A Call to the New York Annual Conference

Thomas J. Bickerton  
Resident Bishop

Dear Friends & Colleagues,

When I was five years old my father took me to my first Annual Conference session. He was a lay delegate from our local church. As a young boy, I was mesmerized by the grandeur and the spectacle of that gathering and the events that took place at that event.

As I grew I came to meet people in that annual gathering who would become friends, mentors, and colleagues. In that event, I came to understand how the church worked. During those meetings, I came to appreciate the “giants” of the church who provided leadership. With every session, I came to be blessed more and more by all that Annual Conference represented and stood for. I went from being a five-year-old observer, to a sixteen-year-old youth delegate, to a young adult ordinand, to an adult pastor. I am, and always will be, a child of the Annual Conference.

My journey represents over fifty years of attending Annual Conference sessions. I fell in love with Annual Conference as a boy and I have not stopped being mesmerized by the grandeur, the spectacle, and the purpose of a gathering that brings the connection of Methodism alive in one sacred place. To put it simply, “I love Annual Conference!”

The time has come once again for us to send out the “Call” to Annual Conference. Just as Francis Asbury “called” all pastors and laity to assemble in Baltimore on Christmas Eve in 1874, I have the privilege of “calling” all pastors and laity to assemble for our latest version of the gathering of the “blessed connection.”

It is there, at Hofstra University, on June 7-10, that we will gather as the New York Annual Conference. It is there that we will greet one another, sing “And Are We Yet Alive,” and celebrate our life together. It is there that we will worship our God, live out our calling as laity and clergy in ministry, and continue to set in motion the mission that God has offered to us as faithful servants.

Mark your calendars. Send in your registrations. Begin your earnest and intentional prayers. And join me in eagerly anticipating how God will bless us as we celebrate our life together as a people called Methodist in a blessed place called the New York Annual Conference!

See you there!

The Journey Continues, . . .

Thomas J. Bickerton  
Resident Bishop

Important Dates & Deadlines:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 29</td>
<td>Early-bird registration ($225) for annual conference opens: <a href="http://www.nyac.com/ac">www.nyac.com/ac</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 26</td>
<td>All annual conference reports (not more than 700 words), resolutions and petitions to appear in Pre-Conference Booklet due (Rule 27); send to <a href="mailto:confsecy@nyac.com">confsecy@nyac.com</a>. The reports, resolutions and petitions will be periodically posted online beginning late April.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1</td>
<td>Late Registration ($250) for annual conference opens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 24</td>
<td>Last day for annual conference registration. Note: NO ONSITE REGISTRATION AT HOFSTRA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 26</td>
<td>Request to be excused from Annual Conference: It is Bishop Bickerton’s expectation that all clergy and lay members will be in attendance at the 2017 Annual Conference Session. If an absence is necessary, the individual – clergy, laity, provisional members and local pastors – must report by letter (written; email acceptable) to the Conference Secretary (<a href="mailto:confsecy@nyac.com">confsecy@nyac.com</a>) the reason for the absence. Book of Discipline ¶602.8.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 7-10</td>
<td>New York Annual Conference, Hempstead, NY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cancellation of registration due in order to receive refund — send email to website@nyac.com
A Message from our Conference Lay Leader

Annual Conference, a time for joyful worship, reunion, and fellowship and, of course, the work required to conduct the business of the New York Annual Conference. According to statistics, there was fewer than 400 laity who answered the roll call at the 217th Session of Annual Conference in 2016. It is my hope that each of you will accept this cordial invitation to join other lay members and me at the 218th Session of the New York Annual Conference. So please mark your calendar, June 7-10, 2017.

As professing members of The United Methodist Church and through our baptism, we are called to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. As we journey on this pathway of disciple making let us consider these words: “So friends, confirm God’s invitation to you, his choice of you. Don’t put it off; do it now . . . !” 2 Peter 1:10 Message

Your prayers, support, and help during my first year as Conference Lay Leader have been encouraging and greatly appreciated. As we continue this journey together, it is my hope that prayer will bind us together as we proclaim the gospel of Christ and offer hope to the world.

