

2019 UNYUMC Annual Conference Daily Notes

Thursday, June 6, 2019

- Thursday morning began with a vivacious address from the 2019 Upper New York Annual Conference session Study Leader, the Rev. Dr. Vance Ross – who serves as pastor of the Historical UMC in Atlanta and dean of the Chapel of Spiritual Life at Emory University. Rev. Ross focused deeply on how we should pray, relating this to Matthew 6:5-15. “May we have the courage, the commitment, and the desire in prayer to seek God’s will and not just our own,” he said.
- Upper New York Area Resident Bishop Mark J. Webb took time to recognize the Rev. Dr. Michelle Bogue-Trost, who was injured on a beach trip to Alabama and couldn't make it to AC session for the first time. Lay Leader Susan Hardy offered a prayer to God to comfort Rev. Bogue-Trost during this time.
- A second vote for clergy took place, and the Rev. Bill Mudge was elected as a delegate.
- Similar to the first session, in the afternoon, Study Leader the Rev. Ross discussed a Bible reading – this time Romans 12:1-2 – and presented the Conference with three assertions paired with questions for reflection to “think about what it means for our lives, for our ministries, and for ourselves.”
- According to COSROW Monitoring Report for June 5, white clergy men spoke the most with 34 percent, followed by clergy women with 29 percent, white lay women at 13 percent, white lay men at 11 percent, minority clergy women at 6 percent, minority clergy and lay men both at 3 percent, and minority lay female at 1 percent.
- The report (found on pages 160-61 of the *Journal*) and recommendation (found on pages 45-46 of the *Journal*) of the Upper New York Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits, presented by board chair Mary Rublee, were both approved.
- Rich Barling, the president of the Board of Trustees, noted the successful mission and ministry that has taken place at the Conference Center as well as Camping & Retreat Centers in the past year. He reviewed the trustees’ balance sheet, noting that net assets declined by 2 percent. He noted that total revenues for 2018 were \$1,150,746, and expenditures were \$623,971 prior to transfers. The net of the revenue and expenditures resulted in a surplus of \$526,775 prior to transfers. After the transfers, there was a net deficit of \$276,457.
- Jack Keating presented the fact that the trustees’ current list of these properties includes 33 churches, seven with affiliated parsonages, nine legacy locations (including cemeteries and vacant land), five camp properties, 11 district parsonages, one Episcopal residence, and the Conference Center property. He shared that the 2018 property activities’ “net” revenues (after payment of expenses) allowed trustees to support the New Beginnings Fund with over \$404,000 and our Camp and Retreat Ministries with over \$399,000 – which will help CRM continue its important work of making disciples across our -Conference.
- The district superintendents with closed churches each asked members touched by the ministries of the specific churches to stand. Adirondack District Superintendent the Rev. Debbie Earthrowl prayed for the Newcomb UMC and Peasleeville UMC. Cornerstone District Superintendent the Rev. Dr. Sherri Rood prayed for the Cattaraugus UMC and Open Meadows UMC. Finger Lakes District Superintendent the Rev. Dr. Jeff McDowell prayed for the Friend UMC and Palmyra UMC. Genesee Valley District Superintendent the Rev. Vonda Fossitt prayed for the Rochester: Grace UMC and Rochester: West Ave. UMC as well as South Byron UMC. Mohawk District Superintendent the Rev. Abel Roy prayed for the Utica: Asbury UMC. Mountain View District Superintendent the Rev. Nancy Adams prayed for the Elmira Riverside UMC. Northern Flow District Superintendent the Rev. Mike Weeden prayed for the Watertown: Bethany UMC. Oneonta District Superintendent the Rev. Everett Bassett prayed for the McDonough, Plymouth, and Smithville Center UMCs. All closures were supported.
- Conference Secretary Jeff Hodge led the election of the Conference trustees by paper ballot. The Rev. Sara Baron motioned to have the ballot postponed until the Nominations Committee can bring forth more diverse candidates. The Rev. Beckie Sweet amended Rev. Baron’s motion to postpone until two people of color are included on the ballot to be ex-officio members. The Rev. Dr. Scott Johnson amended the amendment to the motion to postpone by removing the word “two.” This amendment was supported after which, the Rev. Ruth Rosa Warner, amended the amendment by changing the wording to a more diverse slate. A motion was made to indefinitely postpone the amendment. Lay member Sam Smith mentioned that the Robert Rules would make postponement out of order until the amendment is voted upon. Bishop Webb affirmed Sam’s statement and invited him to the stage as a parliamentarian. The voting devices were used to vote on Rev. Rosa Warner’s amendment, and the amendment was supported by a mere six votes.

- Peter Abdella was officially elected as Chancellor of the UNY Conference.
- Director of New Faith Communities the Rev. Dave Masland and Bishop Webb presented a video about the “New Places for New People” partnership that will help grow existing New Faith Communities and support the planting of new NFCs.
- Bob Flask was officially elected as Conference Treasurer.
- The nomination committee presented the list of nominees for all Conference teams that had vacancies, and the election of all nominees was supported.
- Bishop Webb and Assistant to the Bishop and Director of Connectional Ministries the Rev. Bill Gottschalk-Fielding commended the UNY Conference staff for their hard work. Bishop Webb also recognized and thanked the Episcopal Office staff members: Episcopal Office Manager Mary Bradley and Rev. Gottschalk-Fielding.
- Blenda Smith started the Conference Commission on Religion and Race report by discussing the racism taking place in Pittsford schools. Harold Wheat talked about the launching of Imagine No Racism (INR). Georgia Whitney spoke about how the majority of UNY pastors and a good number of laity have completed all six sessions of the INR curriculum. Rev. Sweet spoke about steps being taken to improve the INR initiative and launching phase two. Rev. Johnson spoke about resources being made available to local churches and encouraged everyone, whether they are starting their INR journey or stepping into phase two of the ministry, to dive further into understanding racism. In the CCORR Report, Blenda also presented a video on Shirley Readdean, who has been working hard at eliminating racism long before the INR initiative.
- Voting took place throughout the day, and the following clergy were elected Thursday as delegates to General Conference: The Rev. Beckie Sweet, the Rev. Dr. Stephen Cady II, the Rev. Carmen Perry, and the Rev. Rachel Morse. The following laity were elected as delegates to General Conference: Ian Urriola, Marthalyn Sweet, and Sam Smith.
- The evening ended with a Memorial Service to remember the lives of clergy, clergy spouses, and laity throughout the Conference who have passed away since the last AC session. The message was delivered by the Rev. Rood.

To see more coverage of the 2019 Annual Conference session, visit <https://tinyurl.com/AC19news>.