



# CONNECTICUT DISTRICT NEWS

SUMMER

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## ***GOD IS UP TO SOMETHING AND IT GOT TO BE GOOD!*** ***(FOUR DAYS OF JOURNALING AS D.S. ELECT)***

God is certainly up to something big and we are part of it!

Its day four (4) at the parsonage, I sit in the basement, at the district office computer to write this missive. Everything around me is new and foreign and strange. There is one window that allows light to stream into the office. My view of the sky and the trees that surround the building is quite restrictive; however, the light that stream in through the window stimulates a strong sense of hope and purpose for me. I know that it's daylight outside. The sun is rising on the horizon. I look at the trees swaying and I know that the breeze is blowing. It's fresh and clean; hope, possibility looms before me and beckons to me to adventure out and do what I do best: ***I pray, I fast, and I love God's word hence I preach his unadulterated word. I love God's people and believe in helping them to be their best and live the best lives they could. I emulate that which is right, noble, good, and honorable. I attempt to replicate those ideals and lead by example. I am transparent and not afraid of my emotions or my frailty as a human and my incessant ability to fail. But then, I get up and embrace the notion that the righteous falls several times and gets back up again. Yes, and with that I do what I do best, I love, and love, and love again.*** Connecticut, let's see what God is up to?

It is day three (3) at the parsonage and while unpacking trying to reassemble my orderly life, in my mind's eyes, I hear the voice of my deceased mom saying in her West Indian lingo: "look what God has done to my little son name Alpher! God has taken you from Trinidad and Tobago; he has brought you a mighty long way; to a strange place to find some new people to **LOVE.**" Suddenly, I could remember her valuable lessons: ***of walking humble before God; of walking in faith and embracing the impossible and knowing that with God all things are possible. Of never doubting God's purpose for our lives; of living with integrity; of keeping my word even to my own hurt – let my word be my bond; of searching for the best of people and letting them know that if excellence is possible then greatness is not enough; of sharing and caring and fighting for the marginalized and the oppressed. Above all, of loving and esteeming God's word above my necessary food. I can hear her voice saying "if God before you, who can be against you? Love God with all your heart, mind and soul.*** It seems like God is up to something!

It is day two (2) at the parsonage; I am tired, anxious, discombobulated and somewhat ambivalent. There are new scents, new sights, new sounds and no sounds. The village of Saint Albans, Queens is somewhat distant although it looms in my mind. As I arise from a make shift bed, my body aches and my mind is racing at light speed. The horrors of moving is taking its toll. I am in Connecticut as the DS. There are about seventy five churches, sixty five pastors and an innumerable company of people called Methodist that loves God, their communities and their churches. There are myriads of issues and concerns that have already started coming my way but which seems light in the face of the success of this district. ***There are exceptional pastoral leaders; laity that's excited about ministry. There are churches that are***

***GOD IS UP TO SOMETHING AND IT GOT TO BE GOOD continued....***

*vibrant and beautiful. The saints of Connecticut district have excelled as people of their word; they live up to their commitment as part of our Methodist connection; they are excited about their churches and they love Jesus. I am now privileged to be part of this great work; to partner in a shared vision for our district; to add my voice and mind to the brilliant, creative minds and voices of this district.* Wow! God is really up to something and to think that I could be part of it.

It is day one (1) at the parsonage; I arrived about thirty minutes before the moving truck rolled up. David Underwood, his wife, and Ray Heald are the advance welcome party. They are members of the Trustee board that over the past few weeks have painstakingly worked to assure the comfort of the parsonage for my family and I. I feel a deep sense of gratitude toward them. Ray and Dave shepherd my wife and I throughout the space to ensure that there were no stones left unturned. Ray helped with some of the furniture when the moving truck arrived. He stayed throughout most of the day providing support and advice. We are so thankful.

Its mid day, about 11:59 p.m., and the one and only Rev. Ken Kieffer arrived (in short pants and a smile – why is he smiling?) He hands “the keys to the district over to the Rev. Dr. Alpher Sylvester, wishes him well, and then rode off into the sunset.” A facsimile of these words were written somewhere before!

Ken would hold onto “the passwords, pins and double secret codes and handshakes that I will need to know in order that this transition will be smooth and complete.” Thank God, he is staying within the district. He says to me that now I am his DS, he will voluntarily allow me to draw from that deep well of experience and knowledge that assured his success. I am honored to follow after this man that I so admire and respect. As a soldier his word is paired with his integrity and honor. I am grateful to Rev. Ken, my bishop and above all my God. In all of this, it seems to me that **God is certainly up to something and it got to be GOOD.** As bishop will say ... *The journey continues!*

# Camping Opportunities at New York Conference Camps

## **WOODSMOKE YOUTH CAMP** at **KINGSWOOD CAMPSITE**

*Hathaway Pond Road, Hancock, NY*

A one-of-a-kind sleep-away camping program for youth entering grades 5-12 that develops outdoor skills, environmental stewardship, volunteerism, community, and thoughtful spirituality. A true camping adventure!

