

ners.

While churches who donate \$500 or more will receive a “New Places for New People” certificate of recognition, any church that participates in this campaign, even with small donations, will be considered “New Places for New People” Partner Churches.

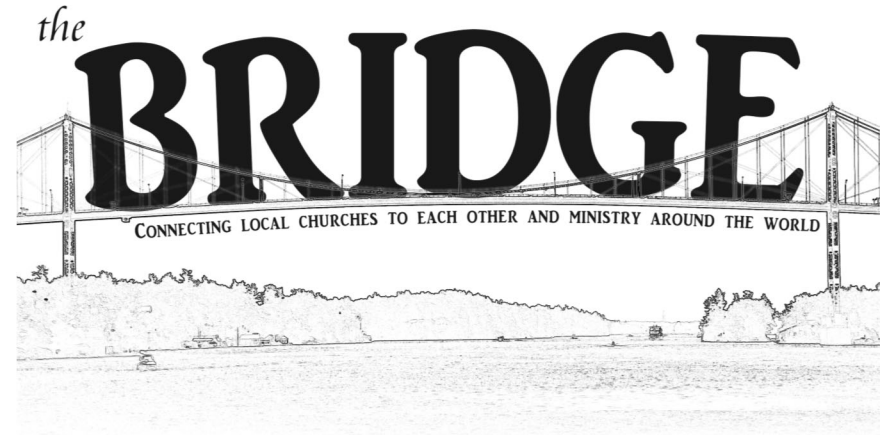
Mentioning a few very small congregations that made donations less than \$100.00, Rev. Masland said, “I consider any church who makes any donation, no matter how small, to be

a ‘New Places for New People’ Partner. It impresses me that small congregations are participating in this campaign.”

Visit <https://Bit.ly/newplacesfornewpeople> to read more about this campaign and/or to make a donation.



Connect with United Methodists from Upper New York and around the world by following the Upper New York Conference on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/uppernewyork/>



## In Brief

### Photo prayer of Thanksgiving

Gather up your friends and relatives for a prayer of Thanksgiving. Words of thanks to God are sometimes hard to express, especially during hard times. Visit <http://bit.ly/umcphotoprayer> for a prayer video showcasing photos



of the wonders around us every day (the beauty of the earth, friends, families, acquaintances who offer us kind words or hold us to higher standard, and so much more).



The Upper New York Conference’s vision is to live the gospel of Jesus Christ and to be God’s love with our neighbors in all places.

## A look inside!

Easy ways to share gratitude this Thanksgiving	Page 2
‘New Places for New People’ campaign update	Page 2
Photo prayer of Thanksgiving	Page 4

*The Bridge is a Conference Communications Ministry tool that delivers to local churches news and stories of ministry from around the Upper New York Conference and the world. For more news and stories visit:*  
**[www.unyumc.org](http://www.unyumc.org)**

# Easy ways to share gratitude this Thanksgiving

**Thanksgiving Day** elicits a bounty of wonderful memories for many people in the U.S. The crisp air. The smell of a turkey roasting and a pumpkin pie baking. The sound of a cheering crowd at a football game. All these can create warm feelings during this special time of year.

While the Thanksgiving holiday is celebrated on the fourth Thursday in November in the U.S., thanking God for our blessings is a spiritual discipline that should not be limited to a single day. Along with expanding our waistlines, our preparation for and celebration of the holiday can be the impetus toward growing an attitude of gratitude that will carry over into the rest of the year. In his **commentary on 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18**, John Wesley writes, "Thanksgiving is inseparable from true prayer; it is almost essentially connected with it." Giving thanks is as essential to our spiritual growth as prayer, which **1 Thessalonians** calls us to do continually. Here are creative ideas to help you get started this Thanksgiving.

- **Fill a family Thanksgiving box.** As part of your Thanksgiving preparation, create a Thanksgiving Box. Each day family members write on slips of paper something for which they are thankful that day and place them in the deco-

rated box. The box will make a nice Thanksgiving table centerpiece, and when opened, a way to remember how blessed we are every day. You could add to it all year too of course.

- **Serve someone.** In the weeks leading up to Thanksgiving, many agencies serving those in need expand their work. Food banks, churches, and other service organizations supply meals to the hungry on Thanksgiving. Centenary United Methodist Church in Los Angeles holds a sleepover for their youth called the "turkey lock-in." On the night before Thanksgiving the youth prepare, and the next day, deliver meals to people in the community who will be alone on Thanksgiving. Ask your pastor for suggestions of places near you to serve or donate.

- **Invite someone new to dinner.** Athens First United Methodist Church invites international students from the University of Georgia to spend Thanksgiving with their members. The students enjoy spending time away from campus and in family homes. Explore ways to invite those who may be alone or far from family to celebrate with you on the holiday.

- **Send cards to those we miss.** Remember those who are not



able to be with you this year by making or purchasing cards for them. "On Thanksgiving Day," Norton writes, "invite all who are gathered in your home to sign and/or write a note on the cards to those who are missing." Mail them the next day to share the gratitude.

- **Create a keepsake of thanks.** When you take that group photo around the table or in front of the fireplace, record not only the names of those in attendance, but also something for which each person is thankful. This will

be a great item to revisit when everyone gathers again next year.

- **Include children.** Encourage kids to write their own Thanksgiving prayers, which they can share during the meal.

However, you can, find ways to give thanks to God for all of his blessings throughout your celebration this year. Instill the habit of an attitude of gratitude, which will extend far beyond Thanksgiving Day. Visit <http://bit.ly/umthanksgivingideas> for more creative Thanksgiving tradition ideas.

## 'New Places for New People' campaign update

"New Places for New People" is an Upper New York Conference campaign to raise funds for new and existing New Faith Communities. This campaign began last spring and gained a lot of momen-

tum at the Upper New York Annual Conference in June.

It's not too late to become a "New Places for New People" Partner. The original deadline was Nov. 1, 2019 and it

has been extended to Dec. 31, 2019.

It only requires a donation of \$50 or more for an individual to become a "New Places for New People" Partner.

This fall, the Rev. Dave Masland, Direc-

tor of New Faith Communities, is focusing on churches who would like to become "New Places for New People" Part-

*Continued on page 4*