

IN BRIEF

Women in the pulpit: UNY nearly four times the national average

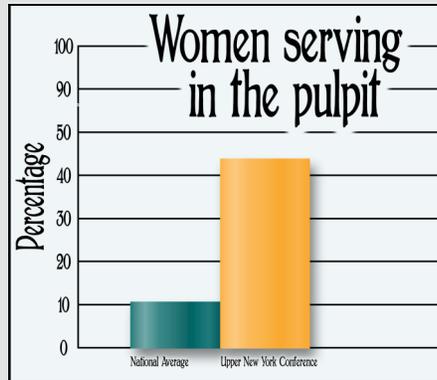
The Upper New York Conference is significantly ahead of the national curve when it comes to women serving in the pulpit.

According to a new analysis of Duke University's National Congregations Study, women serve as senior or solo pastoral leaders at just 11 percent of congregations in the United States – indicating essentially no overall increase from when the study was first done in 1998. However, the United Methodist Commission on the Status and Role of Women reports that 27 percent of The UMC's 54,262 active and retired clergy in 2014 were women.

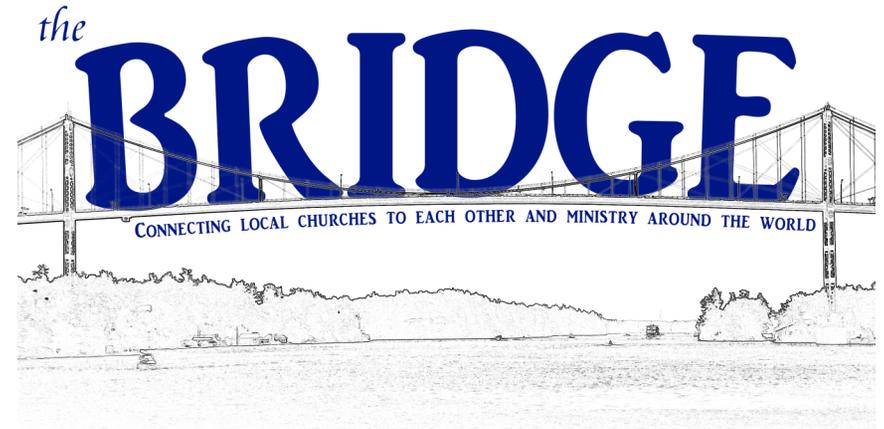
In Upper New York, the percentage is even closer to gender neutrality. The Conference database has 1,193 members identified as active or retired clergy, and 420 of them are female (35 percent). In fact, of the 639 clergy serving in some capacity – including both active and retired status – 277 are women, or 43.4 percent.

“Our Conference is among the leaders in empowering women in ministry,” said the Rev. Dr. Michelle Bogue-Trost, pastor at Central UMC in Endicott. “Yet, dialogue about the role and status of ordained women needs to continue. Even with the increasing presence of women in leadership, and some visible cracks in the so-called ‘stained glass ceiling,’ many women in ministry still face the reality that they must prove their call and abilities, especially in congregations that have never experienced the leadership of a woman pastor.”

Read the full story at www.unyumc.org.



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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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The *Bridge* is a Conference Communications Ministry tool that delivers to local churches news and stories of ministry from around the Conference and the world.

www.unyumc.org

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What are the Special Sundays?

Compiled from "Let's Go Fishing: Making Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World" and umc.org.

Ever wonder what a special Sunday is, why these days exist, and when each occurs? Well, read on to find answers to these pressing questions.

According to *The Book of Discipline 2012*, ¶1263:

The special Sundays in The United Methodist Church intended to illustrate the nature and calling of The Church are celebrated annually. The special Sundays are placed on the calendar to make clear the calling of The Church as the people of God and to give persons the opportunity to contribute offerings to special programs.

Special Sundays fall into four categories: Church-wide, additional offerings set by conferences, UNY Conference special Sunday, and special Sundays without offerings.

Church-wide special Sundays

There are six Church-wide special Sundays with specific celebration dates each year.

Human Relations Day Jan. 17, 2016

It is always celebrated the Sunday before the observance of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday. Human Relations Day supports community developers, United Methodist voluntary service, and youth offender rehabilitation programs. The goal of this Sunday is to strengthen United Methodist outreach in the United States and Puerto Rico, encouraging social justice and work with at-risk youth.

One Great Hour of Sharing March 6, 2016

It is always celebrated the fourth Sunday in Lent. One Great Hour of Sharing provides support for the United Methodist Committee on Relief, which assists people affected by crisis or chronic need with programs and projects in disaster response, health, sustainable agriculture, food security, relief supplies, and more.

Native American Ministries Sunday April 10, 2016

It is always celebrated the third Sunday of Easter. This special Sunday helps nurture mission with Native Americans and provides scholarships for Native Americans attending United Methodist seminaries.

Peace with Justice Sunday May 22, 2016

It is always celebrated the first Sunday after Pentecost. Peace with Justice Sunday supports peace with justice ministries through the General Board of Church and Society and the annual conferences, enabling The Church to have a voice in advocating for peace and justice.

World Communion Sunday Oct. 2, 2016

It is always celebrated the first Sunday in October. This special Sunday provides scholarships for United States' racial and ethnic minority students and international students at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

United Methodist Student Sunday Nov. 27, 2016

It is always celebrated the last Sunday in November. United Methodist Student

Africa 360 Sunday April 17, 2016

This is a day of shared prayer and celebration across UNY to support *Africa 360*, the Conference's holistic plan for health/education initiatives in Africa.

Special Sundays without offerings

There are four special Sundays that help focus attention on a specific aspect of The Church's ministry. There are no offerings collected on these days.

Heritage Sunday

Heritage Sunday is always celebrated the third Sunday of May. It is a day for United Methodist congregations to reflect on its heritage, celebrate where The Church has been, how it views itself today, and the meaning of Christian conferencing.

Laity Sunday

It is always celebrated the third Sunday in October. Laity Sunday celebrates the ministry of all lay Christians.

Organ and Tissue Donor Sunday

It is always celebrated the third Sunday in November and recognizes organ donation as an act of love and ministry.

Men's Ministry Sunday

The date for this special Sunday is set by the congregation and celebrates men's ministry in The Church and community.

Sunday provides loan and scholarship funds for undergraduate and graduate students attending United Methodist-related and other accredited colleges and universities.

Additional special offerings

In addition to the Church-wide special Sundays, there are four other Sundays with special offerings. Each conference sets the dates for these Sunday offerings.

Christian Education Sunday

This special Sunday's offering helps support and strengthen programs that nurture religion.

Disability Awareness Sunday

It celebrates people with disabilities and calls The Church and society to include those with disabilities. Offerings collected are used by conferences to create architectural and attitudinal accessibility in local churches.

Golden Cross Sunday Traditionally received in May

The offerings on this special Sunday are used for a conference's health and welfare ministries.

Rural Life Sunday

Offerings collected on Rural Life Sunday support ministries in rural areas within a conference.

Upper New York Conference special Sunday

The following special Sunday is specific to the Upper New York Conference, and therefore, is only celebrated by our Conference:

Learn more about your giving impact:

www.umcsgiving.org/your-impact