

Continued from page 3

their home and expressed to the students that they are welcome to come anytime, not just on Fridays. Barbara said, "If you need a place to study or just hang out and relax and watch T.V., our doors are open."

Caleb Smith is one of the American students attending the group. He grew up as United Methodist in the Albany, New York area. He is a member of the praise band at Oswego First United Methodist Church. Caleb said, "This (Friday night gathering) is something I look forward to every week."

Ray explained why he and Barbara are excited to lead a Christian small group for college students; he said, "I went to a State University and I know

what it's like to be a Christian when it seems that nobody else is. I am excited to offer a place where Christians feel comfortable getting together and getting to know one another."

While the way we do ministry with college students is changing in many ways, one thing is for sure, college can be one of the most critical times in a young person's life, and it is a time of discernment for many. College ministries, such as Pastor Chun's, can strengthen college students' faith, helping to assure that the mission of the United Methodist Church, to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world, is achieved.

In Brief

Registration is now open for UPWORD 2017

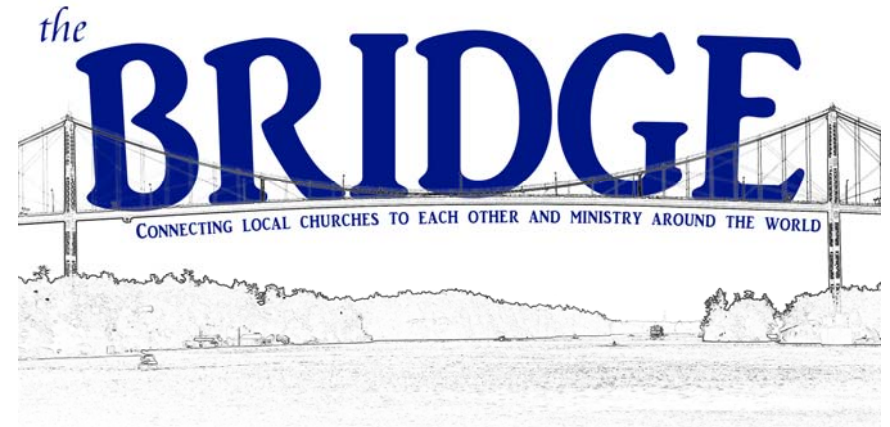
Spread the word to all youth in grades sixth through 12th—UPWORD! is the spring event held by the Upper New York Conference's Council of Youth Ministry (CCYM). The theme this year, short and to the point, is "God is." UPWORD 2017 is an opportunity for youth from all over the Upper New York Conference to experience community and grow in their spiritual journeys through worship experiences, workshops, late night activities, and fun interactions. The event will be held March 31-April 2 at the Holiday Inn in Liverpool, N.Y. Visit <http://bit.ly/upwordspring2017> to register.



*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

For Black History Month resources visit:
www.unyumc.org/resources/black-history-month-resources



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!

Ministry with college students at SUNY Oswego

Page 2

Registration is now open for UPWORD 2017

Page 4

Ministry with college students at SUNY Oswego

By Shannon Hodson

Living a mere three blocks away from a college campus presented the perfect opportunity for a pastor to begin a ministry for college students. When he was appointed to Oswego First UMC in 2011, Pastor Yohang Chun began a Friday-night meal and bible study at the church parsonage for international students from SUNY Oswego. The program has continued each year with new students who learn of the small group primarily through word of mouth.

Pastor Chun is Korean as are many of the international students at SUNY Oswego. When Pastor Chun started the

program, he said “My wife cooks delicious Korean food. Many of the students missed home and their ethnic cuisine. My policy is to fill their stomach and their spirit.”

Each Friday, Pastor Chun leads the students through a bible study followed by a meal. Students who come to the Friday night gatherings are from many different backgrounds. Most, like Pastor Chun, are from South Korea. Students from other ethnic backgrounds, such as Indian and Chinese, have also attended. Many Christian backgrounds are represented, and some have never been to church.



Photo by Pastor Yohang Chun

Over 50 Korean students from SUNY Oswego celebrated the Korean New Year celebration at Oswego First UMC earlier this year.

Dong Gun Lee and his wife HyunJoo Ahn began attending the Friday night gatherings in the fall of 2016 when one of Dong Gun’s friends told him about the gatherings. He grew up Catholic in South Korea and his wife who was born and raised in a Baptist household in South Korea has since converted to Catholicism.

Dong Gun and HyunJoo’s five-month old son, Daniel, attends the gatherings with them. HyunJoo, who studies communications and hopes one day to become a psychologist, said, “It is so nice to get together with people who understand me and who share the same beliefs as me.”

Pastor Chun brings the international students together on other occasions as well. They have a large Thanksgiving

celebration as well as a Korean New Year celebration. They also volunteer at the Salvation Army twice a year, serving meals. Pastor Chun said, “It makes me happy to see how the students enjoy serving the community.”

Seeing how the program has been a success to international students, Pastor Chun has initiated a gathering for American college students this school year as well. He has asked Ray and Barbara Morrison to join and lead the American students at the parsonage on Friday nights. They met Pastor Chun when they began attending the Oswego First United Methodist Church in 2016. Barbara is a Registered Nurse and Ray is a business librarian at SUNY Oswego.

Barbara and Ray, who have two adult sons, are excited to have students in

Continued on page 4



Photo by Shannon Hodson

Korean and American students work on an icebreaker activity at the first Friday-night bible study for the Spring 2017 semester.