

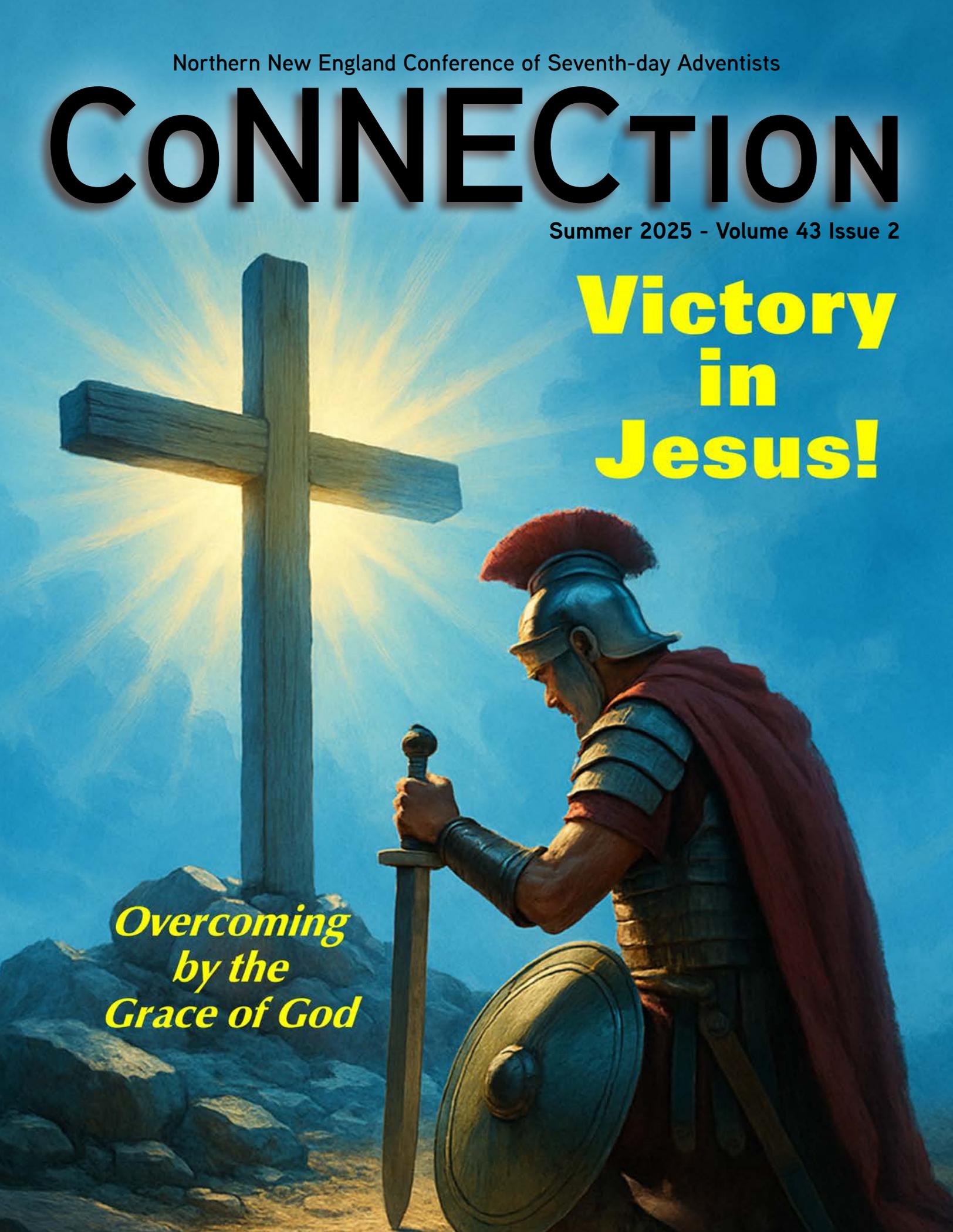
Northern New England Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

CONNECTION

Summer 2025 - Volume 43 Issue 2

**Victory
in
Jesus!**

*Overcoming
by the
Grace of God*



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About the Cover

The front cover was designed by Pastor Steve Dayen, from the Brunswick Church.

