

Northern New England Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

# CONNECTION

Spring 2026 - Volume 44 Issue 1



**REGALIBRATING FOR MISSION**

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**NOTE:** This issue is incomplete because it was a shortened ONLINE ONLY version to reduce costs. The next issue will return to normal...



### About the Cover

Pine Tree Academy students Rhett Tyson & Miguel Matos share for Chapel.

## From the Editor, Linda Dayen

When I was a teenager and a member of the Loma Linda University Church, our youth group was very large, about two hundred strong. The youth leaders had many good programs for Sabbath School but one Sabbath I decided that being entertained was boring and I wanted to do something for God in my church, my neighborhood, and my community. And so, I walk out of the program and waited outside. One of the youth pastors followed me out and we got into a conversation about sharing our faith. To this day I enjoy making new community friends. Their questions make me think, they make



me want to study God's Word more. Many of our youth and young adults are wanting to make a difference in their church and their community. Let us encourage them. Let us mentor them. They are His witnesses.

# CoNNEction

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Adventists

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& 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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## Unclipping Our Wings

I have always loved birds. As a missionary kid in our village in Malawi, I once bought several baby birds from a local man and carefully fed, watered, and protected them for weeks—until they were finally ready to fly. My dream was to release them and hope they would come back to visit me, even perch on my shoulder like in a Disney movie. Then came some well-meant but terrible advice. A villager warned me that if I did not clip their wings, they would fly away—and that hawks would surely kill them. Out of fear and misguided love, I let him clip their wings so they could not escape their cage—or my room.

Although I know they are God’s creatures, I do not like cats very much—but my mom loved them, so we had two in the house. One day I left my bedroom door open. While I was gone, the cats slipped in and turned my birds into an early Thanksgiving feast.

Here is the point of the story: The Seventh-day Adventist Church is like those birds. Revelation describes God’s people as “flying” through heaven, proclaiming the everlasting gospel to every nation, tribe, language, and people (Rev. 14:6). But somewhere along the way, out of fear and misguided love, we clipped our own wings.

Instead of trusting the Holy Spirit to send ministers into unreached areas to plant churches, ordain elders to pastor local congregations, and equip every member for missionary service, we followed bad advice (Acts 13:1–4; Acts 14:21–23, 15:36, 41; 1 Peter 4:10). We did the opposite of what Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy urge for the rapid finishing of the work. It is time to recalibrate for mission and unclip the wings of our movement.



The NNEC has recently produced a video to help our churches begin this recalibration: Go to [www.nnec.org](http://www.nnec.org) - on the scrolling carousel find “President’s Report Recalibrating for Mission”



We are also encouraging every member and leader to prayerfully read—or reread—the free digital book *Let My Pastors Go*: [www.letmypastorsgo.com](http://www.letmypastorsgo.com)



...and our *Revival in the East* booklet is available on our website on the last part of the scrolling carousel on the home page.

These resources could also be studied in small groups. Please work closely with your pastor to develop a recalibration plan for your local church. True love does not clip wings—it equips, releases, and trusts God with the results. May this recalibration restore our flight and help us finish our mission.



**By Gary Blanchard**  
NNEC President



Morning Prayer Group

## Something Better At Pine Tree Academy

In the book *Education* (p.296), Ellen White says that “Something better” is the watchword of education, the law of all true living.” As believers, we know that Jesus always offers us something better than what this world can offer. It thrills my heart to witness the spiritual growth that our students are experiencing daily at Pine Tree Academy. It is foundational that the faculty are comprised of praying, dedicated, and mission minded individuals. A part of that foundation is academic and extra-curricular excellence. But I believe that “something better” is happening at Pine Tree Academy. The students, including the Student Association leaders, have made the conscience decision to prioritize their faith and exercise that faith at school. I notice it when I spend time there. The presence of the Holy Spirit is undeniable. How they facilitated this is worth noting.



Campus Ministries leading office worship at NNEC



Campus ministries, through the leadership of the PTA chaplain James Reid, has given students many opportunities to lead on the spiritual front. One of my favorite student groups is the “Encouragement Team.” Pastor Reid has trained this team to show that scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy have words of life and encouragement. The “Encouragement Team” memorize or write down these words of encouragement and leave them on the lockers of the students, desks of the teachers, or they even mail cards to church leadership around the conference. I have heard them recite words of encouragement to their peers in the hallway. They pay special attention to their peers’ day-to-day mental health, seeking to lend a listening ear or an encouraging word for those who are struggling. The campus ministries team also has been going to churches with the gospel message, preaching messages of hope, and singing the gospel via their small group select choir. If you were to visit school during lunch, you would find a group of academy students praying for the world, the church, and each other in the gymnasium. From elementary to academy, students lead in the weekly chapel services. It is the training ground for leading in the church.

