



STRATEGIC VISIONING AND PLANNING PROCESS

FOR THE UPPER NEW YORK CONFERENCE

OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Whereas the vision of the Upper New York Conference of the United Methodist Church (UNY) has guided our work in serving our leaders, congregation, and communities since before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Whereas UNY faces dynamic changes in denominational, structural, societal, cultural, and financial landscapes that require thoughtful adaptation and proactive leadership; and

Whereas it is vital to ensure that UNY remains aligned with its mission and purpose while meeting the evolving needs in our context of ministry; and

Whereas in this new season of ministry as United Methodists, God is calling us to embrace a faith that unleashes God's boundless creative and transforming power, made known through Jesus Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Be resolved this annual conference session empowers the UNY Conference Leadership Team (CLT) to initiate and oversee a Strategic Visioning and Planning Process, that builds on the missional clarity gained over the past 2 ½ years as outlined in the UNY Missional Playbook, to discern and articulate a clear, forward-looking roadmap for the Upper New York Conference; and

Be further resolved that the Strategic Visioning and Planning Process will:

1. Secure input from clergy, laity, elected conference leaders, staff, ministry partners, community members, and other key stakeholders.
2. Assess the current strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and desired results (SOAR) for the Upper New York Conference.
3. Explore and identify opportunities for collaboration that enable amplified impact and good stewardship with our missional partner, the Susquehanna Conference.
4. Recommend the 2026 Annual Conference session with a Ministry Action Plan that includes, but is not limited to, the following elements:
 - a) Vision statement
 - b) Core values
 - c) Cultural shifts needed
 - d) Structural adaptations needed
 - e) Missional strategic direction with appropriate goals, objectives, and actionable strategies for the next 3-5 years.
5. Ensure alignment with the mission, vision, doctrine, and polity of The United Methodist Church.

Be further resolved that the resident bishop, in consultation with the CLT, will designate a task force to guide the Strategic Visioning and Planning Process, facilitate regular updates to the conference, and ensure the process is inclusive, transparent, and participatory. This task force will be amenable to the CLT.

Be further resolved that the UNY Annual Conference commits to engage in a season of prayer over the summer to open our hearts to the guidance of the Holy Spirit as we discern how God wants us to go forward.

Respectfully submitted by:

Dr. Scott Johnson and Ms. Jessica White
on behalf of the UNY Conference Leadership Team

1 ***FOR INFORMATION ONLY - United Methodists of Upper New York Missional Playbook as of 4/15/2025***

2 The missional playbook is the guiding document that it is currently used by the UNY Conference Leadership Team and staff teams to inform guide
3 their work.



11 Mission

12 Transform the world as we nurture passionate disciples of Jesus Christ who embody and share faith, mercy, and justice in
13 their everyday lives.

15 Vision

16 Live the Gospel of Jesus Christ and be God's love with our neighbors in all places.

18 Our Purpose

19 Equip and resource leaders and congregations for impactful ministry and provide a connection for mission beyond the
20 local church.

22 Our Primary Task

23 Increase the leadership capacity of clergy and congregational leaders for impactful ministry.

25 Our Core Values

26 UNY's ministry is at its best when we live together,

- 27 1. Faithfully – responding with *love* to God's grace in Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit (Hebrews 3:1-2,
28 Matthew 6:33)
29 2. Collaboratively – honoring the diversity, perspectives, gifts, and skills present among us as a connectional body.
30 (1 Corinthians 12)
31 3. Prophetically – compassionately and courageously seeking mercy, justice, equity, and peace for all of God's chil-
32 dren (Luke 4:18)

34 Our Missional Essential Functions

- 35 1. Provide spiritual leadership so that disciples and leaders continually grow in their knowledge, experiences, and
36 outward expressions of the love of Christ.
37 2. Discover, develop, and deploy leaders (clergy and laity).
38 3. Resource clergy and congregational leaders with tools and best practices for impactful ministry.
39 4. Nurture a culture to plant sustainable new faith communities and other collaborative ministries.
40 5. Align and maximize resources to support the mission and ministry of UNY and the UMC.
41 6. Promote unity that honors our diversity as a gift from God.
42 7. Communicate our shared mission and impact as United Methodists in Upper New York.

44 Realities, Challenges, and Opportunities

- 45 1. Continued church attendance/engagement decline.
46 2. Growing generational gap in our congregations and leadership.
47 3. Growing number of older, oversized church buildings that are costly to maintain.
48 4. Amount and speed of change inside and outside the church.
49 5. Lack of trust in the conference and among clergy.
50 6. Call to be a theologically diverse denomination related to ministry with and by LGBTQ persons.
51 7. Paring with the Susquehanna Conference.

53 Organizational Cultural Shifts

- 1 We prioritize relationships over everything else, and we lead the way in the shift from:
- 2 1. Silos to Connections
 - 3 2. Competition to Collaboration
 - 4 3. Programs to Resourcing
 - 5 4. Equality to Equity
 - 6 5. Church Growth to Missional Impact
 - 7 6. Clergy-centered ministry to CLAITY
 - 8 7. Scarcity mindset to Sufficient provision

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10 Our Missional Organization

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12 Superintendency

- 13 • Vision Casting
- 14 • Strategic Planning and Missional Oversight
- 15 • Clergy Appointment and Supervision
- 16 • Congregational Oversight
- 17 • Clergy Recruitment
- 18 • Ecumenical Relationships
- 19 • Legal Matters
- 20 • Resourcing to administrative agencies, teams, and leaders

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22 Missional Excellence

- 23 • Plan and oversee missional excellence strategy
- 24 • Leadership Development
- 25 • Congregational Development
- 26 • Missional Impact
- 27 • Young People
- 28 • Camping & Retreat
- 29 • Connectional Ministries
- 30 • Resourcing to programmatic agencies and teams.

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32 Finance and Administration

- 33 • Plan and oversee financial/ administrative strategy
- 34 • Budgeting
- 35 • Management of cash and assets
- 36 • Financial statistics and reporting
- 37 • Resourcing administrative agencies
- 38 • Risk Management
- 39 • Compliance
- 40 • Human Resources

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42 Communications

- 43 • Plan and oversee communication strategy
- 44 • Create content to inform, inspire, and equip.
- 45 • Articulate and translate our mission/vision story for multiple audiences.
- 46 • Develop public and media relationships.