From the Editor

Here in Maine, Mother's Day in May is always a sign of Spring with Summer coming close on its heels. It is a time for putting away the snow shovels, the heavy winter jackets, and bulky sweaters, to focus on new life in the natural world. Around our home in Bryant Pond there are perennial flowers and fruit trees. The Hosta plants poke through the earth to form their hearty bush of greenery. I would like to take credit for these beautiful plants, but the owner before us was very intentional about planting flowering plants. God is like this as He gave His only Son for us—this was Intentional Grace. It was planned from the beginning to give us a future and the hope of eternal life with Him. Drink in the beauty of this season and remember the drink from the River of Life that is to come.



Linda Dayen
Editor

CoNNEction

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

Linda Dayen Editor

Dustin Johnson Managing Editor
& Layout



Northern New England Conference
of Seventh-day Adventists

CONFERENCE LEADERSHIP

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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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Victory in Jesus: Overcoming by the Grace of God

Our theme at Camp Meeting this summer is “Victory in Jesus: Overcoming by the grace of God.” Jesus wants us to overcome every challenge, obstacle, and sin in our lives! To believe otherwise would be to imply that our obstacles are greater than our Lord. They are certainly not! Someone once said, “Sin will take you further than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you want to pay.” But how do we overcome sin? The bible says, “For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ...” (Titus 2:11-14, emphasis mine). Notice it is the “grace of God” revealed in the life and death of Jesus that “teaches” us to turn from sin and to live “godly lives in this present age.” There is life changing power in contemplating the cross! Sin freeing power is released into our lives, when we hear the good news that Jesus has already forgiven us, already made us right with God, already provided perfect righteousness and already given us everything we need for eternal life. That is what makes the good news so good!

Many years ago, my sister-in-law was in a life and death struggle with a meth addiction. Her struggle was a decade long! One day in desperation, she cried out to God for deliverance and had a dream that helped her understand and experience the grace of God. The dream was a revelation of God’s faithfulness, care, and love for her, even in her addiction and struggle. This glimpse into the amazing grace of God led to victory. She has been free of meth and back in church for over 10 years now! Here are the lyrics to her song.

“Last night I had a dream about my life, I was walking down the road, but I could not see the light. I stumbled and fell upon the ground, and though I tried alone, my sins held me down.

-- Then I saw Jesus he was holding out his hands, I could see the marks where the nails had been as he helped me to stand. He held me close and dried my tears and said, “I understand but please try again.”

-- As I continued, I saw mountains move aside, then I started stumbling on my own selfish pride, I thought that I could do it on my own, but as I fell once again, I never felt so alone.

-- Then I saw Jesus he was holding out his hand. I could see the marks where the nails had been, as he helped me to stand. He held me close and dried my tears and said, “I understand but please try again.”

-- I slowly started covering the last of the ground, a little humble a little wiser now I found, and to my great surprise I found only pain and strife, I did not know the devil had found an entrance into my life.

-- As I fell to the jagged rocks below, I realized I had wandered off that straight and narrow road. Just before the impact, He broke the fall for me, and blood and torn garments were all I could see.

-- Then I saw Jesus, He was stretching out his hands as the blood I was supposed to shed ran down his hands, and he looked at me with love in his eyes and said, “I understand, I will take your hand and try again, together we will try, try again.”

If the grace of God could set my sister-in-law free, from one of the most severe forms of addiction, Jesus can give you victory regardless of what master sin currently has control of your life. Lord, give us a deeper revelation of your victory causing kindness!



