

Your congregation can also collect a special offering and send it to the Conference treasurer's office, attention "2022 Blizzard Response." Your generosity will empower the UNY disaster response and missional engagement teams to offer relief and recovery to impacted individuals, families, and congregations in impacted areas.

3. Serve – There is a need for skilled teams to help with flood cleanup and recovery. If you are

able to serve, please contact the UNY Director of Missional Engagement, Kristina Clark at [kristinaclark@unyumc.org](mailto:kristinaclark@unyumc.org).

When one part of the body hurts, the entire body hurts. May the Holy Spirit continue to embolden us to be God's healing presence in our communities and the world.

To learn more about the blizzard response and how you can help, visit: <https://www.unyumc.org/mission/blizzard-response>



## Why do United Methodists celebrate Human Relations Day?

Human Relations Day is Jan. 15 this year; it is one of the United Methodist Church's six Special Sundays. Every January, on the Sunday before the observance of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday, United Methodists come together to help bridge the gap between church and community. We do this by participating in an offering on Human Relations Day.

The special offering on Human Relations Day benefits neighborhood ministries through community developers, community advocacy through United Methodist Voluntary Services, and work with at-risk teens through

the Youth Offender Rehabilitation Program.

Human Relations Day reminds us of Dr. King's vision of the beloved community that speaks of loving every neighbor as ourselves. It calls us into "neighborhood," into being a neighbor, with all kinds of people in all kinds of places. We give thanks for those already working to bring the vision to reality and join together to continue this work of God's kingdom more fully.

You can give toward Human Relations Day by visiting <https://bit.ly/UMCspecialsunday>.



*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. For more news and stories visit: [www.unyumc.org](http://www.unyumc.org)



*"People have shown up for each other in remarkable ways in the critical stages of the storm. As the recovery phase from the blizzard begins, we know of immediate needs calling us into action."*

*Read more on page 3.*

### What's inside

- 2 | A message from Bishop Héctor
- 3 | Blizzard response
- 4 | Celebrating Human Relations Day



*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.*



[www.facebook.com/uppernewyork](https://www.facebook.com/uppernewyork)



[www.instagram.com/uppernewyork](https://www.instagram.com/uppernewyork)



## From the desk of Bishop Héctor A. Burgos Núñez

*I [we] can do all things through Christ who strengthens me [us].”*  
Philippians 4:13, par

Dear siblings in Christ,

May the grace and peace of God be with you in the New Year!

I thank God for the honor of serving United Methodists of Upper New York as your new episcopal leader. My family and I are grateful for the many expressions of hospitality we have received from clergy, laity, and staff as we transition into a new missional assignment, home, and community. We look forward to getting to know you better and doing life and ministry together in the coming years. You can learn more about our journey thus by checking out my bio at <https://bit.ly/BishopHector>. You can also follow me on Facebook and Instagram @BishopHectorABurgos.



ministry through Upper New York congregations, launching New Faith Communities, and ending the sin of racism. I am inspired by the progress being made, the new learnings, and the many stories of faithful mission and service in the community.

In the weeks to come, I will continue working with the cabinet, preparing for the 2023 appointment season, and organizing our ministry together in 2023 and beyond.

During February and March, I will visit all UNY regions to meet with clergy and congregational leaders to learn about your ministries and hopes for The Upper New York Conference. I hope to see you there.

We are living in unprecedented times in the Church and the world – a global pandemic, extreme weather, the war in Ukraine, political polarization in the US, decline in congregational engagement, disaffiliations, and uncertainty about the future of our denomination, amongst others. In this challenging context, God is calling us to shine brightly with the light of Christ, sharing faith, love, mercy, and justice with all people and in all places – and that’s exactly what we will do **TOGETHER**.



As we begin a New Year and season of ministry, I pray for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit over all UNY leaders and congregations that lead us outwardly into our communities to be God’s love with all people.

I am looking forward to the journey,

Paz,  
Héctor

Bishop Héctor A. Burgos Núñez,  
Upper New York Area Resident Bishop

## Regional Meetings with Bishop Héctor

Bishop Héctor is eager to meet laity and clergy across the Conference. He will be visiting six churches in February and March. To view the schedule, scan the QR code with your mobile device:



## Storm of the century response from Bishop Héctor

*On Jan. 4, 2023, Upper New York Area Resident Bishop, Héctor A. Burgos Núñez, sent the following letter to the Upper New York Conference about the recent winter storm that impacted the Niagara Frontier and Northern Flow Districts.*

Dear partners in ministry,

Like you, my thoughts and prayers have been with all the communities affected by the blizzard, the residents of the City of Buffalo, and neighboring communities as they have endured what many are calling the “Blizzard of the Century.” I grieve the loss of life even as I give thanks for the many stories of heroism emerging from these difficult days.

People have shown up for each other in remarkable ways in the critical stages of the storm. As the recovery phase from the blizzard begins, we know of immediate

needs calling us into action. In addition to damage to homes, two United Methodist churches in the Niagara Frontier District, Lincoln Memorial United Methodist Church and Community Church Jehovah Jireh, suffered significant water damage from burst pipes.

Other community needs at this time include replenishing food pantries and other emergency services as well as assisting low-income families with funeral expenses. We are staying connected to the recovery efforts and anticipate learning more in the coming days.

I invite all United Methodists of Upper New York to:

1. Pray – for those impacted by the storm and its aftermath.
2. Give – through the UNYAC website here.



Continued on page 4.