

May/June 2020

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CAMP 2045 AD

KIDS CAMP

JULY 6-10

TEEN CAMP

JULY 13-17

\$250

BEFORE JUNE 22

\$300

AFTER JUNE 22

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Superintendent Dennis Marquardt

**“Your Potential is
Our Mission!”**

FOCUS PLEASE!

We have traveled through an unprecedented time in our nation. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way we see everything. The gloom that some people feel is based on fear of the disease and fear of death. How we view this event will have a deep impact on how we view life, including ministry. We can see all the setbacks that this creates for us, or see in this time new opportunities. How we see things determines how we will act.

“Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eyes are good, your whole body also is full of light. But when they are bad, your body also is full of darkness. See to it, then, that the light within you is not darkness. Therefore, if your whole body is full of light, and no part of it dark, it will be completely lighted, as when the light of a lamp shines on you.” (Luke 11:34-36)

These verses must be understood within the context of the culture of Jesus’ day. The ancients believed that the ability to see light determined a person’s health, both physically and mentally. This is why blindness was considered such a serious issue. It indicated more than just a health issue; it also indicated that the person was probably corrupt spiritually and mentally because they were unable to be affected by light. While Jesus is not supporting that particular view, He is saying that in the spiritual sense the ability for us to see correctly will deeply affect our true view of spiritual things, whether our view of life is one of “light” or one of “darkness.” The way we focus or view things affects everything about us: our attitudes, our view of ministry, our view of self, our view of others, even our effectiveness.

You may have met a pastor who always has something to gripe about, who never has anything good to say about his own ministry or that of others. This person has a “dark” view because they have chosen to focus on the negative things of life. Focus is an important element of life. When Moses was at the burning bush he asked the wrong question when God called him. He asked God, “*Who am I?*” The right question was “*Who are you Lord?*” The wrong question created doubt, an unwillingness to go, doubt about his abilities, and too much focus on self. The right focus or question would have seen a God of great abilities and would have changed the focus completely. Indeed, God changed the focus for Moses by asserting, “*I will go with you.*” It wasn’t about Moses; it was about God.

You can trace every problem the disciples had with their focus or perspective. When they failed to see things properly they acted improperly. Following the crucifixion, the disciples were in mourning and hiding. They were filled with darkness because their spiritual eyes were not open. Even when the women returned from the tomb and said that Jesus was raised they thought the women were crazy. This is what Jesus was talking about with the eye and lamp image.

The Pharisees also failed to see things properly. Jesus did not fit their image of what they expected of the Messiah, so they acted improperly toward Him.

Saul of Tarsus did the same thing until the brightest light struck him down and revealed Christ to him and his behavior changed dramatically. Why? Because his focus changed. Ironically, he experienced real blindness for a short time, and then received his sight back supernaturally. With this physical sight he received far more than just physical sight, for he now had a light that penetrated his entire being.

People who have their eyes closed cannot see what you want them to see no matter how much evidence you provide. You cannot change a bitter Christian no matter how much great evidence you provide if they are unwilling to open their eyes. The same is true with us. What about our own focus? Are we more focused on what others are doing or what they think than what God wants or thinks? Are we jealous when others succeed rather than rejoice? What are we focused on? Do we have a kingdom mentality or just a regional concern? All of these are good questions to ask ourselves to check our own focus. Jesus’ comments about the whole body being whole if the eye is good, is still valid. In spite of this pandemic we are experiencing, what opportunities do we have to preach the “Good News” (Gospel)? If we are looking for God’s opportunities, we will discover great ways to serve God and serve others. How do things look to you?



Secretary/Treasurer

Ed Shearer

LOCKDOWN

I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart and, whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus. (Philippians 1:3-8)

The last few weeks have been interesting to say the least. A virus outbreak overseas a few months ago has led to an almost complete shutdown of most of the in person interactions for a month and most likely by the time you are reading this it will still be continuing in some fashion. The world as we know it has changed, and some of those changes may be with us for a long time. As I am writing this, there is talk about relaxing some of the most stringent rules and beginning to move towards the opening of society again. I would just like to share a couple of important things for the church (you, the body) to remember as we go forward.

First, no matter what happens, God was not taken by surprise. Sickness and disease has been a part of the world since sin entered the scene. Although the Book of Romans said that sin entered the world through one man Adam, sin was in creation before that. Satan, the deceiver, did not start his rebellion in the Garden of Eden. He had first rebelled in heaven, taking a third of the angels with him. It is his rebellion and enticement for others to follow his path that has changed a perfect creation into a place where toil, disease, drought, famine, hatred, greed, and death are part of the equation. We may have forgotten what it was like to live in a world where diseases were rampant, where there was no warning for natural disasters, where to be alive at the end of a day was a blessing, but our security in these areas has only been a recently occurring reality. Throughout the millennia, pandemics have come and gone, many much worse than this current one. There have been world destroying floods, disease outbreaks that spanned centuries, cataclysmic wars, and in every situation, the Creator was there to bring peace, calm fear, and walk with us even through the Valley of the Shadow of Death with a promise of a future with no pain, disease, or death.

