

through social media.

We will build off of the success of the Conference blog in engaging each other in a variety of conversations—from fun to serious and from personal to big picture.

We will build off of the success of our video ministry and start producing shorter videos specifically designed for social media that will sometimes complement longer videos designed for worship settings and sometimes stand on their own.

We will also be inviting voices from around the Conference to be heard as we have with the Advocate and

other Communications channels over the last few years.

If you are not following the Upper New York Conference on Facebook, Instagram, and other social media platforms now is the time to start. Go to <http://www.unyumc.org/news/connect> to learn more about how to connect with us through social media.



Stephen J. Hustedt

In Brief

Important dates for 2018

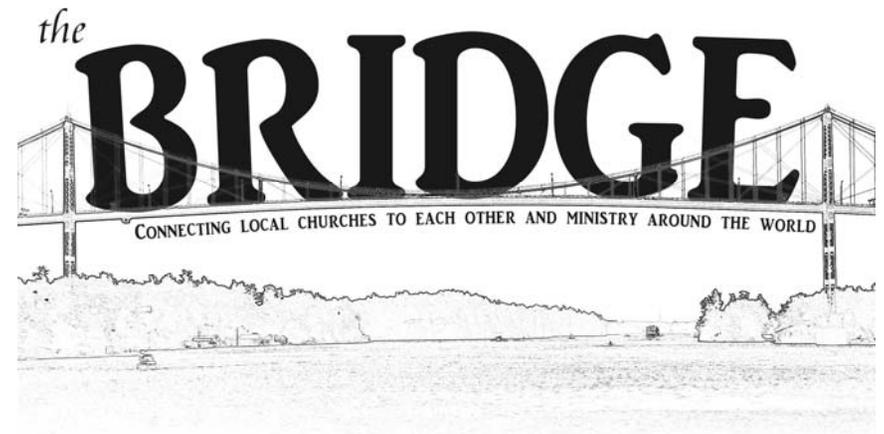
Editor's note: *Following are some important dates to remember as 2018 approaches. Please mark your calendars now so that you don't miss these deadlines and opportunities to participate in the life of the Upper New York Conference.*

- Jan. 2: EZRA system opens
- Jan. 10: Final day to submit Ministry Shares
- Mid-End Jan.: Narrative Budget Booklet becomes available
- Feb. 15: Deadline for submission of petitions and resolutions (from Individuals, churches and unofficial bodies of UNY) as well as deadline for reports and action items from Conference teams
- Feb. 15: Final date to update statistics in EZRA system
- Early March: Annual Conference registration opens
- Early April: Vol. I of the Journal is available
- May 31-June 2 Annual Conference (Onondaga Community College)

*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

The next issue of the Bridge will be available on the Conference website the week before the third Sunday of the January for use in the local church on Sunday, Jan. 20 or after.



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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Bishop Mark J. Webb's 2017 Christmas/Advent message

Editor's note: Bishop Mark J. Webb has a Christmas/Advent message for the member of the Upper New York Conference. The transcription is below. To watch the video message visit: <https://vimeo.com/245073990>.

I love the words of the advent hymn entitled "Send Your Word:"

Send your word, o Lord, like the rain falling down upon the earth.

Send your word.

We seek your endless grace, with souls that hunger and thirst, sorrow and agonize

We would all be lost in dark without your guiding light.

Send your word, o Lord, like the wind, blowing down upon the earth.

Send your word.

We seek your wondrous power, pureness that rejects all sins, though they persist and cling.

Bring us to complete victory; set us all free indeed.

Send your word, o Lord, like the dew, coming gently upon the hills.

Send your word.

We seek your endless love.

For life that suffers in strife with adversities and hurts, send your healing power of love;

We long for your new word.

As we journey through another season of advent and prepare for another celebration of Christmas, this hymn is my prayer. Over the past weeks and months, we have continued to witness and live within a world that is deeply hurting. Every day the news points to the reality of brokenness, fear and loss. The struggles of racism, sexism, abuse, violence and many other forms of spiritual darkness seem overwhelming.

I watch as the world seeks a response, a fix to all that is swirling around us. Hear the good news! Proclaim the good news! For today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. This Savior who proclaimed that he came into the world, not to judge the world, but to save the world. This Savior who continues to offer the hope that He is the way, the truth and the life. This Savior who spoke the powerful words that he is the light of the world, and those who follow him shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of Christ.

Send your word, o Lord!

The world needs the truth of Advent and Christmas. The communities in which we live and serve need the promise and assurance of a Savior. The solution to the spiritual forces of evil that



surround us was sent in a baby born in a manger, a savior who taught a new way, lived a sinless life and offered his life on the cross that we might be reconciled to god and then propelled into the world to offer that reconciliation found in Jesus Christ!

This advent and Christmas season let us be bold in receiving the gift of Jesus, let him transform you. Let us be courageous in sharing the good news of this Savior with those around us. Let us watch with joy as Jesus transforms the

lives of others and powerfully pierces the darkness with light!

Let us pray and live the promise for our lives and within the lives of others – Send your word, o Lord!

Jodi, Ben, Tyler and Lyndsay join me in wishing you a blessed and holy Christmas!

—Bishop Mark J. Webb

Engaging with the UNY Conference through social media

By Stephen J. Husted, Director of Communications

Some significant changes have taken place in the Upper New York Conference

Communications ministry area recently, which has given the Conference Communications team the opportunity to think strategically about how to continue to improve the ways we tell our story. In

assessing our communications channels' strengths and weaknesses, one means of telling our story was clearly in need of work. That area was social media.

In the coming weeks and months,

members of the Upper New York Conference will see some major changes in how, where, and what we communicate

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