



# the Bridge

Connecting local churches to each other & ministries around the world

## Bishop Webb's farewell gathering



Upper New York (UNY) Area Resident Bishop, Mark J. Webb, will be retiring from the Upper New York Conference on Dec. 31, 2022.

There will be an open-house style celebration and farewell gathering at the UNY Conference Center at 7481 Henry Clay Blvd. in Liverpool on Saturday Nov. 19 from 1-4 p.m.

All are welcome and you can come and go as you please. The tentative schedule is as follows:

- 1 p.m. Gathering begins – open-house-style fellowship time
- 2 p.m. Official program by the Episcopacy Committee
- 3 p.m. Cutting of the cake followed by more open-house-style fellowship time until 4 p.m.

**We hope to see you there!**



*"Giving thanks is as essential to our spiritual growth as prayer..."*

*Read more on page 2.*

## What's inside

- 2 Giving thanks
- 3 Native American Heritage Month
- 4 Bishop Webb's farewell gathering

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)



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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# Happy Thanksgiving!

While the Thanksgiving holiday is celebrated on the fourth Thursday in November in the U.S., thanking God for our blessings is a spiritual discipline that should not be limited to a single day. Along with expanding our waistlines, our preparation for and celebration of the holiday can be the impetus toward growing an attitude of gratitude that will carry over into the rest of the year. In his commentary on 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, John Wesley writes, “Thanksgiving is inseparable from true prayer; it is almost essentially connected with it.” Giving thanks is as essential to our spiritual growth as prayer, which 1 Thessalonians calls us to do continually.

Giving thanks is commanded in the Old Testament and New Testament. The term “thanks” appears 100 times in the King James version of the Bible, and “give thanks” appears 48 times.

Expressing gratitude has been scientifically proven to improve physical, mental, and spiritual health.

Psychological research indicates that grateful people are more likely to

give back to their communities and beyond. In essence, being thankful helps motivate people to do for others.

These creative ideas will help us get cultivate gratitude and generosity this holiday season.

- Fill a family Thanksgiving box. As part of your Thanksgiving preparation, create a Thanksgiving Box. Each day family members write on slips of paper something for which they are thankful that day and place them in the decorated box. The box will make a nice Thanksgiving table centerpiece, and when opened, a way to remember how blessed we are every day. You could add to it all year too of course.
- Serve someone. In the weeks leading up to Thanksgiving, many agencies serving those in need expand their work. Food banks, churches, and other service organizations supply meals to the hungry on Thanksgiving. Ask your pastor for suggestions of places near you to serve or donate.

- Take time for quiet reflection. As the big day approaches, things get busier. Set aside some time each day to say thank you to God for all he has provided.
- Share blessings together. When gathered around the table, many families will ask guests to share something for which they are thankful.
- Send cards to those we miss. Mark one December to-do item off your list. Send Thanksgiving cards instead of Christmas cards.
- Include children. Involve the children celebrating with you by sharing this prayer: *Thank you God for all that grows. Thank you for the sky's rainbows. Thank you*

*for the stars that shine, Thank you for these friends of mine. Thank you for the moon and sun. Thank you, God, for all you've done!* Then encourage the kids to write their own Thanksgiving prayers, with which they could lead the adults in prayer later in the day.

- Adopt a friend. Consider inviting someone new to your individual Thanksgiving celebrations—are there college students in your area who are unable to go home, or individuals who do not have family to celebrate with?
- Consider the homebound. Also, think about how can help provide meals for homebound individuals and seniors who may not be able or willing to travel.

## November is Native American Heritage Month



Native Americans offer rich contributions to The United Methodist Church. “It is time for the church to look at the gifts and graces of Native Americans,” said Josephine Deere, a member of the Muskoke Nation. “We have a lot to offer.” Her remarks followed the “Act of Repentance toward Healing Relationships with Indigenous Peoples” service at the 2012 General Conference.

Blenda Smith, a white laywoman from our Conference, agreed.

“We need to focus on healing relationships,” she said. “And then we need to realize that the learning is just beginning.”

Native American Heritage Month gives United Methodists an opportunity to reach out to indigenous groups in the community and to learn about—and from—their Native American sisters and brothers.

Consider learning more about Native Americans’ heritage and contributions to the United Methodist Church on the UNY’s Committee on Native American Ministries page by visiting <https://www.unyumc.org/ministries/conam> or scanning this QR code.

