

October 2021



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](http://www.neumc.org).



## Celebrating the Order of Deacons

The 1996 General Conference established the Order of Deacons. To mark the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the order, we will share short profiles of a few of the New England Conference's deacons. While elders are called to lead congregations in ministry and mission, deacons are called to connect baptized Christians with their ministries in the world.

In 2016, UM News reported that "44 percent of deacons report that their primary appointment is beyond the local church: They serve as teachers, lawyers, writers, church-growth consultants, nonprofit agency staff or any number of other professions." That, according to the report, marked a significant change from the year 2000, when research showed 70 percent had their primary appointment to a church.

Learn more about what it means to be a deacon through our 2021 profiles of some of the deacons serving in our Conference at [www.neumc.org/news](http://www.neumc.org/news)

## Bishop champions hybrid worship

During his visit to the Many Waters District on Sept. 9, which had participants in person and via Zoom, Bishop Devadhar took the opportunity to talk about the important role video conferencing will play in worship going forward.

"Friends, the ministry paradigm is changing," he said. COVID-19 brought tremendous pain and suffering, but it also made us rethink ministry, the bishop said.

"On a given Sunday, now, we are no longer a local church, we are a global church— we can be connected anywhere and everywhere," Bishop Devadhar said. The bishop reminded people that he has asked Congregational Development Director Rick McKinley to place the emphasis this year on helping churches with all aspects of **digital ministry**.

"Once we are back in church [in person], no matter what, we need to have hybrid worship services, because the people who are now joining you — who have never joined a worship service before — are still looking for that, but, also, we cannot lose the fellowship we



Bishop Devadhar at Many Waters District Sept. 9

have in person," the bishop said.

"That is going to give us a new type of vision for ministry locally and internationally," he said. "These are exciting times. As United Methodists we are really going to embrace what our founder envisioned, the catholic spirit ... where we are all part of the Church of Jesus Christ."

"I am not just saying this to please you," Bishop Devadhar said, "the best days of the church's ministry are ahead of us."

Find more from this event and the schedule of upcoming District visits in the News section on our website.



FIND THE DISTRICT DAY SCHEDULE  
[www.neumc.org/news](http://www.neumc.org/news)

## Afghan refugees in New England

# Helping our new neighbors from Afghanistan

The United Methodist Foundation of New England and New England Justice for Our Neighbors (NE JFON) have established a matching fund to help support our new Afghan neighbors in New England. In the wake of the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan tens of thousands of families were evacuated. They are men, women, and children whose lives were endangered by the new regime; many had assisted U.S. military.



Afghans at the Kabul airport in Aug 2021.

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK

Among the first evacuees and refugees here in New England will be 150-200 persons to be settled in Lowell, MA, with additional arrivals anticipated in Boston and Manchester, NH. Most of these people will arrive with nothing but the clothes on their backs. They usually do not speak English or understand life in the U.S. and are not immediately eligible for government assistance.

United Methodist Foundation of New England  
34 Route 111, Suite 102  
Derry, NH 03038  
Attn: AFGHAN NEIGHBOR FUND

The [International Institute of New England](http://www.iine.org) (IINE) has long been used by the U.S. State Department as a primary nonprofit for the resettlement of refugees in New England and has experienced staff to assist these new arrivals. IINE relies on donors to provide financial assistance and furnishings to those beginning their new lives here in the U.S.

Churches and individuals are invited to support the Afghan Fund by sending checks to the address below, transferring funds to or donating online at [www.umfne.org](http://www.umfne.org)

## Leadership Training Opportunities

### Resource Days

Laity and clergy are encouraged to take advantage of the Conference's online training opportunities. These events, which include Conference Resource Days, are opportunities to hear from gifted speakers and workshop leaders from across New England and around the nation. These experts will offer big ideas and practical tools that can be implemented in your local church context.

These events are offered as a way to help strengthen the work of your church and as United Methodists and members of a connectional church, we know we are stronger together. So we encourage you to take full advantage of the gifts and knowledge of our presenters.

Get details on our website at [www.neumc.org/training](http://www.neumc.org/training)

## Coming up ...



Oct. 16, 2021 — Conference Resource Day: **What Can We Still Do? The Climate Crisis and the Need for Action with Bill McKibben**



Bill McKibben

Nov. 13, 2021 — Conference Resource Day, hosted by the Katahdin District, will feature **Rolling Ridge Executive Director Larry Jay, who will lead us in "Preparing For the Holy Days."**



Larry Jay

## 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](mailto:communicate@neumc.org) or (978) 682-8055 ext. 150