Here is a link to listen to her song on YouTube (or scan the QR code): <https://youtu.be/mijg14dy3z8?feature=shared>



By Gary Blanchard
NNEC President



Victory in Jesus: Grace that Blossoms into Triumph

Like dawn gilding a quiet valley, the 1888 Minneapolis message bathed Adventism in warm light, reminding weary believers that victory is born—not in the clenched fist of effort, but in the open hands of faith. Ellen G. White wrote, “When men learn they cannot earn salvation by their own works, they look with unwavering trust to Christ as their only hope” (1888 Materials, p. 468). Grace arrives first, like sunrise; obedience the morning song that answers its glow.

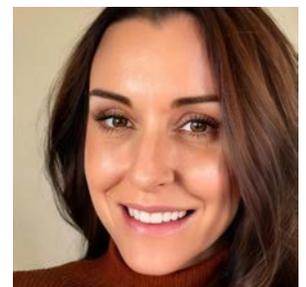
Paul heard that melody: “Those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:17, AMP). The river of grace flows down to us; only afterward do green banks blush with fruit. Trying to ripen character without that river is no more successful than tying silk blossoms to barren limbs. Our effort must be to know Him and trust Him thus allowing Him to color the flower tree with His glory.

EGW illuminated the process in brilliant color: “The Holy Spirit works upon the human agent, giving him new motives and affections, and bringing him into obedience to Christ” (Review and Herald, Sept 17, 1895). Picture a gentle Gardener breathing life into bruised stems until sap rises and blossoms open of themselves.

Because love is the current, the outcome is sure: “In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us” (Romans 8:37). The preposition is a doorway—through Him, not through our own righteousness.

Each doorway is richly supplied: “All power is provided for every soul who will believe. Christ’s righteousness will accomplish the work” (1888 Materials, p. 1666). Standing in that supply, the soul becomes an orchard of the Spirit—love, joy, peace shimmering like fruit bathed in the afternoon sun.

Victory in Jesus, then, is not a mountain we scale but a life that rises within us as surely as spring follows winter. Our task is to stay yielded, letting grace fill the chambers of the heart until it overflows in fragrant deeds. Then we may join the swelling chorus, “Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 15:57).



By Dana Brady
NNEC Prayer Ministry Director



Tithing: An Act of Faith

God challenges us, “Test Me!” Return tithes faithfully and see if He will not bless (Malachi 3:10-12). My wife and I have found that God is the Promise Keeper. We have determined to be faithful in tithes return.

In Malachi and Nehemiah’s day, Judah was in crisis. Upon Nehemiah’s return, he found betrayal of sacred trust by the high priest himself. The people were not bringing their tithes into the storehouse; the Levites left the Temple service to farm. Fully aware of the trouble at the heart of the work, the Lord excused no one from bringing “all the tithes into the storehouse.” He declared: “You are cursed with a curse, for you have robbed Me.” (See Nehemiah 13; Malachi 1-3)

God will purify the Levites and restore Jerusalem as “the city of righteousness” (Isaiah 1:26). He created us to be the image of the Godhead’s oneness (see Genesis 1:26-27; 2:24) Deuteronomy 6:4). This remains God’s purpose (see Ephesians 4:15-16; John 17:20-23). To a church torn between two patriarchs Paul wrote: “He who has begun a good work among you (plural) will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6).

On one occasion Ellen White agreed to forward a sister’s tithe, because, as she had written to Elder Watson: “I would not advise that anyone should make a practice of gathering up tithe money” (Letter 267, 1905, par. 6). But Ellen encouraged: “It is better to put confidence in the ministers of

the conference where you live and in the officers of the church where you worship. Draw nigh to your brethren. Love them with a true heart fervently and encourage them to bear their responsibilities faithfully in the fear of God” (Letter 96, 1911).

She writes: “More men would give themselves to the ministry were they not told of the depleted treasury. There should be an abundant supply in the Lord’s treasury, and there would be if selfish hearts and hands had not withheld the tithes or made use of them to support other lines of work” (Testimonies, vol. 9, 249). Tithe is clearly for supporting the gospel ministry in the organized work.