**July 16-22, 2017**

***Have a blast at Woodsmoke!***

Camp in the woods, learn about campfire building and cooking over the fire, hike, swim and boat in Hathaway Pond, do crafts, play games, make homemade ice cream, sing and tell stories around the campfire while making s'mores. Learn about the local forest and pond ecosystems. Make new friends. Be trained on how to use various tools as you work with your fellow campers on service projects and leave with a good feeling of having done something special for someone else. The Woodsmoke experience is an opportunity to step back from technology and "disconnect to reconnect."

**Woodsmoke** - the ultimate youth camp! We'll see you there!

**FAMILY CAMPING:** Kingswood Campsite is available all summer for family camping. Check out our unique equipped sites: <http://www.kingswoodcampsite.org/camping/campsites/> All you need to bring is your bedding, clothes, and food. We supply the rest! Campsites are spacious and far apart. Opportunities to join in daily programming for individuals and families – campfire cooking instruction, nature talks, hikes, arts and crafts, campfire activities, making hand-cranked ice cream, hayrides, swimming, free boating. Or just relax and do nothing! Very family-friendly campsite. Operated by a vibrant volunteer community. [www.kingswoodcampsite.org](http://www.kingswoodcampsite.org) Contact Holly Moore @ 845-702-5766 or [kwadministrator@nyac.com](mailto:kwadministrator@nyac.com).

## **SUMMER CAMPS** at **QUINIPET**

*on Shelter Island*

Our **overnight camp** provides all the fun of a traditional Christian summer camp in our amazing beachfront setting. In addition to the program focus of each camp, every week includes camper favorites. Campers swim, play soccer and basketball, go to arts and crafts, and master our low ropes course.

Campers live and play together in their special program groups, and are housed by gender in roomy cabins with bunk beds, electricity, and bathrooms. Each evening, it's time for all camp fun, like Capture the Flag and making s'mores around the campfire. At the end of each day, it's time for Vespers and Cabin Chats, special times to slow down, connect, and reflect.

**Day Camp** has all the spirit and tradition of our overnight camp, complete with waterfront, sports, and arts activities. Activities are age appropriate and hands on, and are conducted in small groups with campers the same age. Every day includes structured activities ranging from art, nature exploration, cooking, and noncompetitive sports. By popular request, we're now offering Red Cross swim lessons in addition to daily recreational swims.

# Summer Positions at New York Conference Camps

New York Conference Camping and Retreat Ministry camps are hiring for Summer 2017! Spend your summer making lifelong memories at Quinipet and Kingswood. What could be better than a summer spent enjoying God's creation and creating impactful experiences for others in an inclusive, caring, and creative environment? Check out our open positions and apply today!

Lifeguard at Kingswood Campsite. Read about the position here:

<http://www.kingswoodcampsite.org/wp-content/uploads/doc-lifeguard-2017.pdf>

Family Camp Program Director at Kingswood Campsite. Read about the position here:

<http://www.kingswoodcampsite.org/wp-content/uploads/doc-program-director-2017-revised.pdf>

Woodsmoke Youth Camp counselors:

<http://www.kingswoodcampsite.org/camping/woodsmoke/staff-volunteers/>

Quinipet Camp & Retreat Center is hiring for Summer 2017! Available positions include Sailing Director, Waterfront Director, Counselors (sailing, waterfront, and general), Camp Nurse, and more. Learn about all our summer positions and how to apply here-

<http://www.quinipet.org/summer-staff-positions.html>

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## Mission u

a mission education event for u! will take place

**July 14-16** at the Stamford Hilton.

This year's studies will be:

Living as a Covenant Community

Mission Conferences of the United Methodist

Church in the United States Climate

Justice: A Call to Hope and Action Class for adults, youth, children. Youth class will volunteer on Saturday at New Covenant House of Hospitality food bank and soup kitchen.

**Details and registration at:**

<http://www.nyac.com/eventdetail/6241171?month=7&year=2017&day=1&display>

## MISSION u



**Planting Seeds  
for the  
Beloved Community  
of Disciples**

# AMONG OURSELVES

## **Please keep in your prayers:**

CT District pastors and their families, especially those new to our District and/or beginning a pastorate at a different church in our District.

### **Appointment Changes:**

Cheshire

Gaylordsville

Kensington

Meriden: South Trinity

Middlefield Federated

New Haven: First & Summerfield

Newington

Pleasant Valley

Rev. Kenneth Kieffer

Jacob Eun

Joseph Yang

John Blossom

Suzanne Personette

Juhye Hahn

Joseph Yang

Lee Gangaware

Congratulations to the following pastors who received their Local Pastor License and Annual Conference this year:

Lisa Bosworth (Seymour)

Fern Blair Hart (Canaan)

Barbara Marks (Middletown)

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## RETIREE'S LUNCH

**Please note:** The Retired Ministers monthly luncheon will take a summer break and resume on **Thursday, September 14, 2017.**

**Watch for details!**

# **DATES TO REMEMBER**

## **FALL CLERGY MEETING COMING UP IN SEPTEMBER**

**CONNECTICUT DISTRICT IS ON  
FACEBOOK!**

**CHECK US OUT AT:  
nyacconnecticut district**

**DEADLINE FOR THE SEPTEMBER DISTRICT NEWS  
IS AUGUST 20, 2017**