

Upper New York Conference Annual Conference 2020 notes

- The Service of Commissioning and Ordination took place on Friday Oct. 2. at Liverpool UMC. Attendance was limited to invitation only due to COVID-19—the event was also livestreamed. Two individuals were commissioned for the work of Elder. Three individuals were commissioned for the work of a Deacon. One individual was ordained to the order of a Deacon. Two individuals were ordained to the order of Elder. And two individuals from the Korean United Methodist Church were recognized. Bishop Webb’s sermon focused on “Positioning for Ministry.” [Click here](#) to read the full article about this service.

- The UNY Annual Conference was held virtually through secured livestream on Sat. Oct. 3 and the following items were on the agenda. All reports were prerecorded via video. [Click here](#) to watch them.
 - o The UNY Annual Conference began with a devotion by the Rev. Sung Ah Choi.

 - o Prior to the start of the Annual Conference business, an organizational motion was supported for each report and recommendation will be presented to the Annual Conference session with provision for debate but not amendment.

 - o The Annual Conference business opened with the Leadership Report. Presenters from the Bishop’s Operational Team discussed their work toward helping local churches increase their vitality using the Discover, Develop, Deploy Christ-following Leaders campaign. [Click here](#) to read the full article about the Leadership Report.

 - o The second item on the agenda was the Board of Pensions and Health Benefits Report. The board brought forth four recommendations. The first recommendation was for acceptance of the 2021 housing/rental exclusion resolution. This recommendation was supported. The second recommendation was for the 2021 past service annuity rate for the pre-82 pension plan remain the same as for 2019 at \$645. This recommendation was supported. The third recommendation was to reduce the health reimbursement account for retiree spouses by 50 percent. This recommendation was referred to the Board of Pensions and Health and Conference Committee on Finance and Administration to reassess the benefits reductions and find more just ways save money. This referral was supported. The fourth recommendation was for acceptance of the 2021 Comprehensive Benefit Budget Plan. The report highlighting the board’s work, including a move in Jan. 2021 from the traditional HealthFlex plan with Wespath to Wespath’s HealthFlex Exchange, the continuance of “small employer exception” Medicare rules, and the focus of the investment subcommittee, was accepted. [Click here](#) to read the full article.

 - o The third item on the agenda was the Equitable Compensation report. Four recommendations were brought forth. The first recommendation for 2021 was that the standardized minimum base compensation that was established for the Upper New York Conference effective Jan. 1, 2017 stay the same. The second recommendation for 2021 was that that the yearly increment amount that was established for the Upper New York

Conference effective Jan. 2020 stay the same. The third recommendation for 2021 was that an additional \$500 for each additional church on the pastoral charge (over one), not adjusted for part-time appointments remain in place. The fourth recommendation for 2021 was that no pastor's salary can be decreased as a result of this policy, as long as they retain their current appointment. All recommendations were supported. [Click here](#) to read the full article.

- The fourth report presented was the nominations report. Changes in appointment terms due to the cancellation of General Conference were discussed. One change is the new Conference Lay leader position. Though the term was extended, Susan Hardy is stepping down. Drew Griffin, former Associate Lay Leader is the new Conference Lay Leader. Jessica White is now the Associate Lay Leader. Conference and District level nominations were both supported as was the entire nominations report. [Click here](#) to read the full article.
 - The fifth report presented was the Board of Trustees'. In this report, closed churches were brought forth as well as expenditures, revenues, and assets. The fact that churches are being subpoenaed as part of the Child Victims Act was also presented. All closed churches were accepted, and the trustees report was supported. [Click here](#) to read the full article.
 - The final report presented at Annual Conference was the Conference Council of Finance and Administration (CF&A report). Because of the COVID-19 pandemic affecting Ministry Shares, the budget for 2020 was adjusted slightly as well as the 2021. It was presented that the difference is not very much because it is trusted that churches will continue submitting Ministry Shares despite the hard times. A motion was requested that all ministries receiving a significant budget increase (\$5,000 or more), which include Hispanic Ministries, Camp & Retreat Ministries, District Operations, and New Faith Communities provide within three months a report on how their budget has and will be used; it was also requested that Vital Congregations provide within three months more information on Spiritual Leadership Incorporated (SLI), including: coaches hired to train leaders and how SLI helps grow and support a thriving United Methodist Church. The budget, motion, and CF&A report were all supported. Additionally, a declaratory decision, "Are Annual Conferences permitted to include in their budgets numbers for general church apportionments that are not in line with the Conference's obligations pursuant to the budget approved by General Conference?" [Click here](#) to read the full article.
- Currently, the UNY Annual Conference for 2021 is scheduled for June 3-5 in Syracuse, NY.