

IN BRIEF

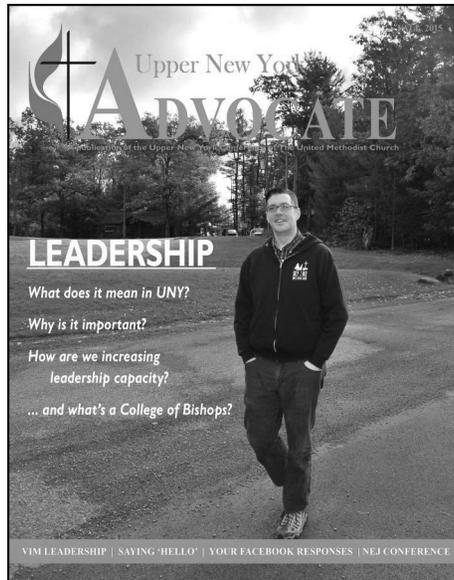
2015 Advent calendar for free download

Each year, retired United Methodist pastor the Rev. Merry Watters (pictured at right) and Pastor Tom Mousin, an Episcopal priest, prepare an Advent calendar appropriate for reprinting in church newsletters. This year's calendar is now available. For more information and to download the calendar, visit the Advent Calendar website at: www.thomasmousin.wordpress.com.



Fall issue of the *Advocate* available soon

The fall issue of the *Advocate* will be available in churches within the next couple of weeks. This themed issue focuses on leadership. Learn more about how the Upper New York Conference is working to increase leadership capacity, find useful resources about leadership, read about the role of a camp & retreat center director, enjoy our Leadership Glossary Quiz about the 15 least known leadership terms, and much more. Want to see an advance copy of this issue? Visit the Upper New York Conference's Issuu page at www.issuu.com/uppernewyork.

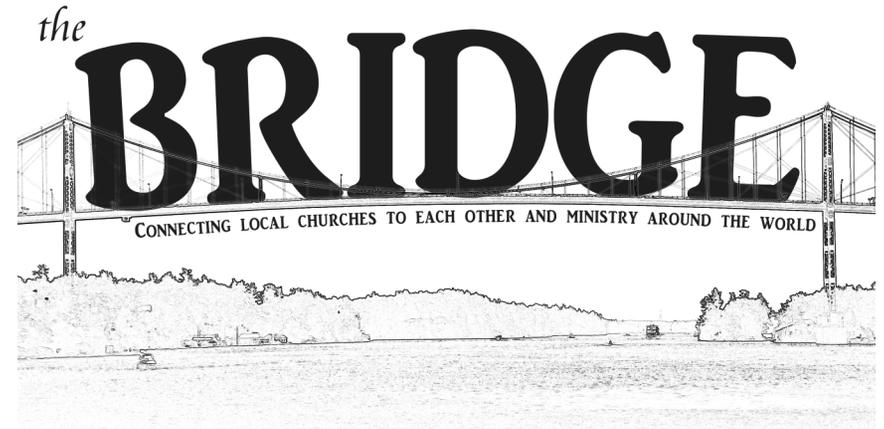


The Upper New York Conference and District Offices will be closed Nov. 26-27 for the Thanksgiving holiday.

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

REMINDER: NOV. 29 IS THE FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT



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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NOVEMBER 2015, VOL. 2

Bishop Webb: Let's transform the world through leaders, radical churches

By Kathleen Rubino

The 2015-2016 District Days tour is underway, as Upper New York Area Resident Bishop Mark J. Webb visited the Adirondack District on Oct. 26 and the Albany District on Oct. 27. (For a full list of the remaining District Days, go to www.tinyurl.com/15-16-DD-tour.) For photos of the District Days, go to www.tinyurl.com/neb2tph.

During each District Day, Bishop Webb will enjoy lunch and a session with clergy, followed by dinner with each District Leadership Team and district superintendent, and an evening session open to both laity and clergy. While each district can host the Bishop and Conference staff in different ways, Bishop Webb's overall message will be the same from district to district.

Transforming the world

"If we could find a way as clergy to worship together on a regular basis, our Church would be even more fruitful than it is," Bishop Webb said at one District Day. "I would offer you a challenge: Find ways to worship together."

Bishop Webb's clergy session emphasized ways in which clergy can exert their influence to live out the mission: "to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."

"Our mission has been given to us, and it's the same that has been given to any other church; it comes from Jesus," he said. "When the Upper New York Conference was formed, the leadership that led through that formation crafted a vision statement. That vision statement is a picture of God's preferred reality when, together, we are

living the mission that Jesus gave us."

The UNY Conference vision is "living the Gospel of Jesus Christ and being God's love with our neighbors in all places."

Bishop Webb emphasized that the mission is not accomplished by the structure of the Conference; disciples are made in the local church. The Conference can help in the process, but disciples are made as people in the churches build relationships with one another and grow deeper in their relationship with God.

"The purpose of the Conference is to grow Christ-following leaders who build healthy congregations that make disciples who make disciples so that the world will be transformed by the power and grace of God," Bishop Webb said.

Bishop Webb said the Conference must define its culture, and right now, its primary task is to increase the capacity of Christ-following leaders, both clergy and laity. The Conference can assist in this by multiplying vital congregations, planting new faith communities, aligning resources for the purpose and primary task, and communicating connectional ministry for the 21st century. He said churches must be willing to try new approaches to live the mission and vision, and to anchor the culture.

The Rev. Bill Gottschalk-Fielding, Executive Assistant to the Bishop and Director of Connectional Ministries, led a time of question groups, and the Rev. Dr. Aaron Bouwens, Director of Vital Congregations, addressed whether leaders are born or developed and discussed the 16 core competencies necessary for UNY clergy leaders.



Becoming the 'radical church'

"God is using you in amazing ways to offer the good news of Jesus to the world around you," Bishop Webb said.

Bishop Webb called attendees of the evening session to be the "radical church."

"I believe we are here to celebrate the call not just to be the Church but to be the radical Church, a Church to be used to bring hope and healing and joy and life," Bishop Webb said at one district day. "A radical church is intimate and solidly connected to the root, to the stem, to the vine, and that root has been and always will be Jesus Christ."

There are three main characteristics of a radical church: being willing or ready to be used, communicating in other languages, and boldly declaring faith. All three are demonstrated in

Acts 2:1-13, 37-47 as the disciples waited in one place when the Holy Spirit came upon them (willing to be used), Acts 2:2-8 as the disciples were given different tongues by the Holy Spirit (communicating in other languages), and Acts 2:14 as Peter proclaims the truth of Jesus (boldly declaring faith).

"If we will take on the characteristics of a radical church, we will see the results I believe God intends for the Church," Bishop Webb said.

"Radical! Dangerous! That is who and what God is calling us to be," Bishop Webb said. "God wants to change us, so that we can be used to change the world through the grace and power of God. Church, it is time for us to rise up; it is time for us to stop letting the world define us and allow God to use us to define and shape the world."

FIND MORE OF THE STORY ONLINE:



www.tinyurl.com/BDD2015Review