In preparation of our time at Annual Conference, the Board of Laity will again offer Daily Prayer and Meditation, beginning April 24, 2017, from 6:55 – 7:00 a.m. and continue until June 3, 2017.

Please refer to the 2016 Book of Discipline to refresh your mind on the following:

Lay members of the annual conference are expected to participate in all deliberations and vote on all measures except on granting or validation of license, ordination, reception into full conference membership (Page 410, paragraph 602-6, Book of Discipline).

The annual conference shall be composed of clergy and lay members. The lay membership shall consist of professing lay members elected by each charge… If the lay membership should number less than the clergy members of the annual conference, the annual conference shall provide for the election of additional lay members to equalize lay and clergy membership of the annual conference. (Pages 34 & 35, paragraph 32, Article 1, Book of Discipline)

You don’t want to miss the Laity Session on Wednesday, June 7th! The Rev. Susan Henry-Crowe, General Secretary of the General Board of Church and Society will engage the laity in an interactive workshop around the relevance of our Social Principles and their importance in disciple making. The NYAC theme: “Pathways & Possibilities — The Journey of Disciple Making.” I am looking forward to seeing you there. Remember: your presence and your vote count!

In the service of the Lord,
Roena Littlejohn
Conference Lay Leader

Rev. Susan Henry-Crowe

General Secretary of the General Board of Church and Society Rev. Susan Henry-Crowe will be our guest speaker at the Laity Session on Wednesday, June 7th engaging the laity in an interactive event based on the theme “Pathways & Possibilities — The Journey of Disciple Making.” Henry-Crowe, who became the chief executive of the GBCS in 2014, is committed to the long-established ministry of GBCS through advocacy, education and justice-seeking. “The opportunity to support the communities and lives of real people around the world in their struggles for justice is the call of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and one in which I am privileged to serve,” she said.

Prior to assuming her duties at GBCS Rev. Henry-Crowe spent 22 years as Dean of the Chapel & Religious Life at Emory University in Atlanta, GA. For 16 years, Henry-Crowe served as a member of the United Methodist Judicial Council—she is the first woman elected president of the Council, serving in that role from 2008-2012. Henry-Crowe was ordained an elder and continues to be a member of the South Carolina Annual Conference. In South Carolina she served in three pastoral appointments, and as associate director and then director of the Conference Council on Ministries.

We welcome Rev. Susan Henry-Crowe to the New York Conference.
Meet Father Greg Boyle, Guest Preacher

Father Greg Boyle, S.J., is an American Jesuit priest who works with Los Angeles street gangs as the founding director of Homeboy Industries in California (www.homeboyindustries.org). Before founding Homeboy Industries as a non-profit ministry to his neighborhood’s predominantly Hispanic gang members in 2001, Father Boyle (www.homeboyindustries.org/fatherg) was a pastor of Mission Dolores church in 1986-1992. Homeboy Industries got its start when he founded Homeboy Bakery in 1992, following the L.A. race riots, as a way of getting gang members off the streets. He previously taught at Loyola High School and worked with Christian Base Communities in Cochabamba, Bolivia. He also spent time as Chaplain of the Islas Marías Penal Colony in Mexico and at Folsom Prison in the U.S. He is the author of Tattoos on the Heart and is also a public speaker who has been honored by numerous organizations for his work.

Workshops

Workshops are back by popular demand! After the success of last year’s ministry workshops, we will be offering new opportunities for members of Annual Conference to experience meaningful and relevant ideas to take back to their local churches. Descriptions of the workshops and presenters will be available on the conference website soon. (www.nyac.com/ac).

Topics for 2017 will follow our conference emphasis on disciplemaking and may include: The Church and People with Disabilities; Developing Men’s Ministry; Making Disciples through Local Missions; Preaching in Contentious and Uncertain Times; 21st Century Disciple Making, and Small Group Development/Implementation.

