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how well their hard work pays off. Tammy said, “We are blessed with an awesome ministry” and Erica, who timed the kids coming in from their 1-mile race, said, “There are so many smiles, which makes the event so much fun.”

Because of the Ramp it up 5K, many individuals in need are able to access their very own homes with ease. And like Charlie, they are able to get out and enjoy the company of others. This is just one way that Cortland First



UMC is living our common vision to be God’s love for all people in all places.

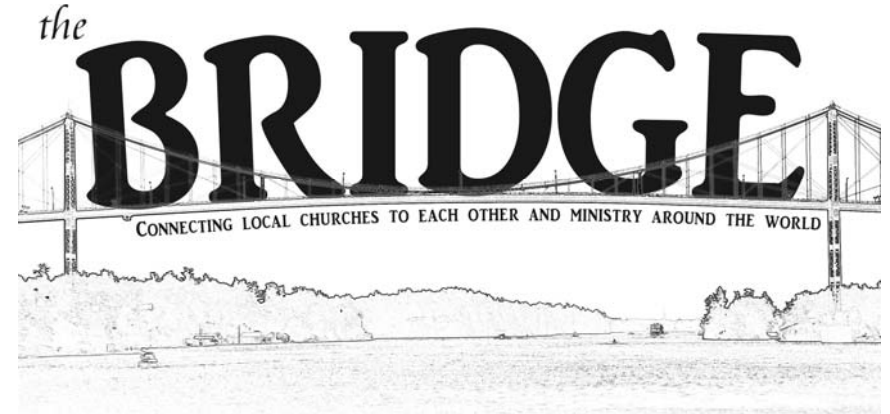
Laity District Days locations announced

Bishop Mark J. Webb has announced the following dates for the District Days with the Bishop coming in the fall of 2017 and the spring of 2018. Locations for the event have now been confirmed for each District as follows:

- Mountain View – 9/7 @ Avoca UMC
- Cornerstone -9/17 @ Christ First, Jamestown
- Finger Lakes - 9/26 @ Seneca Falls UMC
- Niagara Frontier – 10/3 @ Harris Hill UMC
- Albany – 10/5 @ Shenendehowa UMC
- Adirondack – 10/19 @ Queensbury UMC
- Oneonta – 10/30 @ Unadilla UMC
- Northern Flow – 11/16 @ Canton UMC
- Crossroads – 2/1/18 @ The United Methodist Center
- Mohawk – 2/13/18 @ Sherrill: Christ Church
- Binghamton – 3/1/18 Endicott First UMC
- Genesee Valley – 3/19/18 @Farmington UMC

Each event will take place from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. Stay tuned for more details on what to expect at the District Days.

Learn what Upper New York Conference leaders learned from their trip to South Korea, hosted by the Bupyeong Methodist Church, by visiting <http://www.unyumc.org/news/perspectives>.



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!

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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

From the desk of Bishop Mark J. Webb: Response to Charlottesville

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Having just returned this morning from some time away with limited access to news, my heart breaks upon reading the reports of what occurred in Charlottesville, VA on Saturday, August 12th. This is evil fully manifested. As the Church of Jesus Christ, we must stand strongly against this kind of hate and racism. I urge you to pray and continue to seek ways to be the hands and feet of Christ. Through your actions and your words boldly proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ.

This is a spiritual matter, plain and simple. May we remember that Christ calls us to renounce the spiritual forces of wickedness, reject the evil powers of

this world, and repent of our sin. Christ calls us to accept the freedom and power God gives to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves. And Christ calls us to confess him as Savior, put our whole trust in his grace, and promise to serve him as Lord, in union with the church which he has opened to people of all ages, nations, and races.

Let us confidently offer the light of Christ, as it alone will pierce the darkness within our world.



—Bishop Mark J. Webb

Ramping it up in Cortland

Imagine not having access to your own home. Seventy-four year old Charlie Yager faced this situation in June of 2016. He struggled with lung problems for several years and was hospitalized for two weeks with severe breathing problems. Charlie came home on hospice, in a wheelchair, yet no way to enter his home. Within 24 hours, Cortland First United Methodist Church's Ramp it Up ministry came to Charlie's house and built him a ramp.

When Charlie came home that day last June, he was given two weeks to live. Now, over a year later, Charlie still struggles with breathing and is wheel-chair bound for the remainder of his life, but

feels well most days. Janet Zimmerman, his daughter, said, "The Ramp it up 5K is a God-send and the fact that the ramp ministry was able to build a ramp in an emergency situation amazes me. I'm pretty sure were it not for the ramp, my father wouldn't be alive today. He is a mover and needs to be out and about. He's a very social person."

The Ramp it Up 5K that Janet mentioned is the primary fundraiser for Cortland First UMC's ramp ministry. This year marked the fourth year of the race; it was held on July 15. The race registration cost was \$20 and included a t-shirt and sweat towel as well as a pancake breakfast after the race for each partici-

part, which was made possible by 48 local business sponsors and food donations for the breakfast. There were also generous prizes given for the overall winner of each gender as well as the top 3 runners in the age groups 18 and under, 19-30, and 31+, including tablets for the overall winners.

This year, there were almost 70 runners. The day began with a one-mile kids run, which was on an out-and back course.

Runners came from as far as Albany and Rochester. Melissa Weiner, the fastest female, who ran the race in 20:12, came from Ithaca, N.Y. She said, "I always like to run races that have a good cause. I saw a flyer for this in Ithaca and decided to sign up."

Twenty-seven year old Emilie Searle is disabled and participated in the race in her wheelchair for the third year in a row. In the near future, she will directly benefit from the race as Ramp it Up builds a ramp for her home. Emilie said, "Ramps are so expensive. This event is an amazing ministry and obviously important to someone like me. I'm so grateful that I will be able to have a ramp installed at my house."

Funds gained from the Ramp it Up 5K pay for all of the building materials for ramps and the ramps are installed by volunteers. Each year, five to nine ramps are mounted throughout New York State. Ramps are even built for individuals who need them temporarily after surgery, and then they are moved for someone who needs one permanently.



Rev. Charles Smith II, the pastor of Cortland First UMC, said, "What is most wonderful about this event is that we get to connect with the community in two ways...one is by having the actual event and seeing all the people have a lot of fun and the other is in the mission work of building the ramps, which is made possible by the proceeds of the race."

Race organizers Tammy Hoover and her daughter Erica Eaton are proud of

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