

PowerChurch Software Newsletter - Spring 2013

Welcome to the latest issue of the PowerChurch Software Newsletter. In this issue, we cover some useful features and welcome the return of our "Making a Difference" series, where PowerChurch users get to share some of the wonderful work they do and inspiring stories they have to tell.

PowerChurch Online System Upgrades

We have recently upgraded all of the PowerChurch Online server hardware. Not only are the system specs of the servers significantly improved, with faster processors and more memory, but there are also twice as many of them as there were previously. This has made the connection process and day-to-day operations in the program much smoother and more efficient. Also, the system does not slow down at peak times when more users than normal are online. We now have additional hardware that allows us to create hourly backups of your data, where previously it was just backed up once a day.

As part of all of this, we have also upgraded to a new version of IDS, the software that allows the remote connections from your computer to our servers. This upgrade has brought several new features and improvements. The program icon is now branded as PowerChurch Online, not the IDS Client, and when you run it, you are connected to the server and PowerChurch Plus opens directly. Also, when printing, a Printers dialog is available, letting you switch to a different printer or a new Preview PDF option. The Preview PDF option opens a PDF document on your computer instead of sending it directly to the printer.

The new version of the IDS has also introduced a couple of new client versions. Along with the existing mobile web access (m.mypowerchurch.com), you can now access PowerChurch Online from iOS (iPhone/iPad) and Android devices. The iOS and Android apps are not branded as IDS or PowerChurch Online and are not directly supported.

At its root, PowerChurch Plus is a Windows desktop application and accessing it on a small resolution touchscreen device like a smart phone can be annoying; zooming in and out, trying to tap the little menu dropdowns and report options. It is better on tablets, which have much higher resolution and larger screens, but you are still left using the onscreen keyboard and touchscreen navigation. While it isn't recommended that you make the new mobile clients your primary means of accessing PowerChurch Online, it is now possible.

The old PowerChurch Online servers are still up and running, for those that have not yet upgraded to the new version of the IDS Client. However, we will eventually be taking those servers offline, so it is important that you download and install the new IDS Client as soon as possible. Communications will be sent through the messaging center in PowerChurch Online as we get closer to that time.

The new IDS Client and mobile apps are available at www.mypowerchurch.com.

Prospective PowerChurch Online customers can find more information about the service and pricing at www.powerchurch.com/online.

Constant Contact Sync

In November 2010, we released Version 11.1, which added a few new features, including a sync to Constant Contact. We know many churches and nonprofits use Constant Contact and most PowerChurch users keep e-mail addresses in their Membership database.

These days, it is getting harder and harder to get bulk mail sent out successfully, be it through PowerChurch Plus or other programs. E-mail providers spend so much time fighting off spammers that they can't help but make it difficult for everyone else to send e-mails successfully. And that's only the first half of the fight!

Once you are able to get the e-mail sent out, you then need to make sure that people will receive it. The only thing worse than an e-mail server that won't let you send mail is one that won't accept your message once it has been sent.

Constant Contact simplifies all of this by keeping you separated from all the technical stuff. You choose or customize your e-mail template, type your message, and choose the contact list. The integrated sync tool in PowerChurch Plus ensures that you won't be maintaining two separate databases of contacts. You can sign up for a 60 day free trial at:

powerchurch.constantcontact.com/features/signup.jsp

After the free trial, nonprofits qualify for pricing as low as \$10.50 per month, which allows you to keep up to 500 e-mail addresses in your contact list. They also offer a 30 day money-back guarantee.

In PowerChurch Plus, you will find the Constant Contact Sync program under Utilities > Constant Contact Sync. You will first be prompted for the username (or e-mail address) and password used to log in to your Constant Contact account. On the next screen, you set up the different Contact Lists that you will be working with in Constant Contact.

The Constant Contact Sync allows you to query information from Family Mailing List, Personal Profiles, Activities & Skills, and Parents of children in Activities & Skills. To add a new Contact, do the following:

1. Click the Add button on the right of the form.
2. In the Title field, assign a name for this Contact List.
3. Select which area of the PowerChurch database you are querying from the four options below.
4. Click OK.
5. You will now see the familiar Selection Criteria form that is used when running reports or mailing labels from that particular area of the software. Choose the

selection options and click OK to finish.

