



THE NED CONNECTION

NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTHEASTERN DISTRICT C & MA

BLOCKED, SUFFOCATED, AND DRAINED BY PHRAGMITES

David B. Linn, Superintendent

In my role as district superintendent I spend a lot of time rolling down the road, and often that includes the New York State Thruway. Some years ago I noticed a little fringe of six-foot reedy plants on the side of the road with tassels, particularly in marshy areas. As the years went by, I began to see more and more of these plants growing into substantial stands on the side of the road. At this point, the plants are no longer just on the side of the road, they are taking over entire large fields, crowding out the other plants, and are beginning to invade the immense Montezuma Wildlife Refuge. From the Thruway you used to be able to see a stunning 10-foot statue of a spread eagle there. Not anymore. The view is blocked by the reeds. A law firm with a very expensive building and signage near the Thruway is now almost completely behind the wall of invading plants.

The reeds called phragmites (aka “common reed”) grow very tightly together. They propagate horizontally and by copious seeds from their silky tassels. The stands kill off almost every other plant, cutting off crucial food supply for many animals. They are thick enough to block the path of wildlife and so restrict movement. And they grow so vigorously that they drain the land of nutrients. In short, this invasive species blocks, suffocates, and drains the biome wherever they grow. And they are spreading like wildfire.

This is a good picture of what Jesus was driving at when he spoke these somewhat confusing words: **“The eye is the lamp of your body; when your eye is clear, your whole body also is full of light; but when it is bad, your body also is full of darkness”** (Luke 11:34 NASB). I would explain it in context this way: Jesus is the light. His revelation hits your eye. If your eye is good, the light comes through to your inner self and the eye seems like the source. But it is actually the Light of the World coming through to you.

So what makes a good or bad eye? It’s up to you and me by the decisions we make to receive or reject the light of Jesus. Jesus spoke these words to Jewish leaders who knew about all of his miracles, rejected what they meant, and demanded a **“sign from heaven”**—which Jesus was not willing to give. They had bad eyes and so no light within them. Good eyes are in people who openly receive Jesus and his precious word, shedding his light throughout their entire persons.

The piercing application to me personally was to do a self-examination by the Holy Spirit to see if I was permitting unspiritual attitudes and decisions to block out, suffocate, or drain some of the light of Jesus from my life. And the phragmites taught me that areas where I may not be as open to Jesus as I should can expand through increasing spiritual dullness. Yikes! That’s a scary thought, and a road down which I do not want to go. Ever.

An example might be a hidden bad attitude toward some person or group which blocks the grace Jesus wants me to deliver. Or a private entertainment of some ungodliness from the world system which suffocates godly intentions. Or an unwillingness to reach out to someone in need because it will be inconvenient and ultimately costly. Or a desire for some thing or experience which may not be evil in itself but is a distraction from my walk which drains my attention to no good purpose.

Make your own applications. Ferret out the things which block, suffocate, and drain the new life within you! It is the word of God and the Holy Spirit which bring self-understanding of these things. I hate the phragmites on the Thruway, but I hate the junk in my life even more.





NED NOTICES



OPEN CHURCHES

SENIOR/LEAD PASTORS

- ⇒ Macedon, NY
- ⇒ Ohio, NY
- ⇒ Schodack, NY
- ⇒ Sidney, NY
- ⇒ Syracuse, NY
- ⇒ Tonawanda, NY

STAFF POSITIONS

- ⇒ Greece, NY (Worship Leader)
- ⇒ Corning, NY -Beartown Road
(Dir. of Student Ministries)
- ⇒ Rome (Associate Pastor)
- ⇒ Rome (Dir. Communications/Connections)
- ⇒ South Glens Falls - Pine Knolls Alliance
(Discipleship Pastor)

GREAT COMMISSION FUND

2025 giving to the Great Commission Fund
from our District churches of \$1,031,318 is 106.1%
compared to this time in 2024!

MINISTRY TRANSFER

Timothée Bateman (Sheralyn)

Pastor

Colonie Alliance Church

Colonie, NY

Autumn

Let the fields be jubilant, and
everything in them; let all the trees
of the forest sing for joy. *Psalms 96:12*





REACH HURTING KIDS
INSTITUTE

Trauma Informed Children & Youth Ministry Workshop

We invite you and your team to join us
as we acquire insights and practical
strategies to support the students facing
trauma challenges
in our ministries.

We will be across the state this fall for regional training days.
Check the details below to register for a workshop.

