



# the Bridge

Connecting local churches to each other & ministries around the world




*"I see congregations moving away from a spirit of competition to a spirit of collaboration so we can amplify our impact on communities!"*

*Read more on page 2.*

## What's inside

2 | Celebrating Bishop Héctor's Installation

 *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.*

 [www.facebook.com/uppernewyork](https://www.facebook.com/uppernewyork)  [www.instagram.com/uppernewyork](https://www.instagram.com/uppernewyork)

The crowd roared with applause.

Bishop Héctor outlined just a few of the new things that are happening now:

- **Elections:** In our denomination, he was elected as the first Hispanic/Latino bishop in the Northeastern Jurisdiction and the first Puerto Rican bishop in The United Methodist Church. The Western Jurisdiction elected the denomination's first openly gay Black bishop and first Filipino bishop. South Central, which elected all three of its bishops on the first ballot, elected its first Black woman and the denomination's first Native American bishop.
- **Post-COVID Gatherings:** Churches are reemerging from COVID, gathering again. They are beginning to prioritize work on racial justice. "At the regional gatherings I have been hosting across the Conference, I have witnessed resilience and creativity. I have sensed a new hope emerging among our clergy and laity," Bishop Héctor said.
- **Ordination:** The 2023 class of ordinands is the largest Upper New York has had in awhile.
- **The UNY Mission Central HUB:** The HUB is doing so much work, engaging with churches in need throughout the Conference—more missional engagement than ever before.

Bishop Hector told the Conference what he sees ahead in Upper New York:

"I see a vision of unity that celebrates our diversity as a gift from God!"

"I see us leaving behind mindsets of scarcity!"

"I see a new generation of servant leaders claiming their place!"

"I see congregations moving away from a spirit of competition to a spirit of collaboration so we can amplify our impact on communities!"

Bishop Héctor asked the audience to reflect on the questions:

- How do the words of Isaiah speak to your heart?
- What circumstances do you need to let go?
- What truth can you claim today to help you trust that God is doing something new?
- Who do you need to invite on this adventure?

Bishop Héctor ended his message by asking everyone in the pews to stand as an act of faith, to proclaim that God is doing something new.

Scan this QR code to watch a recording of the livestream in its entirety.



*The Bridge* is a Conference Communications Ministry tool that delivers to local churches news and stories of ministry from around the Upper New York area and the world. For more news and stories visit:

[www.unyumc.org](http://www.unyumc.org)



# God is doing something new



By Shannon Hodson  
*UNY Writer/Editor*

On Saturday, March 11, the Upper New York (UNY) Conference celebrated the installation service for Bishop Héctor A. Burgos Núñez at Liverpool First United Methodist Church.

Nearly 100 people attended this service in person and hundreds of others watched the service via the livestream or a recording of it.

In his introduction of Bishop Héctor, the Rev. Bill Gottschalk-Fielding, Assistant to the Bishop, expressed what an honor it is to be Bishop Héctor's assistant.

Rev. Gottschalk-Fielding shared a story of how someone he knew told him that all services in Lent must be solemn and serious.

Then, Rev. Gottschalk-Fielding said, "I think we can manage serious, but we will not manage solemn! Today we are going to celebrate nuestro amigo and nuestro obispo...our friend and our bishop."

In addition to his wife, Jazelis Adorno, and their children, Fabián, Joel (via livestream), Marcos, and Valeria, Bishop Héctor invited some very special guests to the service, including Bishop Lee Miller II of the Upstate New York Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church; the Rev. Dr. Giovanni Arroyo, the General Secretary of the General Commission on Religion and Race; the Rev. Jeff Campbell, General Secretary of Discipleship Ministries; and Rashida Tyler, the Deputy Executive Director of the New York State Council of Churches.

After quoting a John Wesley sermon in which Wesley spoke about congregations coming together to love all humankind, Bishop Miller said, "We look forward to serving with you this universal love for all people."

The Rev. Dr. Arroyo said he looks forward to "working together in building a Church that is equitable, antiracist, and vision-oriented." Looking at Bishop Héctor, Rev. Dr. Arroyo said, "I look forward to what God will do for you and the Upper New York Conference in the days, months, and years ahead."

Rev. Campbell expressed his pleasure for Bishop Héctor being appointed as the President of Discipleship Ministries. He has known Bishop Héctor for 20 years.

"In Bishop Héctor Burgos Núñez, we have a passionate leader that The Church needs desperately; we need more passionate and inspiring leaders to do the work we are called to do, and we are truly given this gift in Héctor," Rev. Campbell said.

Rashida congratulated Bishop Héctor and expressed how the New York State Council of Churches is looking forward to working together to create a more just New York.

Bishop Héctor also invited the Rev. Dr. Lydia Muñoz, Executive Director of the National Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministries of The United Methodist Church, to offer her musical talents. She played the piano and beautifully sang "There's nothing our God Can't Do" and sang in Spanish, "Al Otro Lado Del Rio."

Bishop Héctor's passion and inspiration, which his guests mentioned, were evident in his installation message. Bishop Héctor's message was based on the prophet Isaiah's promising words in Isaiah 43:18-19.

"Forget the former things. Do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland."

This scripture was written to give hope to the people of Israel who were in captivity in Babylon.

Bishop Héctor recognized the need for hope in current times.

He mentioned many troubling truths:

- The fact that over 6.5 million people have lost their lives from COVID.
- The global economy is in flux.
- There is racial tension.
- The war in Ukraine.
- Gun violence.
- Racial hate.
- The decline of churches
- Unemployment.
- Hunger.
- Homelessness.

Bishop Héctor said, "Church, we are living in challenging times!"

He acknowledged that COVID amplified challenges.

He exclaimed to the people of Upper New York and the people watching the installation across the globe, "Our God is a God of new things. We should be focusing on our freedom in Christ. We need to realign our sight on God. Forget former things. Stop expecting past things to sustain us because they do not compare to what God has in store for us!"

Bishop Héctor asked the people at Liverpool First UMC to turn to their neighbors in the pews and tell them to "Stop looking behind!"

Blending the words from Isaiah with current times, Bishop Héctor explained, "The God of new things is making new pathways through the wilderness. God is creating rivers through wastelands."

He shouted, "Church, God is doing something new!"

*Continued on page 4.*