

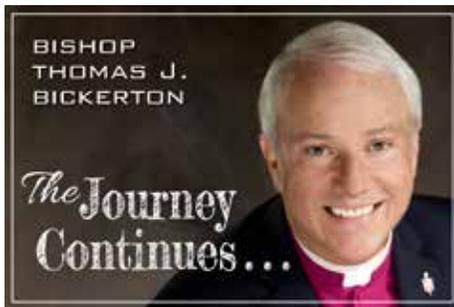
SAVE THE DATE: March 16, a special called session of the NY Annual Conference

"Write the vision clearly on the tablets, that one may read it on the run." – Habakkuk

THE VISION



January 2019



Resolving To Live With Kindness

"And what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God."
-Micah 6:8

On the way home from church last Sunday, my son Ian and I were reflecting upon the engaging sermon that we had just heard. Going down the highway, Ian asked, "Dad, what are you resolving to do this year?" What quickly spilled forth from my lips was, "I hope to continue to promote kindness in the midst of a very conflicted world."

I'm not a big person for New Year's resolutions. That conviction is driven by the reality that most New Year's resolutions only last for a few weeks as well as the firm belief that resolutions should be about a lifestyle change rather than a temporary fix.

"Resolve" should be, in my mind, something that is closely associated with spiritual conviction, spiritual discipline, and spiritual life.

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Kicking Off the New Year

A small but energetic group of youth and staff welcomed the New Year at the Winter Weekend at Camp Quinipet on January 4–6. The event was filled with worship, fellowship, and fun and games.

Methodist Mission Celebrates 200 Years

FROM GBGM REPORTS

The General Board of Global Ministries is celebrating a big anniversary in 2019—200 years of Methodists engaging in mission around the world.

The bicentennial recognizes the founding of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church. On April 5, 1819, the Missionary Society was formed in New York City in response to the mission work of John Stewart, a freeborn African-American, among the Wyandotte Native American people in Ohio. Stewart had been licensed as a "missionary

pioneer" in 1818.

The Methodist Episcopal Church supported Stewart's mission work financially and appointed missionaries to assist him. Stewart's work and example inspired the formation of The Methodist Missionary Society, the forerunner to today's General Board of Global Ministries.

Creation of the Missionary Society was affirmed by the 1820 General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church as the first denomination-wide mission society for Methodists in the United States. The United

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PRAYING OUR WAY FORWARD

UMCprays.org • A UMC Prayer Community

Prayer Matters! Learn More.



For a full lineup of events, go to: www.nyac.com/conferencecalendar.

1/26 “Messy Church” Workshop

Come explore this way of “being church for all-ages to join in experiencing fun and faith formative activities.” The event is at the Learning Center in White Plains, N.Y. Check for new details [here](#).

2/11–13 Anti-Racism Training

A three-day training program, “The People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond: Undoing Racism,” is being offered to fulfill a new requirement approved at the 2018 annual conference. The change requires all that clergy and lay leaders receive at least 10 hours of anti-racism training each quadrennium. The event is at the Stony Point Center in Stony Point, N.Y., and runs from 10 a.m. Monday to noon on Wednesday. The training is free to those affiliated with the UMC, but a refundable \$250 deposit is required. Register [here](#). Contact Sheila Beckford at sheila.beckford@nyac-umc.com with additional questions.

2/16–17 BMCR Weekend

Best-selling author and leadership consultant Bonnie St. John will be the featured speaker at this two-day gathering of the NYAC’s Black Methodists for Church Renewal at the New Rochelle UMC, 1200 North Avenue, New Rochelle. St. John, who was the first African-American to win medals in Winter Paralympic competition as a ski racer, is the chief executive officer of the Blue Circle Leadership Institute. She worked in the White House during the Clinton administration as a director for the National Economic Council. The weekend includes a 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. workshop on Saturday, and worship and dinner from 4–6 p.m. Sunday. Cost is \$30; more information and [registration](#) details may be found on the NYAC website.

2/23–26 2019 Special Session

Delegates to the specially-called [2019 General Conference](#) will gather in The Dome, part of the America’s Center Convention Complex in St. Louis. Guests and observers to the conference may [register](#) online. See related story on Page 4.

3/9 2020 Budget Hearings

The conference Council on Finance and Administration will gather from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Learning Center to hear requests for funding for the 2020 calendar year.