Date: Saturday, September 20th

Time: 9am-3:30pm

Location: Frewsburg Alliance
Church
60 Falconer St Frewsburg

Cost: \$10/person includes lunch



Date: Saturday, October 4th

Time: 9am-4pm

Location: Lockport Alliance
Church
555 Davison Rd Lockport

Cost: \$10/person includes lunch



Date: Saturday, October 25th

Time: 9am-3:30pm

Location: Delhi Alliance Church
16178 NY-28 Delhi

Cost: None, lunch provided



For questions or more information, please contact Jen Veitch at jveitchkidzmin@gmail.com
or by text/call at 518-932-5399.

Fostering a Positive Ministry Environment The Foundation of Well-Functioning Teams

By Terri Groh, Northeastern District Alliance Women's Director

Ministry leadership is a God-given calling that extends far beyond the logistics of planning events, organizing programs, or managing volunteers. At its heart, ministry is about people: nurturing their gifts, recognizing their contributions, and walking alongside them as they grow in faith and service.

One of the most profound ways to fulfill this calling is by becoming a leader who actively seeks out what your team is doing right, celebrates those strengths, and gently guides team members through their areas of struggle—with dignity and compassion. A ministry team that feels seen, valued, and supported will not only serve more effectively, but will become a beacon of Christ's love to the wider community.

When leaders focus on strengths and approach weaknesses with compassion, they cultivate discipleship in its truest form—walking together, bearing one another's burdens, and rejoicing in each step of growth. In my own ministry, I have found that approaching people with the mindset of encouraging them and celebrating their strengths goes much further than focusing on their weaknesses.

As you lead, remember that the most enduring legacy you leave will not be the size of your church, the programs you run or the events you organize, but the people you nurture. Let your leadership be marked by encouragement, gentle honesty, and the unwavering belief that every member has something vital to offer.

Questions for Reflection: The Foundation of Well-Functioning Teams

1. Are you intentional about building up and celebrating the strengths of others or are you quick to point out their mistakes?
2. What specific activities do you do to help your team feel noticed and valued?



Encouraging Corporate Worship: Part 2

How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

Romans 10: 14,17 (ESV)



*Melanie Thornton
Northeastern District*

While working for several years with the Deaf community, I quickly learned that effective communication is not something to be taken for granted. In order to be effective, I had to learn new skills and practice them. I had to take time to prepare for my meetings and use lots of creativity to be sure my message was “heard” and understood by the people I was communicating with.

As church leaders, we have a dual task of carefully and accurately interpreting the message of God while effectively communicating it to people who desperately need to hear it. As Paul states in Romans 10, preaching the word of Christ is essential for building faith. Good preaching is indeed an art in itself – a skill to be polished and carefully crafted. Hours of time and effort are poured into preparation to be sure the concepts, scripture passage, and application are heard and understood by the listener. As the center of the worship service, this is exactly how it should be.

But often, other elements of the worship service are not as carefully crafted and planned. We live in an era where entire worship services can be purchased pre-packaged and ready for consumption- just download and press play. The modern church is trending towards an entertainment model of “worship”. Church is becoming a spectator sport, and attendance is based solely on whether people feel they saw a good show. Congregants go home and post reviews of their local church online the same way they would at a restaurant or hotel. Church leadership is feeling the pressure to “perform” or risk losing numbers. All of this is telling evidence that the message – God’s message- isn’t being “heard” in the midst of all the noise.

How can we build our worship services around the centerpiece of the preaching of the Word? How can we invite people into a life-transforming experience with the living God? Well, as the most complete, unique, and full form in which God communicated to humanity, we look to Jesus. Whenever Jesus wanted to communicate something important to his followers, He invited them into an experience. An experience that spoke to the person as a whole and engaged every sense. After an encounter like that, the word of Christ was “heard” loud and clear. Lives were changed forever.

Attempts at more effective communication on the part of churches tend to be primarily visually oriented. The incorporation of more visuals (video, imagery) can be a very effective means of communication and attempts at multi-sensory worship usually mean investing significantly in sound system and screen upgrades. This is a great starting point, but true multi-sensory worship engages more than sight and sound. It’s an experience that engages the worshipper to participate and interact with the message, and when “heard”, will take root and grow the faith that will strengthen and revitalize the Body of Christ.

When planning a worship service, take time to prepare and plan for effective communication of the message. What are some ways to engage sight, sound, touch, smell and taste into the worship service as a whole? How can the worshippers be fully engaged and interact with each other and with the concepts of the message itself from the time they walk in to the time they walk out? Planning and preparing for a life-transforming experience with the living God is well worth the time, effort, and teamwork required to faithfully present the word of Christ. A sacrifice of praise requires just that- a sacrifice of time, effort, energy, and even resources - but when fueled by the power of the Holy Spirit, the message of love, forgiveness, and resurrection has the power to change the world if truly “heard.”

