

UNY2020equitablecomp.

The Upper New York Conference Trustees report included updates on topics including:

- Properties
- Audits
- Revenues/Expenditures
- Conference Property Insurance
- An update on New York State's Child Victims Act

The Child Victims Act removed the statute of limitation on survivors of childhood sexual abuse and has put some churches in the Upper New York Conference in a position where they may be liable for horrific deeds of childhood sexual abuse that took place decades ago. Following this update, the Annual Conference took time to pray for all those impacted by sexual abuse.

The Trustees report concluded with affirming the closure of churches that had previously stopped worshiping and accepting the Trustees report in its entirety. Additional information on the Trustees report is available here <http://bit.ly/UNY2020trustees>.

There were no changes to the report submitted by the Upper New York Committee on Nominations.

However, the committee did take the time to explain that New York State's requirement that the Conference elect Conference Trustees by written ballot means new trustees can't be elected during a virtual session. The *Book of Discipline* does allow the Bishop and Cabinet, on recommendation of the nominating committee, to fill vacancies ad interim (between sessions of Annual Conference). The nominating report lists the three persons who will be appointed using this provision. They will serve only until our 2021 Annual Conference when new trustees will be elected by Conference members using a written ballot.

Bishop Webb also acknowledged that

The Conference Lay Leader, Susan Hardy, is stepping down. Drew Griffin, former Associate Lay Leader is the Conference Lay Leader this year, and Jessica White is now the Associate Lay Leader.

More information on the Nominations report is available here <http://bit.ly/UNY2020nominations>.

The Conference Budget presented by the Conference Council on Finance & Administration (CF&A) Recommendations was supported. However, motions were passed that resulted in the Annual Conference requiring all ministry areas receiving an increase of more than \$5,000 to provide within three months a report on how their budget has and will be used. These areas include:

- Camp and Retreat
- Hispanic and Latino Ministries
- District Operations
- New Faith Communities
- Vital Congregations

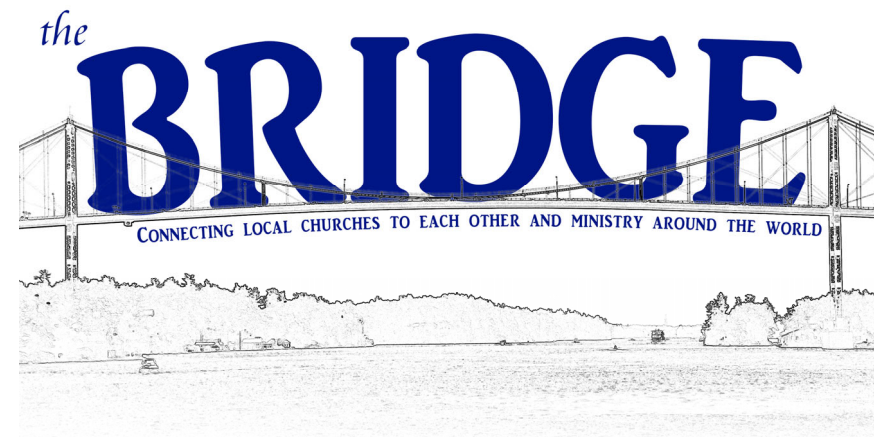
Vital Congregations was specifically asked to provide information on Spiritual Leadership Incorporated (SLI), including:

- The coaches hired to train leaders
- How SLI helps grow and support a thriving United Methodist Church

More information on the report from the CF&A is available here <http://bit.ly/UNY2020CFA>.

Once the budget, motion, and report were approved, Lay Member, Kevin Nelson, requested a declaratory decision be made regarding the budget. There was specific concern about if the formula used to calculate General Church Apportionments was in order.

The eleventh session of the Upper New York Annual Conference concluded with an acknowledgement of appointments, thanking all those who made the session possible, and a prayer to send the body forth from outgoing Conference Lay Leader, Susan Hardy.



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!

Upper New York gathers online for eleventh AC session

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*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)

# Upper New York gathers online for eleventh AC session

By Stephen J. Hustedt, Upper New York Director of Communications

The eleventh session of the Upper New York Annual Conference took place virtually on Saturday, Oct. 3. This was the culmination of multiple weeks of events comprising different Annual Conference elements. Prior to the full Annual Conference Session on Oct. 3, the Upper New York Conference held a practice session on Sept. 18, Clergy Session on Sept. 19, and the Service of Ordination on Oct. 2.

