

is valuable to anyone who wishes to engage him in conversation!" Contact Rev. Hood at pastorjustinhood@gmail.com.

Rev. Stierheim is an ordained elder who six years ago had a dream to plant a new church in the medical corridor of downtown Buffalo. Since he attended Launchpad over six years ago, he has been planting a new church called "Wesley's Place."

Rev. Masland said, "Gregg's unique giftedness and experience is in planting a truly Missional Church. In other words, he has never met people in a church building. Rather, he has gathered with individuals and groups in restaurants, coffee shops, apartment buildings, and hospital meeting rooms. Because of the difficulty of find-

ing large enough (and affordable) space in his mission field, his church and disciple-making plan has been entirely small group based. During the pandemic, these small groups have gone to all online! Yet, Wesley's Place continues to effectively reach new people. Since he started Wesley's Place, Gregg has been a champion for planting NFCs in UNY, has assisted in teaching Launchpad, and is fluent in all things related to planting!" Contact Rev. Stierheim at pastorgreggumc@gmail.com.

Are you ready to have a conversation about starting a New Faith Community? Connect with Rev. Browka, Rev. Blinn Cole, Rev. Hood, or Rev. Stierheim today. They'd be happy to guide you in your vision!

In Brief

Some new faith community highlights

Hispanic-Latino New Faith Communities growing with your support:

The Rev. Dave Masland, the Rev. Carlos Rosa-Laguer, and Pastor Jose Rodriguez are seeking folks who want to make donations to support the planting of new Hispanic/Latino churches. Currently, the 6-7 existing Hispanic Church will be taking a special offering on the last Sunday of each month (to collect a pool of money for the future). If you would like to personally make a donation to this effort, to the "Hispanic/Latino New Places for New People Fund," use this QR code to make a donation.



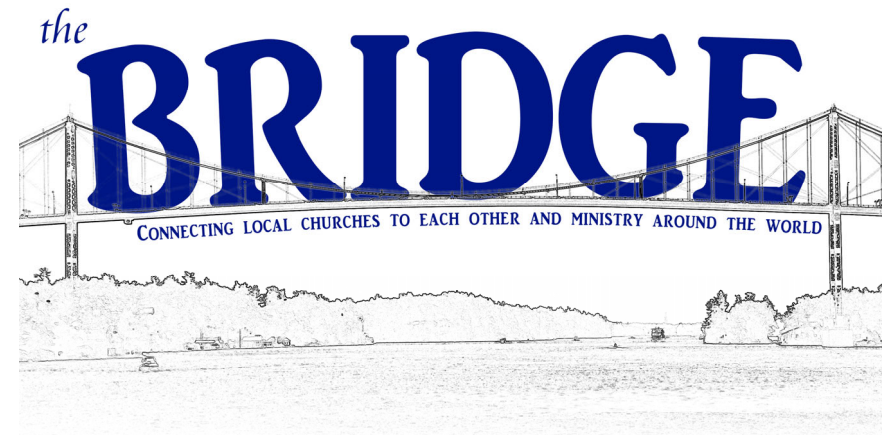
Church in the Wild:

What if you could worship God in nature every week with a community of fellow believers? Now, you can! Church in the Wild is a New Faith Community that is taking place at Sky Lake Camp & Retreat Center in Windsor, NY. The first service will take place on June 6 at 4 p.m. Visit churchinthewild.org to learn more.

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

The 2021 Session of the Upper New York Annual Conference will be held remotely June 17-19. Visit <https://www.unyumc.org/events/annual-conference> to learn more.



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!

New Faith Communities Team's empowering new structure Page 2

Hispanic-Latino New Faith Communities growing with your support Page 4

Church in the Wild Page 4

New Faith Communities Team's empowering new structure

In his seven years as Director of New Faith Communities, the Rev. Dave Masland helped church planters create dozens of New Faith Communities (NFCs) across Upper New York (UNY). Dave retired in December 2020, but still works with the UNY Conference part-time, supporting planting efforts in the Conference. In that time, he has been equipping a team of NFC allies that anybody in the Conference can contact about the exciting idea of creating New Places for New People.

Rev. Masland is still available to help people interested in planting NFC, but is less available now that he is part-time. For additional help Rev. Masland has been working closely with a new team that you can contact for help in planting a NFC. The team is spread across multiple regions of the Upper New York Conference, but you can contact them whether they are in your region or not.



The Rev. Abigail Browka is the contact person for the Northeast Region.

Rev. Browka is an ordained elder who had a vision to plant a coffee house centered NFC 18 months ago and attended Launchpad in February 2020 with that goal in mind. Then, COVID hit, and that plan was put on the back burner. However, COVID also inspired a new idea. Her NFC called "Everyday Sanctuary" is centered around a free mobile app that provides a five-minute centering spiritual practice for anyone who signs up. Over 1,000 people have downloaded the app since its launch just couple of months ago.

Rev. Masland said, "Abigail has a unique giftedness in creating online presence and impact for new people. Rev. Browka is also an active member of UNY's NFC Leadership Team and is leading the current team-taught online Launchpad. She has enthusiasm for planting work that is truly infectious!" Contact Rev. Browka at pastorabigail1@gmail.com.

The Rev. Anna Blinn-Cole is the contact person for the Southern Tier Region.

Rev. Anna Blinn-Cole is an ordained elder who planted a NFC called "Nourished" a number of years ago in the Cobleskill area, which quickly doubled to two such NFCs in the county. Nourished is a dinner church, where people come to share a meal, and then have a conversation-style worship experience around the table.

Rev. Masland said, "Anna's NFC reached many previously unchurched people and seems to be a very effective strategy for rural settings! As the lead pastor of a large, rural cooperative parish, Anna is particularly gifted at bringing varied groups of people together and discerning a shared vision. Anna is a team builder. And, Anna is ALL IN on the planting movement. She loves to talk to people about their dreams for new places for new people. "Contact



Rev. Blinn Cole at pastor.anna.cole@gmail.com.

The Rev. Justin Hood and the Rev. Gregg Sterheim are the contact points for the Lakes Region.

Rev. Hood is an ordained elder who three years ago led both churches in his two-point charge to plant NFCs in their mission field just north of Syracuse.

Rev. Masland said, "Justin has unique giftedness for leading a congregation thru a

prayerful, patient discernment process to discover what new thing God is calling them to do to reach new people thru a New faith Community. He can teach many best practices for an existing church to plant an NFC. Justin is a relatively young, new member of the NFC leadership team in the Conference. Yet, his experience as a Christ-centered pastoral leader and planter

Continued on page 4