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.

January 19
The Clymer and North Clymer Churches. Pastor Kevin Costner, his wife Heather and their children.

January 26
The Cornerstone District Office. Rev. Suzanne Block and her "boys," Matzo and Noodles.

February 2
The Delevan and West Valley: St. Paul's Churches. Pastor Dawn Quesenberry, her husband Mike and their family.

Prayers for the family of Melvin A. Ricker, 102, father of the Rev. Richard Ricker. Mr. Ricker died December 24, 2019. To read the complete obituary, go to https://www.ottoredanz.com/notices/Melvin-Ricker. Cards/notes may be sent to Richard and Carole Ricker at 38 Holmes Place, Fredonia, NY, 14063.

From the Desk of Bishop Mark Webb - Protocol Statement

Last week Bishop Mark Webb sent a letter through UNY Notes about recent stories in the media related to our denomination:

Dear Friends,

Grace and peace to you in the wonderful name of Jesus the Christ!

Over this past weekend, various media were filled with stories about the
splitting of the United Methodist Church. Based on some of these stories, people have been asking, "has the United Methodist Church split? Has the decision been made?" The simple answer to those questions is no.

To download a copy of Bishop Webb's letter in its entirety, please click here.


For a full text of the Protocol of Reconciliation & Grace Through Separation proposal, click here.

To subscribe to UNY Notes, click here.

Click here for information/registration form for Cornerstone's 6th annual Learning Day for Laity & Clergy on Saturday, February 8. 20% discount if 3 or more from your church register.

Register online at www.cornerstonedistrict.com (choose Resources, then 2020 Learning Day for Laity & Clergy, then Online Form)

Deadline to register is February 4, 2020. Please call or email the office if you have questions.

Epiphany - The Visit of the Wise Men
Matthew 2:1-12 (New Revised Standard Version)

Please click here to read Suzanne's January newsletter article.

An Epiphany Prayer from the United Methodist Hymnal #255
O God, you made of one blood all nations, and, by a star in the East, revealed to all peoples him whose name is Emmanuel. Enable us who know your presence with us so to proclaim his unsearchable riches that all may come to his light and bow before the brightness of his rising, who live and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen (Laurence Hill Stookey, USA 20th Century Matthew 2:1-12)

NEW - Shepherd Group Meeting
The Cornerstone of Cornerstone Shepherd Group will meet at 12 noon at Panama United Methodist Church, 22 E. Main
NEW - Download the Latest Issue of The Bridge

The Bridge is a communications tool designed for local churches to stay connected to each other and to the ministries taking place around the Upper New York Conference and The United Methodist Church. Two versions are included, your local church can download a color version or a black & white version. This bulletin insert is meant to be a bridge to your ministry that takes place far beyond the doors of your local church, and that is the inspiration for the title.

Click here to print and share the first issue of the Bridge for 2020!

Opportunities for Prayer & Study

Thursday Bible Study (meets weekly), 8:30 a.m. at South Dayton Library, 17 Park St. Call Pattie Lukaszewski for more information, 716-296-1021

Cornerstone District Prayer Gathering, Thursday, January 16, 2020 (TODAY), 12 noon to 1 p.m. at Christ UMC, 633 Linwood Ave., Olean.

Jamestown Area Prayer Gathering, Thursday, January 23 & 30, 2020, 11:45 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at Celoron UMC, 28 E. Livingston Ave.

The events listed are open to everyone! Please let the District office know if there are other opportunities for prayer & study in your church/area.

NEW - Course of Study (COS) Reminder

Licensed Local Pastors - Are you are planning on attending COS for the Spring Weekend 2020 (March 27-28 & April 24-25) at the Conference Center? If you are, please fill out your registration form and get it to the District office to have the DS sign it so it can be forwarded to the Registrar. The deadline for registration is Friday, February 14. (Reminder that the District office is CLOSED on Fridays)

Please, DO NOT WAIT to the last minute to register. When a class is filled, Wesley closes the registration for that class and there is no wiggle room.

The courses being offered for this session are:

- 321- Bible 3: Gospels
- 323-Congregational Care
There is no reason to wait to the last minute because you don’t need to send money with your registration. So, please sign up now!!

NEW - Bishop Webb Announces Clergy Appointments
Upper New York Area Resident Bishop Mark J. Webb and the Upper New York Conference announce eight ad interim appointments and eight retirements pending approval of clergy session. View the full list of changes here.

Wondering how clergy appointments are made? Click here to read about the process.

2020 Annual Conference Info

Petitions and resolutions will need to be submitted to petitions@unyumc.org by February 3, 2020 for inclusion in Vol. 1 of the Upper New York Conference Journal. Items not submitted by this date will only be available on the Annual Conference App and on the Conference website.

As we get closer to Annual Conference, continue watching Conference and District communications channels for the latest information about the 2020 session.

