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From the Editor

I am so encouraged lately about the way our church folk are returning back to Sabbath Schools and the worship services each Sabbath. Even with our colder temperatures, many showed up at their churches to worship God and to fellowship with each other. Thankfully, it seems that we want to meet in-person rather than to stay at home in our pajamas to watch the services on Zoom. Not much interaction with that, is there? It was good when we needed it, but now is the time to renew those friendships we have cherished so dearly. Our churches that are planning "outreach" socials and have a Sabbath School program for all age groups will see life returning to their congregations. I encourage each

of us to "work together" to create the bonds that Jesus longs for. Plan special programs where you can invite your community. Stay committed to your church and reach out to your neighbors. There has never been a better time than right now! Enjoy each other.



Linda Dayen Editor

CONNECTION

the official magazine of the Northern New England Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

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Northern New England Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

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OUR VISION

The Northern New England Conference strives to demonstrate the Eternal Gospel to every hamlet, home, and heart in New England and then Jesus will come.

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The Power of Renewed Hearts

Where is our focus?

"I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: and hast borne, and hast patience, and for my



name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. It will require much diligence and a continual struggle to keep evil out of our churches. There must be rigid, impartial discipline exercised; for some who have a semblance of religion will seek to undermine the faith of others and will privily work to exalt themselves." Ellen G. White (5T p. 538)

Where is our focus as we look at the signs of the Lord's soon return? What dangers truly lay at the door of God's law-abiding people? Truly can we understand Christ and His Righteousness as it applies to our daily experience as Seventh-day Adventist Christians? When we grasp the right standing of the law and what the law is, love to God and love to man, we can begin

to see the danger in our churches Ellen White refers to. Do we let our Sabbath keeping, tithe paying, and dress reform wearing pride keep us from love? Do we pat ourselves on the back for our observance of fundamentals while edging carefully away from the one not as "in tune" as we are in the church pew next to us? Let it not be so brothers and sisters! The state of our hearts tells a tale of false or true religion.

"Self-esteem and self-sufficiency are killing spiritual life. Self is lifted up; self is talked about. Oh, that self might die! 'I die daily,' said the apostle, Paul. When this proud, boasting self-sufficiency and complacent self-righteousness permeate the soul, there is no room for Jesus. He is given an inferior place, while self-swells into importance and fills the whole temple of the soul. This is the reason why the Lord can do so little for us. Should He work with our efforts, the instrument would appropriate all the glory to his own smartness, his wisdom, his ability, and he would congratulate himself, as did the Pharisee: 'I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.' When self shall be hidden in Christ, it will not be brought

to the surface so frequently.... It is only when we are careful to carry out the Master's orders without leaving our stamp and identity upon the work that we work efficiently and harmoniously. 'Press together,' said the angel, 'press together'.'" Ellen G. White (5T p. 539)



By Dana Brady Prayer Ministries Director

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Working Together

2023 Constituency Session Info

I found the following words to be powerful and apropos to our time:

"'Counsel together' is the message which has been again and again repeated to me by the angel of God. By influencing one man's judgment, Satan may endeavor to control matters to suit himself. He may succeed in misleading the minds of two persons; but when several consult together, there is more safety. Every plan will be more closely criticized; every advance move more carefully studied. Hence there will be less danger of precipitate, ill-advised moves, which would bring confusion, perplexity, and defeat. In union there is strength. In division there is weakness and defeat." Ellen G. White - 5T p. 29, 30 (1882)

What do you take away from this? I take away that it is vital that we come together when working for Christ. Coming together means several things to me. One, that we are wiser as a community than one or two persons. Two, that we are strong together when we stay united. Three, that Satan is trying to cause disunity. Four, that Jesus is the Head of His Church. Five, that the Holy Spirit will guide us as we jointly seek Him in earnest prayer.

Although Satan seeks to stop God's mission of reaching people with the everlasting gospel—if we stay united—He will definitely fail! With Satan appearing successful

at bringing disunity on so many fronts in recent history, I find the following to be very encouraging.

