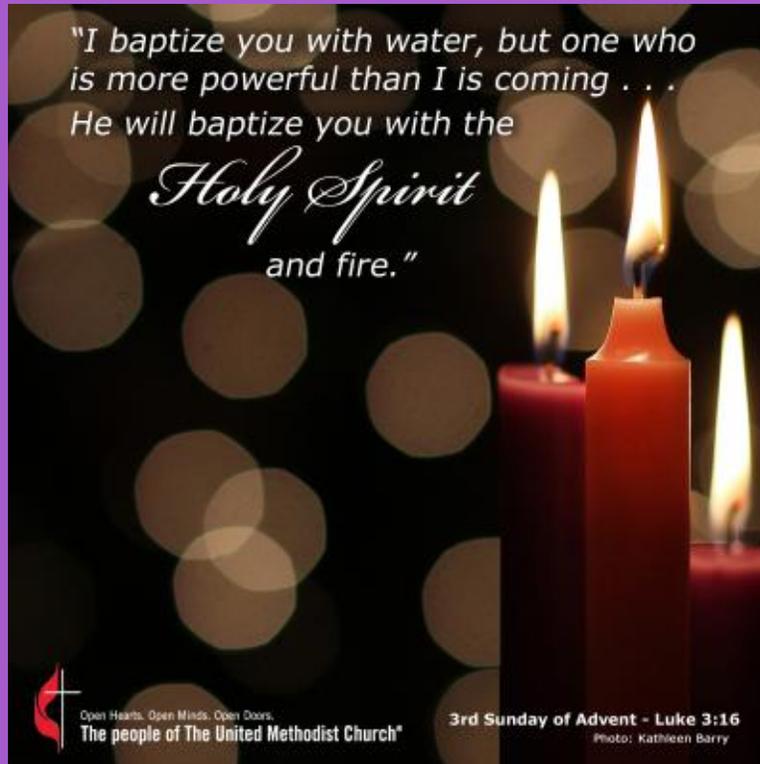


You may [unsubscribe](#) if you no longer wish to receive our emails.



JOYS & CONCERNS

Please include these prayer requests in your weekly church bulletin, in your prayers during your Sunday worship if you have a time of "pastoral prayer" and keep these pastors, their families and the Church families in your prayers throughout the week.

December 16

The **Centerville** Church. **Robert Schooley**, his wife Karen and their family.

December 23

The **Charlotte Center & Pleasant Valley** churches. **Chuck Wittenbrook**, his wife Kelly and their family.

December 30

The **Cherry Creek** Church. **Pastor John Dedloff**, his wife Liz and their family.

We pray for healing and returning strength to **Pastor John Arter Jackson**, who had triple bypass surgery on Friday, December 7, at UPMC Hamot Medical Center in Erie. John expects to be recuperating at home by the end of this week. If you'd like to send John a card, please send it to him at PO Box 52, Chautauqua, NY, 14722. He and Juanita appreciate your prayers!

Congratulations to **John Dedloff** (Cherry Creek UMC) on being licensed

as a local pastor! We pray that he and Liz continue to be blessed in their ministry.

As we move closer to the special session of **General Conference February 23-26, 2019**, we invite everyone to pray and ask for God's guidance. If there is ever a place where we can be one, it's in the space where we meet God.

Also be in prayer for **all** who are in need of physical healing, burdened by stress, living with grief, and more.

NEW - Give An Invaluable Gift - It's Absolutely Free!

You're not the only one who is super busy and stressed out this Advent Season. Chances are your Pastor is too--with extra worship services and perceived pressure to minister to the higher than usual volume of worshippers in church at Christmastime. Be a gift to your pastor today and throughout the year by lifting her or him in prayer!

[Click here for suggestions.](#)

PLEASE NOTE - Ministry Shares Deadline

The deadline date for 2018 Ministry Share payments will be **Tuesday, January 8, 2019**. After that date, any payments received for 2018 will be reflected in 2019 listed as Prior Year Ministry Share Payments on your monthly statement.

Many Thanks for Your Support!

On behalf of the Cornerstone District, "thank you" to **Bob Ebert** at Ripley United Methodist Church for serving as our District's point person for the Shoe Boxes for Red Bird Mission project.



Thanks also to the churches in our District who participated in this effort: Christ First, East Randolph, Napoli, North Harmony and Ripley. A special thank you to Joe and Kelly Osborne's (North Harmony) daughter, Sarah, who with her Alpha Sigma sisters at Delaware Valley University in Doylestown, PA, contributed 35 shoe boxes and to Linda from East Randolph who collected items from her senior living facility in Fredonia.