Second, do not forsake your local assembly. Once groups of believers could not meet en masse, many churches needed to develop a new paradigm for their church services. You may be enjoying being able to see your pastor from the comfort of your home. Maybe you have started to watch other pastors and church presentations. For some churches they have had people viewing that never had or maybe never would enter their church building. The availability of tools to make their church available remotely has been a great help to many pastors. But we need to be careful not to think that now would be a good time to just forget about gathering at all. As restrictions begin to lift, we can find ourselves saying, "I don't need to gather together, I like just tuning in." Involvement can begin to slip, and the cohesiveness of the body starts to disintegrate.

While we are on the subject of participation, please remain faithful in your giving as well. There are some who may think that since the church isn't meeting in the building the expenses have miraculously been reduced to zero. Or that now we aren't meeting together, pastor is just sitting around with nothing to do. Actually, both of those thoughts are incorrect. Truthfully, the expenses for the mortgage or utilities have most likely not gone down that much, and pastors still are preparing sermons, teachings, and learning a whole new way to deliver them. They are spending more time trying to stay in contact with their parishioners, and deploying ways to stay spiritually healthy through this time.

Finally, find ways to keep community. Many churches have been deeply involved in reaching their communities through service even when they haven't been able to meet. As we start to come back together, don't lose that servant attitude. The body of Christ finds ways to stay in touch, to communicate with one other, to work together to meet needs. There are those in your church community who will be feeling the effects of the shutdown well after the mandates are loosening. Gather around them to support them. Don't let social distancing give you an excuse to put up a spiritual barrier to others. Just because you are limiting physical contact, doesn't mean you have to limit spiritual contact. Paul's letters are great examples of this. Obviously, he wasn't social distancing because of a plague, but the reason for those epistles was that he wasn't physically able to be there at that moment. Yet in every letter, you could tell that Paul was present with them in his spirit. The churches and people were constantly on his mind and in his prayers. We can be the same way. Calls, video chats, an email or text; these are all ways we can continue to stay close as the church body as we look forward to the time we come together again. Let's be like Paul, *"It is right for me to feel this way about you, since I have you in my heart..."*

Our classes in June will be online, so sign up today. And don't forget the new school year in September.

DISTRICT SCHOOL OF MINISTRY

DSOM is a District sponsored and operated ministerial training program that allows individuals to complete the educational requirements necessary for obtaining credentials in the Assemblies of God.

The school was designed to help those who have not completed a formal education at a bible college or seminary. It also provides an avenue for lay leaders to prepare for effective ministry in their local church.

Each course combines home study, and a day of classroom instruction, and interaction with other students and their instructor to enhance the student's educational experience.

The experience also requires active involvement in ministry through an internship at each level of study.

You can check out all the details at:

nedaog.org/districtschool/

This spring there are classes in April, May, and June, and the new school year starts in September with certified, license, and ordained level courses. So whether you are just interested in a course or two, or you need to work towards meeting all the educational requirements as you pursue credentials, we would love to see you at DSOM.



Church Development

Dan Abbatiello

THE VALUE OF COMMUNITY

If nothing else this recent corona virus pandemic has caused me to take a look at something I have, at least in part, taken for granted. At times it seems we have to lose something before we truly appreciate what we had. Not being able to assemble for church, having church activities being considered “non-essential,” schools being closed, some having to self-quarantine, people wearing masks and the mandate for social distancing has caused me to appreciate the value of community a bit more. Although I have grown to appreciate the electronic advances and what the internet affords, I miss face to face personal contact. Without personal human contact, I think anointing with oil and the laying on of hands would, shall we say, take on new meaning.

The good news is that this corona situation will not last forever. However, the “experts” are saying that the corona virus pandemic will create a new normal; things will in some way or another be changed forever. If that is true, there is one thing that I hope changes. I hope there will arise a new appreciation for community – authentic Christian community. Acts 2 says *that they devoted themselves to fellowship...and all who believed were together... in the temple and from house to house.* (Acts 2:42-46) The writer of Hebrews states, “...and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as it is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.” (Hebrews 10:24-25)

I would like to offer a reminder of the value of community by recommending two books. The first is **Feels Like Home** by Lee Eclov and the second is **Pursuing God’s Will Together** by Ruth Haley Barton. Read together, these two well-written volumes will be an insightful look into the importance and benefit of community life in the church.

