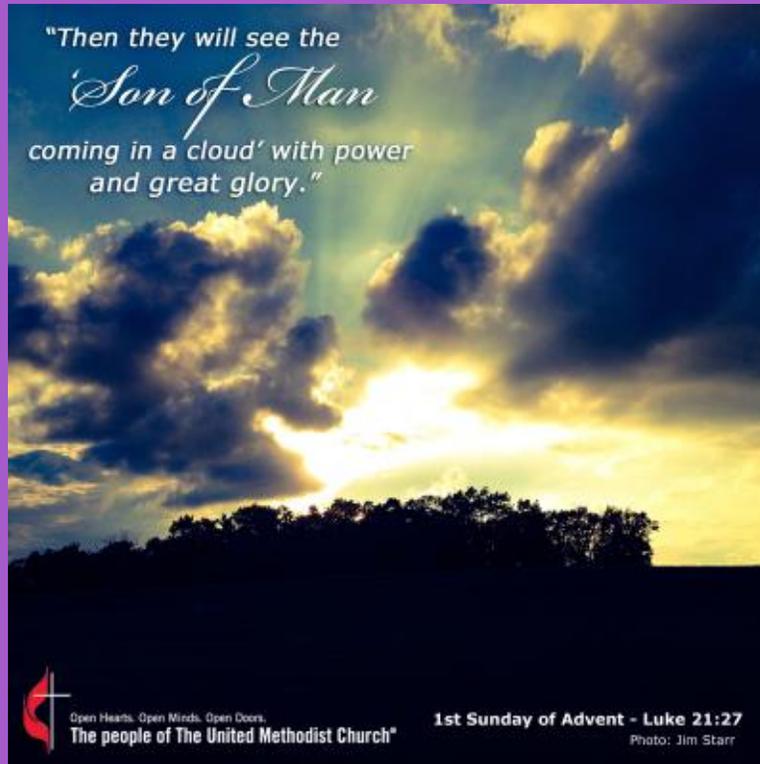


Why just a thank you and you're receiving this email because you have expressed an interest in Upper New York Conference. Don't forget to add [cornerstonedistrict@unyumc.org](mailto:cornerstonedistrict@unyumc.org) to your address book so we'll be sure to land in your inbox!

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 2

**Brocton Tri-Church Parish. Pastor Barbara Brewer** and her family.

### December 9

**Busti Federated Church. Pastor Lee O'Brien**, his wife Carol and their family.

### December 16

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

Congratulations to the **Rev. Carolyn** and **Mark Stow** on the birth of their granddaughter, **Elba Rose Pilot**. Elba arrived at 4:03 a.m. on November 17; she was 20 inches long and weighed 7 lbs 1.4 oz. Baby, Mom Jacki Stow Pilot, and Dad Pedro Pilot are doing fine!

Prayers for healing for **Elaine Damsteegt**, wife of Pastor Gordon Damsteegt. Elaine fell and broke her wrist on November 15; she is at home, recovering from surgery.

Please keep **Sandra Beard**, wife of Rev. Bob Beard, in your prayers. Sandra is dealing with Parkinson's Disease.

An update on **Rev. Steve Deckard**. As many of you know, Steve suffered a hemorrhagic stroke on September 12. After a lengthy hospital stay and inpatient therapy, he is recovering at home with outpatient therapy. Steve is doing very well and continues to improve. It will be a long journey and his spirits remain positive. His wife Pam, the Administrative Assistant for the Finger Lakes District, was at home caring for him and now has returned to work. Pam and Steve wish to thank everyone for their prayers, cards, and wishes. Truly Steve's remarkable progress is God's work and they are extremely grateful.

As we move closer to the special-called session of **General Conference in February 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 - Food, Fellowship, Fun!**

The congregation of **Ripley United Methodist Church**, 84 W. Main St., invite their friends and neighbors to join them for two upcoming events.

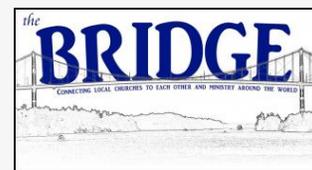
This **Sunday, December 2**, the church is pleased to host **Jamestown Harmony Express**. This talented group will perform their Christmas Sing Concert at **7 p.m.** A love offering will be accepted and a time of fellowship and snacks will follow the concert.

On **Saturday, December 8**, the monthly **All-You-Can-Eat-and-Drink Breakfast** will be served from **7:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.** Cost is \$7 per person for pancakes, sausage, bacon, fried potatoes, made-to-order eggs (including omelets), toast, biscuits & sausage gravy, orange juice and coffee.