"The church may appear as about to fall, but it does not fall. It remains, while the sinners in Zion will be sifted out—the chaff separated from the precious wheat. This is a terrible ordeal, but nevertheless it must take place. None but those who have been overcoming by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony will be found with the loyal and true, without spot or stain of sin, without guile in their mouths.... The remnant that purifies their souls by obeying the truth gather strength from the trying process, exhibiting the beauty of holiness amid the surrounding apostasy." SDA Bible Commentary Vol. 7, p. 911

In my view, we need to keep our focus on Jesus, the precious life-changing gospel to every soul, and pray with and for each other. This is still true and powerfully effective even when we do not see eve to eve with our own spiritual brothers and sisters. We should not be surprised that we see differences of perspective on a whole host of areas ranging from personality to politics. This is quite normal and to be expected. Perhaps we may consider being much more cautious about what we post/repost on social media and rather uplift each other more in prayer. I have personally chosen to disengage with social media and tried to listen to people's testimonies. It has really helped me to understand why people think about things differently than me. I have found God calling me up to a higher level than where I have been at times-to take my level of spiritual maturity to a more heavenly domain. I confess in my past I have seemingly been more excited about what is happening on earth (e.g., political world) than how

Upcoming Dates

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE
July 25, 11am (Freeport Church)

NOMINATING COMMITTEE
August 13, 1pm (PTA)

REGENERATE! CHURCH REVITALIZATION CONFERENCE

October 20-21 (PTA Gym)

CONSTITUENCY SESSION

October 22, 9am (PTA gym)

Christ would have me focus on His kingdom. Let me tell you that ever since God gave me this wake-up call, I have had much more personal peace inwardly and in being with others who may have different views than me. Let us refrain from the friendly fire that has taken place among our own "family" and allow the Spirit to lead us to a better way to live for Him. What I have found is that although I have previously found comfort in spending time with those who agree with me is that I can appreciate and even learn from those who do not. I believe I am a wiser person like Ellen White said above when I take this approach. Some may find it easier to give in to the temptation to withdraw, but I believe Christ is telling us to, "Hang on and hang in there!!!"

I believe with the Holy Spirit's help, we can keep sideline issues on the sidelines where they likely belong. Let us keep unity in the Spirit front and center as we focus

together on Christ's mission to grow us as we co-labor with Him to save sinners.

As we unite with God, people will be drawn to our uplifted Savior as He has told us. "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples if you love one another." John 13:34-35. Let's stay connected with our spiritual family and keep trusting that God will take His church through to the end!

In the meantime, like at the local church level, as well as union, division, and General Conference levels, our conference needs to go through a process of hearing reports of the last 5 years and re-electing its leaders. Though human leaders are imperfect, I believe God calls the constituents (i.e., members) to trust in the leadership of Christ and the Holy Spirit. Each church will select its own delegates to serve for the upcoming Organizing Committee and Constituency Session. Pray for God to continue to guide the apple of His eye for His Church in NNEC to select godly leaders whose primary focus is on growing God's kingdom herein. We will be having a Connect LIVE episode sharing more on how the process works on March 8. You may find out more about watching Connect LIVE by going to www.nnec.org/live. With the goal to keep the focus on growing God's kingdom, in reaching more

for Him, we will be having a special ReGenerate! Church Revitalization Conference right before the Constituency Session. This will take place October 20-21, 2023, at PTA. Our keynote speakers will be Elder Ted Wilson, General Conference President, and Elder Tom L. Evans, President of Child Impact International.



