

October 2020



Connected is a publication of the New England Conference of The United Methodist Church. This monthly insert is designed put Conference news directly into the hands of our local church members.

Find more at www.neumc.org.



NEAC Camping and Retreat Ministry: Become a sustaining donor

This was a summer of camps without campers and a retreat center with no guests. Due to COVID-19, our Conference Camping and Retreat Ministries (CRM) made the painful decision to cancel in-person summer camp at all our sites as well as programming at Rolling Ridge.

“The pandemic has created an acute financial crisis for our camping and retreat centers, but it has also highlighted the need for robust sustained support of this vital ministry,” said Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar.

CRM is asking United Methodists in New England to become sustaining supporters of this vital ministry by making a regular monthly gift.

A monthly gift to the site of your choice will certainly help our camps and retreat centers recover from a devastating season. *Continued on page 2*

AC session is Oct. 17

The 2020 New England Annual Conference will take place as a one-day online session on beginning at 8:30 am on Oct. 17, 2020.

The session is scheduled to end at 5 pm, but may go longer if there is business to attend to. There will be a 30 minute lunch break.

The session will include the Memorial Service with guest preacher Rev. John McCullough, an elder in the New England Conference and President and CEO of Church World Service.

Livestream Only voting members needed to register; others can watch the session via livestream on our conference website: www.neumc.org/aclivestream

The Pre-Conference Materials and



the 2021 proposed budget will be published before the session. Find links on our AC Sessions page (link below).

Pre-Conference briefing There will be an online briefing via Zoom webinar from 9-11 am Saturday, Oct. 3. This is an opportunity to learn more about the proposed 2021 Conference budget and other legislation coming before the Annual Conference. It will be recorded.



FIND ANNUAL CONFERENCE INFO AND LINKS HERE
www.neumc.org/acsessions

Cornerstone: Claiming our past, building a better future

Church's painful past leads to new anti-racism initiative

A new initiative to dismantle racism and white privilege is beginning from one church's painful, long-buried past.

Cornerstone: Claiming our past, building a better future will seek to do the work of ending racism and dismantling white privilege in our Conference in collaboration with existing conference commissions and committees.

The funds to support this work will come, in part, from assets from the Wellspring United Methodist Church in Shrewsbury, MA.

Wellspring members voted to close in February 2020. In July, Commonwealth West District Superintendent Megan Stowe retrieved items from the church that were to be placed in the district archives.

Among them was a cornerstone laid on Jan. 16, 1927 by what was then the Fairlawn Community Methodist Episcopal Church. In it, Rev. Stowe discovered some unexpected— and troubling— materials.

Much of the cornerstone's contents were what you might expect: New England Conference Journals, 1926 coins, newspaper articles, a list of founding members. But the cornerstone also con-

tained items that were inappropriate for commemoration: materials published by the Ku Klux Klan.

Rev. Stowe shared her discovery with Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar, who gathered some conference and denominational leaders to discuss how to respond.

"Fighting racism requires truth telling, confession and repentance from us all," Bishop Devadhar said. "We lift up this church's history not to shame them, but as a lesson for all of us in the importance of facing the past and reconciling with it. We must start by understanding our past; that is the only way we can hope to create a present where there is true racial justice."

A resolution (RS-20-203) officially closing this church will come before the Annual Conference. If approved, it directs any assets and property belonging to Wellspring UMC, which are not otherwise designated, to the *In Our Time Fund*, a partnership initiative of the United Methodist Foundation of New England. These funds will be used to support anti-racism work including education and advocacy.

Find the full story on our website and watch for more in the coming weeks.



Join others from around the New England Conference to meet this year's speaker and watch the 2020 Laity Address at 7 pm Thursday, Oct. 8, on the NEAC Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/NEUMC/>

The video address will be available on our website.

Support our Conference camps with a monthly gift

Continued from page 1

But this is not about a single season: Your ongoing support can ensure that CRM has a solid financial foundation on which to build a long and healthy future. No one wants a summer without songs around the campfire.

A gift of \$10 or \$25 per month is affordable for many of us; some will be able to give more, and those monthly gifts add up to the long-term ongoing support that ensures CRM can continue to inspire and offer meaningful opportunities for transformation and spiritual growth.

Visit our CRM site websites to donate directly to that site. All offer the opportunity to automatically make yours a recurring gift: www.neumc.org/crm

You can also send donations to the Conference: make checks payable to "New England Conference" and include CRM donation in the subject line.

New England Conference
411 Merrimack St., Suite 200
Methuen, MA 01844
Attn: CRM Donations

Let's Connect

Do you have a story to share? A feature idea? A question to ask? Contact Beth DiCocco, Conference Director of Communications, at communicate@neumc.org or (978) 682-8055 ext. 150