Faithfully returning tithes through the local church is more than an act of faith God will provide. It is an act of faith God has an organized church in the world, and feeble and defective as it may be, He will purify and make us one in His image. (See Ellen White, Review and Herald, October 3, 1893, par. 13; Unlikely Leaders, p. 7; Selected Messages, Book 2, p. 380.2)

Act in faith on the promises of the Promise Keeper!



By Arnet Mathers
Pastor of the Oakfield/Presque Isle Churches and the Madawaska Fellowship Group



Making A Joyful Sound Music Clinic 2025

On March 27, 2025, Pine Tree Academy teamed with lots of activity as the NNEC Music Clinic got underway for two days of intense music rehearsals leading up to three performances. Students enjoyed reconnecting with friends from other schools in several states whom they had seen in years past. The Clinic concluded with the Finale Concert Saturday night in which the 292 students participated. The Grand Finale song, directed by Brendan Krueger (PTA principal) is the highlight with all music groups participating; choirs, strings, band, and piano all praising God together. The audience was treated to a surround sound experience. This year's Finale piece was A Mighty Fortress.





God’s Promises Revealed Spring Pathfinder Camporee 2025

The forecast for the weekend of May 2-4 called for rain, but nothing was going to dampen the spirits of the Pathfinders as they gathered in South Royalton, Vermont for their annual Spring Camporee. The theme for the Camporee was “Spread the Word” and as nine Pathfinder clubs pitched camp on Friday they experienced the first rain shower. Soon after, the Lord provided a beautiful double rainbow, reminding them of His promises, just as He had at the beginning of the year in Gillette, Wyoming. If that was not enough, He dazzled them with a second, even brighter double rainbow an hour later.

That evening, and again on Sabbath morning, Judit Magdaleno-Lopez presented her experiences as a

literature evangelist, and how the Lord had led her away from her family and her home in Arkansas to work for Him in NNEC, just as He had led Abram from his home in Ur to the Promised Land.

After the church service, the Pathfinders invested two new Area Coordinators. Megan Deshaies stepped up to serve as the Teen Leadership (TLT) Coordinator, and Brent Runnals came on board to coordinate the clubs in Vermont.

After lunch, the Pathfinders gathered under the pavilion as it poured outside, and Judit trained them on how to hand out tracts. Just as she finished, the rain let up, and the Pathfinders fanned out across the nearby communities to distribute Glow Tracts. They returned full of excitement and beaming with joy!

The rain continued through the night but let up again on Sunday morning just as the Pathfinders were ready to play kickball and other games. By noon, everyone was ready to go home where they could dry out their gear, cherish the memories they made, and reflect on the fellowship they enjoyed as they united their hearts and hands in the service of the Lord.



By Jim Thomas,
NNEC Pathfinder Director

Barbara Umbro invests her granddaughter, Megan Deshaies, as the NNEC TLT Coordinator



Adventurer's Spring Escape

As the sun dipped behind the trees on Friday, May 16, 2025, Camp Lawroweld transformed from peaceful and quiet to bursting with energy, laughter, and the sound of excited Adventurers arriving from all corners of the conference—and even beyond! They came with sleeping bags, smiles, and plenty of anticipation for this year's Adventurer Spring Escape.

The theme? Masterpiece Makers—a weekend all about celebrating creativity through arts, crafts, and music. But the message ran deeper: just like the beautiful things we create have value, we have value—because God created us. From finger paints to musical notes, everything pointed back to the truth that we are God's masterpieces.





Dr. Pete Gleason lit up the stage with an engaging talk on feelings—yes, feelings! He reminded us that emotions are part of God’s brilliant design, and without them, life would be pretty bland (like cereal without milk... or cupcakes without frosting!).

Speaking of fun, the crowd roared with laughter during a lively skit starring club directors, a few Pathfinders in Teen Leadership Training, and none other than the NNEC Pathfinder Director, Jim Thomas, who played Francis, a wacky statistician obsessed with numbers. The message? Every talent counts, and every person shines for Jesus in their own unique way!