By Brad Cauley Executive Secretary

Legal Notice - Northern New England Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Inc.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the first quinquennial session of the Northern New England Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Inc., will be held at Pine Tree Academy, Freeport, Maine, on Sunday, October 22, 2023. The first meeting of the session is called for 9:00am. The purposes of this meeting are to elect officers, an executive committee, and the departmental/service directors for the ensuing quinquennial term; to consider proposed amendments to the Articles and Bylaws; and to receive reports. Each church is entitled to one delegate for the organization and one additional delegate for each twenty (20) members (Article V, Section 1a) to represent them at the session. The Organizing Committee shall meet on Sunday, June 25, 2023, at 11:00am, at the Freeport church, 63 Pownal Rd., Freeport, Maine. The purpose of this meeting is to elect the nominating committee to serve the constituency, to nominate an Articles and Bylaws committee, and any other committees as may be necessary (Article VI, Section 1c). The Nominating Committee shall meet on Sunday, August 13, 2023, at 1:00pm at the Pine Tree Academy Chapel, 67 Pownal Rd, Freeport, Maine (Article VI, Section 2a).

Gary Blanchard, President and Brad Cauley, Executive Secretary

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The Modern **Relevant Church**

Maybe there's more to staying up-to-date?

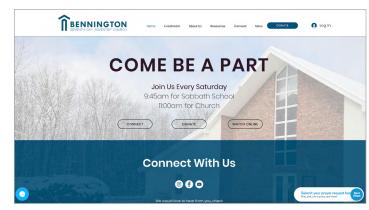
A new year has begun and it's 2023 - is your church "keeping up" with the times? What makes a church modern?

Here are the key components a church must have:

- ♦ An online presence: Your church is not only recognized by the building in your community but by how it can be found online. What do they see when they Google your church - can they easily find it? If they click on the link to your church website, is there a quality picture of the church with additional photos of smiling faces inside? What if they search Facebook?
- Sending communications via email or text and not just the printed bulletin at church.
- ♦ Using fresh slides with clean lines and graphics but minimal text on the TV screen or projector.
- ♦ Live streaming the service or making the sermons available to watch on the website later.
- ♦ A church sign with the current Seventh-day Adventist church logo

These are a few important components of the "infrastructure" necessary for a modern church, but for our church to accomplish its mission they must do more than stay visible in our internet driven society and up to date with technology. Our churches must also be relevant - meeting the needs of the people in

the community God planted it in. This is a huge task way bigger than installing a few cameras and updating a website. How can we achieve it?



A well done, new website at the Bennington Church.

I firmly believe this huge task begins with a simple step. It begins with a resolve in our hearts to return to what church was in the New Testament and what our church was early in our movement: small groups of people that were a church family beyond one day a week. Why do I firmly believe this? Because today's generation wants what all beings created in the image of God have always wanted: to find truly loving relationships, to have a sense of belonging, to grow together and be a part of something bigger than themselves - in a simple phrase, to be in community.

The common places for youth and young adults to find community right now is in exercise and at their jobs. Why is it that churches have largely ceased to be on the list for finding community? I don't think the excuse can only be that people are running from God. I think that the church has not only failed to stay relevant, but actually gotten less relevant by losing its sense of community & family focus.

So how do we build community? We are tempted to

think that we can do that solely from the comforts of I believe that the Seventh-day Adventist church has home - go on social media and make it happen. But lasting relationships still work best in person. We live in a hyper-connected world and yet so many members is in the next CoNNECtion of all different generations are lonely and feel unloved. Social media should be used as a tool to reach new people and then once you've made the connection, grow the relationship in person and just use technology to keep in touch.

But how do we build a sense of community? What exists to encourage and empower that within our church?

one of the best solutions. I will share what I think that Magazine - so stay tuned. In the meantime, what do you think the answer is? Share your ideas by emailing me at djohnson@nnec.org.



By Dustin Johnson Communications Director





Hear from Conference leadership, staff, ministry directors and special guests! Join us live, share your prayer requests, and comment with questions. Watch the previous recordings and share them with your church.

