

## IN BRIEF

### Reminder: Native American Ministries Sunday is celebrated on April 10

Native American Ministries Sunday (NAMS) is April 10 – it is always celebrated the third Sunday after Easter. Giving on this special Sunday in The United Methodist Church helps nurture mission with Native Americans and provides scholarships for Native Americans attending United Methodist seminaries. Go to [www.tinyurl.com/NAMS2016](http://www.tinyurl.com/NAMS2016) for more information about NAMS.



### Sharing lunches and communion in the streets

At Open Street Communion – a mission of The ROAD at West Genesee United Methodist Church, an Upper New York Conference new faith community – members and volunteers hand out free lunches and offer prayer and communion to anyone walking by. In the winter, they also distribute socks, hand warmers, hats, gloves, and sleeping bags.

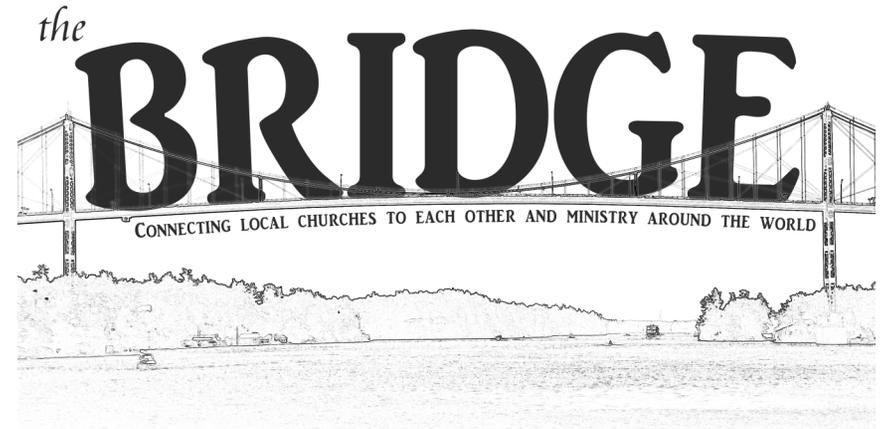
“The relief for some people that, when they come upon us, and they realize we’re handing out free lunches and there’s no catch to it and we offer prayer and communion, they’re just so dumbfounded by that; there’s a grace to that that’s just really powerful to see,” said the Rev. Rebecca Laird, pastor at The ROAD and Cicero UMC. “And for some people, it’s the only lunch they would have had that day.”

The ROAD hosts Open Street Communion at noon every Friday at Perseverance Park in downtown Syracuse. Go to [www.tinyurl.com/ROAD-OSC](http://www.tinyurl.com/ROAD-OSC) to read the full story and watch a video.

The *Bridge* is a Conference Communications Ministry tool that delivers to local churches news and stories of ministry from around the Upper New York Conference and the world.

[www.unyumc.org](http://www.unyumc.org)

APRIL IS *AFRICA 360* MONTH. SEE MORE INSIDE



The Upper New York Conference’s vision is to live the gospel of Jesus Christ and to be God’s love with our neighbors in all places.

## A LOOK INSIDE!

|   |        |
|---|--------|
| Celebrate with <i>Africa 360</i> in April               | Page 2 |
| Reminder: April 10 is Native American Ministries Sunday | Page 4 |
| Sharing lunches, communion in the streets of Syracuse   | Page 4 |

# Celebrate with *Africa 360* in April

By Kathleen Rubino

April is *Africa 360* Month, with celebrations all month long throughout the Upper New York Conference that will help raise funds and awareness for *Africa 360* – the Upper New York Conference’s holistic plan for health and education initiatives in Africa that benefits *Imagine No Malaria* and Africa University.

“Hopefully, these ideas inspire other congregations to action,” said Laurel O’Connor, Upper New York’s *Africa 360* field coordinator. “Different congregations may host different events, but our mission is the same: Saving lives and educating leaders.”

On April 17, churches across the Conference are invited to celebrate *Africa 360* Sunday. UNY churches are asked to share in a unified prayer that day – UMH #456, “For Courage to Do Justice” – to help unite everyone in mind and spirit as the 2016 Annual Conference session approaches. Churches with audio-visual capacity are also invited to show the *Africa 360* video to keep focused on the shared mission of *Africa 360*. Go to [www.tinyurl.com/A360-toolkit](http://www.tinyurl.com/A360-toolkit) to access the video.

Through *Africa 360*, the Conference has pledged to raise \$1 million for *Imagine No Malaria* – an organization dedicated to reducing malaria deaths in sub-Saharan Africa through the distribution of insecticide-treated bed



nets, communication of life-saving information, improvement of health facilities, and training of a grassroots network of community health workers. Additionally, the Conference has pledged to raise \$1 million to endow eight Africa University scholarships to train health and administration specialists who follow the mindset of Africa University and “Learn Here, Live Here, Lead Here.”

The events throughout the month culminate on April 25, when people across the globe will take part in a

wide range of activities to mark World Malaria Day. There is more information to come about what will happen in the Upper New York Conference that day with an event called “Take a Bite Out of Malaria.”

Below is a list of *Africa 360* Month events planned to date across the Upper New York Conference:

- April 9 – *Africa 360* Benefit Concert – hosted by the Christ United Methodist Church in Moravia, Auburn First UMC, Lansing UMC, Homer UMC, and the Casowasco

Camp & Retreat Center – from 4-6 p.m. at the Moravia UMC.

- April 10 – *Africa 360* featured at adult forum from 9:15-10 a.m. at the Fayetteville UMC.
- April 16 – Pancake breakfast hosted by the Preston, Plymouth, North Norwich, Broad Street in Norwich, Oxford, McDonough, and Smithville Center UMCs from 7-11 a.m. at the Norwich VFW, 61 E. Main St., Norwich.
- April 17 – Upper New York Area Resident Bishop Mark J. Webb visits the Saratoga Springs UMC to accept a gift in honor of Bruce Conklin on *Africa 360* Sunday.
- April 24 – *Imagine No Malaria* celebration at the Trinity Church Grand Island and Pendleton Center UMCs.
- April 25 – “Take a Bite out of Malaria” for World Malaria Day, more information to follow about this Conference-wide event.

Is your church hosting an *Africa 360* event in April? Let us know! Email [Africa360@unyumc.org](mailto:Africa360@unyumc.org).

Where does the *Africa 360* initiative currently stand? To date, approximately 25 percent of Upper New York’s churches are participating, but that number doesn’t tell the whole story because the only churches that have been counted are those that have sent in pledge cards or started sending in funds.