There has also been a concerted effort by the Freeport Church to provide something better for the students. Church and student leadership have come together to create “Friday Night Alive,” a Friday evening vespers service that



**Collin Verrill preaching at Woodstock Church**

aims at providing opportunities to accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Students have been bringing friends that do not attend Pine Tree Academy. There are also efforts underway by a parent/teacher team to create an agriculture program that will benefit the students spiritually and financially through a potential work-study program. They realize that spiritual lessons in agriculture are invaluable.

Starting at the top, the faculty and students have committed themselves to modeling a lifestyle



**PTA Select Choir at Woodstock Church**

of service, which has richly blessed the Youth Department. Five teachers at PTA volunteer each summer at Camp Lawroweld. Students are hired as staff to serve the youth, families, and the blind. Anyone who has worked at camp can attest to the exhausting yet rewarding experience of serving others at summer camp. There is dedicated support and participation in the “Mission at Home” initiative, a spring project that aims at helping churches and schools in the NNEC. The students have landscaped, refinished pews, painted, and rebuilt a greenhouse as a part of this work.

The above-mentioned experiences are but a fraction of what the school is offering for student spiritual growth and leadership. We cannot forget that the teachers integrate faith into all subject areas as well! Would you please join me in praying and supporting the students and faculty at Pine Tree Academy? This powerful work will not go unopposed, and they need your support in their quest for “something better”! Carefully consider the appeal below:

“Parents and teachers do not estimate the magnitude of the work given them in training the young. The experience of the children of Israel was written for us “upon whom the ends of the world are come.” 1 Corinthians 10:11. As in their day, so now the Lord would have the children gathered out from those schools where worldly influences prevail, and placed in our own schools, where the word of God is made the foundation of education. If ever we are to work in earnest, it is now. The enemy is pressing in on all sides, like a flood. Only the power of God can save our children from being swept away by the tide of evil. The responsibility resting upon parents, teachers, and church members, to do their part in co-operation with God, is greater than words can express. To train the young to become true soldiers of the Lord Jesus Christ is the most noble work ever given to man.” (CT p.166)



**By Trevor Schlisner**  
NNEC Youth & Young Adult Director



# Created in the “Image of God”

## Art Clinic 2026

Pine Tree Academy hosted the Northern New England Conference Art Clinic, Jan. 19-31, for 140 students, staff and chaperones. There were opportunities for the students to take 2 art classes from the list of artistic technics and mediums which included: Acrylics, Watercolors, Woodworking, Pencil Drawing, Culinary Arts, Audio /Visual Operation, Costume Design, Embroidery-Felt Applique, Visual Presentation, Set Design, Clay Sculpture, Dress Design, Furniture Making.

The Conference Youth Director, Trevor Schliesner, shared devotionals each morning about the life of Desmond Doss. A critical experience that shaped

Desmond’s life occurred, when as a young boy he became enthralled by a picture of the Ten Commandments in his home. This artwork and experiences in his home inspired Desmond to commit his life to Christ and determine to keep His Ten Commandments, including the fourth commandment to keep the Lord’s Sabbath and the sixth commandment not to kill another human being. Desmond’s devotion to Christ and love for his fellow man motivated him to rescue over seventy fellow soldiers during the bloody battle of Okinawa during World War Two. His efforts and faith in God earned him the nations highest military honor the Medal of Honor, which was awarded to him by President Harry Truman.

The Visual Arts, Costume and Set Design classes portrayed the life of Desmond Doss and how he reflected the image of God through his words and actions. The Art Clinic was a success because it demonstrated the beauty of our God and His image in His children.



The Visual Presentation students



By Mark Bugbee  
NNEC Education Superintendent  
(excerpts from his original in the Gleaner)



*Art Show Entry*  
Name: Zakhar P.  
Grade: 11  
School: ZFB  
Instructor: Donna Niewinski  
Class: Cabaret



*Art Show Entry*  
Name: Sarah  
Grade: 10  
School: ZFB  
Instructor: Sherry Niewinski  
Class: Cabaret



# Space Rescue

## Vacation Bible School in Newport, Vermont

During the week of August 10-15, 2025, Newport Seventh-day Adventist Church held its first Vacation Bible School. Sixteen children with four from the community attended and members from Morrisville SDA Church helped their sister church make it an incredible experience.