Even the kitchen joined the party—serving up cupcakes on “paint palettes,” complete with sprinkles in the paint selections so kids could design their own dessert masterpieces.

Sabbath afternoon was packed with hands-on fun: candle making, painting, Legos, sewing, pottery, and even hand shadow puppets! Each project not only sparked creativity but also helped Adventurers earn another well-deserved award for their sash.

By Sunday morning, the kids were not just ready to watch a talent show—they were the talent show! From violins to poetry readings, skits to songs, these kids showcased the gifts God has given them with confidence and heart. They reminded all of us that age does not matter when it comes to shining for God.

This weekend proved it: our Adventurers are not just learning—they are leading. And they are truly examples in speech, conduct, love, and faith. What a masterpiece of a weekend!

By Rebecca Barcelow
NNEC Adventurer Director





Island Flavor

Having Faith in the First Year of Running a Jamaican Restuarant

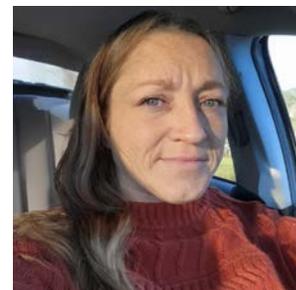
Island Flavor is a new restaurant that offers authentic Jamaican cuisine in rural Bennington, Vermont. When you walk into Island Flavor you will find yourself surrounded with Jamaican decor, from the flowers and plants, a beach scene with palm trees, and colors of green, black, and gold all around. On top of their authentic Jamaican food choices (including vegetarian dishes), you will also find Jamaican drinks, treats, and a selection of nicnacs, trinkets, shirts, and other items.

April marked the one year anniversary of the opening of Island Flavor at its new location. Owned and operated by Joan & George Gilpin, members of the Bennington SDA Church, this restaurant has been nothing short of a labor of prayer, hope, love, faith and trust in God. "It is a faith journey," stated Joan. Challenge after challenge faced them while trying to open in this location. So much so that they didn't know if they would end up being successful. First, Joan lost her job the very same day the bank approved the loan.

Then the day they were signing the closing papers the bank called saying they no longer qualified for the loan because Joan had lost her job. It was awful, one problem after another until it seemed like it wasn't going to happen.

Joan and her family were all in though and they persevered, sacrificing and working hard. They knew they needed and wanted to dedicate the new restaurant to God. Their church family and pastor came together, shared scripture, and prayed over the building and the family. Joan and George committed the endeavor to God. There's a sign on the wall encouraging others to turn in faith and offering to pray for anyone's needs. "If you would like prayer simply mark an X on a card and drop it into the wooden box. GOD BLESS!" Underneath they set up a Prayer Box. Resting beside it is a stack of Steps to Christ books for anyone to take.

Over the last year it hasn't been easy, there have been days with no customers, tears pleading with God, hard work and long hours, but God has provided, as He has promised. While it isn't always easy, He is always faithful. Joan finished the interview by saying, "This place is a gift from God, as fulfilled in His word. 'The just shall live by faith,' and we are a daily testament showing how good God is to His children."