Holiday Schedule

The Cornerstone District Office will be closed for the Christmas and New Year's holidays **December 21 through January 1**. Email/telephone calls to the office will not be answered until Wednesday, January 2, 2019.

In case of emergency, please email Sherri directly sherriood@unyumc.org or call her at 585-217-3359.

NEW - Test Your Knowledge!

United Methodist Communications invites you



to take a short quiz about the music and beloved hymns of "The most wonderful time of the year." We encourage you to share [the link](#) with others, especially fellow choir members, and compare your scores! After you take the quiz, review the [complete answers](#) and learn more about the

sounds of the season.

[Download](#), print and share this Advent & Christmas Music Quiz with your church, family and friends! Test your knowledge with our other quizzes, especially our [Advent Quiz](#) and [Christmas Quiz](#).



NEW - Important Dates for Your Calendar!

As we begin to think about the year ahead, please **make note** of these dates and **share them with your church family**:

Wednesday, January 30

Pre-Lenten Day Apart for Cornerstone Pastors

Panama United Methodist Church, 22 E. Main St.

Please save this date; details will be shared in January.

Saturday, March 16

5th Annual Learning Day for Laity & Clergy

Bemus Point United Methodist Church, 4954 Bemus-Ellery Rd.

Morning & afternoon learning opportunities, inspiring worship and a great time of fellowship together. Brochure will be coming soon!

NEW - Bishop Webb Names Abdella as Conference Chancellor

Last month, Scott DeConte was elected to the New York State Supreme Court. With this new commitment, he will no longer be able to serve as Chancellor to the Upper New York (UNY) Conference.

Effective December 15, **Peter Abdella**, current Vice President of the UNY Board of Trustees will be the new Chancellor of the UNY Conference.

A life-long Methodist, Peter can trace his "roots" to **Christ First United Methodist Church** in Jamestown. Please click [here](#) to read more about Peter.

NEW - Learn More About Your Community

Church leaders and pastors across our district recently have updated their online **Church Profile**. Did you know that the Upper New York Conference also offers all churches access to a **free** tool that provides important information about the communities where they are located?

Mission Insite is a web-based demographics provider for local church use. In planning ministry, it is important to know the context. Mission

Insite provides demographic data that is updated on a regular basis. The reports are user-friendly to the novice or experienced demographer.

In order to access the website you will need to register your local church. The links below provide instruction for you to register and establish user name and password for your local church.

- [How to Register](#)
- [User Guide for Demographic Information Service](#)

To log on to the Mission InSite web page, click [here](#).



Webinars to Check Out!

Thursday, January 10 at 7:30 p.m. EST

We start each new year with this webinar that is focused on the new members of the stewardship team, finance committee, or church council - those who are looking to get a strong start right from the first week! Updated each year, the webinar explores many of the technical issues these teams face: reporting, internal controls, audits, access to giving records, and much more. We also offer ideas for building a spiritual foundation for the work of your group. Bathe your work in prayer. Remember, you are not alone; there are places to find help! Click [here](#) to find out more/to register.

Monday, February 11 at 11 a.m. EST

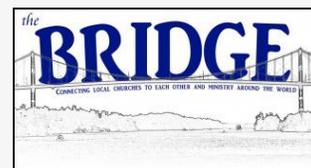
Clergy face some unique challenges when it comes to things like social security payments, estimated tax payments, housing allowances or exclusions, and reimbursed expenses. Your corner tax preparer may not understand the unique situation of clergy, and finding a tax preparer who does understand your situation can save you substantially in money and aggravation. Join us as the Rev. Don Joiner, a certified financial planner, helps us navigate the preparation of taxes under the new tax laws as well as plan for a sound financial future. Register by clicking [here](#).

These webinars and a variety of other helpful resources are provided without cost thanks to your church's generous support of the Word Service Fund Apportionment! Thank you!

Go to <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/>

NEW - Make Copies of The Bridge!

The **December Issue II** copy of the *Bridge* is now available for download. It is available in both color and black & white formats. [Click here](#) to select the version you prefer and make copies as necessary.



This issue a fun quiz to test your knowledge of Christmas history and traditions. Also, learn about the Conference Leadership Team's latest meeting, where they were encouraged to give God their best as they worked together to map their way from today through 2025.



Christmas is a time of giving. During the Advent season, the **Upper New York (UNY) Mission Central HUB** is accepting both monetary and supply donations through Home Depot and Amazon, to

help those affected by natural disasters.

For every donation, an ornament will be placed on the UNY Mission Tree. Help adorn the tree with ornaments by making your donation today. [Click here](#) to make a donation and learn more.