Please Make Note of These Dates on Your Calendar!

Through February 15
The Ezra site (www.ezra.gcfa.org) is open for entry of 2019 local church statistical data. Saturday, February 15, 2020 is the deadline for 2019 local church statistical data.

SAVE THE DATE!
Saturday, February 8, 2020
6th Annual Learning Day for Laity & Clergy
9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Bemus Point UMC, 4954 Bemus-Ellery Road

Sunday, March 15, 2020
The 2019 Local Church Annual Financial Audit is DUE in the District Office.

April 19-25, 2020
Local Pastor Licensing School
Casowasco Camp & Retreat Center
For more information please contact Rev. Caroline Simmons, revcsimmons@gmail.com.
Human Relations Day

Human Relations Day (January 19, 2020) is one of six churchwide Special Sundays with offerings of The United Methodist Church. Human Relations Day calls United Methodists to recognize the right of all God's children in realizing their potential as human beings in relationship with one another. The special offering benefits neighborhood ministries through Community Developers, community advocacy through United Methodist Voluntary Services and work with at-risk teens through the Youth Offender Rehabilitation Program.

To learn more about Human Relations Day, please click [here].

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Message from Mike Block, UNY Conference Disaster Response Coordinator

We all have heard of various natural disasters which have occurred across the country such as floods, tornadoes, and other severe storms. What we often don't hear about is how survivors struggle to recover during the following days, weeks and often months after the disaster. We don't think of people who have no power, no heat, no water, even though it is during winter months. We don't think of those who can't live in their home due to mold or because the house is off its foundation. Instead we watch the news, see the destruction, and then sit down to eat dinner or go about our business the next day.

To bring this closer to home, in our own Conference, in the Utica area, there was a massive flood event on Halloween which damaged some 800+ homes. People still are suffering, cleaning, repairing, replacing furnaces a full 2 months later. Most of us didn’t hear about this flood, or have already forgotten about it.

But we can still help. Our Conference has a program to send people almost immediately into disaster areas to quickly, effectively and appropriately provide a caring, Christian presence to assist survivors in recovery. It is called ERT, which stands for Early Response Team. Early Responders are trained by UMCOR during an 8-hour session with all the Who, What, Where, When, Why and How answers to the typical questions willing volunteers ask when they feel called to provide help.

What do we do? We listen to survivors, we hold trembling hands, we hand out bottles of water, and listen some more. We give hugs, we assure that people care and then we wash walls, remove wet carpet, wet wallboard, shovel mud, carry out ruined appliances, cover holes in roofs and make homes secure again. We don't do repairs - that happens later with rebuilding teams who often are the very same people on the Early Response Team.

If you'd like more information and/or training to become an Early
Respecter, please consider attending one of the following Basic Early Response training events:


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**Please Complete Form from Church Mutual**
All Upper New York Conference churches will be receiving a **Payroll Audit - Report of Wages** form from **Church Mutual**. This report is for the policy period 1/1/2019 to 12/31/2019, during which time UNY churches were covered by Church Mutual. **This form must be completed.**

Please send the completed form directly to Church Mutual by **FAX** at 715-539-4721 or **email** at premiumaudit@churchmutual.com.

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**New Federal W-4 Form for Church Employees**
Effective January 1, 2020, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) redesigned the Federal W-4 Tax Form, which instructs employers how much tax to withhold. This form is required to be completed by new hires, as well as existing employees who want to change their federal withholding. Current employees do not need to complete a new federal W-4 tax form unless they would like to change their withholding. Federal tax withholding will continue based on the employee's previously submitted federal W-4 tax form unless the employee completes a new form.

Click [here](http://bit.ly/20ERTNorwich) for the new Federal W-4 Tax Form.

Click [here](http://bit.ly/20ERTNChatham) for Frequently Asked Questions published by the IRS that may be helpful when completing the form.

**Conference Contact:**
If you have any questions regarding the new Federal W-4 Tax Form, please contact Tracy Rickett, Human Resources Generalist, at 315-898-2017 or TracyRickett@unyumc.org.

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**Opportunities to Serve**
The Nominations Committee is accepting nominations for almost all **Upper New York Conference ministry teams**. Their team has begun its work of developing a list of nominees for consideration at our upcoming Upper New York Annual Conference session (May 28-30, 2020).

While each Conference ministry team has a focus, all exist to equip clergy, laity, and their churches to live our mission of making disciples for the transformation of the world. The Nominations Committee believes all the gifts needed to live this mission have been given to the people of
Upper New York by God. Prayerfully consider serving as a member of one of our Conference ministry teams.

Click here for a description of the ministry teams that have vacancies. Click here to complete a nominations form on Survey Monkey. Should you need to print the form, please use the Survey Monkey link.

For questions or information, contact the Rev. Tony Hipes at tjhipes@gmail.com.

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