



December 14, 2018

Niagara Frontier District E-Connection

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The E-Connection! goes out near the 1st & 15th of each month.
The next edition will go out Monday, December 31

We are part of the Upper New York Annual Conference (12 Districts) – 867 churches & 65 new faith communities in 49 New York State counties!

All Attachments are found in the e-mail message.

| Calendar of Events | | | |
|--------------------|--|--|---|
| Dec. 21-25 | | Office Closed – Merry Christmas! | Will be checking phone |
| Dec. 28-Jan. 1 | | Office Closed – Happy New Year! | and e-mail messages |
| January 14-31 | | Stream #1 Church Conferences | |
| March 2 | | 2019 Catch the Spirit District Workshop Day | Clarence UMC 10205 Greiner Rd., Clarence |

~ Joys and Concerns ~

Please pray for the community and congregations in Wesley's Place, and West Seneca's Covenant and New Hope and pastors Merrill Bender, Mike Breunig, Cheryl Brown and Stephen Mannion.

~ Local Church News ~



Sardinia UMC (12369 Savage Rd., Chaffee) We will offer a Blue Christmas Service at 7pm on **Thursday, December 20**. This service helps us remember those for whom the holidays are not joyful; they are lonely, in mourning, feeling alienated and cast apart from family celebrations; they are experiencing depression and sadness and yet are often compelled to "put on a happy face" for others, denying their true feelings.



(New) Harris Hill UMC (8495 Main St., Williamsville; corner of Harris Hill Rd.) You are invited to a Blue Christmas service on **Thursday, December 20** at 7 pm. Pastor Katie is offering this service for those for those who are hurting during the holidays. The reasons are many, but we gather together in the midst of our suffering to remember God is good throughout the generations. We are not alone, we have reason to hope. Please share this invitation with those who might like to attend.



(New) Pendleton Center UMC (6864 Campbell Blvd., N. Tonawanda) The Blue Christmas service is a worshipful and sacred event, lead by Pastor Bill and the PCUMC grief support team. The observance invites those who have experienced loss of any kind (death, relationship, employment) to surrender to God their feelings of anger, sadness, anxiety, and any other burdens they carry on their hearts in preparation to receive God's love and mercy in the form of His Son, the baby Jesus. You are invited to share in this service on **Friday, December 21** at 7pm.



(New) Bowmansville UMC (5344 Genesee St., Bowmansville) Are You Seeking Joy, Hope & Peace? Please join us for a Blue Christmas – Longest Night service on **Friday, December 21** at 7pm. Have you suffered the loss of a loved one, a job, your home, a loved pet, your health, your joy or possibly even your faith? We invite you to join us as we recognize and accept our loss and to remember and celebrate the gift of light and hope that God offers to us in the stories of Christmas, which also began in abandonment, insecurity, and humbleness...in a time of war and in a poor stable.



Amherst: Trinity UMC (711 Niagara Falls Blvd., Amherst) The *Amherst Chamber Ensembles* present A Christmas Concert on **Saturday, December 22** at 7:30pm. A string quartet and brass group will play popular Christmas music. A free will offering will be taken to benefit the renovations to the church's handicap bathroom. See the **Trinity Concert attachment** for a flyer that you can post.



Clarence Center UMC (9750 Clarence Center Rd., Clarence Center) We will offer a Blue Christmas Service at 4pm on **Sunday, December 23**. This service helps us remember those for whom the holidays are not joyful; they are lonely, in mourning, feeling alienated and cast apart from family celebrations; they are experiencing depression and sadness and yet are often compelled to "put on a happy face" for others, denying their true feelings.

(New) Buffalo: Metropolitan UMC (657 Best St., Buffalo) The Advent Committee of Metropolitan UM Church will present the "Black Nativity" on **Sunday, December 23** at 5pm. Please, join us as we travel back to Bethlehem to witness the birth of Jesus Christ through music and song. We promise that you will not want to miss this exciting performance. The "Black Nativity" is directed by Catherine Sharpe and Nora Felder Truman which is free and all are welcome to attend.

~ District and Conference News ~

(New) (12/14) Preparing for Special Session of General Conference – The Special Session of General Conference will be held from **Feb. 23-26, 2019** in St. Louis, Missouri. Upper New York Area Resident Bishop Mark J. Webb has created a series of videos that can help prepare you for what will be taking place at General Conference. The videos review the report created by the Commission on a Way Forward that will be presented at General Conference-they can be viewed individually, used for group discussions, and more-each video can be downloaded as well. In addition to Bishop Webb's videos, the Upper New York Conference has also compiled other resources to help you prepare for Special Session, including Bishop Webb's Way Forward PowerPoint Presentation, an overview of the three church plans, and more. [Click here](#) for all resources.