Proceeds from the December breakfast will benefit Kids Konxions, Ripley UMC's after school program.

### **Make Copies of The Bridge!**

The **December Issue I** 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.



Advent is here! This issue reviews **the meaning of each Sunday in the Advent season** up to the arrival of Jesus. This issue also includes information about a giving opportunity called **Christmas in the HUB** that helps support the United Methodist Committee on Relief through the Upper New York Mission Central HUB. This issue also reveals Upper New

York Area Resident **Bishop Mark J. Webb's favorite Christmastime tradition** and a request for your church members and visitors to send in their favorite Christmas traditions.

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### **NEW - Important News to All Buffalo COS Students!**

This is newly updated information about the January-February and March-May classes.

All eight classes will be taught with a minimum of three students per class.

Full or Partial Scholarships will be provided to every student who registers for classes in the Winter or Spring Quarters. In order to qualify, you must send a simple email or snail mail request to [bufcosdirector@gmail.com](mailto:bufcosdirector@gmail.com) indicating that you would like financial aid for one or both sessions.

Requests must be received NO LATER than **December 1** in order for us to know how many students are applying. This will determine whether we can give full or partial scholarships.

If you have already signed up for the January session, and have paid tuition, either part or full will be refunded. **NO LATE FEES WILL BE CHARGED IF YOU MEET THE DECEMBER 1 DEADLINE AND WISH TO SIGN UP FOR A JANUARY COURSE.**

When filling out your registration forms, if you are requesting assistance, do not include any payments at all. Simply write "Scholarship Request" at the top of the form. You still will need the required signatures.

Rev. Gail Lewis, Director  
Buffalo COS



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.

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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 policy can be distributed in writing or electronically. Employers are encouraged to have employees acknowledge receipt of the policy, and to post a copy of the policy where employees can easily access it.

Every employer is also required to provide employees with sexual harassment prevention training by October 9, 2019. This is an annual requirement as part of the new regulations. Additional resources for sexual harassment training will be shared once information has been gathered.

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](mailto:TracyRickett@unyumc.org).

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### Database Updates

Many **thanks** to the churches who have submitted **Form 2b. UNYAC-Local Church Leadership Interface Sheet** along with their reports for the Church Conference. Interface forms received to date exceed the total number received in 2017-18!

The information on these form allows me to keep the Conference database up-to-date. Sherri and I use the database daily and it's great to know that the information is current.

Again, thank you for your help with this. Keep up the good work!

-- Cathy



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### Help Needed with Anti-Bullying Project

Kristian J. Snyder, a member at Ripley United Methodist Church, is making an appeal to the greater Cornerstone community to get involved with **The Be Kind Initiative**, an anti-bullying project that he hopes to introduce in schools throughout our area.

"Through The Be Kind Initiative, we want to help all kids (who are being bullied)...and give them some hope that things will be better for them, that there are people willing to help," stated Kristian. To read more about

his plan for The Be Kind Initiative, click [here](#).



### **Church Conferences are Underway!**

As we gather to tend to the business of Cornerstone's local churches at Annual Church Conferences, a couple of reminders:

Each church should bring **copies of their reports** for those who are planning to attend. Sherri will have the "master copy" of the reports that have been submitted in advance to the District Office. If you have reports that **were not submitted previously**, please make sure that Sherri gets a copy.

**Form 14 Church/Charge Conference Recording Secretary's Minutes Form** (due at the close of the meeting) and **Form 15 Church/Charge Conference Sign-In Sheet** will be available at the Church Conference.

Thanks to all of you for your timely submission of reports for these meetings. Your diligence and commitment are much appreciated!

Please be in prayer Sherri, our church leaders and our pastors as we gather for this time of celebrating the work of all Cornerstone churches.

### **Lakewood UMC Announces Opening of Blessing Box**

"What in heaven's name is a Blessing Box? That's what the congregation of **Lakewood United Methodist Church**, 164 Shadyside Ave., are discovering through this new outreach mission.

The cupboard-like structure is located on church property and is stocked by church members with food items, personal care products, cleaning supplies and miscellaneous items. Described as "the Lord's pantry," the goal of the Blessing Box is to serve the greater community.

"It is an opportunity for a person to bless someone else or for a person to receive a blessing - anonymously," according to Pastor Michael Childs.



