



Upper New York Annual Conference postponed due to COVID-19 concerns

Members of the UNY Sessions Committee met on April 21 and shared both their own perspectives and what they have been hearing from others regarding the comfort level of gathering more than a thousand United Methodist from across Upper New York at Onondaga Community College's SRC Arena. In the end, while there was a great sense of loss about not being able to gather in-person for the third year in a row, the Committee overwhelmingly agreed that the top priority had to be the health and safety of the individuals that would be asked to attend. The decision

was made to institute a backup plan that has been in place since the Committee started planning for an in-person Annual Conference gathering.

Annual Conference will be postponed to Oct. 6-8, and it will be a virtual gathering. The plan is to use the same technology that was used at the 2021 virtual Annual Conference gathering, which was relatively well received.

Visit <https://bit.ly/AC2022postponed> 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



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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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Native American Ministries Sunday

Native American Ministries Sunday (NAMS) is May 1! NAMS, one of the United Methodist Church's (UMC) Special Sundays, is a time to recognize the history of Native peoples; marred by colonial violence, land theft, and attempted genocide. This legacy continues to challenge the sovereignty of Native peoples today. Let us all embrace our opportunity and obligation to honor the struggles, perseverance, and achievements of our Native brothers and sisters. May we endeavor to walk together creating a shared and sustainable future for all creation.

Donations on NAMS support vital ministries and churches in the Native American communities and allow The UMC to partner with existing Native ministries to develop new programs on behalf of Native Americans. Half of the donations collected remain within the Annual Conference to provide hope to children and youth, hope



for a brighter future in impoverished communities, and a voice to those who have felt voiceless for years. This fund is distributed by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

When you give generously on Native American Ministries Sunday, you equip seminary students who honor and celebrate Native American culture in their ministries. You empower congregations to find fresh and culturally appropriate ways to minister to their communities with Christ's love.

Without your generosity, this ministry could not be achieved! You gave \$453,155 in 2021 towards ministries funded by the Native American Ministries Special Sunday offering. Because of you, The UMC is able to develop and strengthen Native American ministries in the Conferences, Native American rural, urban, reservation ministries, and communities relating to the General Board of Global Ministries. It also provides scholarships for Native Americans attending United Methodist schools of theology.

Funds collected for Native American Ministries Sunday partner with existing Native American ministries to create beneficial programs.

A gap in knowledge exists in The United Methodist Church, in congregations and other United Methodist entities, relative to comprehending concepts of Native American life, cultures, languages, spirit, values, contemporary issues, and such. We affirm the sacredness of American Indian people, their languages, cultures, and gifts to the

church and the world. Donations support vital ministries and churches in the Native American communities and allow The UMC to partner with existing native ministries to develop new programs on behalf of Native Americans. Some of those efforts include mentoring programs, peer support systems, funding for economic development projects, and restoring traditional and historic ways that bring forth new leaders for Native American communities.

Half of the donations collected remain within the Annual Conference to provide hope to children and youth, hope for a brighter future in impoverished communities and a voice to those who have felt voiceless for years.

Almost all United Methodist Conferences have a Committee on Native American Ministries (CONAM). These committees seek to advocate for ministry with and by Native Americans to share the diverse culture, history, and traditions of Native peoples. The committees determine the distribution of the Native American Ministries Sunday offering, coordinate the promotion of that Special Sunday, and monitor Native American ministries within the Annual Conference.

Here is one testimonial of how the 2021 NAMS collection helped a Native American Church here in the Upper New York Conference:

A member of Four Corners UMC and active member of UNY CONAM, Marilyn Anderson, said, "On behalf of the Four Corners UMC I want to thank CONAM for their generous donation to our church. COVID kept us from being open for many months, but we still had utility costs in order to keep the church heated, etc. We didn't have any financial support during that time.

The NAMS donation has been used to catch up on our utility bills and our doors remain open!"

Twenty-five percent of every donation on Native American Ministries Sunday provides scholarships.

The General Conference of The United Methodist Church endorses and supports development, implementation, and assessment of a higher education recruitment/retention forum, sponsored by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry for Native Americans throughout the denomination's regions.

The UMC has a seminary scholarship for Native Americans.

A serious shortage exists of American Indian pastors and trained professionals. Native American Ministry Sunday provides an opportunity for The United Methodist Church to support American Indian ministries and communities. This Special Sunday offering has enabled a route for Native American leadership development that is culturally appropriate and carefully constructed to expand leadership development among Native People and in Native tribes, churches, and communities. This fund also helps in learning and prioritizing Native American United Methodists in leadership, programming, education, strategizing, and establishment of Native ministry.

To support Native American Ministries Sunday this year, simply write "NAMS" on the memo line of the check you put in your church's donation plate or visit <https://bit.ly/NAMSdonation> to donate to NAMS online.

