

March 25, 2021



Please watch your email on Mondays during Lent for Rev. Suzanne Block's weekly devotional. If you've not read the devotional for the fifth week of Lent, please click [here](#).



(Photo courtesy of ResourceUMC)

Please keep these pastors, their families and the Church families in your prayers throughout the coming weeks.

March 28 - Palm Sunday

Frewsburg: Trinity UMC
Pastor PJ Pasieka, his wife Lindsey and their children Peter & Leah.

April 4 - Easter

Westfield 1st UMC
Rev. Nick Perry, his wife Rev. Carmen Perry and their children Nathan & Nadia.

April 11

Knapp Creek UMC
Rev. Jerry Piper, his wife Kathy and their family.

Prayers for victims, first responders and communities affected by recent mass shootings in the Atlanta, GA area



From the desk of Bishop Mark J. Webb

In response to the

recent Atlanta shootings and other acts of violence throughout our country the past week, Upper New York (UNY) Area Resident Bishop, Mark J. Webb sent a letter to the UNY Conference yesterday, expressing the many prayers that are needed as well as the fact that we must continue to stand against all forms of violence in whatever form they take. [Click here](#) to read the letter.

Watch as hundreds of United Methodists from across the globe join together to sing "Thine Be The Glory."



Please feel free to [download the video](#) for use in your Easter services. And don't forget to share and post the video to social media!



News About Annual Conference

Once again we are looking for lay persons in the Cornerstone District willing to serve as **Equalization**

Members to 2021 Annual Conference (June 17-19 online). Youth (ages 12-17), Young Adults (ages 18-30) and Adults are welcome to apply

and Boulder, CO.

Please keep **Rev. Bob Beard** (retired) and his family in your prayers. Bob's wife of 62 years, Sandra, died Tuesday, March 2, 2021. The funeral was held Tuesday, March 9. Condolences may be sent to Bob at 13 Medbury Heights, Cuba, NY, 14727.

Continue to pray for all those who are affected by **COVID-19**, either directly or through a family member, neighbor or friend. May we continue to show respect for others by practicing good hygiene, wearing masks & social distancing.

To download the 2020-2021 District Prayer Calendar, [click here](#).



Digital Worship Experience

The Mohawk

District Leadership Team invites you/your congregation to share in the digital worship service they have developed for Good Friday.

<https://youtu.be/hWmubq015Lc>

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WVj3FM3ShGNmj_68aRsLI0ICY9P0FI6A/view

The service also will be livestreamed at 7 p.m., April 2, at:

<https://firstumconline.org/livestream>

Popular hymn writer Carolyn Winfrey Gillette wrote a new Easter hymn in 2020 for the coronavirus



era. It can be sung to the tune of "The Church's One Foundation." Find all the verses here:

https://www.carolynshymns.com/thi_s_easter_celebration.pdf.

Ministry Shares Credit Opportunity

The Conference Council on Finance and Administration has created an opportunity for local churches to receive a **Ministry Shares credit of 50%** on your **May 2021** statement.

(click here for [application](#)). Contact your pastor or the District office for more information.

Deadline for applications is April 12.

Clergy and lay delegates who are unable to participate in the June 17-19 Annual Conference must submit a request to be excused. Click [here](#) to complete the form.

The **March 27 Basic Safe Sanctuaries training** via Zoom is **fully subscribed**. Please watch this newsletter for information about future Safe Sanctuaries training opportunities.



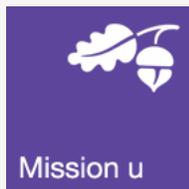
Feel free to contact one of the co-chairs of the committee at safesanctuaries@unyumc.org.

For more information on Safe Sanctuaries, and on background checks, [click here](#).

