

IN BRIEF

UNY makes prayer beads for General Conference

Nancy Dibelius – coordinator of the Upper New York Conference’s *Day of Prayer* on April 23 – has made 20 sets of Protestant prayer beads on behalf of the Conference, which will be given to delegates at the 2016 General Conference session, May 10-20 in Portland, Ore. Since the deadline to receive prayer beads for General Conference is April 30, these beads will not be prayed over during *Day of Prayer*, but will be prayed over before they are mailed. Districts interested in making prayer beads to be prayed over on Day of Prayer can find more information at <http://60daysofprayer.org/prayer-beads>. Completed strands can be sent to Kristen Vincent, 889 Euclid Avenue NE, Atlanta, GA 30307. Prayer beads received after the April 30 deadline will be given to GC16 guests and visitors.



'Take a Bite Out of Malaria' on April 25

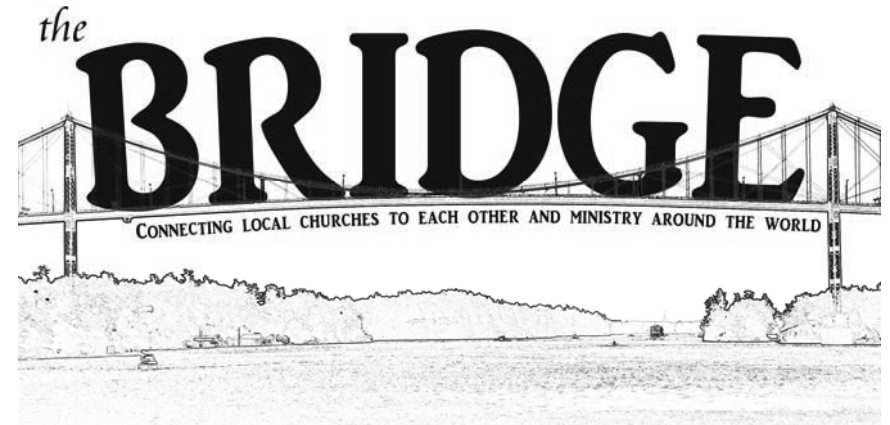
Churches of and communities within the Upper New York Conference can "Take a Bite Out of Malaria" on World Malaria Day, April 25. Conference-wide, churches are asked to work with local restaurants to receive a portion of their revenue on April 25 - which will go toward *Imagine No Malaria*, an integral part of *Africa 360* – and then encourage members and friends to eat out that day.

Participating businesses will get their name and hours placed on the Conference website with a reminder email blast sent the week before the event. This is a win-win for businesses and churches. It can help churches "spread the net" wider and invite family and friends to help save lives from a preventable, treatable, and beatable disease. The website will be updated as restaurants are added to the list. To download a letter to connect your congregation with a local restaurant and to find out more about other *Africa 360* celebrations during April, visit <http://tinyurl.com/WMD2016>.

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

APRIL IS AFRICA 360 MONTH. LEARN MORE AT
[HTTP://WWW.UNYUMC.ORG/MISSION/AFRICA-360](http://www.unyumc.org/mission/africa-360)



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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How do clergy appointments get made?



By Bishop Mark J. Webb

“The Book of Discipline” gives the conference bishop and district superintendents the responsibility for appointment-making. While appointment-making happens year-round, the majority of appointments are made from January to May and then “fixed” at the Annual Conference session.

The rhythm of making an appointment seems to be a mystery to some. Our hope is to lessen that mystery by sharing the foundational process used each time.

The Cabinet of the Upper New York Conference began this appointment-making season with an intensive three-day retreat in December, where members looked at the big picture, established priorities for appointment-making, and developed guiding principles.

At the foundation of the appointment-making task is clarity regarding priorities for deploying clergy leadership. The following priorities guide our discussions, discernment, and decisions.

1. **Prayer and God’s Agenda** – *This entire process is bathed in prayer, seeking God’s desire for our life together as brothers and sisters in Christ and the ministry of congregations in the UNY Conference.*
2. **The Mission Field** – *What are the needs of the community surrounding the local congregation? How can we better equip the local church to engage the community in ministry?*
3. **The Local Church** – *What is the current reality of this congregation? What strengths for ministry do they currently demonstrate, and what are the areas of ministry that need to be developed? What kind of pastoral leadership will assist the congregation to fruitfully and effectively live the mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world in the days ahead? Who is God calling to be the next pastor?*
4. **The Pastor** – *What are the gifts the pastor brings? How will this pastor help this congregation continue living the mission and move to the next level in their ministry to the community? How does this potential appointment fit within the personal needs/desires of the pastor?*

These priorities help us focus on the mission of the church and equip the church to more effectively live that mission. These priorities remind us that appointment-making must be responsive as the church continues to seek transformation and vitality.

The conversation and discernment process does not start with the pastor’s needs; it begins with the opportunities in the mission field – the strengths, potential, and needs of the local congregation – so they can engage the mission field. It then moves to the giftedness needed in the pastoral leader. These guiding principles and priorities moves away from a “seniority-” and “status-based” approach to appointments toward an approach that focuses on “gifts” and “effectiveness.”

The consultation process occurs among superintendents, committees on Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations, and pastors. The information shared through church and clergy profiles as well as ongoing conversation with the district superintendent are critical to the Cabinet’s work.

Full-time appointments are considered first, then we work on less than full-time appointments.

As a potential appointment is discussed by the Cabinet, we begin with the understandings and needs shared through the consultation process. A common question is: What are the gifts needed in the next pastor to assist this congregation for the future?

After conversation, the Cabinet enters into a time of prayer. At the conclusion of that prayer time, names of pastors the Holy Spirit has brought to our minds and hearts are shared and added to a list of potential pastors for that specific congregation.

Each person is then discussed, asking two primary questions: “Why would this pastor fit here?” and “Why wouldn’t this pastor work here?” Potential designations are made, and then the Cabinet leaves the discussion of that congregation.

At the end of the Cabinet meeting, we revisit those potential designations, and a final prayerful discernment is made – or we acknowledge that we do not yet have the right person and return to the conversation at the next Cabinet meeting.

Once a designation has been made, the discernment process continues engaging the designated pastor and Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committee in conversation to assure the sense of God’s call.

Finally, the Cabinet seeks to provide ongoing support for churches and pastors when new appointments are made.

Our appointment-making process is never perfect. While we deeply desire to seek God’s will, there are times that we don’t get it right. However, the great truth we celebrate is how often God indeed works with and in spite of the process.