By Katie Greene
Member of the Bennington, Vermont Church



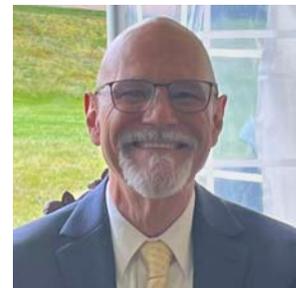
A Dance in the Rain

Read the full story and see a photo of Kristin at www.nnec.org/news-article/rain

There are moments when the walls of the church are stretched beyond their familiar boundaries. This is the story of one such Sabbath morning, when a woman named Kristin* – broken, beautiful, and beloved by God danced in the rain. Her story reminds us that grace often comes quietly, sometimes painfully, but always purposefully. It challenges us to put aside our comforts, our assumptions, and to embrace God’s calling to love without measure. This is a story about Kristin*, but it is also about us. (*Kristin and her friend *Carla are pseudonyms used to respect their privacy). Kristin arrived at our church on Sabbath morning. Jon, a non-member, had seen her downtown, struggling to walk while carrying her belongings. Moved with compassion, He offered her a ride. I had just arrived to open the church when Jon shouted from his vehicle at the far end of the parking lot. As he pulled up beside me, I caught my first glimpse of Kristin – half-slumped in the passenger seat of his pickup truck. She stepped out of the truck: messy, somewhat matted hair, a dirty sweatshirt, and sweatpants. She mumbled, “Hi,” Her speech was slurred (she had suffered a stroke in 2023 from crack cocaine use). Her step was unsteady, almost palsied. She was clearly anxious and restless, symptoms of both intermittent crack withdrawal and deep social anxiety around strangers. Inside, she sat at a table and began to eat breakfast. As Kristin’s anxiety began to ease, she shared with me that she started a methadone program three days prior and was struggling through withdrawal and sleeplessness. Sometimes she would rise from her seat, pacing with arms jerking uncontrollably, needing help to calm herself. Our church family took turns sitting with her, reassuring, and comforting her.

Our sweet Head Deaconess guided Kristin to the mother’s room where she slept soundly until the end of the church services. One of our regular guests, a former drug addict named Carla*, recognized Kristin. They had been childhood friends. Carla, clean for ten years now, shared that both girls began experimenting with drugs, and before long, they were addicted to crack. For Kristin, addiction had led to prostitution to support her habit. She

birthed four children, all of whom were removed by child protective services. Used, abused, cast aside, and left to survive alone, Kristin bore the heavy stigma of society. Praise God for people like Jon – people who see the lowest of society as still worthy of a touch from Jesus’ hands and heart. My wife Sue hosted a meal and fellowship with members of our church family. When Jon took her to a friend’s house for the night, he shared that Kristin said she felt accepted – not judged – by our church family. Several days later, to our deep shock and sorrow, we learned that Kristin, along with another had died of an overdose of Fentanyl. The days following her death gave me time for reflection about myself and my church. I will not lie: the situation had pushed me outside my comfort zone. To have Kristin visit our campus’ in the condition she was in, on the Sabbath challenged me, and yet it is the very day God set aside for rest and restoration for all humanity – especially for Kristin that day. I had to make a choice: to put off my prejudices and “put on Christ”, in order to minister to her effectively. It was not easy, but it was essential. And it is a work God is striving to perfect within His church. Kristin’s death also reminded us of how precious time really is. God, in His grace, gave us a window of opportunity to be His hands and feet for this woman. Jody shared a memory that comforted all of us. When folks left the service that day, and after gathering food and clothes for Kristin, Jody and her husband Kevin had stepped outside the food shelf where it was raining, and she saw Kristin, alone in the rain in our parking lot, dancing under the falling drops. Could it be that in serving the Kristins of this world on God’s behalf, we somehow become participants in that divine outpouring of refreshment? My prayer is that God will continue this work in us and through us as the Day approaches. The Kristin’s out there are counting on us!



By Don LeBlanc

Retired Registered Nurse in the Barre, Vermont church



Involved in the Community

Recent Activities at Forestdale Christian School

Forestdale Christian School sits in a beautiful country setting surrounded by forests and mountains. This school, located in Woodstock, Maine, has been in existence since 1932. The staff consists of two full-time teachers. Mr. Neil Clauson is principal and teacher of the upper grades, and Mrs. Kate Clauson teaches kindergarten through fourth grade. Along with an excellent academic program the staff at Forestdale attempt to reach out in the community to add enriching experiences to their program.



