

October 2022



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.



Conference seeks Climate Coordinator

In June, the Annual Conference adopted RS-22-222 Stewardship of Creation: Responding to Global Climate Crisis, which, as amended at the session, calls for the creation of a part-time Conference position: Climate Coordinator.

The Climate Coordinator will be responsible for working with the district offices and churches to coordinate efforts to slow climate change and work for climate justice.

This role will also work with Conference Board of Church and Society and other Conference entities to advise and work on creation care issues and Conference legislation.

Application deadline is Sept. 26, 2022.

Find the full job description on our website:

www.neumc.org/employment

The job posting includes a link to the full amended text of RS-22-222.



Course: 'Your Congregation as a School of Love'

As you may recall, the NEAC joined together with author and activist, Brian McLaren, to study his latest book, "Faith After Doubt."

After hearing so many requests for more time with Brian, we reached out to him and his colleagues at Convergence to explore next steps. (<https://convergenceus.org>)

Brian and his colleagues developed a four-part online course series. The final topic is "Your Congregation as a School of Love."

The course is self-paced via video

and is available for you to view at any time once your register.

There will be a live online event at 7 pm, Tuesday, Nov. 15, when Brian will dive deeper and take questions.

In order to get the most out of this live conversation, you are encouraged to complete as much of

the course material as possible in advance.

Supported by the Conference, the course is free to participants. Once you are enrolled in the class, you will be given information about how to access the live session.



GET COURSE ENROLLMENT INFORMATION ON OUR WEBSITE
www.neumc.org

Local church ministry

Raya (neighbor) Mission Week

The story of *Raya Mission Week* at Hampden Highlands UMC in Hampden, ME, is a story about connections.

The connection between two United Methodist congregations 600 miles apart, the connection of a church to its community, and of congregation members connecting with the scriptural commandment to love our neighbors.

The word *raya* is found in the Old Testament meaning neighbor. For the mission, the church would accept applications from individuals and nonprofits in the community needing assistance, and, during one week, volunteers would do the various projects “completely free of charge [supported] with funds raised by the church and simply to be an act of love,” said Rev. Spencer Shaw.

From Aug. 8 to 12, 2022, volunteers completed 24 projects— nine more than the number of original applications. Work included rebuilding a deck, repairing stairs, stacking firewood, and at the Hampden Neighborhood Food Cupboard, moving some freezers and other work.

But this week-long, locally grounded mission project began a nearly a year before and a few states away.

Hampden Highlands member Kelly Santiago’s daughter attends First UMC in Williamsport, PA. For nine years, that church has done a similar ministry under the name *Transform*.

In 2021, Santiago participated in *Transform*. “I loved it!” she said. “For a long time, I have wanted to do something that would involve the entire church: children, youth and adults all working together towards a common goal grounded in scripture,” Santiago said, “something that would bring scripture to life in our everyday living.”

She thought a version of *Transform* could be it, and brought the idea to Rev. Shaw.



After raising \$11,000 to fund the projects, the church was ready, in late June, to accept applications. Once the applications were in, team leaders were assigned and did an advance assessment of the actual work sites to ensure the projects could be completed.

Then it was time to head out to work.

“Every homeowner we helped expressed that this gave them a new feeling of hope,” Santiago said.

“[People were] just really pleased to hear that that this church, that’s been around since 1795, was trying to go outside its walls and do what the church should be doing,” Rev. Shaw said.

“One homeowner commented that she was impressed that we didn’t come with Bibles in hand ready to preach to her,” Santiago said. “What she didn’t know is we were preaching the whole time only with actions and not words.”

Share your church’s stories

If your church has a unique or impactful ministry that you’d like to highlight and share across the Conference, send a few paragraphs and a photo or link to the story to communicate@neumc.org. We will publish stories in our weekly e newsletter UMCatalyst.

Is your church haunted? Tell us the story

John Wesley and his family wrote about their encounters with “Old Jeffrey,” a poltergeist that inhabited Wesley’s childhood home.

Does your church have a ghost? Are their sounds and sights you can’t explain?

Send your ghost stories to communicate@neumc.org and we’ll share them in a Halloween feature.

Here is one of John Wesley’s accounts:

On December 2, 1716, while Robert Brown, my father’s servant, was sitting with one of the maids a little before ten at night, in the dining-room which opened into the garden, they

both heard one knocking at the door.

Robert rose and opened it, but could see nobody. Quickly it knocked again and groaned. “It is Mr. Turpin,” said Robert, “he had the stone and used to groan so.”

He opened the door again twice or thrice, the knocking being twice or thrice repeated. But still seeing nothing, and being a little startled, they rose and went up to bed ...



Click the link or scan the QR code above to [Read more about Old Jeffrey](#) from the General Commission on Archives and History.