Agenda Summary

Wednesday
Afternoon
Communion Usher Practice
Gathering Music
Opening Worship with Holy Communion, Bishop Bickerton preaching (1pm)
Clergy & Laity Sessions
All Conference Dinner (5pm)

Evening
Opening Business
Healing Service

Thursday
Early Morning
Communion & Morning Prayer

Morning
Memorial Service, Father Greg Boyle preaching

Afternoon
Retirement Recognition
Workshops

Thursday (cont)
Early Morning
Communion & Morning Prayer

Throughout the Day
Business

Evening
Commissioning Service with Call to Ministry
Father Greg Boyle preaching

Saturday
Morning
Gathering Music
Ordination with Holy Communion, Bishop Bickerton preaching
Please register for annual conference as soon as possible. The link to the online registration can be found here: www.nyac.com/ac

The last day to register is May 24, 2017. There will be NO onsite registration at Hofstra — everyone who wishes to attend and receive credentials must register online.

Registration fees covering meals and participation costs of the conference are shown below. Your cost depends upon the timing of your registration, providing an incentive to register early.

You will receive a confirmation email with a link where you can review all of the options you have chosen, your total charges, and the mailing information for checks. Please print this confirmation information and bring it with you to conference.

Prices are as follows:

- **Registration**: completed and paid prior to May 1, 2017 — $225; May 1 until May 24, 2017 — $250
- **One-day fee for clergy retirees and spouses** for Thursday, June 9 — $20 each (may also register for campus housing for Wednesday and/or Thursday night at the prices below)
- **Hofstra campus housing (optional; costs are in addition to registration fee)**: Single: $53.25 per person per night; Double: $43.25 per person per night. (See information for booking hotels at discounted rates on page 7 - not part of registration)
- **“Special Meals”**: $6/per meal (separate locations incur additional expense to the conference)
- **Voluntary Contributions** over and above the registration cost can also be made during the online registration process. These contributions go toward reducing the cost of the conference. We thank you in advance!

Your registration is not complete until payment has been received. Payments must be made either: 1) by credit card/debit card through PayPal during registration (no account is necessary), or 2) by check made payable to NYAC and mailed to NYAC, Attn: Fran Collins, 20 Soundview Ave, White Plains, NY 10606 within two weeks of the online registration. The additional fee of $25 for late registration (beginning May 1), will be charged to those early-bird registrants who have not paid prior to May 1.

Check-in hours in lobby of the arena:

**Wednesday, June 7th**: 10am - 5pm and 6pm - 9pm
**Thursday, June 8th**: 8am - noon and 1pm - 5pm
After 5pm on Thursday, check-in moves downstairs to the business office in the “Pride Lounge.”

**Items you select while registering:**

- **Meals** — You choose which meals you will attend. If you have registered and paid for conference, meals in the Student Center from Wednesday dinner through Saturday breakfast are included. Visitors and reserve lay members will be charged for each meal requested unless they have registered and paid to attend the entire conference.

Those choosing “special meals” (e.g. the meeting of Church & Society), will be charged an additional $6 fee.

- **Workshops** — During registration, you will be given the choice of six/seven workshops to attend Thursday. See list on www.nyac.com/ac.

- **Legislative Sections** — Those who are members of annual conference (member clergy, those elected as lay members of conference from our churches, and other members per The Book of Discipline and Conference Rules) will choose which legislative section they would like to attend. See page 7 for choices. If you are attending as a visitor/guest, please choose the “non-voting” option. Changes can be made at Hofstra in the check-in area only up until 10am on Thursday.

- **Mentors/“First Timers”** — See more information about this program on page 6.

**Babysitting** — Will be available for children of conference members. See article on page 6 for more information.

**Volunteers** — Are needed to help annual conference run smoothly; please join us! See more information beginning on the next page.

**Conference Rules** — As part of our contract with Hofstra University, there are rules and regulations that we must relay to you. You will find a link to these rules in the online registration form. Please take the time to review. At the end of the registration form, you will be asked to acknowledge that you have read and agree to these rules.

**Help with Luggage** — You’ll be able to let us know if you need assistance with your luggage, and we’ll have someone ready to do just that. Check in with the hospitality desk upon your arrival/departure, and we’ll be sure to help.

**Refunds**

Refunds will be sent after annual conference to those who notify Barbara Eastman (website@nyac.com) by May 26, 2017 of their inability to attend the annual conference session.