Wednesdays at 10:30am at www.nnec.org/live





to God

CAKE DECORATING

OSEPH

CULINARY

ARTS

Students from all over the Northern New England Conference gathered for Art Clinic, which is held each year at Pine Tree Academy. This year's clinic was in person on February 2-4, after being virtual for the past two years. The halls at PTA were buzzing with excitement as students gathered for worship, fellowship, and the opportunity to tap into the creative side of their brain. Students signed up for a variety of classes led by gifted instructors who were willing to share their time and talents with our students.

Classes and their instructors included: Drawing, by Chris Thacker; Acrylics by Heather Kahnsari Nejad; Pen and Ink, by Donna Newinski; Polymer Clay Figurines, by Kate Clauson; Cake Decorating, by Christina Losey-Brink; Culinary Arts, by Sophia Milano; Set Design, by Elizabeth Sommers; Visual Presentation, by Janel Tyson; Costume Design, by Sharon Hinckley; and Advanced Photography, by Michelle George.

on both Thursday and Friday, with see them so engrossed in their work, and really enjoying their classes. By Friday, everyone was scrambling to finish their creations in order to bring their completed projects to the art gallery in the gym.

Sabbath was a high day as the students displayed their beautiful creations. Neil Clauson, head teacher at Forestdale Christian School, led out with some of his students in the song service for church before James Reid preached a powerful message relating the trials that Joseph went through to how it applies to us today as Christians.

Following church, students from the visual arts class presented their version of the life of Joseph. The results of their presentation revealed the hard work that they had put into preparing for this day, under the leadership of Janel Tyson, vice principal and seventheighth grade teacher from PTA. The beautiful backdrop and set for the program were created by the set design class, taught by Elizabeth

teacher from the school. Following very few breaks. It was rewarding to the Visual Arts Presentation, scholarships for next year's Art Clinic were awarded to a student from each class and then a delicious lunch was served to the participants and their families. Dessert included some of the delicious cupcakes that students from the cake decorating class had made and decorated.

> It was a joy to see how talented our students are and how much they accomplished in such a short time. We are grateful for their hard work and how cooperative they were. We would like to also thank David DePalma and the kitchen crew, who worked tirelessly to create and serve such delicious food, and for all the volunteers, chaperones, and assistants who made this clinic such a success.

By Sonia Edwards **Education Superintendent**

- the food made in Culinary Arts class.
- 2. Completed cakes from Cake Decorating class. Who's birthday is it?
- 3. The Visual Presentation class portrays Joseph forgiving his brothers.
- 4. Christ Thacker teaches the Drawing class.
- 5. The Set Design class builds the backdrop for the Joseph
- 6. Pastor James Reid speaks for the Sabbath Church Service.





Men's Ministry Rallies

We are coming to you!

The NNEC Men's Ministry will again be holding regional spring rallies in 2023. We will hold five regional rallies; a New Hampshire rally, a Vermont rally, a southern Maine rally, a downeast Maine rally, and a northern Maine rally. In the past, Men's Ministry always held one Spring rally for the whole conference. Each year it was held in one of the three states within our conference. Noticing that the Northern New England Conference encompasses a lot of real estate, and in order to serve the men in our conference better, we decided to break up the rally into regional rallies. This way the men will not have to travel so far to be a part of this blessing.

All rallies are FREE one-day events. A fellowship lunch will be provided by each host church. Each rally will start at 9:00 a.m. and end no later than 4:00p.m.

We will have morning fellowship, prayer, and a song service, and then will join the host church for the divine worship service. Small group discussion sessions will be conducted in the afternoon for sharing and encouraging each other. The theme this year for all of the rallies is "The Struggle is Real!" Although everyone is struggling, we want you to know that you are not alone.

You have brothers in Christ who are also struggling. We

are much stronger together than apart! All NNEC Men's Ministry events are open to all men, and you can attend as many rallies as you would like to, so come and bring a friend. For more information contact Doug Berrill at 207-590-8891.



By Doug Berrill Men's Ministry Director

Rally Dates

10

These rallies are completely free and will include lunch. Invite every man that you know, it is open to ALL! From 9:00am - 4:00pm.

