

IN BRIEF

Susan Hardy elected as laity leader

On June 3, during the afternoon plenary at the 2016 UNY Annual Conference, Susan Hardy, Cornerstone District Lay Leader was elected as the Conference Lay Leader. Susan brings with her decades of leadership skills. On June 2, during the laity session, she shared her sentiment about the Annual Conference for laity, expressing, "What do the scriptures tell us about discipleship? It takes courage; it takes trust; it will take us to new places...Did you arrive here by accident? No, we are here because we were invited here. We are lay leaders; we are here to learn how to be disciples." Read the full article at <http://tinyurl.com/susanhardyUNY>.



Rev. Butler to bungee jump for Africa 360

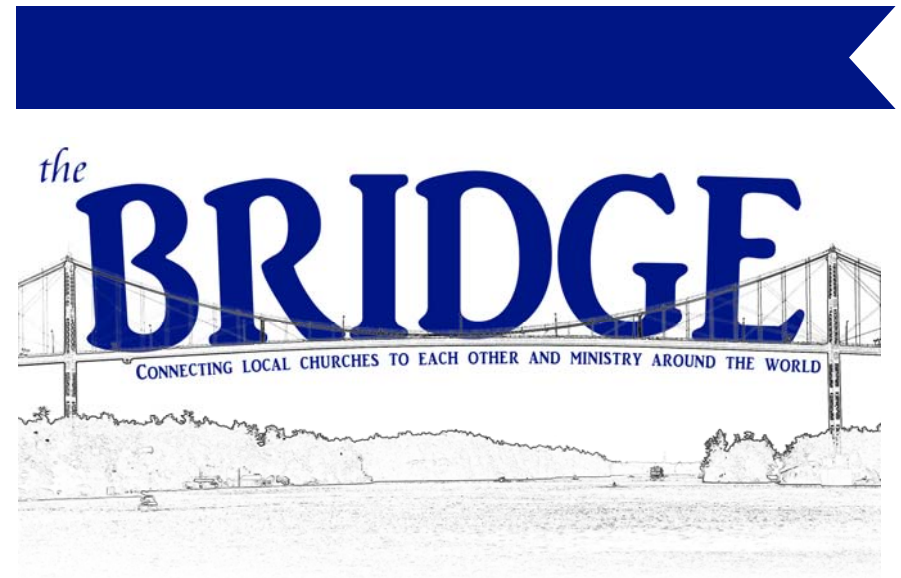
In the fall of 2015, The Rev. Wayne Butler, District Superintendent of the Niagara District, set a challenge for the district's churches to raise \$20,000 for *Africa 360*. He said that if they met the challenge, he would do the bungee jump at Darien Lake. The churches more than surpassed his challenge! Rev. Wayne will be going to Darien Lake for the payoff - he will fly on the Redhawk bungee jump!

If you have any questions or would like to jump with Wayne, contact Julie in the Niagara Frontier District Office at (716) 276-8631.



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Two from UNY to be considered for bishop at Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference

Every four years, United Methodist laity and clergy delegates gather regionally (in five Jurisdictions in the US and in Central Conferences outside the US). One of the key roles of Jurisdictional Conference is to elect new bishops to fill vacancies created by retiring bishops. Bishops are required to retire if they reach the age of 68 by July 1 in the year of the Jurisdictional Conference.

In support of the Jurisdictional Conference process, Annual Conferences may endorse one or more candidates to be considered for the role of Bishop.

On June 4, at the 2016 session of the UNY Annual Conference, the endorsement of the Rev. Cathy Hall Stengel and the Rev. Rebekah Sweet as nominees for the episcopacy was supported. Rev. Hall and Rev. Sweet will be sent to the Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference in Lancaster, Pa., July 11 - 15, 2016 where bishops will be discerned.

How exactly does this process of electing bishops work?

Elected delegates from each of the Annual Conferences in the Northeastern Jurisdiction will interview the nominees and elect two new bishops through a balloting process. The church's *Book of Discipline* recom-



mends that at least 60 percent of those present and voting be required to elect. Under normal circumstances, a Bishop can serve two four-year terms within the same Conference and then they are required to move. Under special circumstances, a bishop can serve three four-year terms in the same Conference.

Bishops may also be required to move based on decisions made by the Jurisdictional Episcopacy Committee. This committee is made up of one clergy representative and one lay representative from each Conference. They serve four-year terms and meet every February to converse with each Conference's Bishop. They

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get to know the bishops' skills, experience, gifts, and struggles.

During Jurisdictional Conference, the Jurisdictional Episcopacy Committee collaboratively discerns whether or not certain areas would benefit from having a different bishop as their area's resident bishop. Two very important tools that this committee uses are reports describing what each area is like and what their leadership needs are and evaluations of each bishop (based on surveys).

The Rev. Bill Gottschalk-Fielding – Conference Director of Connectional Ministries and Executive Assistant to the Bishop serves as Upper New

York's clergy representative on the Jurisdictional Episcopacy Committee. Describing the discernment process that takes place at the Jurisdictional Conference over whether or not to move bishops and where to move them, Rev. Gottschalk-Fielding said, "This process is a very intentional discernment process. It's prayerful and thoughtful and there is a lot of conversation. We're looking for a consensus on each decision. This doesn't mean that each person feels 100 percent satisfied with the decision, but at the very least, they understand why putting a certain bishop in a certain area is the best fit."

The fact that the Jurisdictional Episcopacy meeting goes into the wee hours of the night illustrates just how much discernment is involved. On Friday July 15, Northeastern jurisdictional bishop assignments will be announced.

This is when we will find out if our Bishop, Mark J. Webb, will be returning to Upper New York or moving to another area's Conference.

Bishops are consecrated at the jurisdictional conference and are expected to report for work in their new areas September 1.