**Contacts for questions about your registration**

- **Housing/ general questions:** Barbara Eastman at 860-633-9721 or website@nyac.com
- **Accessibility concerns:** John LeCain at 518-821-2816 or john.lecain@nyac-umc.com
- **Payments:** Fran Collins at 914-615-2223 or fcollins@nyac.com
SOME THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW

What to Bring with You to Hofstra

If you are staying on campus in a Hofstra Dormitory:

Hofstra will provide you with:

One pillow, bed linens, one towel, and one blanket. You should provide for your accommodations:

- An extra blanket or two
- Soap, washcloth, flashlight
- Rooms have only an overhead light, so you may want to bring a table lamp
- Hangers for your clothes closet

Please note: There are no telephones in the dorm rooms. If you don’t have a cell phone and need to make a call, please contact any conference staff member or go to the security desk in the lobby of your dorm and ask for help.

Whether or not you are staying on campus:

- Comfortable walking shoes
- A holder for your papers – consider a loose-leaf binder and three-hole punch
- Extra money to contribute to session offerings and/or if you plan to visit the Cokesbury bookstore
- A sweater (the arena can get cold)
- Bible for studies and/or meditation

When you check in, you will receive the following:

- Conference booklet containing all reports, petitions and resolutions (the pre-conference booklet will also be available on www.nyac.com/ac)
- Name badge – color coded for voting
- Housing/accommodations information (if appropriate)
- Menus for each meal
- Campus map
- Conference telephone directory including emergency information
- Check-out procedure sheet
- Brightly colored sheet for permission to speak during sessions
- All other papers will be found on the document tables in the arena (at the back of the room on the right side when facing the stage) or they will be handed out within the bar of the conference

Hofstra Facilities Information

The arena is where the plenary sessions take place, check-in occurs, and where the Cokesbury bookstore is located.

WiFi is available in the arena and other areas of the campus.

Cell phones must be turned off in the arena during conference sessions.

The Student Center is where you will find:

- Dining Hall
- Many Legislative Sessions
- Guest Services Desk
- Lounge Area: Snacks and coffee will be available each evening in front of the Dining Hall immediately opposite the Hofstra bookstore

Request to be Excused from Annual Conference

It is Bishop Bickerton’s expectation that all clergy and lay members will be in attendance at the 2017 Annual Conference Session.

If an absence is necessary, the individual – clergy, laity, provisional members and local pastors – must report by letter (written; email acceptable) to the Conference Secretary (confsecy@nyac.com) the reason for the absence. Book of Discipline ¶602.8.

The request must be submitted by May 26, 2017.

Display Tables

Ministry display tables on the upper level of the arena are available with reservations through Rev. Matt Curry. Please email your request to mcurry@nyac.com or in writing to: Rev. Matt Curry, NYAC, 20 Soundview Ave, White Plains, NY 10606-3302. Space is offered to conference and church agencies on a first-come, first-served basis.

Volunteers

Ushers

You are invited to sign up to be an usher at the Annual Conference Session.

Once we have the list of volunteers we will send an email outlining the types of ushers: communion, offering, voting, general.

There will be a set of instructions for each type of usher. Because there will be changes to the “way we have always done things,” there will be a required “walk through” for Communion Ushers, prior to Opening Worship.

Your responsibilities and performance as an usher are critical to making our events at conference run smoothly.

Worship Team Assistants

The Worship Team invites all clergy and laity with gifts and passion for creative and inspiring worship to join us in planning various services for annual conference.

If you are interested, please contact co-chairs Rev. Heather Sinclair (heather.sinclair@nyac-umc.com) or Rev. Alex da Silva Souto (alex.souto@nyac-umc.com).

Other Opportunities

During registration there is an opportunity to sign up for other assistance: Hospitality/greeter, stage hand and assistance with “Telling Your Story.”

Your help will be greatly appreciated!

Telling Your Story

Last year you heard the stories of historical figures in our Conference. This year, we want to hear YOUR story! Do you have a faith story to share? Has the story of someone in your church inspired you? How does your church’s story connect with your own?