### **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](mailto:info@asburyuny.org) or 585-237-5262 for a registration form.



- 1. Lead your church through an Advent season of anticipation and celebration.** Use the Discipleship Ministries worship series "Prepare the Way" during this Advent and Christmas season. The paired Old Testament and Gospel readings will help you understand how to "prepare the way of the Lord" (Luke 3:4). Resources include sermon starters, music suggestions and Advent candle liturgy, as well as weekly graphics and faith formation resources for adults, youth and children. Find more at <https://bit.ly/2DdKbAV>.
- 2. Deepen your understanding of Wesleyan heritage.** Plan to be part of the 2019 Wesley Pilgrimage in England to explore historic sites while walking in the footsteps of John and Charles Wesley and the people called Methodists. The 10-day event, cosponsored by The Upper Room on July 8-18, 2019, will be led by Rev. Steven Manskar, former director of Wesleyan Leadership at Discipleship Ministries, and Dr. Paul Chilcote, professor of Historical Theology and Wesleyan Studies at Ashland Theological Seminary. For more information, go to <https://bit.ly/2iUPRE4>.
- 3. Outstanding speakers and artists planned for YOUTH 2019.** The national gathering for United Methodist youth and their leaders in Kansas City next July 10-14 will feature Romal Tune, Jeff Hanson, Scott Erickson, I Am They and others. Registration is open and the best rate is available until the end of January. The event sells out after the first 8,000 people register. For more information, to learn about additional speakers and artists, and to register, go to <http://youth2019.com/pages/speaker-grid-2>.
- 4. Explore the foundations for small groups from our Wesleyan**

**roots.** In the podcast *Small Groups in the Wesleyan Way*, Scott Hughes, Director of Adult Discipleship at Discipleship Ministries, interviews various discipleship leaders to help churches grow their small group ministry. The podcast discusses small groups of various kinds, innovative strategies and other small group dynamics. To listen to Episode 50, an interview adult learner guru and author Barbara Bruce, and to get connected to the podcast, go to <https://bit.ly/2FfulbU>.

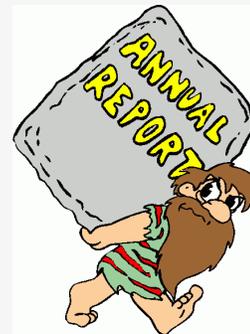
**5. Learn how A Missionary Mindset led to a significant breakfast ministry.** Read the story of how a New Church Starts (Path 1) resource impacted a pastor to start his own local mission project. The Rev. Earl Dionne serves the Rachel S. Harlow United Methodist Church in Windsor, Vermont. After reading *A Missionary Mindset*, Dionne started Rachel's Kitchen, a ministry that provides breakfast five times a week in an area of the country where food insecurity is prevalent. Read about Dionne's experience [here](#). To order *A Missionary Mindset*, go to <https://bit.ly/2zLIuJ6>.

### NEEDED - Online Profiles

If you haven't yet done so, please complete the following (online ONLY):

19. Church Profile
20. Pastor's Profile

The information on these forms is used by Bishop Webb and the Cabinet during the **Cabinet's Appointive Retreat December 3-5**.



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### Golden Bucket Award

The Upper New York Conference of the United Methodist Church **Mission Central HUB** is announcing the Golden Bucket Award to the District that donates the most UMCOR Cleaning Kits!

Monthly recognition will be shared throughout the conference with a certificate to be displayed at the District Office. The District that collects the most UMCOR Cleaning Kits throughout the period will be awarded the prestigious Golden Bucket Award!

This award started on October 1 and runs till May 25, 2019. The Golden Bucket will be awarded at the 2019 Annual Conference.

It is important to follow the [UMCOR Cleaning Kit list](#), last updated May 2018.

Any questions, please contact Mike Block, 315-898-2066 or [mikeblock@unyumc.org](mailto:mikeblock@unyumc.org).

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### Order of Elders Gathering

All **Upper New York (UNY) elders** are invited to join UNY Area Resident Bishop Mark J. Webb as he welcomes Bishop Grant Hagiya from the California-



Pacific Annual Conference on **December 6, 2018**  
from 9:30 a.m. until 3 p.m. for an Order of Elders  
Gathering at the **Holiday Inn in Liverpool.**

This will be a time of worship, learning, and fellowship  
and qualifies for .5 CEU. The registration cost is \$25  
and includes lunch. The registration deadline is  
**November 28.** [Click here](#) to see the schedule for the  
day and/or to register.



**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

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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