



The Promise of Harvest  
2015

# Upper New York ADVOCATE



The Daily Advocate is a special publication for the 2015 Annual Conference session. Daily issues will be distributed on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.

## Young Adults 'Pass the Baton' at Thursday morning worship

Young Adult Ministries led morning worship on Thursday, May 28, at the 2015 Annual Conference session. As Laurel O'Connor, field coordinator for *Africa 360*, said, "It's all about how we tell the story ... a Biblical story told not as much by words but by actions."

So that's exactly what one young adult did: took action.

Theresa Eggleston acted out the stories of Moses and Joshua from the Book of Exodus, where Joshua fought Alamek, Aaron and Bur helped Moses hold up his staff at the top of the hill, and Moses received the tablets from God.

Pastor Ben O'Connor, appointed at the Lycoming United Methodist Church, spoke to these stories, emphasizing that, "We are in the middle of the story, somewhere between the beginning and Amen."

Pastor O'Connor said it's the story



Laurel O'Connor "Passing the Baton"

that starts with God creating something to be in relationship with His people.

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**M**embers exceeded the *Stop Hunger Now* goal by packaging 75,168 meals for school feeding programs around the world; a future announcement will detail specifically where the meals will be sent. *Photo by Stephen J. Hustedt*

### Equitable Comp report, recommendations adopted

The Commission on Equitable Compensation presented its recommendations on Thursday at the 2015 Annual Conference session, which were adopted.

The largest commission recommendation – and the one that garnered the most conversation – involved the creation of a Moving Policy, that "will now cause our pastors to move away from being their own movers," said Upper New York Resident Bishop Mark J. Webb. "It's a way in which we continue to care for those who God has called to lead us."

This policy creates a uniform way of moving, institutes Conference and district moving coordinators to handle moving details, and lays out a plan to finance moves.

"Regardless of the size of the church, they aren't prepared when a pastor moves," said the Rev. Cathy Stengel, pastor at the Rush United Methodist church. "It [the new policy] helps churches of all sizes prepare for this process so they are not financially undermined when they have to move a pastor."

The plan is a cost-sharing arrangement in which the most any church will pay towards a move is \$2,250. This sum will be acquired by a church as it remits \$450 per year for five years to the Conference treasurer that will be held in escrow in a moving account. The moving account will pay for moving expenses, and the Conference will provide additional support.

"It doesn't seem like a terrible burden that we'll have money available when it comes time to move a pastor," said Cathy Honrath, lay member at the Afton UMC. "It actually seems like a blessing to me."

## Election results announced through Thursday's plenary

With 24 hours of plenary session behind them, members at the 2015 Annual Conference session were less than one-sixth of the way toward electing 28 representatives needed for conferences in 2016.

Three laity – Dr. Scott Johnson (elected on Wednesday), Greg Forrester, and Riley O'Flynn – and one clergy member – the Rev. Bill Allen – have been elected to date.

The first six clergy and laity elected are delegates to the 2016 General Conference session.

The next six clergy and laity elected are delegates to the 2016 Northeastern Jurisdictional (NEJ) Conference; four alternates will also be elected – two clergy, two laity. The first two clergy

and laity of the NEJ delegates will also serve as alternates to the General Conference session.

Prior to the first ballot of the day, the Rev. Bill Gottschalk-Fielding made a motion to only show the top 72 clergy vote-getters on the screen along with their respective four-digit number.

"The screen can only render 36 names at a time, so the 72 would limit us to two screens and would be a good way to capture the leading vote get- ters," Rev. Gottschalk-Fielding offered.

After opposition to the motion was aired by the Rev. Dick Barton, the Rev. Wilson Jones offered an amendment, suggesting instead of limiting the list to the top 72, cutting off the list at those who receive four votes or less.

With the margin too close for two votes on the amendment, Upper New York Resident Bishop Mark J. Webb called for a vote utilizing the hand-held devices primarily used to elect delegates, that way the session could receive instant results.

The amendment was approved.

Why are there so many invalid ballots? A representative from Option Technologies – the company the Conference contracted to facilitate the electronic voting – said there are two ways a ballot can be considered "spoiled" or "invalid" for its system: a person votes for a candidate more than one time during a ballot or a person makes fewer selections than is required during a ballot.

## Young Adults 'Pass the Baton' –

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"Our relationships are stills strained; our relationship with God, with humanity," he said. "But that is where relationships are the most important because we are made to be in relationship with each other."

Pastor O'Connor pointed out that Moses needed Joshua to watch his back, and Joshua needed Moses to teach him how to read a crowd, similar to how we need each other. One example of improving through working together is a relay race, where what we can accomplish together trumps what we can do alone.

"Together we are better, we are stronger, and we are faster," he said. "We are in the middle of a very complicated relay race that we call Christianity, that we call the Church. It is full of baton passing – from the older generation to the younger generation, from the younger generation to the older generation, from peer to peer, from clergy to laity, and from laity to clergy. This is the intricate web that we call ministry, and it is done in relationship with each other."

And that's where a visual representation of #PassTheBatonUNY comes in. Mentors and mentees have the opportunity to pass a symbolic baton to each

other (and others at AC session); mentees sign their mentor's name in black on a white-painted wooden cross and mentors signing mentees names on a white-painted wooden flame, with the hope that both will be covered by the end of AC session, thus depicting the denomination's logo. It is a way to recognize mentors and thank them for their support. The cross and flame are in the hallway outside the plenary.

Worship also included lively Christian rock music and a Nigerian song sang in both English and Yoruba languages led by Ian Urriola, and the presentation of the mosquito net superheroes fundraiser for *Africa 360*.



Upper New York Resident Bishop Mark J. Webb moved the bar of the Conference to the dining room on Thursday afternoon for conversation circles, an opportunity for members to gather in small groups of approximately 10 to discuss resolutions and petitions referring to human sexuality prior to voting on them by a printed ballot. *Photo by Dan Wistrup*