Your new Contact List is now shown in the grid along with a "quantity" or count of e-mail addresses that will be sent over to Constant Contact. Only those e-mails that have the "Include in bulk mailings" option checked on the family or profile will be included.

Click the Edit, Delete, or View buttons on the right of the form to edit the Selection Criteria, delete, or view a list of those names and e-mail addresses that will be included in the next sync of the selected Contact List. Click Finish to start the sync process.

You will see the Processing screen go through four steps:

1. **Getting current e-mail addresses from Constant Contact.** PowerChurch Plus requests a list of all contacts from Constant Contact.
2. **Getting changed e-mail addresses from Constant Contact.** Each of the addresses in your PowerChurch Plus data is compared to the list of contacts from Constant Contact.
3. **Updating Constant Contact with changes made in PowerChurch.** If any of your contacts have changed their e-mail address through the Constant Contact system, the address will be updated automatically in PowerChurch Plus.
4. **Updating contact list on Constant Contact.** New or changed addresses in PowerChurch Plus are then inserted into your contact list at Constant Contact.

When the sync process has completed all four steps, you will see a Constant Contact Sync report appear onscreen, completing the sync.

Making a Difference

Cyndy Whiten: Mentoring students in Oklahoma

Name: Cyndy Whiten

Title: Administrator, Manford First United Methodist Church

Passion: Fulfilling a call to ministry

Why PowerChurch: It saves me days.

"Everything I've done in my life has somehow led me, enabled me, to do this job. From my work as an IT systems analyst to being a mom, it has all readied me for this. I love my work." It's always heartening to find someone who is doing something they love, but who hasn't simply stalled there. This would describe Cyndy. Her day-to-day task list at Manford United reveals an exciting, protean and impressive variety of activities that cause her to stretch herself weekly to meet the needs of her church. These days, those needs include assisting a new mission team that will visit Mexico to rebuild part of a church, hosting Vacation Bible School, and ministering to locals for a couple of weeks.

As Administrator, Cyndy chose PowerChurch Plus because it allows her to keep track of

people, resources, ministries and money without her time being consumed by details. "Initially, I was consumed with using the attendance and contributions modules, which I love! They literally save me days of work with spreadsheets and mail merge... it's quick and easy. Now, I'm designing reports and am amazed at all of the things I can do. People will ask for all kinds of information and I can whip out a report in no time that provides what they need. I think this software is great!"

When she's not whipping out reports, Cyndy devotes her time to the students at her church, many of whom have access to her as a mentor and second mom. Her devotion to them is evident in the time she spends and in the types of programs she helps execute. "We have a phenomenal new youth pastor who suggested that we create an 'Adopt a Student' program. It was a tremendous success. Our students were adopted secretly, so they didn't know who we were. We gave them encouragement in the form of letters and gifts - all anonymous of course - and then finally met them at a party where we revealed that we were their secret parent/mentor. It was a moving evening. I cannot begin to describe the depth and importance of those relationships. It's really powerful."

Cyndy's voice when speaking about the teens at her church changes from business-like to tender focus. At PowerChurch, it is precisely this kind of devotion, focus and fortitude that we love to support.

"I really was called to be in this place, this position," she said. "I provide stability and this place is my second home. So many good things happen right here."

You make a difference all over the world. PowerChurch makes it easier. Read previous installments of Making a Difference at www.powerchurch.com/stories/.

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.

From General:

Q. We upgraded from Version 9 to 11.5 and on the first run of 11.5 did not select upgrade. Now we can't import from a backup of 9.

A. You can delete the x:\powerchurch\pcplus115\data\ directory and the program will assume it's a new installation and will ask if you want to upgrade.

From Accounting:

Q. I had to void 3 payroll checks from last year and need to reenter them correctly. How do I do that in the Payroll Module?

A. Since you have already voided the checks, you would process payroll for the employee(s) using the date of the original check, and then manually enter the check numbers of the checks. You would then post that payroll to the proper month in 2012. Hopefully, that month is still open in PCPlus.

From Contributions:

Q. When we come across returned checks on our bank account that have been posted

in the Contributions Module, I was confused on how to handle it properly.

A. You first reverse the contribution. This places the reverse entry in Unposted Contributions. Then, you Post in Contributions and Update Fund Accounting. To deal with the bank fee, if there is one, go to Fund Accounting/Enter Transactions. Credit the checking account and debit the bank fees expense.

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