UPDATE - Golden Bucket Award

The Golden Bucket Award challenge is in full swing at the **Upper New York (UNY) Mission Central HUB**.

Results for November are in! So far, 800 UMCOR cleaning kits have been assembled all over the UNY Conference.

The Crossroads District donated the most buckets for the month of November and the Mountain View District made the largest monetary donation to purchase supplies.

Your District has plenty of time to win the coveted award. Don't forget to label the buckets dropped-off with your church and District name.

[Click here](#) for an updated UMCOR cleaning kit supply list.

[Click here](#) for more information about the challenge, which runs through May 25, 2019. All UMCOR cleaning buckets will be used to help our neighbors near and far who are affected by natural disasters.

Thanks to all who have acted as the hands of Jesus through their work at the HUB this fall: Sparta Center UMC, Faith Journey UMC, North Ontario UMC, Alton UMC, Sodus Point UMC, Liverpool First UMC, Immanuel UMC, Tully UMC, Rush UMC, Endwell UMC, Saratoga Springs UMC, **Brocton Tri-Church Parish**, and all others who have given time, donations, or prayers to support the work of the Upper New York Conference Mission Central HUB.

2019 EZRA Reports

The 2019 EZRA statistical reports (www.ezra.gcfa.org) will be open on January 1, 2019 and close on February 15, 2019. The 2018 forms are not yet available on the website; please use the 2017 reports as a guide.

There will be an additional line in the Membership Table this year. There are Spanish and Korean tables available. Please contact the district office if you need one of those forms. If you have any questions in the meantime regarding EZRA statistical reports, please contact Erica Wentworth at ericawentworth@unyumc.org.

NEW - Human Relations Day

Please help spread the word and encourage your church to celebrate and give to Human Relations Day on **January 20, 2019**.



Human Relations Day is a day for United Methodists to celebrate everyone's potential to do great things. A day to empower those living on the margins of society. A day to invest in at-risk youth. A day for United Methodists to make a difference together.

A [library of resources](#) is available for you to use and share including a podcast, worship songs, a reading list, youth activities and discussions - along with the social media graphics and videos. They are ready to use and available FREE today.



The **Special Session of General Conference** will be held from February 23-26, 2019 in St. Louis, MO. Upper New York Area Resident Bishop Mark J. Webb has created a **series of videos** that can help prepare you for what will be taking place at General Conference. The videos review the report created by the Commission on a Way Forward that will be presented at General Conference - they can be viewed individually, used for group discussions, and more. Each video can be downloaded as well.

In addition to Bishop Webb's videos, the Upper New York Conference has also compiled other resources to help you prepare for Special Session, including Bishop Webb's Way Forward PowerPoint Presentation, an overview of the three church plans, and more. [Click here](#) for all resources.

Important 2019 Dates

- January 8, 2019 - Last day to submit 2018 Ministry Shares
- February 15, 2019 - UNY Annual Conference Reports are due
- Late February 2019 - The 2020 UNY Narrative Budget Booklet will be available online
- March 15, 2019 - UNY Annual Conference Petitions and Resolutions are due
- Mid- to late March 2019 - The 2020 UNY Budget Booklet will be printed
- Mid- to late April 2019 - The UNY Journal will be available
- June 4-8, 2019 - The UNY Annual Conference will be held at the OnCenter in Syracuse

NEW - Mark These Dates on Your Calendar

This year's **UNY Local Pastor's licensing school** will be held **May 5-11, 2019**. This is an earlier date than in years past. The venue is unknown at this time.

NEW - Volume II of UNY Journal Now Available

The 2018 Upper New York Conference Journal, Vol. II is now available for download as a free PDF and for purchase through online publisher Lulu.com. This comprehensive book provides all the details of Annual Conference for the year of 2018.

Please view or download the **2018 Upper New York Conference Journal, Vol. II** for free by first visiting the Conference website [here](#).

To purchase it for \$16.86 (plus shipping and applicable sales tax) from Lulu.com, [click here](#).



Attention, Local Churches!

There are changes that will affect Upper New York churches and employees in the new year. Effective December 31,

New York State's hourly minimum wage rate is increasing to \$11.10. All employers in the Upper New York Conference must pay non-exempt employees minimum wage regardless of how many people they employ. [Click here](#) to read more about the wage increase.

Beginning January 1, 2019, New York State (NYS) Paid Family Leave is increasing to 55% benefit and 10 weeks for eligible employees. [Click here](#) to learn more about the updates and changes.

Due to a new law, **every employer in New York State is required to establish and distribute a sexual harassment prevention policy.** The UNY Human Resources staff are working on this and will share more information about the policy and sexual harassment training in 2019.

