

## Sunday Announcements for September 8, 2024



September 3, 2024

*This is a day of new beginnings,  
time to remember and move on,  
time to believe what love is bringing,  
laying to rest the past that's gone.*

— Brian Wren, 1978

As I write this first word to you, my mind is full of wonderment and curiosity about this new creative arrangement that has brought us into relationship with one another, both as your bishop and with the New York Annual Conference. My heart is also full of hope and joy at being able to add to my satchel of life a new set of colleagues and friends who will further expand the full picture of Christ in my pursuit of the sanctified life. It is indeed a day of new beginnings.

In the journey of life there are, most certainly, a series of remembrances that take us back, as well as anticipations that move us forward. Today, I acknowledge the significant memories of mission and ministry that fill your hearts and minds in Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut. I remember, with deep gratitude to God, the faithful service of bishops like Herb Skeete, Susan Hassinger, Pete Weaver, Sudarshana Devadhar, and Peggy Johnson, each whom have played a significant role in my life journey. There is no doubt that it is good to look back, to remember, and to savor the experiences and people that have shaped our spiritual lives.

As you get to know me, you will quickly find out that I am the product of a rich past. I was born into and raised by a family that had a deep history of Christian formation. I learned more about faith on the back porch of my grandmother and grandfather Bickerton's home than I ever did in a classroom. I was inspired by a mother and a father who taught me about love, resilience, and faith in ways that no one else could.

In the last chapters of his life, my dad experienced a significant amount of hardship. Laid off from his job in a rapidly declining glass industry, my father became a journeyman, finding work wherever he could to care for his family.

As a result, retirement came very late in his life with just barely enough to scrape by. The death of my mom, a fall that broke three vertebrae in his neck, and severe kidney failure that tied his life to a dialysis machine, gave him every reason to become bitter and angry about a past that did not offer him a life that he had anticipated.



### **Bishop's Office**

Bishop Thomas J. Bickerton

Brenda Cayer  
Administrative Assistant  
Phone: (978) 682-7555 ext. 250  
Fax: (978) 682-9555  
[BishopsOffice@neumc.org](mailto:BishopsOffice@neumc.org)

Yet, every single day, my father would end every conversation with the same line: *Remember, son, every day is a gift. There are no guarantees for tomorrow. So, make every effort to make the most of every day you have.* This daily statement of faith became his credo, a reminder to put the past in the rearview mirror and look forward to the blessings and opportunities that lay ahead.

I believe that this is the same credo that can and should guide our journey together these next few years. While I knew that assuming additional responsibilities as a bishop in a rapidly changing church was a certain reality, I, like you, had no idea that our lives would be brought together in this new arrangement. Curiosity abounds for all of us. How will sharing a bishop work? What historical expectations will need to shift and change? In what way will this alter the way we do mission and ministry? I share those very same questions and more.

And yet, by faith, I know that God has got this. My life story bears witness to it. There is hope and joy and possibility on the horizon. We just have to set our sights on what lies ahead, looking with eager anticipation for what God has in store for us together.

Brian Wren says it best in verse 2 of this wonderful hymn:

*For by the life and death of Jesus, God's mighty spirit, now as then,  
can make for us a world of difference, as faith and hope are born again.*

That's it! The ability to face an uncertain future with faith, hope, and joy is completely dependent on our belief that God's mighty spirit can make for us a world of difference. That's how I choose to embark on this new journey as the bishop of New England and New York. There is no doubt that there will be challenges ahead as we format a new, shared relationship together.

This is most certainly not a merger into one Annual Conference. But it is a creative exploration of how mission and ministry can be accomplished in the midst of a new reality. We will be tempted, at times, to look back and long for a day that never will be again. But my prayer is that we will resist that temptation and look forward with eager anticipation and hope. Just remember: *Every day is a gift. There are no guarantees for tomorrow. So, make every effort to make the most of every day you have.*

I thank God for the opportunity to serve you. I have been praying for you each day since this assignment was announced in mid-July and I will continue to lift you up in daily prayer as we enter into relationship together. I ask the same from you.

I wonder what God is up to these days? Won't you join me as we walk this road of discovery together?

*Then let us with the Spirit's daring, step from the past and leave behind  
our disappointment, guilt, and grieving, seeking new paths and sure to find.* (verse 3)

May it be so!

The Journey Continues, . . .



Thomas J. Bickerton

Resident Bishop

New Hope Episcopal Area

The New England and New York Annual Conferences

## Special Prayers for these Wesley Family, Friends, and Others...

Cathy (sister-in-law of David Potts), Kimberly Shays (Deborah Surette's daughter), Rich Reynolds (Debi Reynolds' brother), Shirley Pisarski, Grace Woode, Rosamond Hammond, Linda Keister, Pinamang Boateng, Joseph Boateng, Stephen Boyns, Anne Burrows, Isabella Consolatti (Gail and Ron Liston's granddaughter), Dot Ellis, Barbara Fletcher, Tom Friend, Beverly Grimshaw, Jim & Judy Hoffman, Don Johnson, Charles Kiefer, Dorothy Norcross, Sandra O'Driscoll, David Samanen, Alysia Simoneau, Janet Terzian, Donald Tremblay; Barbara and the Vietze Family; Peter Woodcock, Laura Zoldak, Margie (Linda Keister's sister), Page (Allison Hansen's sister), Libby T. (friend of Phyllis Yngve), Neil Ashton (past member), Paula and Calvin Kelly (sister and brother-in-law of Linda Dylewicz), Those who struggle with depression, anxiety, and alcoholism.