The Commission on Archives and History would like to hear from you at Annual Conference. We will be recording video stories with two participants at a time, one interviewer and one storyteller in conversation with each other. So find a partner (or we can help you find one) – and tell your story together! Visit www.nyac.com/archives for more information and to sign up.
Babysitting & Children’s Programming

The conference is offering Safe Sanctuaries-certified babysitting (infants and pre-schoolers) and children’s programming (school aged) free of charge. If you sign up for this option, Cassandra Negri, NYAC children’s ministries consultant, will be in touch with you with more information as we move closer to the conference.

Mentors & First-Timers

There are parts of our annual conference meeting (e.g., our Legislative Section process) that may be strange or unusual for first-time attendees, and we want to ensure that new members are equipped to participate fully in all aspects of the conference. We can arrange for first-timers to be paired with veterans so that any and all questions or concerns can be addressed either on site, or before our session at a time, location and in a manner convenient to both first-time and veteran mentor. Should you want to be paired with an experienced conference member, or are a veteran conference attendee who would like to help mentor a first-timer, let us know during registration and the hospitality team will follow-up with you to make the necessary connection.

Accessibility Concerns

Pastor John LeCain, a member of the Conference Committee on Accessibility, will be our liaison between individuals with accessibility issues and conference staff. Please contact John with any questions or concerns you may have regarding accessible accommodations, area transportation, meals, arena/plenary matters, etc. We look forward to helping make this annual conference an event at which all feel welcome!

Please contact John LeCain at:
John.Lecain@nyac-umc.com
518-821-2816
P.O. Box 176, Kerhonkson, NY 12446

Blueprint for Wellness

Biometric Screening

This important service will once again be held during annual conference on Thursday and Friday from 6am-8:30am. Active clergy and their spouses who are enrolled in HealthFlex along with retirees should consider participating and earning cash rewards through Virgin Pulse! This is the first step to completing the Health Quotient and saving on your annual deductible in 2018.

Pre-registration is required; details on registration for this screening to follow. Walk-ins are not encouraged and accepted only if there is availability.

Live Captioning

After a successful first year we will again have live captioning at conference. All events in the arena will be transcribed live and the words will scroll across the bottom of the large central screen in real time. Live captioning is intended to provide greater accessibility to all members and guests of the annual conference by offering all arena events in both written and spoken word.

Offerings

The following offerings will be taken at conference:
- JFON (Justice for Our Neighbors)
- Bishop’s Partners in Mission
- Anchor House
- Young Clergy Debt Assistance

Please make checks payable to NYAC, and put the name of the offering on the “memo” line.

Day of Dance Conference

All are invited to participate in the 3rd Annual Day of Dance Conference to be held from Saturday, April 8 to Sunday, April 9th. All are welcome.

No experience is needed. Some dance pieces will be used to minister throughout the conference. However, all are welcome to participate in the Day of Dance Conference.

Please contact Rev. Sheila M. Beckford at Sheila.Beckford@nyac-umc.com for more information.

Annual Conference Choir

We invite you to share your gifts by ministering with this year’s Annual Conference Mass Choir on Saturday, June 10th. Time of arrival for Saturday’s rehearsal is 8:45 am. For any additional information please contact Raymond Trapp, Director of Music or Ian Wharton, Coordinator at music.worshipnyac@gmail.com

Call for Health Kits!

Health kits provide basic necessities to people who have been forced to leave their homes because of human conflict or natural disaster.

These kits will be collected on Wednesday and Thursday in the arena.

For information about building a health kit, go to: www.umcor.org/UMCOR/Relief-Supplies/Relief-Supply-Kits/Health

Travel Directions to Hofstra University

By GPS To the David S. Mack Sports and Exhibition Complex (we call it “the arena”) - Use 1255 Hempstead Turnpike, Uniondale, NY – this is the address of the Nassau Memorial Coliseum which is across the street from the arena entrance. If you are traveling south/west on Hempstead Turnpike (Rte 24), turn right on Earle Ovington Blvd just after you see the coliseum (McDonalds will be on your left), then turn left onto East Gate Rd. When that road ends, turn right onto Dome Rd, then left onto unnamed road. The front of the arena is on your left about 500-1,000 ft after the turn – we’ll have a sign out front.