3/9 Hulapaloozas to Come

Churches across the conference are joining in the denomination’s “Abundant Health” initiative by sponsoring health and fitness expos for their communities. Wendy Vencuss, the NYAC’s Abundant Health coordinator, has worked with churches to plan the following “Hulapalooza” gatherings:

March 9: Tremont UMC, 1951 Washington Ave., Bronx

March 30: 1 to 5 p.m. at Huntington-Cold Spring Harbor UMC, 180 West Neck Rd., Huntington, N.Y.

Check the NYAC [calendar page](#) for more details, or contact [Wendy Vencuss](#) to plan your own event.

4/26–28 “Converge” Youth Retreat

All youth in the Long Island East and West, and the Metropolitan districts are invited to this weekend at Camp Quinipet on Shelter Island. The event starts Friday at 7 p.m. and concludes at noon Sunday. Register through your local church by March 31; details can be found [here](#).

7/10–14 Youth 2019 Registration

“Love Well,” the national gathering for United Methodist youth and their leaders in Kansas City next July 10–14, promises four days of discipleship, worship, Bible study, big-name musical artists, service opportunities and life-changing fun. Early bird registration is available through Jan. 31, 2019, and includes a discounted rate, plus a free spot for every 10 paid registrants. YOUTH 2019 is for youth grades 6-12 and their leaders. For more information, go to <http://youth2019.com> or @youth2019 on all social media platforms.

Vision Deadlines for 2019

The Vision is a monthly online publication of the New York Conference. Deadlines are always the first Friday of the month, with posting to the web site about 10 days later. The deadlines for 2019 are January 4, February 1, March 1, April 5, May 3, June 7, July 5, August 2, September 6, October 4, November 1, and December 6. Please send any stories, photos, ideas, or questions directly to vision@nyac.com.

 <p>The Vision</p> <p>The News of the New York Conference of the United Methodist Church</p>
<p>Bishop: Thomas J. Bickerton Editor: Joanne Utley New York Conference of The United Methodist Church 20 Soundview Avenue, White Plains, NY 10606 Phone (888) 696-6922 Fax (914) 615-2244; Website: www.nyac.com Vision e-mail: vision@nyac.com</p>

Youth Ambassadors Headed to Ecuador

The NYAC Youth Ambassadors in Mission (YAM) will be traveling to Ecuador this summer. The YAM program is a unique opportunity for older youth, ages 15 to 19, to serve in an international setting. The ministry seeks to grow and support young Christian leaders, developing their faith, teaching them how to love and serve God's children everywhere in this world, and instilling in them the Wesleyan/holiness mission-spirit of evangelism and social responsibility.

For many participants, this might be their first time traveling away from home and family to a different country to experience a new culture. The YAM experience offers a critical cross-cultural encounter and fosters a sense of maturity in the faith journey of young people in the conference. More than 200 youths have participated in this ministry since its inception in 2005; the average age is 17. Among the countries that youth ambassadors have served in are Antigua, Bolivia, Cambodia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Ghana, and Haiti.

Each year these teenagers leave their comfortable homes, familiar environment, family and friends—sometimes with anxiety and uncertainty—to travel to another country to participate in specific assigned projects. The actual accomplishment is not the “project” they do, it is the sharing of God's love with others through humanitarian services. It is the lasting relationships they develop among themselves and with the new community. It is the transformation that occurs in the life of the youth through their encounter of Christ in the other.

Local congregations in the NYAC are invited to recommend youth for the team. More information it will be posted on the [youth ambassadors page](#) of the NYAC website as it becomes available. Applications are available through the NYAC Missions office: [Tom Vencuss](#) or [Alexa Ojeda](#).

YAM Ecuador Trip Details

Dates: July 20–27, 2019

Cost: \$2,000. The cost is shared by the youth, his or her family, their local church, and the respective district. The Missions office will work with each YAM to coordinate this.

Host: Sara Flores, General Board missionary working in Ecuador
Participants: Limited to 15 youth; persons will be accepted on a “first application and deposit” basis. A priority will be given to first-time applicants. Names and \$250 deposit are due by March 1.

Disaster Response Opportunities

Alabama-West Florida:

February 16–23

Team leaders: Ross Porter and Tom Vencuss

Cost: \$500

Application deadline is January 19. Location and scope of work to be

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Celebrating 200 Years of UMC Mission

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Methodist General Conference in 2020 will mark the 200th anniversary of that action in 1820.

At the same time John Stewart was beginning his work among the Wyandotte people, Methodists in Great Britain were building on initial mission work in Ireland, the Caribbean, Canada, Sri Lanka, and Sierra Leone. Local societies formed in the early years of the 19th Century to support mission. At its 1818 Conference meeting, the British Methodist Conference brought these initial societies together to form the Wesleyan Methodist Mission Society.