## Tower & Rose Window Lightings & Altar Flowers

**The Tower lighting** for September is given in loving memory of Rev. Blaine Taylor by Lois Taylor.

**The Rose Window** for September is given in loving memory of Ralph Ellis.

**The November Tower** lighting is available. If you'd like to light the Tower in honor/celebration or in memory of a loved one, please contact me in the office or send me an email.

*Debi Reynolds (office@wesleyworc.org)*

## Announcements

### SAVE THE DATE!

#### Sunday, November 3, 2024 – ALL CHURCH MEETING

Wesley's Vision Task Force will host a conversation about possible new directions for our church on Sunday, November 3 after the service. More details are to come, but please save the date so you can bring your ideas and thoughts to the discussion.

**Worcester Area United Methodist (WAUM) Music & Fellowship on September 15<sup>th</sup> is indefinitely postponed.**

**October Herald:** *There are always extra copies of the Herald in the Narthex by the Welcome Office.*

The October Herald will be part of the October 13<sup>th</sup> bulletin. Please send all articles to me no later than Monday, October 7<sup>th</sup>.

*Thank you, Debi*

**From Carty Cupboard Food Pantry...** For the month of September, we need nutritious Cold Cereal and meals in a can, like stew and Chef Boyardee products please. Thank You to everyone who donates money and or food to Carty Cupboard on a regular basis, we appreciate your generosity and kindness.

*Nancy*

### **Harvest 2024 – Sunday, September 29<sup>th</sup>!**

If anyone has an item(s) they would like to donate for the main Harvest on September 29<sup>th</sup>, please speak with Gifty Bentum-Asante. Let us all pray about ways we plan to give to the Lord and know that is our little token of saying *Thank You* for all that He has done for us.

### **International Lunch Celebration – Sunday, September 29<sup>th</sup>!**

The International luncheon will follow the harvest celebration this year. Please plan on making your favorite dish from your heritage to share with fellow members. Let us know if it will be a main dish, a side or a dessert. There will be signup sheets and foil pans to put your dish in. (Ingredients must be listed to prevent any problems with allergies.)

**Volunteers will be needed for set up and clean up!!!!**

**This is a church-wide function so let's make it a huge success!**

For those of you bringing food, please email/text one of us the name of your dish, Country of where your dish is from (so we have a flag of the country it represents to place next to it) and list of ingredients (for those who have allergies or are gluten free).

Stephanie Smyth... email [smyth0822@gmail.com](mailto:smyth0822@gmail.com) **OR** you may call or text message Linda D'Acri at 508-450-0331.

Thank You in advance for your help in making this a huge success!

Kind Regards,  
Stephanie and Linda

### **Gift Cards Can Prevent Homelessness!**

#### *Hope for Housing Fall Dates*

Do you buy groceries? Stop by CVS? Grab a coffee at Dunkin, Starbucks or a meal at Panera? If you do, pay with a gift card instead of cash or credit. Buy your card at Wesley and your purchase will help a family threatened with homelessness actually remain in their home.

Allison Hansen will be selling cards in Brewer Hall after church on the following dates and will accept orders by email at [AChis4788@aol.com](mailto:AChis4788@aol.com). Please give her advance notice if you want to place a larger order.

September 22,

October 13,

November 3

November 17 – Shop for stocking stuffers and plan ahead!

December 8 – Secret Santa? Team gifts? Last chance for larger orders this year.

## GOD MOMENT

If you could share a story of seeing God's work in your life, please tell me or email it to me. The story can be anonymous or signed, and all are invited to participate. Betsy ([betspenn35@hotmail.com](mailto:betspenn35@hotmail.com))

### A God Moment from Chris Flagg

Each day I travel up route 20 to get to work, it's not uncommon for traffic to be heavy and the traffic lights can be unbearably long, so I'm always plotting and scheming in my head about which "shortcuts" will get me to work the fastest. I have three choices for the last part of my route... turn off route 20 and take back roads, but that would mean a lower speed limit and I could end up getting stuck behind a school bus picking kids up at their individual houses, or I could travel a little further down the road past the place where I need to turn and then make a loop around at the next intersection and backtrack, or I can just pull into the lane designed for my final turn and wait out the very long light.

On one particular day I decided to pull into my designated lane, I was the only one waiting to turn and the oncoming traffic was very heavy, so I wasn't expecting the light to change any time soon. As I sat there waiting for the light to change, I started thinking about how this whole light system was designed to make it easier (and safer) for me to get to my destination, it may take longer than I'd like it to sometimes but eventually the pre-designed plan will fall into place and I will be on my way. As I sat thinking about all of this the light did in fact change, the oncoming traffic slowed to a stop and as I began to take my left hand turn I said a small prayer of thanks for the people who developed the light system that helps to keep me safe.

Then it happened...  
the God moment!

A split-second thought that changed my mood for the rest of the day.

The realization that my life with God can be described as similar to that traffic light... I can try taking shortcuts or doing things "my way", or I can choose to be patient and know that God already has a pre-designed plan and even if it's not in the timing I would choose, it will always be the safest way, the best way, the way that leads to life.

Thank You God.