(New) (12/14) All young adults (18-35 years) are invited to join with others from around our Conference for a day of FREE food and games! It will be at Dave & Busters in Syracuse on **Saturday, January 12** starting at 1pm. If you want to join us, please send an email to unyyoungadults@gmail.com. See the **Young Adults attachment** for a flyer that you can post.

(New) (12/14) Launchpad scheduled for Feb. 1-2, 2019 – Is God calling you to start a New Faith Community (NFC) next year? Are you already a church planter and would like to bring your NFC to the next level? Launchpad, a two-day boot camp, taught by the Rev. Bill Vallet and the Rev. Dave Masland, Upper New York Conference Director of New Faith Communities, is for anyone planting an NFC in Upper New York. If you are planting, or thinking about planting an NFC, this training, slotted for **Feb. 1-2** at the United Methodist Center in Liverpool, is for you! Launchpad is an intensive crash course in the first five "Seasons of Planting": Discerning, Visioning, Gathering, Worshiping, and Disciplining. It is designed for lead planters to attend, along with 2-4 other team members. The more people who attend from your team, the stronger the impact of the training on your team, and ultimately, on your NFC. The intended outcome of the two days is for each team to leave with a detailed six-month action plan. Most important is the work you will do to sharpen your vision for your NFC. The cost of this workshop is \$99 for the lead planter, and \$25 per person for each additional team member PLUS, the cost of staying in a nearby hotel and supper one night. Lunch is provided for both days and included in the cost. [Click here](#) for more details and a registration form. The deadline to register is Jan. 25, 2019.



(11/16) Youth Winter Weekend at Asbury Retreat Center on **January 4-6!** Calling your Youth Group to come be a part of a weekend getaway designed specifically for youth groups! Our theme this year is SEEKER, come join us for a weekend full of fun spirited games and activities, dynamic worship sessions with speaker Jay Trainer of Infuzion Ministries, amazing food (we know how important food is!), and opportunities to discuss your relationship with Christ. Come grow closer as a body of Christ and make some new friends! Oh, and we can't forget about A Night of Gametivities and our Annual Sledapalooza! Your group does not want to miss this weekend! \$89 per person for 2 nights/4 meals/1 snack. 1 Adult Free with each 8 Paying Youth. Contact info@asburyuny.org or 585-237-5262 for a registration form. See the **Youth Weekend attachment** for a flyer with more information.

~ Peter & Paul List ~ (I can help – do you have a need or I have a need – can you help?)

(New) (12/14) **Volunteers Needed!** Asbury UMC (850 Dodge Rd., Getzville) has a growing ministry that provides respite care for the caregivers of memory-impaired adults. This once a month program gives the caregiver a much-needed 4-hour break to do errands, attend doctor or dentist appointments, go to lunch with a friend or just relax. It is held every 2nd Tuesday of the month, 10am to 2pm. Free training is provided. Volunteers provide supervised fun activities, piano music/singing, games, and a nutritious lunch. Male volunteers would be particularly welcome. Please contact asburyangels@gmail.com or Pat Hair at 716-697-4049 for more information.

(11/30) **Technical Director Sought** – Indian Falls UMC seeks to hire a person to coordinate the use of innovative technology service for maximum, professional impact within our church family and in the general public. Starting salary for this position will be \$12 per hour for up to 10 hours per week, hopefully to begin January 1. Flexibility during special projects or holiday times will be granted. See the **Indian Falls Job attachment** for a full job description and how to apply.

(11/30) **Sunday Organist Needed** – Faith UMC in Barker is in need of an Organist / Pianist for Sunday morning worship (9:30 am) beginning in December 2018. If interested, please call Pastor Sheila Paige at 716-795-9945. (please leave a message, if no answer).

(11/5) **Network of Religious Communities needs new representatives!** Here is a brief explanation of the organization and what they do from our current rep, Mary Jane Russell, from Orchard Park UMC. If you have any questions, please contact Mary Jane at wjmjrussell@gmail.com.

Representatives meet roughly once a month, from September through May/June, at the Network building or at a worship facility of one of the member denominations/faiths. (I'll use "church" as a loose translation.) When we meet in a "church", the congregation typically provides a light meal before the meeting. If no group volunteers to serve as host, we meet at the Network Building at 1272 Delaware Avenue, just south of Gates Circle.

The goal of the organization is to share concerns, support each other when difficulties arise, and inform each other regarding special functions, celebrations, issues, etc., and, when there is consensus, to craft a response that can be shared with the greater community.