A half century later in 1869, women in the Methodist Episcopal Church joined together to form the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, becoming one of the most significant women's denominational mission societies globally and the forerunner to today's United Methodist Women, celebrating 150 years in mission in 2019.

Together, these mission societies have been the main organizational vehicles for Methodists engaged in mission around the world. This history includes active participation in mission by Methodists from Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and North America.

While mission has changed in the last 200 years, Methodists remain deeply committed to mission. The bicentennial recognizes the

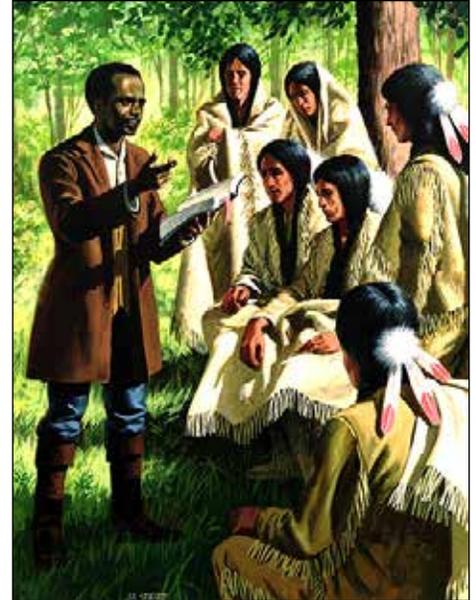
accomplishments and changes over the past 200 years while celebrating the present and future of Methodist mission, including how mission unifies all Methodists for God's redemptive work in the world.

The bicentennial steering committee is being chaired by Bishop Thomas Bickerton of the New York Conference, home of the original Missionary Society. Bickerton is also a Global Ministries director and heads the panel of directors that oversees the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR).

The bicentennial will include a world conference of mission leaders and scholars on April 8–10 in Atlanta. Sponsored in collaboration with Candler School of Theology of Emory University, the conference, “[Answering the Call: Hearing God's Voice](#),” will celebrate Methodism's mission heritage and look to the future of Methodist mission.

Methodists from all continents, from many nationalities, races, and ethnicities, both women and men, lay and ordained, have organized, supported, and engaged in mission to evangelize; start new churches; work for justice; alleviate suffering; build peace; empower women; train leaders in society; conduct medical missions; start new churches, schools, hospitals, clinics, and printing presses; and witness to the kingdom of God.

GBGM has collected stories of many of its



John Stewart's mission, pictured above, to the Wyandotte Indians in Ohio prompted the Methodist Episcopal Church to form its Mission Society.

missionaries and made them available on a [website](#) that many be searched by geography, people and theme. Stories of missionaries with ties to the New York Conference can be found [here](#).

Praying Our Way Forward



The Conference Board of Church & Society has created a [web page](#) with daily prayers for the 40 days leading up to the special session of General Conference in St. Louis. It begins with January 13.

Bishop Thomas J. Bickerton has also asked for continued prayers for all those who will gather, especially the NYAC delegation:

Delegates

Laity: Frederick Brewington, Gail Douglas-Boykin, Jorge Lockward, and Dorothee Benz
Clergy: Timothy J. Riss, Noel N. Chin, Kristina D. Hansen, and Alexandre da Silva Souto

Alternates

Laity: Tiffany French Goffe, Ann Craig, Roena A. Littlejohn, and Karen Prudente
Clergy: Vicki I. Flippin, Sheila M. Beckford, Martha E. Vink, and Sungchan Kim

Additional prayer resources, including a video invitation from Bishop Bickerton, may be found on the [NYAC website](#).

Bishops' Letter to LGBTQ Community

Editor's note: At the fall meeting of the Council of Bishops a motion was approved to send a pastoral letter to the global LGBTQ community. A writing team, composed of a bishop from each central conference and jurisdiction, completed this task, on behalf of the Council.

To our Global LGBTQ Kin in Christ,

The Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church recognizes the ways in which the convening of the Special Session of General Conference creates a time and space of harm for you and members of your family. To be the focus of attention, discussion and debate is hurtful.

Demeaning and dehumanizing comments and attacks on LGBTQ persons in conversations related to the upcoming February Conference are a great tragedy and do violence to hearts, minds, and spirits. When you suffer, the whole body of Christ suffers. Together, we need to work to resist hate, violence, and oppression of persons. In these attitudes and actions, great harm is done throughout the community, to the offended and the offender.

As Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 12: "We cannot say to a part of the body, 'I have no need of you.'" We belong to each other. In our Baptism, we are incorporated into the Church, the body of Christ, and made one in Christ. The Church pledges to every baptized member: "Your joy, your pain, your gain, your loss, are ours, for

you are one of us." (*The UMC Book of Worship*, p. 83). Our Book of Discipline clearly states that all people are of sacred worth.

As leaders of the church, we are brokenhearted by conversations that dishonor, objectify and dehumanize. We confess, as Bishops of The United Methodist Church and as we attempt to honor our convictions, that our actions and words have not always been life-giving or honoring of the LGBTQ community. Amid our sorrow, we seek to learn and grow in grace. To that end, we commit ourselves to helping people who disagree with each other to have conversations that include, honor, and respect people with different convictions. We are a diverse group of leaders—conservative, centrist, progressive—however, we are unified in our commitment to work together in ways that will give you and all God's children strength, comfort and hope for better and more merciful tomorrows.

As the Special Session of General Conference approaches, we pray that the Holy Spirit will draw us together. May we see the image of God in one another, treat one another with tenderness, and love one another fiercely. Bearing Christ's love in these ways, we pray to be God's faithful witnesses.

The Council of Bishops

The United Methodist Church

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

A Note About Wesleyan Covenant Association

I was a clergy delegate to the Global Legislative Assembly of the Wesleyan Covenant Association (WCA) which met at Mount Bethel United Methodist Church in Marietta, Georgia, on November 2, 2018. It was a very heartwarming experience to be among such devoted lay and clergy members of our beloved denomination who were praying, sharing, and working diligently to see ahead of us a way forward that honors our traditions as people of the Wesleyan heritage. Bishops and delegates from many nations gathered together in genuine holy conferencing.

Clearly and briefly stated, the two major emphases of the Modified Traditional Plan endorsed by the WCA seek to affirm the language currently found in the *Book of Discipline* pertaining to marriage, and the standards for ordination of clergy members and consecration of bishops within their respective conferences and jurisdictions. This traditional plan also contains wording that reminds us of our privileges and responsibilities as disciples of Jesus Christ and points to the need for all to be accountable to the church for our behaviors.

I include the following resolution enacted during the WCA Global Legislative Session in November. It should dispel any notions of the WCA being an exclusive movement within the church.

Statement Offering Radical Hospitality and Genuine Community

"We long for and are working for a church that offers radical hospitality and genuine community to all persons. While we affirm the orthodox, biblical view of sexuality and gender, we also welcome all persons to the redemptive grace of Jesus. We are committed to being a place of refuge and community for all who experience brokenness."

It is my prayer that the specially called General Conference to be held February 23–26, 2019, will agree that the Modified Traditional Plan is indeed the best way forward, thus enabling us to stop the infighting that has long plagued us and is preventing us from being a strong witness for Christ to the world.

In spirit and in truth,

Steve Knutsen

Pastor, United Methodist Church of Seaford

Resolving to Live With Kindness

Continued from page 1

Those very strongly held beliefs around “resolve” drive my thinking when it comes to a subject very near and dear to my heart: Kindness.

Looking back over 2018, most of my writings had a similar undertone. I have been significantly concerned about the fear-based, anger-driven rhetoric that is dominating the landscape of our world. Most of my musings have been about how we as Christians should try our best to create an alternative rhetoric based on our core beliefs as followers of Christ.

That alternative rhetoric is not just about the words we speak. It has much to do with the actions that we either intentionally or spontaneously do that demonstrate the status of our heart. And, to be honest, there are some days when we have it and some days when we don't. We are driven by the spirit of our heart, and the environment in which we live. All of those factors combined determine the degree to which we can live in a kind and loving way.

As I enter into 2019 I want it to be clearly known:

I love kindness.

Most, if not everyone, can agree that they love kindness when they are the benefactor of that form of grace. As most of you know, the second half of 2018 has been a time of extreme “hellos” and “goodbyes” for my family. In August, we were overwhelmed with joy as we welcomed our first grandchild, Holden, to the world. In December, we were overwhelmed with sorrow as we said a very quick goodbye to my Mom, Marlene, as she exited this life. Both events brought out the extremes of emotions within us. When Holden was placed into my arms for the first time, I felt the joy of an instantaneous bond with this new life as I began to immediately give myself away to this next generation of life. When Mom died and I said goodbye to her for the last time, I felt the sorrow of giving up a bond that had sustained and supported me for the entirety of my life. And, in the midst of both events, my family and I felt the extreme “loving kindness” from so many of you. So many of you fulfilled your own version of the membership vows which, in effect, became vows of relationship as you offered to us your “prayers, presence, gifts, and service.” And in those moments, as benefactors of this extreme grace, we just loved “kindness.”