March 25 Portsmouth SDA Church (IA)
April 15 Mountain View SDA Church (IA)
April 29 Freeport SDA Church (IA)
May 13 Three Angels SDA Church (IA)
June 3 Caribou SDA Church (IA)

(New Hampshire)

(Vermont)

(Southern Maine) (Eastern Maine)

(Northern Maine)

New Health Team

Preparing for eternity while living here on Earth.

"A Seventh-day what?, I've never heard of that church before!"

The young man who made that statement to me 29 years ago is now an elder in his Adventist church and a physician coordinating his own medical missionary clinic. An understanding of righteousness by faith, coupled with seeing healthy lifestyle choices lovingly modeled was what first attracted this former Catholic to dedicate his life to serving Jesus. I'm blessed to be married to Dr. Zach Mazone and to support him as the new Conference Health Ministries Director serving along with Dr. Tim Howe.

A Health Ministries Advisory Team has been formed with the mentorship of the doctors and Pastor Rick Kuntz. This team is already preaching in churches and leading workshops on various topics, but they are most excited about an intensive medical evangelism training for our NNEC Health Ministries leaders. This Conference-sponsored event at Camp Lawroweld, May 10-14, will give participants confidence in program planning, hands-on treatments, health coaching, and most importantly, in addressing spiritual health.

"Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and

Above: Dr. Zack Mazone and herbalist Jane Kuntz hold a jar of Calendula healing herbs.



Josiah Wannemacher & A.J. Norzow demonstrate a fever bath.

to be in health just as your soul prospers" (3 John 2). This beautifully shows God's desire for all His children and the vision He has entrusted our Church to share.

"In teaching health principles, keep before the mind the great object of reform—that its purpose is to secure the highest development of body and mind and soul.

Show that the laws of nature, being the laws of God, are designed for our good; that obedience to them promotes happiness in this life, and aids in the preparation for the life to come." Ministry of Healing, p 146.



By Kimberly Dixon Mazone Topsham SDA Church Member

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Calling All Husbands

Be a Hero to Your Wife!

Throughout 43 years of marriage, Linda and I have been blessed by marriage retreats. However, long before we accepted the role of Family Ministries Directors for our conference, we observed a sad trend. In casual conversations with other couples, we would share our enthusiasm for marriage enrichment weekends and ask if they might be interested in experiencing one. Predictably, we would catch a gleam in the eye and a hopeful look on the wife's face. Then, before she could speak, the husband would say something like this: "No, I don't think that kind of thing is for us. We are doing just fine." Her disappointed expression quickly became visible.

Brothers, here is a little secret. Being willing to attend a marriage enrichment event is not a statement that your marriage is on the rocks, or that you are failing as a husband. I have a confession. The first time friends invited us to a marriage retreat, I dragged my feet. Although I never spoke it, this message played in my mind: "We don't need this. We have a great marriage. Save this marriage enrichment stuff for people who really need it."

There is always room to grow, even in the best marriages. A willingness to invest ourselves more fully in this priceless relationship comes with great rewards. If you have an open heart, these retreats are also a wonderful time for fellowship, good food, and fun! And yes, there are opportunities to share your

Above photos taken at the 2022 Marriage Retreat

thoughts and feelings, should you choose, but there is never any pressure to do so. You can just come and listen, if you are the strong, silent type!

Our next retreat is September 22-24 at Camp Lawroweld. The cost is \$195 per couple. Don't snooze, as registration is limited to 12 couples. To register, contact Linda at (207) 577-1775 or NNECfamily@ gmail.com.

So, dear husbands, I invite each of you to dive in and take the plunge! What have you got to lose? Well, it certainly won't be any weight, as the food that weekend will be way too delicious and far too plentiful. What is

there to gain? How about the respect and admiration of a loving wife, with a renewed appreciation for a husband that is not too proud to have new experiences and learn new things. And, after all, isn't it kind of fun to be a hero in the eyes of your woman? It doesn't get any better than



By Steve Dayen Family Ministries

The Greatest Gift

Returns!