The Service of Ordination was held in-person but by invitation only to allow for appropriate social distancing coupled with the requirement that Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) be worn. There was also an open livestream of the service on the Conference website, allowing those who could not be there in person to be a part of the service.

During the service:

- Two individuals were commissioned for the work of Elder
- Three individuals were commissioned for the work of a Deacon
- One individual was ordained to the order of a Deacon
- Two individuals were ordained to the order of Elder
- Two individuals from the Korean United Methodist Church were recognized

A full report is available at <http://bit.ly/UNY2020ordination>.

All other components of Annual Conference were held in a virtual meeting environment through a secure microsite, live streaming, and live voting.

Hundreds of individuals logged in to the practice session to assure that their technology would work and to practice voting as well as what it is like to be recognized to speak in the virtual environment.

Due to the death of a close personal friend, Upper New York Resident Bishop, Mark J. Webb, was not able to preside over the Upper New York Clergy Session so Upper New York Conference Clergy had the unique opportunity to have Bishop John Schol of the Greater New Jersey Episcopal Area preside remotely. Other presenters and leaders were

gathered in a makeshift studio, wearing PPE and following social distance guidelines, at the United Methodist Center in Liverpool, NY, to lead the event.

The makeshift studio was used again at the full Annual Conference Session, where Bishop Mark J. Webb presided. The majority of presenters and leaders were also gathered at the United Methodist Center, socially distanced and wearing PPE whenever possible or necessary, although several individuals did present remotely due to conflicts or health concerns.

The general feeling was of appreciation that while the Upper New York Annual Conference, originally scheduled to meet at the end of May, was still not able to gather in-person, the option of using technology to gather was available. Of course, there were those who struggled either with understanding how the system worked or with operating the technology, but there was a tech support phone number and email address to help them through in as timely a way as possible.

The technology worked well for most with the possible exception of some individuals reporting difficulty hearing and imperfect closed captioning during unscripted segments. This would later prompt the request of a declaratory decision on if this resulted in a lack of access for those who are hard of hearing, potentially in violation of ¶603.4 of the United Methodist *Book of Discipline*.

The agenda for the Annual Conference Session was limited to only the following items:

- Leadership Report
- Board of Pensions and Health Benefits Report & Recommendations
- Equitable Compensation Report & Recommendations
- Board of Trustees Report & Recommendations
- Committee on Nominations Recommendations
- Council on Finance & Administration Recommendations
- Acknowledgement of Appointments

Furthermore, while there was extensive discussion related to the Organizational Mo-



tion, the motion passed as originally written, which included language barring amendments.

There were no recommendations associated with the Leadership Report, but it did fulfill Disciplinary requirements for Annual Conference. A full report is available here <http://bit.ly/UNYleadership2020>.

Three of four Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits recommendations were accepted including recommendations to:

- Accept the 2021 housing/rental exclusion resolution designating 100 percent of United Methodist pension, severance or disability income as housing exclusion, in accordance with IRS Code section 107, from Jan. 1, 2021 through Dec. 31, 2021
- Support the 2021 past service annuity rate for the pre-82 pension plan remain the same as for 2019 at \$645
- Accept the 2021 Comprehensive Benefit Budget Plan

An additional recommendation to reduce the health reimbursement account for retiree spouses by 50 percent was referred to the Conference Board of Pensions and Health and Conference Committee on Finance and Ad-

ministration to reassess.

Additional information on the report of the Conference Board of Pensions and Health is available here <http://bit.ly/UNY2020benefitsandpension>.

Four equitable compensation recommendations were supported including recommendations:

- For the standardized minimum base compensation that was established for the Upper New York Conference effective Jan. 1, 2017 stay the same
- For the yearly increment amount that was established for the Upper New York Conference effective Jan. 2020 stay the same
- That an additional \$500 for each additional church on the pastoral charge (over one), not adjusted for part-time appointments remain in place
- That no pastor's salary can be decreased as a result of the above policy, as long as they retain their current appointment

Additional information on the report of the Conference Committee on Equitable Compensation is available here <http://bit.ly/>

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