I am sure you can relate to that. You, in your own way, and as a result of your own circumstances have been a benefactor of someone's kindness. It happens, at times, in unpredictable and spontaneous ways. At other times, it happens as a result of the relationships

you have built, and the kindness you receive comes your way in predictable and expected ways. Regardless, when this extravagance comes your way, don't you just “love kindness?” I do. And I am so grateful, in ways that words do not do justice, for the wonderful ways you have loved us through your kindness and love.

But as I enter into 2019, I want it to be clearly known:

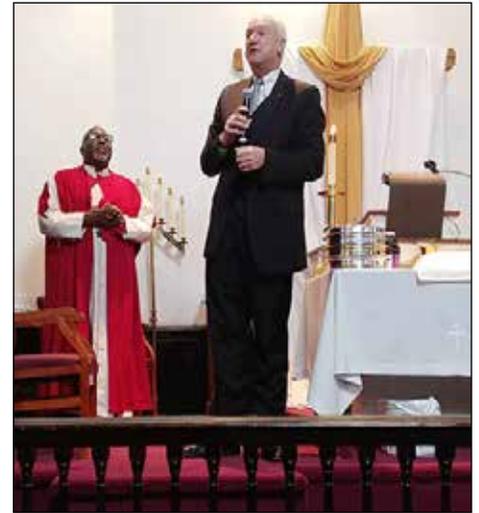
I love kindness.

Several times over the last year, someone has asked me if I have a personal mission statement. After thinking about that the first time the question was posed, I offered this answer: “If I can make someone's life, somewhere in the world, a little brighter every day of my life, then I will consider my life to have been worthwhile.” What that means is, “I love kindness.” It's like the old song written by Hal David and Burt Bacharach, “What the World Needs Now.” The words are so simple, yet beautiful: “What the world needs now is love, sweet love. It's the only thing that there's just too little of. What the world needs now, is love, sweet love. No not just for some, but for everyone.” The song was written and recorded in 1965 and, honestly, I can't think of a day when the world didn't need more love and had to deal with the lack of it somewhere in world.

What that means to me is that no matter the issue, no matter the circumstance, no matter the conflict or the chaos or the uncertainty or the unpredictability of life in this crazy world, there is someone, somewhere who is in need of someone else's “loving kindness.” And we, as followers of Christ, should be completely committed to loving the acts of kindness that make the world a better place.

The year 2019 will be a different and unique year in our lives. As we walk through these days we have no idea how the year will turn out, what surprises will face us, what sorrows will beset us, or what uncertainties will confront us. It will be unique in that way. But year 2019 will just be like every other year in the history of humankind. Every year there has been surprises facing us, sorrows besetting us, and uncertainties confronting us. And, in the midst of it all, there have been persons who have roamed the pathways of the world attempting to salve the wounds, bind the tattered edges, and spread kindness in an effort to make the world a better place. I don't know about you, but I want to be counted among those people.

A couple of weeks ago, I was in of those typical settings in urban New York City. It was a congested mess of tangled vehicles and frayed emotions. In the midst of that mess, I was a pedestrian trying to cross the street. I stepped



Bishop Thomas J. Bickerton, right, speaks to the congregation with pastor, Rev. Cecil Stone, left, during a January 6 visit to Springfield Gardens UMC.

off the curb and immediately got a glare and a loud honk from the driver who was passing by. His attitude got to me and, in that moment, I lost my cool. I was not kind. A few minutes later, Sally said to me, “You sure weren't yourself back there.” I had already acknowledged that in my mind, asked forgiveness for my outburst, and felt that I had not lived up to my personal mission statement with that person. Sally, in her own wonderful way, was holding me accountable for what she knew I wanted to be.

All of that is to say, that some days we have it and some days we don't. And on the days when we don't, may our prayer be that someone will hold us accountable to finding once again our center place and help to put us back on the track of being the living, loving example of what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ. What does it mean to be that kind of follower? It means intentionally working to demonstrate “loving kindness.”

Dear friends and colleagues, as we walk through these days of life called 2019, won't you join me in this simple prayer based on the words of Jesus from the gospel of Matthew:

“Oh God, in 2019 may our light shine before others, that they may see our good works and, as a result, give glory to God in heaven.”