The main Bible talks were led by Mayika Jean and Yaneiri Baez, with Jerry Jean joining on Thursday. Together they taught the children about the fall of Satan and his angels, the creation of earth, the fall of Adam and Eve into sin, how Jesus came to live and die for our salvation, and on the final night, the wonderful promise that Jesus will come back to take us to heaven.

The children learned fascinating facts about outer space with Valerie Sully who created beautiful crafts with Kaitlyn Thomas. They also learned about God and His Ten Commandments with Space Commander Monique Thompson.

Outdoor games were coordinated by several teen volunteers. Delicious snacks were prepared by Camellia Morrison, Mayika Jean, and her girls Arianna and Melody Jean. Marica Plummer put together a beautiful balloon arch that welcomed the children. Jara Stewart took photos each night. Pastor Josias Baez-Roman and Jerry Jean lent a hand wherever it was needed, as did several others during the VBS.

Zac Thomas, designed the t-shirt logos and signs

placed around Newport. Jim Warman, worked behind the scenes with set design and hanging up decorations. Jerry Jean played the piano each night, and Camellia Morrison led the children in song with energy and joy.

On Friday during setup and again on Thursday during VBS, we were joined by folks from Mt. Mansfield Media. They interviewed several of our team members and filmed activities for a documentary they're creating that will highlight what our church is doing for our community here in Vermont.

Valerie Sully and her elementary aged school children, Michelle Warman, and Miyanda Potter painted many of the large art pieces and gave countless hours to prepare the space program, making it welcoming for the kids. It was an incredible week filled with learning, fun, and the love of Christ.

**By Kaitlyn Thomas,**  
Newport Children's Ministry's Co-head  
& **Michelle Warman,**  
Newport Prayer Coordinator

More VBS Pics...





## Men's Ministry

2026 is going to be a banner year for men's ministry here in the Northern New England Conference! And you are invited and encouraged to take part in the many blessings!

Each month on the last Sabbath of the month we are holding a virtual Men's Ministry Power Hour from 7AM-8AM! This is held on Zoom, and is open to all men. Each month a pastor from our conference will lead off in the devotion and discussion. To attend the Power Hour, log on to Zoom, the meeting ID is 207 590 8891, and the passcode is 1844. Remember please this is only on the last Sabbath of the month, we will start promptly at 7AM and end on time at 8AM!

We are replacing the traditional spring rallies this year with men's ministry prayer breakfasts! We will ask local churches to hold a men's prayer breakfast in which I will attend and lead off in devotion, open discussions, and prayer! I will be reaching out to each church, praying that they will host a prayer breakfast. My goal is to hold at least one prayer breakfast per month and to conduct these year-round, and that every church will participate!

We will once again have a presence at Camp Meeting in June. More details to follow!

And of course, our annual men's retreat at Camp Lawroweld. The dates this year are August 28-30!

You can take advantage of the special price for registration this year. Due to generous donations, we are able to roll back our registration fee to only \$50 per man! Check it out, we are by far the lowest cost of any retreat! I encourage all men to join us; you won't want to miss this!

If you need help financially to attend the retreat, please contact me at 207.590.8891! I will not allow money to interfere in a man attending our retreat! It's more important for you to be there!

I would love to visit your church on a Sabbath and share a message. Please reach out to me to schedule which Sabbath you need a guest speaker!

God bless, and I'm praying to reach all the men of our beloved conference with this ministry for them!



**By Doug Berrill**  
NNEC Men's Ministry Director



## “I was in prison and you came to Me”—Jesus

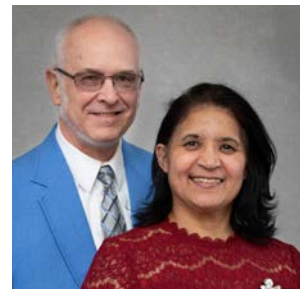
One day we will hear the Savior say: “I was in prison and you came to Me.... Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me” (Matthew 25:36, 40, NKJV). Isn’t it remarkable that Jesus Himself chose to highlight the importance of visiting Him in prison by our ministry to souls who desperately need to hear of His heart of compassion and love for them?