May 8 Special Session Cancelled

The Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church met on Monday, March 22, 2021 in an additional meeting to consider pressing matters related to the Council's work. After much conversation, the bishops reached a decision that in the best interest of the church at this time, they would **cancel the Special Session of the General Conference which was set for May 8, 2021.**

The bishops announced that they will dedicate their regularly scheduled April meeting to conversation based on results of listening sessions that are occurring and discern a possible need for a new timeline toward **General Conference 2020 set for August 29 to September 6, 2022, in Minneapolis, Minnesota.** (Click here to read more)



United Methodist Women in the Upper New York Conference are planning this summer's **Mission u 2021 event**, to be held virtually in July. Mission u is a transformative education program that offers study on several different curricula, including plenary and worship sessions open to everyone - not just women.

Please help us in preparing this event by completing a two-minute survey by April 26. If you have attended Mission u events in the past or would just like to consider attending in the future, you are encouraged to complete this survey. Thank you in advance for helping guide the development of this important program.

In order to qualify for this credit, **churches must pay 100% of their current month April charges** (both Ministry Shares and Direct Bills).

A church will qualify for this credit even if it has not paid toward ministry shares in prior months. A church also will receive the credit if they have already paid their Ministry Shares in full prior to the April statement. The credit will be equal to 50% of May Ministry Shares charges. Credit will be reflected on the May statement as an increase to the YTD paid column)

Payment for April charges must be **received** in the Conference office (not postmarked) **no later than April 30, 2021 to be eligible for the credit.** If you have any questions or concerns regarding this information, please contact Bob Flask, UNY Conference Treasurer, at 315-898-2008 or bobflask@unyumc.org.

Dismantling Racism Devotional

Each week of Lent and every day of Holy Week, a United Methodist bishop will offer a short devotion. Together, we will confess and fast from the sins of racism, discrimination, oppression and exclusion, and feast on the beauty and blessing of the diversity of God's Church.

Bishop Rodolfo Juan, of the Davao Area of the Philippine Central Conference, is leading today's Dismantling Racism devotional.

Watch and share.



Throughout the coronavirus pandemic, Upper New York Assistant

Director of Vital Congregations for Spiritual Life, the Rev. Nancy Dibelius, has been providing videos of helpful spiritual practices to help deepen people's relationship to God during this difficult time.

For 2021, Rev. Dibelius is zeroing in on spiritual disciplines. She explains that spiritual disciplines are a way to get away with Jesus, walk with Jesus, and learn from Jesus.

In her last video, Rev. Dibelius's

Survey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DVXK8ZS>

General Information about Mission u:

<https://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/mission-u>

Mission Central HUB Seeking Support

The **Upper New York (UNY) Mission Central HUB** is preparing for the coming spring to support survivors affected by the different disasters (floods and high winds) that may impact our area. In partnering with the **United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR)**, UNY's status of kits on hand is low at best. The most requested items are cleaning and hygiene kits. Those who can support our communities by assembling kits in your homes or churches, please share projects so we can support your efforts and possibly share your methods with others. Any number of kits will help.

Please review the list for contents of each kit. If you cannot provide complete kits, we can use individual items to help complete other kits that arrive incomplete.

The HUB at the UNY Conference Center will remain closed until further notice. However, there is a tent outside the Conference Center where kits can be dropped off. You can also make arrangements to drop off kits at the HUB by calling MaryBeth Ingalls at 315-372-0285 or emailing her at marybethingalls@unyumc.org or calling Mike Block at 315-491-0497 or emailing him at mikeblock@unyumc.org.

Click here for an UMCOR supply list.

Click here to learn about HUB on the Road.

Click here for UMCOR Kit Assembly options outside the HUB.

Click here to make a donation.

Paid Time Off for COVID Vaccinations

As New York State's vaccine supply from the federal government increases, Gov. Cuomo has **expanded eligibility to more New Yorkers** to keep the

vaccination progress moving. Starting **March 17**, three new groups of New Yorkers are eligible for the vaccine: public-facing government and public workers, not-for-profit workers who provide public-facing services to New Yorkers in need (this includes clergy), and essential in-person building service workers.

I GOT
MY COVID-19
VACCINE!

Please contact your local vaccination center to verify your eligibility.

delved into the discipline of worship. [Click here](#) to watch that video. This week, Rev. Dibelius continues guiding you in the exploration of worship as a spiritual discipline. [Click here](#) to watch Rev. Dibelius's latest video.