That's not a bad resolution for the New Year. I hope you can agree and join me in the effort.

May it be so. O God, in heaven, may it be so. Amen.

The Journey Continues, . . .

Thomas J. Bickerton

Resident Bishop

NYAC JOB OPENINGS

Youth Ministry Coordinator

The youth ministry coordinator will provide creative and administrative oversight for youth ministries within the New York Conference. This position also provides inspired leadership and resources to facilitate youth ministry in the local church and at district levels.

The coordinator will be tasked with re-establishing the Conference Council on Youth Ministries (CCYM) in all six geographic districts, and the Youth Service Fund (including promotions, fund raising, grant applications and awards). They will be responsible to plan and lead events and programs for youth within the NYAC, building cross-cultural relationships and competency. Proficiency in social media as a tool for recruitment and messaging is required.

The coordinator must demonstrate an ability to work as a key member of a team consisting of the Bishop, District of Connectional Ministries, District Superintendents and consult with ministers and laity to identify and establish a youth ministry program in each district.

The Coordinator will be available to consult with and provide resources to local churches to establish or re-invigorate their youth ministries.

A full job description and the application protocol can be found on the NYAC website [here](#).

Director of Leadership Development & Intercultural Competency

The director of leadership development and intercultural competency will provide models to help the New York Conference develop and equip transformational leaders to make disciples and grow vital congregations that impact change in the world. This position also works to create systems, structures and venues for inter-cultural awareness and training, with the goal of creating a more unified approach to relationships and shared ministry within the conference.

The director will work with the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry and the Conference Board of Laity to deliver relevant solutions aimed at improving leadership skills across the system, as well as revise the "Compass" program.

The director will work to enhance the creation of a conference cooperative parish network and the bishop's "Leading Leaders to Lead" program with special emphasis on the development of a coaching program for clergy as well as the development of clergy clusters.

The director will explore how to increase a "culture of call" within the conference with special emphasis on collaboration with the coordinator of youth ministry, the coordinator of camping ministry, the cabinet, and pastors in vital congregations. They will work with the director of congregational development and revitalization to explore the possibility of creating an "incubator appointment" of young clergy/seminary students.

They will insure that all developmental processes are aligned, valid, appropriately resourced, and measured against the Mission, Vision, and Core Values of the conference.

A full job description and the application protocol can be found on the NYAC website [here](#).

Director of Communications

The New York Conference is conducting a nationwide search for a director of communications, whose office will be based in White Plains, N.Y.

The director of communications will provide direct oversight of the creation and maintenance of a comprehensive communications ministry for the NYAC. Using multi-media, the director will play an integral role in promoting conference within its boundaries and to the world. The director will develop a strategic communications plan to tell the story of NYAC and will lead and participate in the implementation of this plan to assist the conference, its churches and members.

The director of communications will work with the cabinet and staff to recognize internal and external communications opportunities and solutions. He or she will serve as the primary media relations liaison for the NYAC and oversee the crisis communications response.

The director will help churches maximize communication resources and strategies to grow membership and reach the diverse population of our conference. This includes developing internal digital and print publications, an intranet system, video projects, and completing special assignments.

The director will develop, present and administer an annual budget for all communications strategies, and work with the CFO and finance department to understand and adhere to the NYAC budget policies and procedures. Candidates should possess knowledge of The United Methodist Church, its mission, structure and theological beliefs.

A full job description and the application protocol can be found on the NYAC website [here](#).

New Anti-Racism Training

A new course, "The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond: Undoing Racism," is being offered to fulfill the requirement change for anti-racism training that was made at the 2018 New York Annual Conference.

The change requires the bishop, district superintendents, clergy, conference staff, all conference- and district-level positions, lay leaders (district and local), lay servants and lay ministries, Staff Parish Relations Committee chairs, and all candidates for ministry to take a minimum of 10 hours of training that addresses the on-going challenge of racism each quadrennium. This training is to utilize materials and personnel offered by the church's General Commission of Religion and Race or equivalent (CORR).

Attendance is **free** for those affiliated with the UMC (The Conference Commission on Religion and Race pays the \$250 cost), however there is a \$250 refundable deposit for the training. Without payment of the \$250, your registration is not complete. This deposit will be returned to UMC-affiliated registrants after the completion of the training. Registrants who do not attend, or do not cancel within two weeks of the training will forfeit the \$250.

Training will be held at the Stony Point Center, 17 Cricketown Rd., Stony Point, N.Y., from 10 a.m.–6 p.m. Monday, 9 a.m.–5 p.m. Tuesday, and 9 a.m. to noon on Wednesday. Participants must be present for the entire program to receive credit for the training. A summary will be forwarded to the Cabinet.