Information about transportation by rail and bus is posted on the web site: www.nyac.com/ac along with a map of the Hofstra campus.
LEGISLATIVE SECTIONS

All sections will include reports and petitions received by the conference secretary by the due date of April 26th. See submission instructions here: www.nyac.com/ac. Listed below are the reports that were presented at the 2016 Conference Session. Go to www.nyac.com/ac to review reports for 2017 – these will be updated frequently as they are received.

SECTION 1: MINISTRIES OF WITNESS

Committee on Accessibility, Hispanic American Council, Mission u, Mozambique/New York Sister Conferences Connection, Committee on Native American Ministries (CONAM), United Methodist Men, United Methodist Women.

SECTION 2: CONNECTIONAL MINISTRIES AND MINISTRIES OF NURTURE

Camps Governing Board, Camps Task Force, Children’s Ministries and Safe Sanctuaries, Connectional Ministries Vision Table, District Councils on Ministries, Fellowship of Local Pastors and Associate Members, Hispanic Consultant, Learning Center, Mission and Outreach Ministries, Older Adult Ministries, Superstorm Sandy Recovery Ministry.

Societies & Institutions: Africa University, Black College Fund, Boston University School of Theology, Candler School of Theology, Claremont School of Theology, Drew University Theological School, Iliff School of Theology, The Long Island Council of Churches, New York State Council of Churches, The United Methodist Frontier Foundation, Inc., Wesley Theological Seminary. Note: Submissions from agencies which have no reporting responsibility to the Conference are included herein for information purposes.

SECTION 3: MINISTRIES OF ADVOCACY

Board of Church & Society, Immigration Task Force, NYAC-Justice for Our Neighbors (NYAC-JFON) Immigration Project, Commission on Religion and Race.

SECTION 4: LEADERSHIP/COMMISSIONING

Committee on Episcopacy, Conference Lay Leader/Board of Laity, Conference Committee on Lay Servant Ministries, Board of Ordained Ministry, Parish Nurse/Faith Community Nursing.

SECTION 5: CLERGY CARE & CONFERENCE FINANCE

Commission on Equitable Compensation, Conference Council on Finance and Administration (CCF&A), Proposed 2017 Budget, CFO & Director of Administrative Services, Board of Pension and Health Benefits.

SECTION 6: ADMINISTRATION

Commission on Archives and History, Conference Archivist, Conference Secretary, Commission on Conference Sessions, Committee on Examination of the Conference Journal, Parish Development—Missional Priorities (EMLC) Commission, Conference Personnel Committee, Conference Rules Committee, United Methodist City Society.

CORPORATE SESSION REPORTS & RESOLUTIONS

Board of Trustees and Corporate Resolutions are presented in plenary sessions.

Special Rates for Conference Members at Area Hotels

Conference members must contact the hotels directly using the information below. The number of rooms is limited, and allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. Reservations Deadline: April 30th IF rooms are still available.

Make reservations early! Once each hotel books the allotted NYAC reservations, no more reservations may be made at the special rate. Hotels are listed by their approximate distance from Hofstra.

Red Roof Inn - 3.16 Miles
699 Dibblee Dr, Westbury
Rate: $119.00 + occupancy tax
For reservations call 516-794-2555, and use Confirmation Code NYACUM.
All rooms are non-smoking.

LaQuinta Inn & Suites Garden City - 3.58 Miles
821 Stewart Ave, Garden City
Rates: Wednesday & Thursday $139.00; Friday-$239; Above rates by day + occupancy tax
For reservations call 516-705-9000 and ask for the NYUMC group rate.

Best Western Mill River Manor - 5.55 Miles
173 Sunrise Hwy, Rt 27, Rockville Centre
Rate: $139.00 + occupancy tax
For reservations call 516-678-1300 and use code: NAC17
Call to the 218th Session of the New York Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church
Bishop Thomas J. Bickerton, Presiding

Hofstra University
June 7 - 10, 2017

INSIDE:
- Speakers/Workshops
- Registration Info
- Reminders