

IN BRIEF

Meet Bishop Cynthia Moore-Koikoi

Cynthia Moore-Koikoi, a district superintendent in the Baltimore-Washington Conference, was elected as a bishop of The United Methodist Church Wednesday evening, July 13, during the 2016 Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference in Lancaster, Pa.

Moore-Koikoi sees herself, she said, “as a bridge-builder,” clear and confident about what she believes, while also respecting others who might not believe the same way. Growing up as an African-American woman in an often discriminatory culture and church, Moore-Koikoi believes she has a unique voice. “As a woman of color, I have learned the gift of perseverance,” she said, “being able to hold onto hope in the midst of oppression.” Our denomination needs that,” said Moore-Koikoi. “As our pews become emptier, as we experience more financial difficulties, we have to hold out hope. I’ve had to use my spiritual eyes.”



Meet Bishop LaTrelle Miller Easterling

LaTrelle Miller Easterling, Metro Boston Hope district superintendent in the New England Conference, has been elected a bishop of The United Methodist Church. She was elected Thursday morning, July 14, on the 17th ballot of the 2016 Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference in Lancaster, Pa.

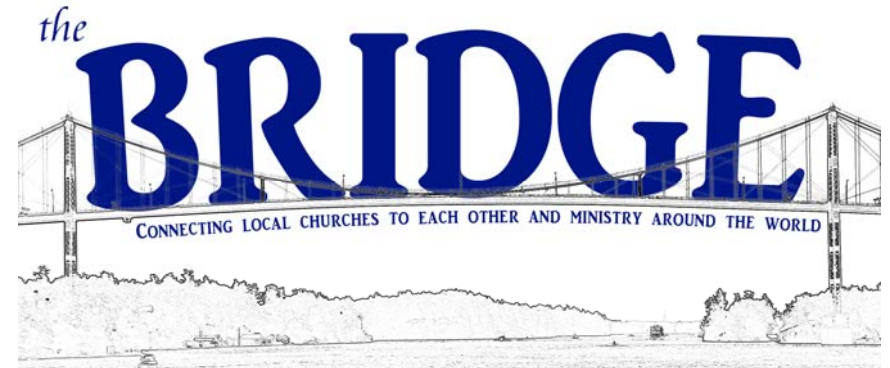
When asked about inclusivity during the episcopal interview process, then Rev. Easterling said, “I know what it feels like to be excluded. I know what it feels like to be present but ignored.” But getting to know one another can change that, she said. “Once we get to know each other, it’s almost impossible to hate, it’s almost impossible to continue excluding, it’s almost impossible to remain where you were. We are changed when we hear one another’s story.”



*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.*

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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.

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Bishop Mark J. Webb reassigned to the UNY Episcopal Area beginning Sept. 1

Editor's Note: September 1 is the official start date for all United Methodist Bishops in the United States. Reassigned to the Upper New York Episcopal Area, there is much to look forward to as Bishop Mark J. Webb continues to lead the Upper New York Conference for the next four years. Also featured in this issue, meet the two new Bishops elected at the Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference, Bishop Cynthia Moore-Koikoi and Bishop LaTrelle Miller Easterling.

On Friday July 15, at the Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference, Upper New York (UNY) Area Resident Bishop Mark J. Webb was reassigned to the UNY Episcopal Area. This means that the Upper New York Conference will be under his leadership for the next four years.

The Rev. Bill Gottschalk-Fielding – Conference Director of Connectional Ministries and Executive Assistant to the Bishop served as Upper New York's clergy representative on the Jurisdictional Episcopacy Committee. Reflecting on many of Bishop Webb's accomplishments, Rev. Gottschalk-Fielding said, "He has preached in local churches (large, small, urban, rural, thriving, and struggling) almost every other Sunday every year he's been in Upper New York. He's met with hundreds of local church clergy and lay people in their districts to teach about leadership and to listen to leaders share their struggles and triumphs. He's invested in our youth, giving midnight keynote talks to youth at UpWord and hosting an annual Confirmation Retreat each spring. He's insisted our conference

face our financial challenges even while encouraging us to believe God always gives enough. He inspired UNY to tie our commitment to Africa University with *Imagine No Malaria* through A360."

In his first Quadrennium of leadership, Bishop Webb has reminded us we are a people with a clear mission: to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. He's also helped us reclaim our understanding that local churches are the primary places where this mission is lived out.

Sherri Rood, Dean of the UNY Cabinet has been very impressed by Bishop Webb's approach to transforming churches and lives. She said, "Under Bishop Webb's guidance, conference leadership continues to seek ways to serve local churches and empower them for ministry. Bishop Webb has encouraged us to create ways to revitalize our existing congregations and create new faith communities in order to reach new people. He has challenged us to ask deeper questions in order to help our congregations move beyond institutional existence and become fruitful and effective places of life and faith where people meet Christ and lives are transformed. Bishop Webb's humility, wisdom, and sense of humor have blessed our sessions of Annual Conference and our teams and committees. Through his leadership, we have been strengthened and are finding forward momentum as the Upper New York Conference. I give thanks to God for his leadership."

Bishop Webb guided conference leaders and staff to refocus their work on supporting local churches in fulfilling their mission. He has also brought about the focus that the most important thing for the Conference to do in this season is to train, equip, and deploy Christian leaders.

Susan Hardy, appointed as UNY Conference lay leader at our Annual Conference last month, is excited to have the opportunity to work with Bishop Webb. Susan said, "When Bishop Webb preaches, we become a unified conference, focused on the grace and glory of Our Creator. We are no longer distracted by regional claims, or differences in our views of what constitutes a truly open table. We remember that we are more fully sisters and brothers through Christ Jesus. May our Bishop continue to shepherd us toward health and wholeness."

With Bishop Webb's reassignment, we can expect that the direction he has been leading over the last four years will continue to gain traction and move forward. In a statement that Bishop Webb released on July 18, following his reassignment, he highlighted some of his goals for the Conference for the next four years:

- To increase the capacity of Christ-following leaders



- To multiply the number of vital congregations that offer relevant and authentic worship, pathways for discipleship, mission, and outreach opportunities
- To continue to create new places for new people
- To address the racism that exists in our society and church
- To call us to the discipline of prayer in new and bold ways
- To increase the worship attendance in our churches
- To increase our ministry with the poor and marginalized
- To increase our ministry with youth and young adults
- To increase the capacity of our stewardship
- To trust that God is leading us and to be obedient to the movement of God's spirit

The Future is bright for the Upper New York Conference. Let us all look forward to what the next four years will bring.