What a joy it is to see the hope reawakening in the eyes of an inmate! They are experiencing guilt and shame, some often wondering if God could ever forgive them; they are anxious and uncertain about their future; they are worried for the welfare of family whom they cannot support or care for while behind bars; some desperately want to change and to break the chains that hold them in bondage, but do not know how. Several times we have been told by an inmate that they had prayed for God to show up, and then, seconds later or the next morning the guard gives an open invitation for whoever would like to visit with the pastors. One Sabbath afternoon the sergeant called us in to the facility to come and minister to an inmate who was uncontrollable. We recognized demon possession and after about a 45-minute conversation and prayer this precious man was calm, relaxed and held a meaningful conversation about the Bible. It turns out he had visited one

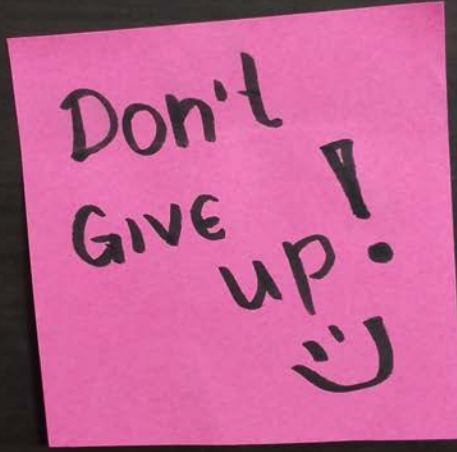
of our churches in the district and shared about the loving care he had received there. What awe-inspiring divine appointments!

In the territory of the Northern New England Conference, we have about 49 jails and correctional facilities: Maine (25); New Hampshire (17); Vermont (7). Prison ministry is a privileged work – and the privilege is ours. Wouldn’t you like to hear “Well done, thou good and faithful servant” one day? “The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore, pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest” (Luke 10:2, NKJV).

If you are doing prison or jail ministry, please let us know who you are, the ministry you are doing and how the Prison Ministries Department of the Northern New England Conference can support you. If you are interested in becoming involved in prison or jail ministry, let us know who you are and where you would like to minister. Our contact email is [pastors@mathers-in-ministry.org](mailto:pastors@mathers-in-ministry.org).



**By Pastors Judy and Arnet Mathers**  
NNEC Prison Ministries Directors



## Don't Give Up!

“Don’t give up!”, I heard her say  
Before she turned to walk away.  
I’d hoped she might have time to stay,  
But that was not the case today.  
Too much to do, I guess she had.  
So there I was just feeling sad  
That she had gone, but what she said  
Kept repeating in my head:  
“Don’t give up!” That’s what I’d heard.  
I contemplated every word  
In this simple admonition.  
I found myself in a position  
Of choosing to give up or not,  
And honestly I’d had the thought  
Of giving up, of simply quitting,  
Like a batter never hitting  
The ball when pitched, but now I thought  
Something new. Perhaps I ought  
To give it all another try,  
Another way, perhaps, than I  
Had tried before. “I’ll think this through”  
I told myself. Yes, something new,  
A simple change perhaps is all  
I need. I could recall  
With ease the ways I’d tried before,  
Which didn’t work. Yet one try more  
May be the answer to my need.

Courage, like a dormant seed,  
Can sprout when least expected, so  
I then determined I would go  
Back to work and try again,  
A different way, since now and then,  
Great success may just appear  
In spite of failure, fault, or fear.  
“Don’t give up!”, she’d said to me.  
Those simple words turned out to be  
Exactly what I needed more  
Than anything. It’s like a door  
Of opportunity began  
To open up. A whole new plan  
Came to light. Should it seem odd  
That then I paused and “Thank you, God”  
Escaped right from my lips without  
A single hint of lingering doubt?  
This may sound strange, and yet it’s true:  
I figured out just what to do -  
A new approach, a whole new vision  
Came to mind. A new decision  
Was made by me right then and there.  
Which gave me energy to dare  
To venture forth without delay.  
Her “Don’t give up!” had saved the day!

**By Gary Fellows**



# Adventure Awaits!

## AT CAMP LAWROWELD

- JUNIOR CAMP - June 28-July 5
- TEEN CAMP - July 5-July 12



[camplawroweld.org](http://camplawroweld.org)

