

**The deadline for the  
Connections  
July issue  
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# CONNECTIONS

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## 2009 session of NCNY Annual Conference begins

“Rekindled by Faith ... in Prayer, in Heritage, in Joy” is the theme for the 2009 session of the North Central New York Annual Conference this week at the Holiday Inn Convention Center in Liverpool, New York.

The Reverend Dr. Marcus Matthews, Resident Bishop of the New York West Area of The United Methodist Church will bring his Episcopal Address, It’s A New World - during opening worship at 9 a.m. on May 28, using as his scripture text, Acts 9: 10 -22.

Bishop Matthews began serving the New York West Area, which includes the North Central New York and Western New York Conferences, in September of 2008. This is the first North Central New York Annual Conference over which he will preside.

The Rev. Marcus Matthews was elected bishop on July 14, 2004, during the first ballot taken at the Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference held in Syracuse, New York. He served the Philadelphia Episcopal Area of The United Methodist Church (Eastern Pennsylvania and Peninsula-Delaware Conferences) from September 1, 2004 to August 31, 2008.

Bishop Matthews is originally from Florence, South Carolina, where his home church, Cumberland UMC, was a pivotal influence in his life.

Bishop Jonathan D. Keaton, resident bishop of the Michigan Area of The

United Methodist Church, will speak and lead a Bible study during this Annual Conference. He will bring the message during the Memorial Communion Service in addition to leading a Bible Study during Annual Conference session.

Believing divisions among Christians seriously diminish the impact of the church on the world, Keaton works for Christian unity. “Like Christ, I wish that we ‘may all be one’ as Christ is one with God,” he said.

Bishop Keaton was elected to the episcopacy in 1996. Prior to that, he served as a District Superintendent in the Northern Illinois Conference. He was a member of the conference staff responsible for monitoring the church’s stand on social issues, providing support and encouragement for ethnic local churches and promoting spiritual formation.

A service of Ordination and Commissioning will be held in Hendricks Chapel, Syracuse University at 7:00 p.m., May 28. Annual Conference continues through May 30.

It is the last full Annual Conference Session for the North Central New York Annual Conference. The Annual Conference will be dissolved in June of 2010 and become part of a new Conference (yet to be named) in the Upper New York Area July 1, 2010.

Eastside Mission has grown in its ability to reach out to the fast growing refugee population around the Asbury UMC in Utica. Through this portion of the LOVE Offering people in inner-city Syracuse and Utica will be blessed by the ministries of these missions.

**Nationally** one third of the offering will be equally divided to support the national UMCOR warehouse at Sager Brown in Louisiana and Mission Central, the regional warehouse in Mechanicsburg, PA. For several years



## New ACT worships with youth from four conferences

by Marilyn J. Kasperek

Exciting, energetic, dynamic, life changing worship was a vital part of the 2009 4Word gathering of youth from the Wyoming, Western New York, Troy, and North Central New York Conferences, and the New Area Conference Team experienced some of it on April 25.

New ACT purposefully scheduled time shared with youth attending 4Word into their time together, first at worship, and then some one on one

time over lunch.

“We are here to listen to you,” Bishop Marcus Matthews told the youth as he greeted them. The youth-led event included worship, workshops, and many opportunities for community building. With excitement, an announcement was made that youth leadership from all four conferences will come together shortly to continue to look at what their journey together into the new Conference might look like.

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## Love offering at Annual Conference to meet needs throughout the world

The LOVE Offering at the 2009 Session of the North Central New York Annual will be divided locally, nationally and globally.

**Locally** one third of the offering will be equally divided to assist the ministries of the Syracuse Westside Urban Mission and the Utica Eastside Mission. SWUM continues to reach out with the hope of Jesus Christ to the people of the neighborhood around the Brown Memorial UMC in Syracuse.

As a new project last year, the Utica

United Methodists in North Central New York have collected and shipped flood buckets, all the various types of kits and school bags to needed areas in this country and around the world. This portion of the LOVE Offering will help to keep these UMCOR relief supplies flowing to those in need.

**Globally** one third of the offering will go, in connection with the offering of the Wyoming Annual Conference, to strengthen their partnership with Haiti. This year they are hoping

to raise over \$40,000. This portion of North Central’s LOVE Offering will assist them to support a clean water project and continue work on the parsonage/VIM guest house in the village of Hermitage. They hope to provide ongoing funding for a very successful micro-credit program established in 2005 and establish a hot lunch program at the school.

North Central’s goal is to receive a dollar for the LOVE Offering from every member of the local church.