

"So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do,
do it all for the glory of God." 1 Corinthians 10:31 (NIV)



Activate

SPRING 2015

UNY Conference Benefits Office Newsletter

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Awareness Week:
Learn how you can
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Greetings!

In spite of the long, hard winter most of us have experienced this year, I can and do still say that I Love Upstate New York! There is gratefulness, yes, that comes with Spring ...

Thanks Be To God! The natural beauty of our Conference's geography is largely unmatched ... and on a sunny day, it feels like the



Putney

Finger Lakes and the Adirondacks, the Wyoming Valley, and the St. Lawrence Seaway have been kissed by the heavens. Winter can be equally enjoyed by outdoor enthusiasts or by those who prefer to hibernate. I find that my hobbies change with the seasons, which fits my short attention span just fine.

What do you do – besides work – that fills your soul? Don't laugh ... this is an important question. Interests outside of work are vital to one's social and mental health. Building friendships outside of work provide the support needed during times of stress and/or transition.

So I ask again: What do you do or who do you associate with – outside of work – that fills your soul?

Vicki L. Putney
Conference Benefits Officer

CBOPHB provides grants for *revitup!*

One of the priorities identified by the Confer-

ence Board of Pensions and Health Benefits (CBOPHB) has been education, especially of our younger clergy. So we are excited to announce that the board had allocated funds to sponsor clergy attendance at *revitup!*

revitup! is an educational opportunity geared toward young clergy and is now in its third year. It is sponsored by the General Board of Pension & Health Benefits and is similar to a Clergy Benefits Academy.

The Conference board will provide a grant of \$400 to any Upper New York clergyperson who provides proof of registration. (Attendance will be verified by the GBOPHB after the event.) This grant is intended to cover registration, two hotel nights and two dinners. Transportation or extra nights/meals would be the responsibility of the participant. The board will be encouraging district superintendents and the Board of Ordained Ministry to help find funding for transportation.

The keynote speaker is the Rev. Mike Slaughter, lead pastor at the Ginghamburg Church in Ohio, now in his fourth decade as chief

dreamer of Ginghamburg and the

Event details:

Location: Bloomingdale, Illinois

revitup! begins at 1 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 5 with inspiring worship and an opening plenary session

revitup! concludes at 2:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 7 after two action-packed days of learning, networking and fellowship

spiritual entrepreneur of ministry marketplace innovations. Discover five daily life practices, embodied in the acronym D-R-I-V-E, required for leaders to sustain personal health, integrity and strategic focus in Rev. Slaughter's message "Momentum for Life."

Core Classes

For these sessions, you will be assigned to a track so you will attend each core class:

- Living Your (Financial) Life Like It's Golden – Financial Planning Goals & Tools
- April is the Cruellest Month: A Survival Guide to Clergy Tax
- You've Got Benefits!
- When There's a Will, There's a Way

SEE **REVITUP!** PAGE 2

revitup! grants –

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Elective Classes

After you have chosen your core class, you will then choose four classes from the following:

- Managing Cash and Dissolving Debt
- Thriving in Ministry: How Not to Lose Your Mind or Your Faith!

- Healthy You – Healthy Church
- Budget All You Can: Finances and the Church
- Keeping Up the Conversation After Answering Your Call: Sustaining Your Call While Helping Others Answer Theirs
- Direct Donor Dollars & Sense – “The Big Ask”

- Conflict Transformation: A Skill and an Art
- Strengths-Based Leadership for Pastors
- Values Versus Value – How Can Investments be a Force for Good? You can find detailed event and registration information at www.gbophb.org/events.

Benefit rates for 2016 are announced

The Board of Pension & Health Benefits has been able to secure the information needed to develop benefit rates for 2016 earlier than ever this year! The board is not recommending any major changes to plans for next year, so they were able to do this work now rather than after Annual Conference session.