Delay in Payment Extended

In 2020, the Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits (CBOPHB) had approved delayed enforcement of the direct bill arrearage policy through December 31, 2020. Understanding the continued struggle faced by many congregations, the Board has approved to **extend that delay through December 31, 2021**.

If your church is still able to pay their direct bills, they should. If a church is experiencing financial hardship as a result of reduced giving during this time, the church is asked to notify their [District Superintendent](#) as well as the [Benefits office](#) (Susan Latessa) to discuss their situation. The Upper New York Conference will work with churches on a case-by-case basis.

UNY Conference
United
Methodist Men
wish to invite men
from the



Cornerstone District to their annual Spring Retreat, 4 pm Friday, April 30 to 3 pm Saturday, May 1 at the Aldersgate UMC camp (<https://aldersgateny.org>). Click [here](#) for the retreat flyer/registration form. Questions may be directed to UNY UMM President Mark Jones, 315-749-3700.

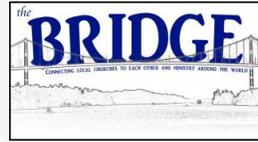
WORSHIP RESOURCE

Upper New York (UNY) Area Resident Bishop Mark J. Webb, and members of the UNY Cabinet have put together and released a **worship service** that may be used on a Sunday of your choice. It is hoped that by using this service, your pastor can have some much-needed rest and renewal.

[Click here](#) to see the service.

Bishop Webb

Effective immediately, New York State employers must provide employees with up to four hours of paid time off per COVID-19 vaccination. The new law sunsets on December 31, 2022. [Click here](#) for details.



The March Issue II 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.

In honor of **Women's History Month**, this issue celebrates Susanna Wesley, if often referred to as the "Mother of Methodism." In this issue, you will also find the announcement for the rescheduled General Conference 2020 date, scheduled for August 29 to September 6, 2022, as well as the Special Session, scheduled for May 8.

The stories that are featured in the *Bridge* can also be accessed from the news section of the Upper New York (UNY) Conference website for easy copying and pasting for those who wish to electronically distribute news featured in the *Bridge*. [Click here](#) to access the UNY Conference news items.



Virtual Launchpad 2021

Launchpad is boot camp for anyone who is in the first year of planting a new faith

community, or is feeling called to plant a new faith community in the next couple of years. It provides the best practical, hands-on training for planters available now in The United Methodist Church.

In these virtual sessions, you will learn an amazing array of best practices that will enable you to build a solid foundation on which to build your faith community.

Please click [here](#) for more information and the Launchpad schedule.

To register by **April 18** or for more information, please send an email to Rev. Abigail Browka, pastorabigail1@gmail.com.

LOOKING AHEAD

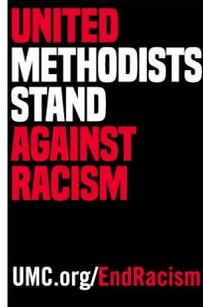
MARCH is Women's History Month



Announcements Clergy Appointments

Upper New York Area Resident Bishop Mark J. Webb and the Upper New York Conference announce three ad interim appointments, four appointments, and three retirements pending approval of clergy session. View the full list of changes [here](#).

The UMC is leading a sustained and coordinated effort to **actively engage in the ministry of dismantling racism and promoting racial justice**. The UNY Conference Communications team will regularly share worship, advocacy, and educational resources to help with this important campaign.



Crimes targeting Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) have risen dramatically since the beginning of the pandemic. Last week's horrific murder of eight people in spas outside Atlanta, including six women of Asian descent, highlights an urgent need to combat this unconscionable rise of crimes and violence directed toward AAPI.

The UNY Conference Commission on Religion and Race prepared a statement as a response to the Atlanta shootings and has useful suggestions on ways you can continue to confront implicit bias and dismantle racism in any way we can.

[Click here](#) to read the full statement.