The fact is, we live in what can be considered the most consumer-driven and individualistic culture on the planet. These two realities militate against true Christian community. Unfortunately, too often the church world falls prey to these cultural pressures and equates programmatic participation with authentic Christian community. Both Eclov and Barton believe that Christian community must reach beyond transactional consumerism. We must form communities that enable us to be transformed into the image of Christ. Barton says,

*People can come together in unity around many things; they can participate together in a variety of causes. What makes a community distinctly spiritual is that we gather around the presence of Christ, mediated by the Holy Spirit. **We are unified by our commitment to be transformed in Christ’s presence through the work of the Holy Spirit** so we can discern and do the will of God as we are guided by the Spirit. (page 77)*

Eclov says something similar but in the context of the church being a family – a community of care for one another. Eclov writes,

The family members are the primary concern in a healthy home. So it is in the church. It sounds nearly heretical to say so, but the lost are not our first concern as church leaders nor as church members. Our first responsibility is to God’s household. Peter told the elders, ‘Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care’ (1 Peter 5:2) ... (then) When the church family matures in Christlike qualities we naturally develop Christlike concern for the lost. A healthy church family creates a kind of gravitational pull toward the gospel. (Page 24 & 26)

I believe that every believer desires to experience transformational Christian community in the context of a healthy church family. I also believe that unbelievers long for this as well and will be attracted to it like moths to a flame. To me, transformational Christian community is a “pearl of great price” we must not neglect or substitute for anything less.

ACTS 2 JOURNEY

Hello Pastors!

I trust you all are fairing well in spite of the ongoing corona lockdown. We all know that this lockdown will not go on forever. Therefore, I wanted to get ahead of the game by extending an invitation to jump in on our next **ACTS 2 JOURNEY** cohort. Churches in almost every district all across the country are participating and seeing great results. The pastors and church teams in our first district cohort have already seen significant benefit and we are only half way through cohort 1.

I would love to start another cohort as soon as we are allowed to get together once again. The ACTS 2 JOURNEY consists of 4 weekend retreats over the course of a year set about 3 months apart. Friday night is designed for pastor and spouse and Saturday is for pastor, spouse and the church health team. You can go the ACTS 2 Journey website for more information:

<https://acts2journey.com/>

This invitation is to assess interest. If you are interested in embarking on the journey please let me know. You can contact me by emailing me at dabbatiello@maine.rr.com, or calling my cell, (207) 653-1314. You can email, call, text or send a carrier pigeon - just let me know. Pastor Ed and I would love to have you take this journey with us.

2020 FALL RETREAT



Arise

Grand Summit Hotel &
Conference Center
Newry, Maine

October 15-17



Main Session Speaker:
Dr. Melissa Alfaro

AMAZING WORSHIP

POWERFUL MAIN SESSIONS

GREAT BREAKOUT SESSIONS

LATE NIGHT YOUTH PARTY

ACTIVITIES FOR NIGHT OWLS
AND EARLY BIRDS

Watch the
Promo Video!



Attention Ladies!

I have wonderful news for you! I am so excited to announce that we have video of the RWRL Spring Conference online for you to view! Just go to our website, www.RealWomenRealLife.net and click on the button right on top of the page.

I hope you will put time aside to watch and enter in - sing along and enter into His presence. Michelle Gagne did a wonderful job ministering to us all. She is a dynamic speaker!

Well girls, let's use technology! You can watch our Spring Conference individually and maybe once again when you start meeting together as a group. Remember, you don't have to travel 2 or 3 hours for this year's conference and there's no registration fee. Be cozy & comfy in your PJs while viewing! Thank you for taking time to watch and share with your friends and neighbors!

Our hashtag is **#RWRLSpringConference2020**. Please send pictures of you watching the Spring Conference!!!!

FRIDAY AFTERNOON ACTIVITIES



BEVIE JO MARQUARDT
RWRL DIRECTOR & EVENT HOSTESS



Registration & Information:
www.RealWomenRealLife.net

NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND DISTRICT ASSEMBLIES OF GOD

The NNED News is going digital!

Beginning with the **July/August** issue of the NNED News, we will be transitioning to a digital format that can be viewed or downloaded from our website. Instead of mailing the News to your mailbox, we will send you an email letting you know that the new issue of the News is available to view. You'll still get the same great content and information. It will just be in a new delivery system!

What do you need to do to make sure you don't miss a single issue?

Go to nedaog.org and provide us with your email address to start receiving the News electronically.

If you would like to continue receiving the NNED News by mail, please send a request along with your current address to:
NNED AG, Attn: NNED News, 501 Riverside St., Portland, ME 04103-1034.

SUBSCRIPTION IS FREE UPON REQUEST

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