Early in the fall, the students are involved in the Mollyckett Mountain Challenge. The students request sponsors and challenge themselves to see how many times they can reach the summit of Mollyckett Mountain. They are accompanied by parents, staff, church members, and community hikers. This event has become an exciting time for students to challenge their physical skills and join with other outdoor enthusiasts.

During the winter, the school becomes involved

in a local ski program. Mount Abrams offers an excellent resource for the students by providing scholarships for ski and snowboard lessons. The students are loved by the many mountain instructors because they work hard and show up with good attitudes. Mt. Abrams looks forward to the students and staff of Forestdale returning to the mountain each year.

Another community resource is the Bryant Pond Library. Each week throughout the year a small group visits this town library. The librarian has become a friend to all the children. She plans several hours of reading, crafts, and activities. She chooses books that hold their interest and encourage their love for reading. At the end of the session the children return to school with a bin full of new reading material. The Christian values that the children show help the community see how special Forestdale School really is.

**By Neil Clauson, Head Teacher
& Linda Wiggin, Retired Teacher/Volunteer**



New Conference Employees



Mark Bugbee

Started July 2024 as the Education Superintendent

We want to welcome Mark Bugbee, our newest Education Superintendent (as of July 2024) and his wife, Susan who came to us from the Michigan Conference. Mark's teaching career began in 1998, which included schools in the Berkshires, MA, Saipan Adventist Elementary School and the Village Adventist Elementary School in Berrien Springs, MI. He and Susan have three children and three grandchildren that simply "warm their hearts." Susan is a

woman of many talents and has followed Mark through his teaching positions. Mark believes that God has given our Adventist schools the privilege to lead young people to Christ and His mission service. He strives to help our schools to teach practical life skills, to learn through nature and to share Jesus with others.



Marc Demers

Started May 2025 as the Camp Lawroweld Caretaker

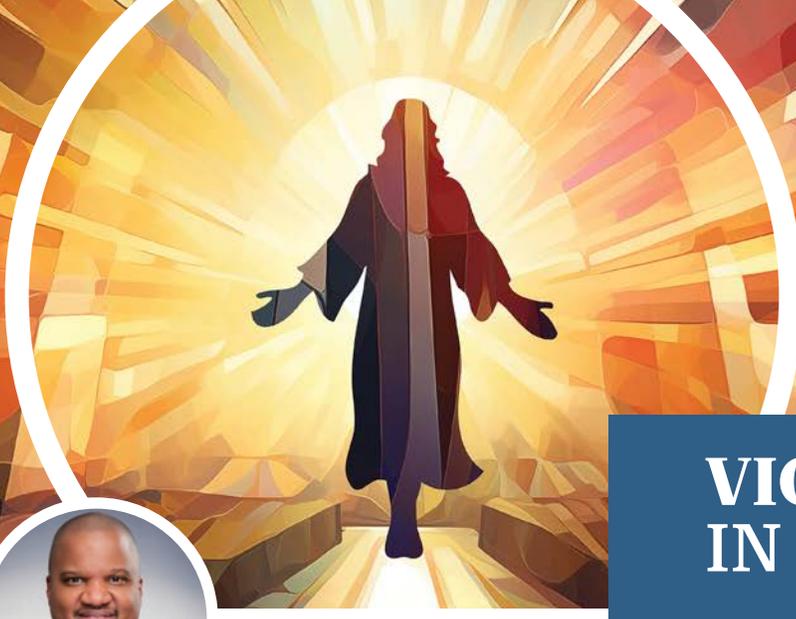
A warm welcome to Marc Demers, our new Camp Lawroweld Caretaker, and his wife, Kristina who are not new to Maine, but have lived here most of their lives. They have two beautiful daughters, Sarah (age 15) and Eliza (age 13), who are homeschooled by Kristina. Their family came into the Seventh-day Adventist Church about 6 years ago when they answered the Holy Spirit's "call". Marc has a

lot of experience in many facets of building. He worked for Bath Iron Works as a welder, designer, and painter and then in 2008 he and Kristina started "flipping houses" which has given Marc experience in all aspects of building. We are always building or fixing something at Camp which is right up his alley. The Demers love water sports, hiking, arts and crafts and winter sports. Kristina is excited to get back into waterskiing. They love waking up to the sounds of nature because they have a passion for country living.



