

Rev Ryan W Henderson- Associate Conference Minister for Communication and Online Community

*When the Lord saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!"
And Moses said, "Here I am."
"Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground."
Exodus 3:4-5*

Since we last met at Silver Bay in 2022- my ministry with the New York Conference has been filled of seeking and seeing places of Holy Ground. Holy Ground moments are fleeting, they cannot be planned, but happen often when least expect them and when God knows we need them most.

For me Holy Ground is found in three categories: Programs, Relationships and Administration

Program-Over the last year I have attended, facilitated, and engaged with programs surrounding technology and youth/faith formation. I lead a community of practice for ACMs on behalf of the National UCC and participated with Community of Trust circle with Conference Youth Workers. I am part of the Exec planning team for the 2024 cycle of regional youth events for the UCC, and led worship and facilitated a workshop for the 2022 Reset for Renewal for the UCC's virtual youth workers gathering. I have led an association and a commission discussion about Artificial intelligence and ChatGPT. In the last six months, I have shifted to working with both the Genesee Valley Association and Susquehanna association in areas of search/call and leadership liason.

Relationship- As an extravert, I have always found the most energy in my ministry when it comes to relating with other people- both fellow clergy and members of our congregations or ministry settings related to the New York Conference. Since our last meeting I have put a deeper emphasis toward relating with people as we ease into the post-pandemic in person events, answering the phone and responding more quickly- even if I cannot solve or resource a problem. It has been a joy to preach more in-person, attend association meeting and celebrate in installations.

As our conference staff has gotten smaller and we are shifting areas of responsibility- I have begun relating more with ecumenical partners in Germany and look toward a time when mission work teams in central america could be a reality again.

Administration- I continue to work with the technological side of the NY Conference- making sure that all systems are working as efficiently and cost effective as they can- I'm especially thankful to work with- Lisa Delgado for our financial processing/accounting, Aja Harris for our Eblasts, artistic flair for communications and the voice behind the phone when you call, and along contracting with Josh Carroll for our cloud database, email exchange and security. Under the leadership of Rev Dr Marsha Williams, I have helped facilitate logistics for Annual meetings, Ecumenical visitors to New York and general synod delegation.

In his latest book The Creative Act music producer Rick Rubin says "Turning something from an idea into a reality can make it seem smaller. It changes from unearthly to earthly. The imagination has no limits. The physical world does. The work exists in both."

It is my humble belief that the work of the being the New York Conference of the United Church of Christ has never been more challenging as this time. Being on the staff of this Conference has never been so rewarding as this chapter of it. Being the Church of Jesus Christ has never been so needed as this moment in history.

I am thankful to continue to find Holy Ground around the Churches of the New York Conference and look forward to places where we can continue to turn our ideas (and prayers) into reality as we make God's love the center of what we do... In the Greatest of Hope- *Ryan*