



io planning. While potential scenarios developed a variety of needs, the CLT felt that its focus should be on leading around how we relate to each other as sisters and brothers in Christ in the midst of decisions that will make some people happy, some people unhappy, and some people unsure of how to feel.

They held up that while there are many things we don't agree on; the great commandment is something we can all embrace. They spent some time reviewing the scripture.

Matthew 22:37-40 "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."

Quiz Answer Key

1.) d, 2.) c, 3.) a, 4.) b, 5.) d, 6.) d, 7.) b, 8.) c, 9.) d, 10.) e

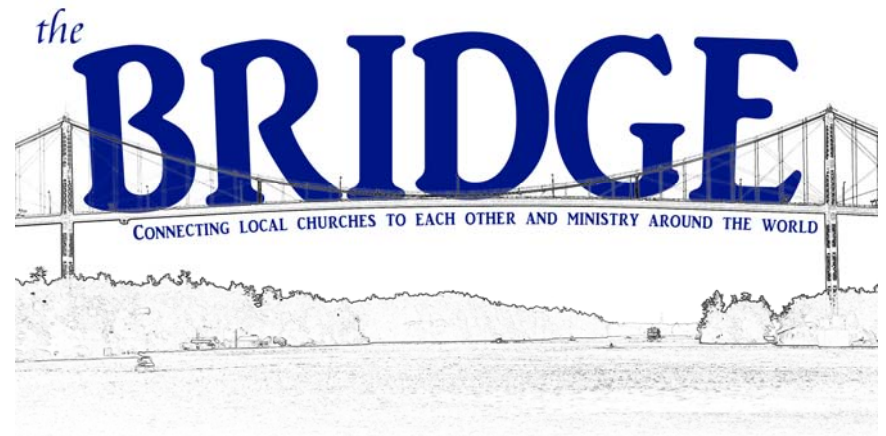
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www.unyumc.org

This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

The team agreed that they would use this as basis and create resources for the Conference that would hold up how we are to be in relationship with one another no matter what happens at the Special Session of General Conference.

Following their time of leading together, the CLT ended their time with prayer and agreed to meet again to continue their work Jan. 18 and 19 at the United Methodist Center.



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.

A look inside!

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Take the United Methodist Christmas quiz

In the spirit of Christmas, take a short quiz to test your knowledge on the history and traditions of the season of Christmas.

- 1.) **The first Christmas trees were decorated with what items**
 - a. Apples
 - b. White candy canes
 - c. Pastries shaped like hearts, stars, or flowers
 - d. All of the above
- 2.) **What favorite Christmas carol was written by Charles Wesley?**
 - a. *White Christmas*
 - b. *Away in a Manger*
 - c. *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*
 - d. *I'll be Home for Christmas*
 - e. *Jingle Bells*
- 3.) **Jesus was born in Bethlehem. What does the Hebrew word "bethlehem" mean?**
 - a. House of bread
 - b. Little town
 - c. City of David
 - d. Village of stars
 - e. Family of Elizabeth
- 4.) **How is the Christ Child depicted in most Nativity scenes?**
 - a. Sleeping
 - b. With arms outstretched
 - c. Standing
 - d. Holding a sword
- 5.) **In many Nativity sets and Christmas scenes, what color is Mary's dress?**
 - a. Blue
 - b. Green
 - c. Purple
 - d. Red
 - e. Yellow
- 6.) **What do scholars say is the significance of the shepherds at the manger?**
 - a. To represent the common man
 - b. To represent David, the shepherd who became king
 - c. To denote Jesus' ancestral lineage
 - d. All of the above
- 7.) **What is a manger?**
 - a. The French word for crib
 - b. Feeding trough
 - c. A cave
 - d. Wooden cradle
- 8.) **Who do scholars speculate the Magi actually were?**
 - a. Estate owners from nearby
 - b. Wealthy doctors
 - c. Astronomers or sages
 - d. All of the above
- 9.) **One of the wise men gave the gift of myrrh, which is:**
 - a. Middle Eastern money
 - b. A brewed drink
 - c. An easily shaped metal
 - d. A perfume
 - e. Rare, expensive food
- 10.) **Which historic period(s) mentions fruit cake?**
 - a. Ancient Egypt
 - b. Roman Empire
 - c. Middle Ages
 - d. Victorian England
 - e. All of the above

Editor's note: The answers to the quiz are on the back of this issue of the Bridge. For more about the celebration of Christmas in the United Methodist Church visit www.UMC.org.

Conference Leadership Team maps way from now to 2025

By Stephen J. Hustedt, Director of Communications

On Nov. 30 and Dec. 1, the Upper New York Conference Leadership Team (CLT) once again gathered for a time of Loving, Learning, and Leading at the United Methodist Center in Liverpool.

On the evening of Nov. 30, they focused on Loving God and each other, worshiping together, and sharing stories. With Advent beginning the next Sunday and knowing they would not be together again until after Christmas, they talked about the season they were entering and what gifts they had to offer to God. Upper New York Resident Bishop, Mark J. Webb, introduced a turn of phrase on

gifts brought to the baby Jesus of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

"We need to give God our mud, circumstance, and gold," said Bishop Webb, explaining that the mud is the bad stuff we hold on to, circumstances are what is beyond our control, and gold is our very best. "You don't hear Olympic athletes say that are training to get a bronze metal. Are we giving God our very best or a bronze effort?"

The following morning the team shared in a time of learning led by Craig Robertson from the Spiritual Leadership Institute. Craig has been coaching the Conference Leadership Team since their first fall 2018 meeting to help them work

together even more effectively. Craig helped the team learn both how to better communicate where they were coming from in a discussion and how to stretch themselves to optimize their motivation.

"If in our work together we are only taking a small step forward, motivation is not high. It's like why does this matter?" he explained. "But if we are trying to take on too much it feels overwhelming and again motivation is low. The key is to find the sweet spot that stretches us just enough to maximize motivation."

Then the team began their time of leading together, starting with reviewing their Master Ministry Action Plan (MAP).

The Master MAP guides all the components of the work of the CLT with a current stated goal of reaching 50 percent of the congregations in the Upper New York Conference being vital by June of 2025. This will be achieved by discovering, developing, and deploying Christ following leaders who are called and gifted for transformational leadership.

Of course, in planning through 2025, the team could not ignore the Special Session of General Conference in Feb. 2019 or the next General Conference gathering in 2020, so a significant amount of time was also spent in scenar-

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