If you have any questions regarding either the minimum wage increase or New York state's sexual harassment requirements, please contact Tracy Rickett, Upper New York Conference's Human Resources Generalist, at 315-898-2017 or TracyRickett@unyumc.org.

There is still space for YOU at one of our winter or spring gatherings - explore the opportunities available at our **Camp & Retreat Centers**. Head to www.campsandretreats.org for more information or to sign up/register, contact the site directly, or contact the CRM Central Office at 315-898-2026 with any questions.



Asbury:

January 4-6, 2019: Youth Winter Retreat (Youth & their Adult Leader(s))

Casowasco:

December 30-January 1, 2019: Retreat: Camp Echo (Ages 7-18)

January 25-27, 2019: SOLID: Youth Retreat (Youth & their Adult Leader(s))

March 1-3, 2019: Women's Chocolate Getaway (Women)

April 11-14, 2019: Quilt by Faith: Spring (Women)

May 12, 2019: Mother's Day Brunch (Families & Adults)

Sky Lake:

January 3-5, 2019: Special Needs Winter Retreat (Ages 18+ with Special Needs)

January 18-21, 2019: Family Winter Weekend (Families & Adults)

February 15-18, 2019: Family Winter Weekend II (Families & Adults)

April 5-7, 2019: Church Family Getaway (Families & Adults)



Youth Winter Weekend

Calling your Youth Group to come be a part of a **weekend getaway designed specifically for youth groups!** Scheduled **January 4-6 at Asbury Camp & Retreat Center**, cost is \$89

per person and includes two nights lodging, four meals and one snack. For every 8 paying youth, one adult leader may attend the weekend for FREE!

Our theme this year is **SEEKER**: come join us for a weekend full of fun spirited games and activities, dynamic worship sessions with speaker **Jay Trainer of Infuzion Ministries**, amazing food (we know how important food is!), and opportunities to discuss your relationship with Christ. Come grow closer as a body of Christ and make some new friends! Oh, and we can't forget about A Night of Gametivities and our Annual Sledapalooza! Your group does not want to miss this weekend!

Click [here](#) for a flyer that you can post at your church. Contact info@asburyuny.org or 585-237-5262 for a registration form.

NEW - Five New Ideas!

1. Considering gifts for your youth leaders? Check out

"Breathe," a Perkins School of Youth Ministry conference with specialized tracks for foundations training, workshops, and youth ministry certification. The event, at Highland Park UMC in Dallas January 7-10, offers your youth leaders excellent worship, workshops, and networking with other United Methodist youth leaders. Register now, and give the gift of professional development and renewal. Only a handful of spots remain. Go to <http://www.perkinsyouth.com>.

2. Read reflectively and pray daily on the lectionary

scripture. The Upper Room's most popular devotional book, Disciplines 2019, is a perfect holiday gift for anyone preaching and studying the lectionary. It offers study and reflection on the lectionary through daily meditations written by leading Christian



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authors. Quantity discounts are available on print copies. To order, call (800) 972-0433 or visit <https://bit.ly/2zRGdvn>.

3. Make plans now for summer learning opportunities.

Discipleship Ministries is partnering with The Lake Institute, part of the highly respected Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, to offer course work required to earn an Executive Certificate in Religious Fundraising (ECRF). The four-day course will be hosted August 5-8 at Discipleship Ministries in Nashville. Registration for the limited 26 spots is now open to accommodate those who may want to use 2018 continuing education dollars for tuition. For more information and to register, go to <https://bit.ly/2qLi191>.

4. Spiritual formation is key when planting new churches.

Church planters and their leadership teams often are so busy marketing their vision, inviting newcomers to join the cause, and raising funds that they neglect the importance of strengthening spiritual depth among the lead team. J. Dana Trent's book, *For Sabbath's Sake*, offers lessons for church planting teams to practice Christian spirituality and align themselves with what Jesus modeled in his ministry on earth. Print or digital copies of *For Sabbath's Sake* are available at <https://bit.ly/2x5E5MB>. An eLearning course based on the book is available at <https://bit.ly/2E93kVn>.

5. Have a conversation with Jesus in your small group. Upper Room Books offers a new small-group study resource, *Let Me Ask You a Question: Conversations with Jesus*. This six-week study, written by Pastor Matthew Croasmun, challenges readers to enter into conversation with Jesus by answering the questions that Jesus asks in scripture. For more information and to order, to go <https://bit.ly/2txSDFE>.



Do you have questions about The United Methodist Church? Need help deciphering the hows and whys of who we are or what we believe? Maybe you have a faith question you've been pondering? We invite you to Ask the UMC.



Cornerstone District

Upper New York Conference

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