They also plan some community programming to educate and enlighten, such as a Community Thanksgiving Service, a Festival of Faiths, an annual Appreciation Awards Dinner, and other issues that are of general interest to the religious communities.

~ Opportunities, Ministry Aids and "Stuff" ~

(New) (12/14) **Wesley Heritage tour set for February 2020** – Join Upper New York Area Resident Bishop Mark J. Webb and his wife Jodi on a Wesley Heritage tour in England Feb. 11-19, 2020. This journey will take you through England where you will learn about the roots of the early Church and the ministry of John Wesley. Visit London, Oxford, Epworth, the Old Rectory where John Wesley grew up, and much more. The earlier you register, the bigger the discount. Details about any potential available scholarships will be determined soon. [Click here](#) to learn more and to obtain a registration brochure with all the details about this exciting opportunity.



(New) (12/14) **From General Board of Global Ministries and General Board of Church and Society** – Human Relations Day is less than two months away. It will be here before we know it! We know the holidays are upon us, so we are touching base with you before the holiday projects are in full motion. Please help us spread the word with the information below, encouraging pastors and churches to celebrate and give to Human Relations Day on **January 20, 2019**. We have new resources to help your congregations promote this special Sunday and activities to educate why we celebrate Human Relations Day. Human Relations Day is our day to **celebrate everyone's potential** to do great things. It's our day to **empower those living on the margins of society**. It's our day to **invest in at-risk youth**. It's our day to **make a difference together**. To make this easy, we have created a [library of resources](#) for you to use and share. This year we have incorporated new materials – a podcast, worship songs, a reading list, youth activities and discussions – along with the social media graphics and videos. They are ready to use and available **FREE** today. Check out this ["Did You Know" video](#) that is featured in the leader and pastor's kit.

(New) (12/14) **Volunteer Opportunities!** The Communications Ministry has launched a volunteer section on the Conference website (<http://www.unyumc.org/about/volunteer-opportunities>) which lists current volunteer opportunities at the Conference level. If your ministry is in need of a volunteer, please send your request to news@unyumc.org. Churches are encouraged to continue using the classifieds section on the Conference website (<http://www.unyumc.org/news/classifieds>).

(New) (12/14) Training Opportunities! We are excited to share a unique opportunity for churches to equip and strengthen their leaders through two different conferences held concurrently at Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, Kansas on **April 4-5**. Churches are invited to send their hospitality & welcome ministry leaders AND/OR their care ministry leaders to one of two conferences held April 4-5. Find details [here](#).

(11/30) **Sparks of Hope** is a Recovery Support Center sponsored by the Hamburg UMC. If you're in recovery, we've got coffee, comfy chairs, listening ears and sparks of hope. They also offer a support group on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of each month. See the **Support Center and Support Group attachments** for flyers you can post.

Genesee Valley District Leadership Training Day – Registration is now OPEN for informed to transform 10 that will take place on **Saturday February 2** from 8:30am - 3:00pm at Asbury First UMC (1040 East Ave., Rochester). This year we will be offering a chance to assist in assembling kits for the Conference Mission HUB. Click here for [registration](#). Click here for a [brochure](#) to pass out to friends. Click here for [workshop descriptions](#). If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Betsy O'Flynn at 585-340-9525 or geneseevalleydistrict@unyumc.org.



(11/16) **Active Shooter prevention and response resources** – In light of recent events like the Pittsburgh synagogue shooting, it is becoming important to know how to prevent and respond to active shooter incidents. The Upper New York Conference insurance provider, Church Mutual, recommends several resources that churches can use to learn how to prevent and respond to such incidents. [Click here](#) to review

Church Mutual's resources.

~ Newsletters & Calendar Items ~

(New) (12/14) Media Resource Center Newsletter – Click [here](#) for the December edition.

(New) (12/14) Resources for Ministry Amplify hope and love this Christmas with resources from the [December 7](#) edition. From the [December 12](#) edition you can communicate joy and peace this Christmas.

(11/30) **Inspiration for Daily Living** – Read the [November 19](#) edition here.

(11/30) **Local Church Resource Guide** – Church administration is hard! You have so much on your mind. Insurance. Financing for new building construction. Outreach costs. *Need some help?* GCFA's [Local Church Resource Guide](#) features strategic ministry partners who can provide resources for you. Click here for their [November/December](#) newsletter.

(New) (12/14) 5 New Ideas for Discipleship Ministries! The [December issue](#) has ideas on 1) Considering gifts for your youth leaders? 2) Read reflectively and pray daily on the lectionary scripture; 3) Make plans now for summer learning opportunities; 4) Spiritual formation is key when planting new churches and 5) Have a conversation with Jesus in your small group.