Benefit Type	Description	Rate for 2016
CRSP	Church paid pension for pastors serving 50 percent or more	Decreased to 13.5 percent of compensation
CPP	Long term disability and death benefit plan for full-time pastors AND elders, associate members, or provisional members serving 75 percent	Remains at 3 percent of compensation
MED	Church responsible premium for churches with full time pastors or sharing a full time pastor	Remains at \$1,000 per month per full-time pastor
PERS	Personal contribution withheld from pastor's salary as their contribution to the health insurance plan when enrolled	CHANGE from a flat rate schedule to: 2 percent of compensation; ZERO contribution for those paying for Medicare Part B or enrolled in the CDHP health insurance plan. This will LOWER the contribution for all.

Important information about the Conference Guardian Dental Plan

Anyone who is eligible for Conference HealthFlex benefits, even if you waived them, has been automatically enrolled in the basic Guardian dental plan at no expense to the participant.

Also important to note:

- Annual election for Guardian dental benefits is in July
- New year of deductible and out of pocket limits begins Aug. 1
- If you choose to buy-up to the

High Plan, the monthly premiums are: Single – \$15.95; Employee & Spouse - \$31.70; Employee & Child – \$34.70; Family of 3 plus – \$51.

- Changes during annual election can be made online at www.guardiananytime.com, or by paper form (download and print the form found on the Conference website at www.unyumc.org and then sent it to the Conference Benefits Office).
- Anyone who has Guardian den-

tal benefits is eligible for Sage Scholars Tuition Rewards. This benefit is at no cost to you. To register or find out more information, please visit www.TuitionRewards.com.

- For those participants who would like a dental ID card, please download the Guardiananytime app on your smartphone (available for iOS and Android). This is the only avenue at this time to get a dental ID card.

Food Allergy Awareness week coming

May 10-16 is Food Allergy Awareness Week. One thing is certain in the world: Churches love their potlucks, and as summer approaches, picnics and barbecues as well. But for the 15 million people in the United States who suffer from

food allergies, these events can be stressful and even dangerous.

Chances are there are both children and adults in your congregation with a food allergy. There are several ways you can help individuals with food allergies:

- Be aware of the common allergens: peanuts, tree nuts, milk, egg, wheat, soy, fish, and shellfish
- Always read food labels to determine what common allergens are in the food you are buying, and label it appropriately so those you are serving are aware
- When cooking with common allergens, use separate pots and pans to avoid cross contamination
- Never share food with friends who have food allergies
- Wash your hands after you eat
- If your child has food allergies, educate the teachers, students, and their parents to gain understanding and support
- If you believe you or your family member may be experiencing anaphylaxis – a severe, potentially fatal allergic reaction – administer the epinephrine auto-injector prescribed to the individual immediately and call 911

For more information on symptoms, diagnosis, and treatment of food allergies, go to foodallergy.org.

KNOW YOUR FOOD ALLERGIES

A GROWING HEALTH CONCERN THROUGHOUT THE WORLD



Eight foods account for 90 percent of all reactions: milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, soy, wheat, fish and shellfish. Even trace amounts of a food allergen can cause a reaction.



SOURCE: foodallergy.org

\$25B

The economic cost of children's food allergies is nearly \$25 billion per year

3MIN

Every 3 minutes, a food allergy reaction sends someone to the emergency department – that is more than 200,000 emergency department visits per year

1:13

This potentially deadly disease affects 1 in every 13 children (under 18 years of age) in the U.S.

RISK

Teenagers and young adults with food allergies are at the highest risk of fatal food-induced anaphylaxis

▲50%

According to a study released in 2013 by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, food allergies among children increased approximately 50% between 1997 and 2011

20-25%

Approximately 20-25% of epinephrine administrations in schools involve individuals whose allergy was unknown at the time of the reaction

A food allergy can begin at any age.



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Activate

Benefits Office
Upper New York Conference

www.unyumc.org/about/benefits-administrative-services

Activate is a quarterly publication of the Benefits Office of the Upper New York Conference. The Benefits Office team is committed to sharing information about the various benefit programs as well as general knowledge that fosters an atmosphere of health – physical, fiscal, spiritual, and emotional. Look to this publication for timely information on the health care program, inspirational testimonies and seasonal health-conscious activities. While this publication may be read by many people, our focus is to “Activate” the knowledge clergy already have about health, as healthy clergy are best able to lead and inspire their churches. Please share your thoughts and stories by email to BenefitsOffice@unyumc.org.