2022 Cast & Crew photo

On a chilly day in December (the 10th), at the Brunswick Church, the wonderful story was retold of our Savior's lowly birth. The angels rejoiced, the shepherds sang, and carolers harmonized as they welcomed about 900 guests inside for the two presentations that day, to experience the joy of Jesus' first coming. Through Mary's eyes, as the story was recounted, the guests realized just how amazing this "Greatest Gift" was.

How did this yearly tradition start? In 2012 Dean Waterman, program director and a member of the Brunswick Church, started this journey, along with other members who were inspired and encouraged by the East Auburn Baptist Church's Christmas program. Being prompted by the Holy Spirit to start a yearly Christmas outreach of their own. They welcomed participants that came at the beginning and continue to come, from the surrounding Adventist churches of Farmingdale, Bath, Portland, and Freeport. Before Covid (a two-year break), 150 children, teens and adults presented this ageless story and this year 85 seventh graders to adults continued this production.

You will want to mark "the Greatest Gift" on your calendar for this December 2023. (Date TBD) Establishing a yearly presence in the community,



like this church has done, is a fantastic way to build friendships with neighbors and coworkers where we

By Linda Dayen Editor

Calendar

Upcoming Events

Mar. 30 - Apr. 1 Music Clinic

April 8 Fill the Baptistry Sabbath

May 5 - 7 Spring Pathfinder Camporee

May 7 - 8 Camp Lawroweld Work Bee

Help at Camp Lawroweld with various projects and spring cleaning.

May 10 - 12 Health Ministries Training Retreat

*Specifically for local church Health Ministry leaders

May 19 -20 Adventurer's Spring Escape

May 25 - 28 Spring Prayer Retreat

June 9 - 11 Pine Tree Academy Graduation Weekend

June 18 3rd Annual Lawroweld Triathlon

June 23 - July 1 Camp Meeting

Stay in tents or bring an RV and enjoy meetings about Jesus in the evenings and breakout sessions during the day. Multiple children's programs throughout and at the same time as Adult programming! This

year's Main Tent speaker is John Bradshaw from It Is Written.

July 2 - Aug. 6 Summer Camp

www.camplawroweld.org

For more event info and changes to this list, visit www.nnec.org/calendar

Rally Dates

These rallies are completely free and will include lunch. Invite every man that you know, it is open to ALL! From 9:00am - 4:00pm.

March 25	Portsmouth SDA Church	(New Hampshire)
April 15	Mountain View SDA Church	(Vermont)
April 29	Freeport SDA Church	(Southern Maine)
May 13	Three Angels SDA Church	(Eastern Maine)
June 3	Caribou SDA Church	(Northern Maine)

Family Fun

Making Music...

Do you love music? God does! In fact, right in the middle of the Bible He gave us a huge hymnal. That book is called ______. Can you find it? The last hymn says that everyone should praise God with these instruments:

instruments.

Maybe you can play one of these instruments or you would like to learn. It takes time and practice. God has given every single person a very special instrument. It is your voice and God says that every child can learn to sing!

Can you sing your favorite Sabbath School song?



Meet Jairo...

Our "new" HR Director

Jairo A. Utate Ogamdo was born and raised in the small town of Villa Sonador, in the province of Monseñor Nouel in the Dominican Republic, near the Dominican Adventist University were his parents worked and where he received his bachelor's degree in accounting. In 2017 he worked for ADRA as Project Manager until 2021 when he went back to the Dominican Adventist University as a Student Financial Aid Officer. He joined the NNEC team in August of 2022 as the Human Resources Director and Accountant in our Treasury department. He is married to Cynthia García whom he meet in 2016 and married in 2021. He likes sports; especially volleyball, chess, hiking and going to the beach. We are so glad that God has brought Jairo to our conference. Give him a hardy welcome when you see him at Campmeeting, likely in the Welcome Center.



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Northern New England Conference

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