Further information and [registration details](#) can be found on the NYAC calendar page.

OBITUARIES

Gayle Romain Frailey Weyand

Gayle Romain Frailey Weyand, 94, died December 14, 2018, at Woodland Pond at New Paltz, N.Y. Born on September 2, 1924, in Los Angeles, she was the widow of Rev. George F. Weyand, who died in 1978.

Weyand attended Southern Seminary in Buena Vista, Va., on a piano scholarship and the Katherine Gibbs School in New York City. She worked as an executive secretary at various NYC firms, including Doyle, Dane and Bernbach. Weyand loved Manhattan, and frequented the opera, museums, and Broadway shows well into her late eighties.

She married Reverend George F. Weyand, pastor of Carmel Methodist Church, on Dec. 27, 1958. The couple went on to serve Grace UMC in Newburgh, NY and Asbury-Crestwood UMC in Yonkers, until George's appointment as superintendent of the Hudson West District of the NY Conference, just a year before his death. After her husband's death, Weyand raised her two sons in Newburgh, where she worked for the commercial lending department of what eventually became Bank of America. She was employed there for 20 years until her retirement.

She was a loyal member of Grace UMC, but her service extended beyond the church. Weyand served on the YWCA board and was one of the inspirations for the Methodist Faith Build project at Habitat for Humanity of Greater Newburgh.

She is survived by sons, Mark Weyand of Newburgh, N.Y., and Peter (Karin Haaland) Weyand of Kingston, N.Y.; and granddaughters, Melia and Grace. In addition to her husband, she was predeceased by a sister, Elaine Viebranz, of Larchmont, N.Y.

A memorial service will be held at 11 a.m., Saturday, January 19, at Grace UMC, 468 Broadway, Newburgh, N.Y. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Grace Church Memorial Fund (Grace UMC, PO Box 2556, Newburgh, NY 12550). Messages of condolence may be left at the [Brooks Funeral Home website](#).

Youth Headed to Ecuador

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determined as more information becomes available. Contact [Tom Vencuss](#) in the NYAC Missions office for more information and an application.

Haiti: March 24–31 Dental/Medical Team

NYAC Mountains of Hope for Haiti is joining with New Hope UMC in Maryland to send a dental/medical team to the mountain village of Furcy. Only experienced medical/dental practitioners are requested at this time. Contact [Wendy Vencuss](#) for more information.

Puerto Rico: April 4–11 Recovery Team

Team leader: Craig Fitzsimmons

Cost: \$650

Contact [Tom Vencuss](#) in the NYAC Missions office for more information and an application.

Done in a Day: Sandy Recovery Team

Within the greater New York area—six-plus years out—homeowners are still recovering from the effects of Superstorm Sandy. We recently received a request from the St. Bernard Project (SBP), one of our Sandy recovery partners, to assist in the completion of repairs for a home in Far Rockaway. If you're interested in assisting as part of a "Done in a Day" project, please contact [Tom Vencuss](#).

UMCOR Relief Kits

It's never too early to begin thinking about assembling cleaning, hygiene or school kits to bring to annual conference. Some of the instructions have changed in the last year, so here's the [link](#) to the proper instructions. Please ensure that your church's kits were packed correctly before bringing them to Hofstra University in June.

Unity Struggle is Major UMC Story of 2018

BY SAM HODGES

UMNS

The struggle to hold The United Methodist Church together despite longstanding division over homosexuality was the denomination's top news story of 2018.

Church communicators and United Methodist News staffers vote annually for the top five United Methodist news stories. Twenty-three ballots were cast this year.

The unity efforts by the Commission on a Way Forward and others have dominated discussions as The United Methodist Church moves toward a special called session of General Conference, set for Feb. 23–26 in St. Louis.

#1: Looking for a way forward

For more than 40 years, The United Methodist Church has faced serious internal disagreement over how accepting to be of homosexuality, with ordination of gay persons and same-sex unions as flashpoints.

At the 2016 General Conference, amid open talk of schism, delegates asked the bishops to lead through the impasse. The Council of Bishops requested and got permission to appoint a 32-member [Commission on a Way Forward](#). Later, the bishops called for the special session of General Conference to consider possible changes to church structure and law, as recommended by the commission.

That group wrapped up its work this year with a report that included three legislative options to be considered by the special General Conference. Most bishops recommended the [One Church Plan](#), but at least one bishop was unhappy with how the results of the deliberations were presented and reported confusion about whether all three plans were being sent as legislation to the General Conference. The bishops [ended up issuing a clarification](#).

