity to the next. The most common example of this would be processing Sunday School graduation.

The Mass Update Activities & Skills feature has been available in PowerChurch Plus for many years. Previously, this was the only way to rearrange your Sunday School classes. You would have to start at the highest grade, move everyone out, and then work your way down the list, moving everyone out of the existing class up to the next highest grade.

This worked well, for the most part, but you would have problems processing classes that hold two grades. For example, in the 5th and 6th grade Sunday School class, only half the kids "graduate" up to the next grade each year. Using the Mass Update feature, it is not possible to move only those kids that were going into 7th grade, leaving the 6th graders in place.

This is the primary focus of the Class Promotion feature. Not only does it allow you to process all promotions at once, rather than updating each class individually, but you can specify on a per-child basis what year their next graduation occurs. Keeping with the 5th and 6th grade Sunday School class example, this class would be labeled as a two year class period. When kids are added to this activity, their graduation year is calculated automatically, two years later. But what about a new child that moves into

the area and joins this class as a 6th grader? You are able to change their promotion year separately from the rest of the class, so that their graduation happens at the same time.

Below is a quick video presentation of the Class Promotion feature from our You Tube page:

For more videos, visit the [support area on our web site](#) or go straight to our [You Tube page](#).

The Importance of Background Screening

Churches of today are growing quickly and implementing more programs, activities, and member involvement. This brings a need for more frequent and longer-term child care, fund raising, transportation, and administrative tasks. Each of these provides another opportunity for impropriety; both personal and financial. According to a recent survey, just over 50% of churches conduct background checks on employees and volunteers.

Some organizations worry about the added cost of performing periodic background checks, but the cost of not doing so can be much greater! Implementing a background screening regimen not only helps to protect against fraud and abuse, it deters applicants that may have ulterior motives before they ever get involved. This provides peace of mind for staff, volunteers, and parents alike.

PowerChurch Plus Version 11 features integration with [Protect My Ministry](#), an industry-leading provider of cost-effective background screening. They serve more than 4,500 churches and faith-based organizations in all 50 states. This makes it easy to request background checks of employees in Payroll and adults involved with certain activities in Membership. For more information, including a list of products and prices available in your area, visit www.powerchurch.com/protectmyministry.

Forum Q & A

The [Support Forum](#) on our web site is a very active online community of our users and Tech Support staff members. There you can browse through thousands of questions and answers, or post your own. Below are some recent examples:

From Membership:

Q. I have a family where there has been a divorce. She is still a member. He is not and has left the area. I changed his status to former member but he still shows up on the statement. Would I delete his profile? Would this effect the envelope number that is now solely hers?

A. If you don't want him to show up on statements at all, simply remove the envelope number from his Personal Profile. If the wife still has that envelope number assigned, then she will keep sole credit for the contributions.

From Contributions:

Q. We had a nursery to donate some flowers and shrubs. They requested a receipt showing the amount of their contribution for tax purposes. Do we need to show a contribution that reflects the amount the donation was worth? Do we need to write them a check for the items and then let them just give the check back to the church?

A. There is no need to do this, as this is a 'donation in kind' and really does not reflect any sort of monetary contribution to the church. What we usually do in this case is have the Financial Secretary or Treasurer write up a letter on church letterhead thanking the company for the donation, listing the items given. This is along the lines of what you get when you drop something off at the Salvation Army.

From Accounting:

Q. We have several monthly auto withdrawals and online payments. How do I record these without having to actually write a check?

A. The way I accomplish this it to do a manual check and use an abbreviation for the reference number.

*Created: 06/29/2010
Last updated: 04/24/2015*