It's Blueprint for Wellness screening time

It's almost that time again for the Quest Diagnostic Blueprint for Wellness screening. This extensive biometric screening is provided to individuals in the HealthFlex B750 and CDHP plans at no cost to the participant or an enrolled spouse. Health Flex participants who are enrolled in the Virgin Pulse program can earn \$100 in Health Cash by getting screened, however, you must be enrolled in Virgin Pulse by the day that you have the screening done.

This year you can also earn up to 120 health points towards your 150 for any improvement in your biometric measurements or if your measurements fall within the healthy range.

There are several ways you can

take the Blueprint for Wellness Screening. There will be two mornings during the 2015 Annual Conference session that you can pre-register for, or you can make an appointment at a local Quest lab between April 1 and July 31. If you cannot make it to AC '15 and the closest Quest lab is too far for you to travel to, you can bring a specified form to your own doctor and have them run the same tests as the biometric screening (plan specific deductible, co-pays and/or co-insurance may apply).

Details on how to register are



Image courtesy www.unitypoint.org

located on the Benefits Office web page and were previously emailed to eligible individuals.

If you have any questions, please contact Human Resources Generalist Debi Marshall at DebiMarshall@unyumc.org, or ext. 302.

Pre-retirement benefits explained

Each year, the Conference Benefits Office and the General Board of Pension & Health Benefits partners to provide a comprehensive look at benefits provided in retirement as a result of service to our local United Methodist Churches. Topics include:

- UM Pension Plans
- Death Benefits
- End of Life planning and wills
- Health Insurance
- Social Security
- Moving Expenses

This is a **PRE-RETIREMENT SEMINAR** ... you need not have

decided on a retirement date in order to benefit from attendance! In fact, these are held as a planning tool for our clergy to learn how to enhance their plans for the future.

In 2015, Upper New York's Retirement Seminars will be held in October in the Western Region and Central/Eastern Region; locations are to be determined. Watch the Conference website at www.unyumc.org for more details.

OneExchange reminder

The Upper New York Conference is continuing to provide to retirees the wellness/walking program administered by Virgin Pulse. Folks can earn \$25 per calendar quarter by meeting their step goals and a bonus amount if they meet all goals for the year.

If you are not already signed up, you can do so at:

www.virginhealthmiles.com/uppernewyork



Wanted: **Health Champions**

Do you have an encouraging story about how you've made a lifestyle change?

- Have you made wellness a priority in your every day life?
- Have you started an exercise routine that has eliminated your diabetes?
- Have you lost weight and increased your life expectancy?
- Have you quit unhealthy habits?
- Have you started a health and wellness ministry at your church that is presenting results?
- Have you started a new spiritual routine that has positively affected your life in a variety of ways?

Tell us your story! Together we can motivate and encourage each other to be healthier physically and in turn emotionally and spiritually.

Submission requirements: 250-300 words, with a headshot or activity photo (if possible), send via email to DebiMarshall@unyumc.org.



Results from the health education survey

The Benefits Office recently asked for input from HealthFlex participants about their desire for a Health Benefits Education workshop.

Of the 300 surveys sent, there were 67 respondents; with 60 of those indicating an interest in a workshop as described in the survey. It would be great if all 60 of those persons could or would attend an event, however 35 percent were willing to drive up to two hours and 58 percent were willing to drive up to one hour. And, of course, the respondents represented all areas of the Conference geographically, so no one or two locations would satisfy those expressed desires.

We will communicate to HealthFlex participants once we have determined the best way to move forward with providing this education.

*Featured
Recipe*

Summer Rainbow Salad

(Recipe found on allrecipes.com © 2015)

Ingredients:

- 3 vine-ripe tomatoes, diced
- 2 mangos – peeled, seeded, and cubed
- 2 avocados – peeled, pitted, and cubed
- 1 orange bell pepper, chopped
- 1 cup fresh blueberries
- 1 red onion, chopped
- ½ bunch cilantro, chopped
- ¼ cup fresh lime juice
- ½ cup pineapple juice

Directions:

- Place the tomato, mango, avocado, bell pepper, blueberries, onion, and cilantro into a large bowl. Pour the lime juice and pineapple juice overtop. Stir gently until evenly combined. Serve immediately for freshest taste.