The Judicial Council heard oral arguments on the question of which legislation could be considered at the special gathering. The council [ruled](#) that all legislation related to the "call" of the conference could be put before the delegates.

In October, the council [issued another crucial ruling](#), this time on the constitutionality of the One Church, Traditional and Connectional Conference plans. The council noted that several Traditional Plan petitions would need to be changed to avoid violating the church constitution.

Through the year, annual conferences held listening sessions about the commission's work and the legislative options before the special General Conference. Some conferences and caucus groups [endorsed plans](#), and new legislative options emerged, such as the Simple Plan and Modified Traditional Plan.

Delegation chairs reported on the high level of interest they were seeing across the church and shared their hopes and anxieties about the St. Louis gathering.

#2: Asylum and immigration

United Methodists' commitment to welcoming the stranger could be seen through individual churches offering shelter to

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those at risk of deportation.

One man stayed for months at a United Methodist church in North Carolina, [but was arrested and later deported](#) after reporting for an appointment with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. Some of the church's members were arrested while protesting his treatment.

The Trump administration's generally tougher approach to immigration prompted protest statements from bishops and others within the denomination. United Methodists assisted in caring for immigrants along the border of Texas and California.

[United Methodists were among about 300 clergy marching](#) in San Diego on Dec. 10, International Human Rights Day, to protest the fence separating the U.S. and Mexico. Two of the United Methodist pastors were among those arrested.

The Council of Bishops called for compassion toward those in the Central American migrant caravan arriving at the U.S. border.

The rhetoric and policies of U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions regarding immigration led some of his fellow United Methodists to seek church law charges against him. They did not succeed, and Sessions would later resign at the request of President Trump.

#3: Natural disasters

California wildfires hit in two seasons and different parts of the state, wiping out one community and devastating others. United Methodists were among the victims and among those offering shelter and other relief.

Hurricane Michael clobbered the upper Gulf Coast, claiming lives and homes and damaging United Methodist churches and parsonages. The massive storm caused problems throughout much of the Eastern Seaboard and prompted a [major relief effort](#) by the denomination's Alabama-West Florida Conference.

Earlier, Hurricane Florence brought flooding rains to parts of Georgia and the Carolinas, including areas still recovering from storms of the recent past.

The United Methodist Committee on Relief was a constant in the denomination's relief and recovery work in the U.S. and beyond, including helping in the Philippines after Typhoon Mangkhut.

#4: Missionaries detained, released

Three United Methodist missionaries, Miracle Osman of Malawi, Tawanda Chandiwana of Zimbabwe and Adam Shaw of the United States, were detained at police checkpoints in the Philippines while joining in an international, ecumenical fact-finding investigation of alleged human rights violations

All three faced long delays in leaving the country, and Chandiwana was detained for eight weeks, including time spent in a detention center in Manila.

The United Methodist Board of Global Ministries [organized an online petition drive](#) calling for the government to allow the missionaries to leave, and more than 18,000 people, from more than 100 countries, signed. The Council of Bishops issued its own statement, and by July, all three missionaries had been allowed to return to their home countries.

#5: Response to mass shootings

Certain place names became disturbingly familiar in 2018, as the sites of mass shootings. Parkland High School in Florida and Santa Fe High School near Houston were among them. So were the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, the Capital Gazette newspaper in Annapolis, Maryland, and Thousand Oaks, California.

United Methodists responded in various ways, with clergy offering counseling and speaking at prayer vigils. The denomination was well represented at the March for Our Lives after the Parkland massacre.

Bishops called for prayer and action. The Florida Conference, under Bishop Kenneth Carter, conducted a successful campaign to get 5,000 letters written to public officials, urging them to enact legislation to curb gun violence.

Other stories getting votes in the survey were:

- The denomination's anti-racism efforts and observance of the 50th anniversary of the assassination of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.
- The wording error that led to a re-vote on a church constitutional amendment related to women's equality.
- The 50th anniversary of the merger creating The United Methodist Church.
- The ratification of three amendments to the church constitution.
- Elections in African nations where The United Methodist Church is present.
- Another outbreak of Ebola, prompting precautions and other responses by United Methodists in West Africa



Pageant Preciousness

Christmas pageants and living nativities played out in a number of churches across the conference to celebrate the birth of Christ last month. The pageant at the Community Church of Stony Brook, above, was performed by the children and youth of the church during worship on December 16.



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