

July 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).



### Bishop names new Director of Connectional Ministries

Bishop Devadhar has appointed Rev. Ashley Renée Johnson as part-time Director of Connectional Ministries. She takes over for Rev. Erica Robinson-Johnson, who served as DCM and Assistant to the Bishop.

The responsibilities of the Assistant to the Bishop will be taken care of by other episcopal office staff and consultants as needed.

In announcing the appointment, the bishop said, "As we celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Order of Deacons, I am very excited about Ashley bringing her presence and perspective as a young deacon to the position of DCM and to the Extended Cabinet table as well as to the many Conference committees on which she will serve."



Rev. Johnson, who is a teacher at Epiphany School in Dorchester, MA, returned to school and graduated from Boston University School of Theology with a Master of Theological Studies degree in 2017. She is a member of Union Church Boston.

Her appointment begins July 1.

## 2021 Annual Conference recap

Here's a short recap of what happened during the business sessions of the 2021 Annual Conference, June 10-12. (More details, including the full text of legislation and links to videos, can be found on our website).

The Annual Conference approved the 2022 budget that was \$175,000 less than originally proposed. The Board of Pensions agreed to absorb the \$175,000 cost for the Missional Pension/Benefits Fund (Fund 3).

For 2022:

- \$6,159,706 actual spending limit
- \$7,269,340 apportionment amount

Approved the formation of a Vision Forward Team "to advance the strategic imagination and mission" for the New England Conference." (Read more on page 2).

Annual Conference approved the Commission on Native American Ministries resolution asking the NEAC to acknowledge and commemorate May



5th as National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Native Women and recognize and celebrate the second Monday in October as Indigenous People's Day. United Methodists are encouraged to wear red on these days to show support and raise awareness.

Approved the Commission on the Status and Role of Women's (supported by the Commission on Religion and Race, the Board of Ordained Ministry and the Committee on the Episcopacy) proposal to create a Sex/Gender-Based Crisis Response Team "to address, heal, and seek justice in circumstances where persons have been harmed on the basis of their sex, gender, gender identity, or gender expression."

Approved disaffiliation of 3 churches:

- Chebeague Island (ME) UMC
- Hope.Gate.Way, Portland, ME
- Tuttle Road UMC, Cumberland Center, ME



FOR MORE DETAILS LOOK FOR STORIES HEADLINED AC21  
[www.neumc.org/news](http://www.neumc.org/news)

## 2021 Annual Conference

# Vision Forward Team approved

Members approved Bishop Devadhar's proposal to create a Vision Forward Team based on the work of the New England delegation to the General and Jurisdictional conferences to gather leaders and stakeholders to "provide collaborative insights to the incoming Bishop, and to the delegation as they deliberate in the coming Conferences."

The bishop called on the Annual Conference to authorize the formation of a Vision Forward Team "to advance the strategic imagination and mission" for the New England Conference.

"We have an amazing opportunity before us as we emerge from the wilderness of the past 15 months of the pandemic," Bishop Devadhar said. "As we imagine a 'future with hope,' we can also build from our strengths and pick up where we have left off and complete the unfinished work."

The team would comprise the organizing members of the delegation's consultations: Amanda Bonnette-Kim, Rev. Becca Girrell,

Rev. Leigh Goodrich, Claire Holston, and Rev. Dr. Jay Williams. And three members, clergy or laity, one each chosen by the Conference Council on Finance and Administration, the Trustees and the Board of Pensions. The bishop, the Dean of the Cabinet and the Director of Connectional Ministries would be members with voice, but no vote.

The bishop's proposal also includes hiring Rev. Meg Lassiat, who has been facilitating the consultation process, to act as a consultant. Rev. Lassiat was acting assistant general secretary for the Division of Ordained Ministry of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Bishop Devadhar called on the Vision Forward Team to "help our conference dismantle the silos, build more trust, and collaborate better together" by reviewing and improving the Strategic Plan to bring to the 2022 Annual Conference. Funding would come from non-apportionment, unrestricted funds.

## Service of Ordination and Commissioning

The 2021 in-person service on June 12 included the clergy classes of 2020 and 2021 as well as two deaconesses. Bishop Devadhar was preacher.

### 2020

#### Ordinands

#### Deacons

Natalie Hill  
Sheri Smith

#### Elders

Kathleen Decker Szakas  
Shannon Keeney  
SeokCheol Shin

#### Commissionees

#### Deacons

Adama Brown  
Ashley Johnson

#### Elders

Brian Hyungsuk Choi  
Sooyoun Kim  
Sunjae Lee  
Adam Randazzo  
Alicia Vélez Stewart

#### Deaconesses

Tracy Tarver-Weisel  
Wanda Winnicki

### 2021

#### Ordinands

#### Deacons

Caroline Bass  
Karen Skalla

#### Elders

Ross Johnson  
Yunki Kim  
Kenneth Mantler  
Dongmyung Shim

#### Commissionees

#### Elders

Michelle Ashley  
Sungmin Jeon  
Juhee Lee  
Junsang Lee  
Minchang Lee  
John Melick  
Jamie Michaels  
Christy Wright

See photos & more online in the Saturday recap at [www.necumc.org/news](http://www.necumc.org/news)

## Awards

### 2021 Ziegler Preacher

Rev. Rae Fraumann, pastor of Hedding UMC in Barre, VT, is the 2021 winner of the Wilbur C. Ziegler Award for Excellence in Preaching. Rev. Fraumann is the first non-binary person to earn this award.

### 2021 Laity Address

The opening worship on Friday included the 2021 Laity Address. The winner of the 2021 Laity Address Challenge is Heather Josselyn-Cranson, lay leader of Sudbury (MA) UMC. Find the recording on our website.

### One Matters Awards

The One Matters Awards are presented annually by the New England Conference Office of Congregational Development in conjunction with Discipleship Ministries. The awards recognize churches that, in 2020, received a high percentage of professions of faith (relative to average worship attendance), baptized both children and adults, and are focused on the process of making disciples of Jesus Christ. Each church will receive a plaque and a check for \$1,000. This year's recipients are:

Highgate Center UMC in Vermont  
First UMC in Southbridge, MA  
St John's UMC in Jefferson, NH

**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



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