Save the Date!
Alumni Weekend

September 26-27, 2025



VICTORY IN JESUS

Overcoming By
the Grace of God

JUNE 20-28, 2025

NEW THIS YEAR

- Main Tent in new level location
- More scheduled outdoor play for kids
- Senior Banquet moved to Sunday
- Two half day Heritage Tours



Dr. Carlton P. Byrd
Evening Speaker*



Dennis Smith
Weekday Morning Speaker



See the schedule, get meal tickets, reserve a camp site, and more!
www.nnec.org/campmeeting



Camp Meeting Theme Song “Victory” by Glenn Holland

Verse 1:

There’s a lie that when you sin that the devil’s going to win,
And his snares will keep us from becoming free.
But I’ve learned that when we pray, that the devil cannot stay,
And the Lord can give us victory!

Chorus:

Victory, hallelujah! Through the Spirit Jesus offers victory.
Victory, hallelujah! Grace to break the chains of sin and set me free.
Though I once was lost in sin, Jesus came to live within,
Day by day He gives me victory!

Verse 2:

If we all could understand how much power is at hand
When we trust the Lord to help us day by day,
We would certainly conclude that his power ever new
Is incentive for us all to pray!

End with Chorus



Sing along with Glenn and his guitar at:
nnec.org/victory-song

Family Fun

GRACE is a Riches to Rags choice Jesus made so we could enjoy the RICHES OF HEAVEN throughout eternity. I hope you and your family will take the time to review some of the stories of GRACE in your Bibles remembering that GRACE is not something we can earn by our works; we cannot buy it. GRACE IS A GIFT to us because God, the Holy Spirit and Jesus are LOVE!



- SUNDAY: GRACE is forgiveness: Mark 2:1-12
MONDAY: GRACE is kindness: Mark 1: 40-43 and/or Matthew 8:1-3
TUESDAY: GRACE is freely given: Luke 23:39-43
WEDNESDAY: GRACE is acceptance: Luke 15:11-32
THURSDAY: GRACE is divine, unmerited favor: John 5:1-15
FRIDAY: GRACE is an enabling power for spiritual growth: Luke 19:1-10
SABBATH: Read Ephesians 1:7-8 and 2:8-10.

By Patti Kneller
Brunswick Church member

Calendar

Upcoming Events

- 
- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| Aug. 14 - 17, 2025 | Haitian Ministries Retreat |
| Aug. 16, 2025 | Cliff Island Day |
| Aug. 22 - 24, 2025 | Young Adult Retreat |
| Aug. 27 - 29, 2025 | Connect Academy (Free & Online) |
| Aug. 29 - 31, 2025 | Men's Retreat |
| Sept. 7 - 9, 2025 | Women's Retreat |
| Sept. 12 - 14, 2025 | Children's Ministries Retreat |
| Sept. 25 - 28, 2025 | Fall Prayer Retreat |
| Sept. 26 - 28, 2025 | Fall Pathfinder Camporee |
| Oct. 4, 2025 | Fill the Baptistry Sabbath |
| Oct. 10 - 12, 2025 | Marriage Retreat |

View more details and additional events at www.nnec.org/calendar

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Small Effort

BIG DIFFERENCE



Just a small effort on your part can
make a big difference to our mission.

When you take the small step of naming our mission as the Payable on Death (POD) or Transfer on Death (TOD) beneficiary of your investment, checking or savings account, you help us continue our important work. A gift like this won't affect your lifestyle and it will make a tremendous impact on those we serve.

Call or e-mail us to learn how you can make a big difference starting today.

Planned Giving & Trust Services

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NNECGIFT.org