CLASSES OPEN TO ALL

Leading Prayer
April 14, 21, May 5, 6-9 pm; May 1, 9 am - 1 pm

Course fee, \$15 each. To register or for more information, contact Arlene at adschmidt@nycap.rr.com. To view the brochure, [click here](#).

Imagine No Racism

April 22, 29, May 6, 13 & 20, 2-5 pm
Zoom: Course fee \$15
[Click here](#) for the registration

PAST DUE

Please send a completed & signed copy of each to the District office. (Click on the **boldface** titles to download the forms.):

[Report of Trustees](#)

[Report of the Finance Committee](#)

2020 Year-end Financial Report

2021 Church Budget

[2020 Local Church Financial Audit](#)

March 28

Palm Sunday

April 1

Maundy Thursday

April 2

Good Friday

April 4

Easter

April 6-8

Appointive Cabinet

April 12

Equalization Member applications due

April 14

Pastoral Leadership Development (Zoom)

April 15

Denman Award nominations due

Nominations Due April 15 for the Denman Award

The Harry Denman Evangelism Award honors United Methodists who bring people into a life-transforming relationship with Jesus Christ. Each year, the Upper New York Conference works with the Foundation for Evangelism to recognize and honor one lay and clergy member for their commitment to consistently introducing others to the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Nominations are now being accepted through April 15, 2021 for clergy, laity, and youth in Upper New York. [Click here](#) for a nomination form. Send all completed nomination forms to dcmoffice@unyumc.org.

Add Your Church's Online Bible Study to UNY Directory

Since the start of the COVID pandemic, one year ago, the UNY Communications team has been connecting folks across the Conference to digital discipleship resources. As part of that, we have created a directory of [online worship services](#).

We are expanding this effort and would like to

brochure. **Registration extended to April 1.**

Lay Pastoral Care

April 28, May 5, 12 & 19, 7-9 pm

Zoom: Course fee \$15

Click here for the registration brochure. **Registration extended to April 1.**

Basic Lay Servant

May 13 & 27, 6-9 pm; May 29, 9 am - 1 pm; and June 7, 6-9 pm

Zoom: Course fee: \$15

Click here for the registration brochure.

Spiritual Gifts

June 14 & 21, 6-9 pm; June 26, 9 am - 1 pm; and July 1, 6-9 pm

Zoom: Course fee: \$15

Click here for the registration brochure.

Leading Worship

July 14, 21 & 28, 6-9 pm and August 7, 9 am - 1 pm

Zoom: Course fee: \$15

Click here for the registration brochure.

Equitable Comp Application Available

The **Commission on Equitable Compensation** has issued guidelines and application forms for salary grants to local churches for the period **July 1 to December 31, 2021**. Salary grants are available only to churches with a pastor under full-time appointment.

Click here for more information, application guidelines, as well as first-time and renewal applications.

create a directory of **online Bible studies** that are taking place across the Conference. If your church has Bible studies that are taking place online and you would like it added to our new directory, please contact Shelby Winchell at **shelbywinchell@unyumc.org** and include your church name, Bible study meeting time and day, and a link where it can be found online.

Notice Related to BSA Cases

Many churches filed a “proof of claim” to assert the right to be indemnified by BSA if child abuse claims are filed against a church-sponsored troop. These churches are now receiving “Notice of Hearing” documents from the bankruptcy court informing churches that BSA is about to propose a plan to emerge from bankruptcy. The notice is for information only and **requires no action on part of the church.**

Click **here** to read a note developed by Peter Abdella, UNY Conference Chancellor, and Rev. Bill Gottschalk-Fielding, Executive Assistant to the Bishop.



COVID-19 Funeral Assistance

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought overwhelming grief to many families. The mission of the Federal

Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is to help people before, during and after disasters. FEMA is dedicated to helping ease some of the financial stress and burden caused by the virus.

FEMA is working to set up a dedicated toll-free phone number that can be used to apply for funeral assistance. More information will be available soon:

<https://www.fema.gov/disasters/coronavirus/economic/funeral-assistance>

For information about eligibility and how to apply, click **here**.