Save the Date

NORTHEASTERN DISTRICT ALLIANCE MISSIONS SUMMIT

SYRACUSE ALLIANCE CHURCH – OCTOBER 18, 2025

Join us for a powerful day of inspiration, collaboration, and mobilization.

At the *NED Alliance Missions Summit*, we'll gather pastors, missions' leaders, church members, and Alliance family from across our district to focus on what it means to *cultivate a sending culture*. Through compelling sessions, real stories, and practical tools, you'll be challenged and equipped to join God's mission – locally and globally.

What can you expect at the NED Alliance Missions Summit 2025?

- ◇ **Why develop a sending culture?** Discover the biblical foundation for sending workers and be inspired by The Alliance's rich legacy of gospel impact – locally and globally.
- ◇ **How do we create a sending culture?** Explore actionable strategies to help your church nurture environments where people of all ages can hear, discern, and respond to God's call locally and globally.
- ◇ **What now?** Engage in collaborative conversations with national office leaders, district leaders, and fellow church leaders as we dream, plan, and strategize together to reach our neighborhoods and the nations.

**Mark your calendars now – and stay tuned
for registration and speaker details!**



THE ALLIANCE

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Explore actionable strategies to help your church nurture environments where people of all ages can hear, discern, and respond to God's call locally and globally.

What now?

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New This Year – Emerging Leaders Track

The District Missions Committee (DMC) is excited to introduce the *Emerging Leaders Track* at this year's Summit – designed specifically for students ages 14 to 22. This new track invites high school seniors and college students to explore God's call to serve – whether across the street or around the world. Breakout sessions will be tailored to engage, challenge, and inspire young leaders as they consider their next steps in being on mission.

Registration Open

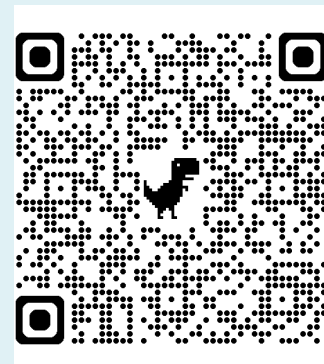
Use the **QR Code** to secure your spot. You may purchase multiple registrations at once. For each ticket, you will be prompted to provide the registration details for the individual attending.

Together, we can make a difference. See you at the Summit!

David M. Murphy

Church Advance Specialist/Missions Mobilizer

The Northeastern District of the C&MA, Inc.



TRAINING GROUND

» **SAVE ^{THE} DATE** «
January 30-31, 2026



Keynote Speaker: Jeff Vanderstelt
Discipleship...*Diving Deep*

Key Leader Intensive

Friday, January 30
1:00-5:00

*This is designed for
official workers &
spouses!*

Training Ground

Saturday, January 31
9:00-4:00

TG '26 will be held in
the Buffalo area!

Youth Track focus: Maximizing student contributions
Kids Track focus: Connecting the Alpha generation with Jesus

Sponsored by Northeastern District of CM&A

NED RESOURCES BULLETIN BOARD

Calendar

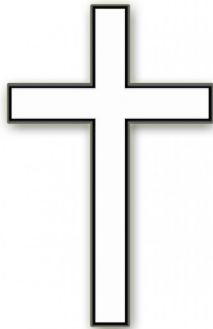
NED Connection Articles
for the November edition are
due by October 20, 2025.
office@nedcma.org

Membership Certificates
Please contact the
District Office at
315-336-4720 Ext. 201
or office@nedcma.org
to request church
membership certificates.

District Prayer Chain
Lorraine Regnier
District Prayer Coordinator
Prayer requests will be distributed
throughout the Northeastern District
family by contacting Lorraine directly
at lorregnier@aol.com
or 518 - 847 - 4323 .

NED Office Hours

Monday-Friday
8:30 AM - 4:30 PM



NORTHEASTERN
DISTRICT C&MA
UPSTATE NEW YORK

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The NED Web
nedcma.org

October

7	9:30 am - Credentialing Council @ D.O.
18	9 am - NED Alliance Missions Summit @ Syracuse Alliance
20	NED Connection articles due
25	9 am - Trauma Workshop (Child/ Youth) @ Delhi Alliance
28	District In-Service @ D.O.
30	9 am - Missions Comm. Zoom

November

1	8:30 am - Alliance Peacemaking Level 1 Training @ Owego
20	NED Connection Articles Due
27-28	THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY— D.O. Closed

