

2018 UNYUMC Annual Conference Daily Notes Friday June 1, 2018

- Study Leader the Rev. Dr. L. Gregory Jones held his first study session in the morning. He said we don't know where we're going or why we're going there. So, he focused on why we are lost and how we can regain our direction. "Each one of us has a 'back to Egypt' part of our souls," Rev. Jones said. "We get a glimpse of what God is calling us to do, and we get uncertain. And we say, 'I don't think so. Egypt sounds just fine to me.'" He said we must remember what it is to bear witness to God by realizing our "back to Egypt" tendencies and allowing God to work through us, in spite of us, and beyond us to change us.
- There was much discussion over the revote on Constitutional Amendment #1, related to gender justice. After 11 lay and clergy from the floor spoke for or against the amendment, there was a call to question, which passed, moving Amendment #1 to a vote. Results are kept confidential until all Conferences throughout the denomination have an opportunity to vote. Afterward, Upper New York Area Resident Bishop Mark J. Webb came to the podium to differentiate himself as presider of the Conference to the Conference's Bishop. He apologized to women for the way they are treated and explained how we need to work to abolish all isms and our culture and Church.
- Northeastern Jurisdiction Volunteers in Mission Coordinator Tom Lank announced that in the last 18 months, UNY congregations sent 100 mission teams into Christian service and said in 2017, almost 11,000 UNY members engaged in mission. He also shared opportunities for volunteer.
- Missionaries the Rev. Douglas Childress and Dr. Kulli Toniste introduced the Baltic Methodist Theological Seminary scholarship fund, which supports students at the seminary they have been serving for the past three years.
- Rev. Jones led his second study session in the afternoon, addressing how churches can change to adapt for the future and become intimate with God. He said people often let the past gets in their eyes and emphasized both thinking and feelings matter when it comes to change. "If we are going to boldly move into our call, if we are really going to be able to understand the summons coming from God, we need to recognize all that needs to be unlearned so we can change." Holy friendships can help in the process, as they help to shape imagination and execute dreams.
- Christian Menzi thanked the Conference for supporting the Black College Fund.
- Bishop Webb thanked the UNY Conference staff for their ministry, with a special thanks to Assistant to the Bishop and Director of Connectional Ministries the Rev. Bill Gottschalk-Fielding and Episcopal Office Manager Mary Bradley.

Recommendations and Resolution:

- **UNY2018.SHRec.1** – The recommendation from the Social Holiness Team on Welcoming a Stranger was supported with an amendment to change the "Bill of Rights" to the "U.S. Constitution."
- The recommendation from the Accessibility Committee to have a Disability Awareness weekend in February was supported.
- **UNY2018.SHRec.2** – The recommendation from the Task Force on Peace with Justice in Palestine/Israel – Advocating for the Rights of Children Living Under Israeli Occupation was supported.
- **UNY2018.SHRec.3** – The recommendation from the Social Holiness Committee in divesting from fossil fuels was supported.
- **UNY2018.SHRec.4** – The recommendation from the Task Force for Immigration on Radical Hospitality was supported with combined amendments to change the language of "that when our Districts and/or our Conference is hiring people who will be the first point of contact, a priority shall be that these people shall be a minimum of bilingual or more." To "that when our Districts and/or our Conference is hiring people who will be the first point of contact a priority shall be that these people shall be a minimum of bilingual or more, whenever possible and/or the District and Conference keep a database of multilingual people, who they are, and the languages they speak as a resource.
- **UNY2018.SHRec.5** – The recommendation from the Social Holiness Team that the Upper New York Conference Rules Committee include a Peace with Justice Coordinator to the list of equalizing lay members based on position of leadership was supported.
- **UNY2018.SHRec.6** – The recommendation from the Social Holiness Team to ban firearms from churches and to have signage saying that firearms are banned was not supported.
- **UNYAC2018.1** – The resolution of specific guidelines for delegates going to the 2019 special session of General Conference was not supported.
- The evening ended with the Service of Blessing and Anointing, which honors clergy and laity for their ministry.
- At the end of the Service of Blessing and Anointing, Bishop Webb shared that the Conference would continue the worshipful spirit by addressing the Nominations Report. It was accepted.

To see more coverage of the 2017 Annual Conference session, visit <https://tinyurl.com/AC18news>.