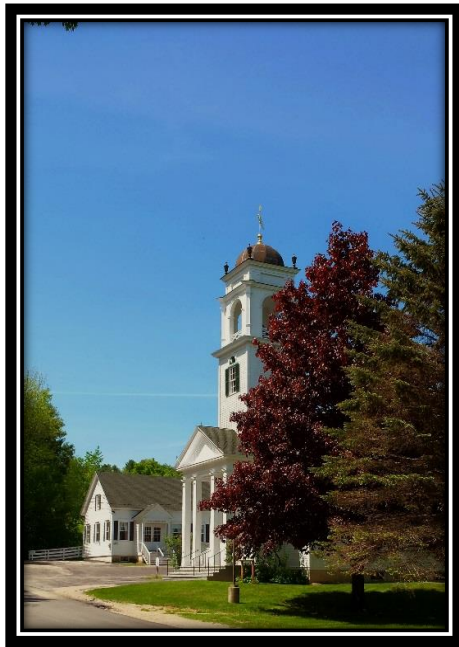


Maine Conference

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

2014



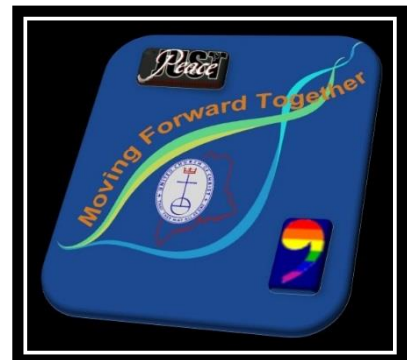
Moving Forward Together

(As voted by the Maine Conference, October 18, 2014)

Up-dated 1/9/15

Moving to a Networking/Community-based Model of Governance and Staffing

A Three-Year Experiment in Governance, Staffing and Ministry of the Maine Conference, United Church of Christ



Moving Forward Together

Building up the Community of Faith: A Networking/Community Model of Governance and Staffing

We believe that Ephesians 4:11-12 calls us to a new consideration of our life together in Christ based on the unity of the Spirit. “The gifts that [God] gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.”

We believe that equipping the saints for the work of ministry underlies the goals and intentions that the Maine Conference adopted in the Vision and Mission Statements and Mission Plan on May 31, 2013 (see Appendix A)

We believe that the most faithful way to build up the body of Christ is to strengthen the relationships among and between congregations, Associations and individual members for the purpose of strengthening the ministry that we provide in and beyond the State of Maine.

We believe that in chapter 4 the writer of Ephesians calls us to simplify and focus our leadership models of governance and staffing to foster creativity in equipping the saints for ministry in the 21st century culture of increased secularization and isolation.

The Moving Forward Together Strategic Plan

A. Therefore, the Maine Conference commits to growing into a Networking, Community-based model of governance, staffing and programming.

1. This new governance model will rely upon:
 - a. More networking among and between Associations, congregations, ministers and lay leaders rather than between congregations and the Conference Staff.
 - b. More investment of time and money in networking tools, including an advanced website and other Internet capacities.
 - c. More emphasis on using Volunteer time for nurture and ministry rather than being used so much for governance.
2. This new staffing model will require revised job descriptions for staff and volunteers that will support the Networking/Community Model of the Conference while it seeks to:
 - a. Make more effective and efficient use of other Conference leadership time and skills;
 - b. And enhance relationships by reconnecting congregations, ministers, and lay leaders across the life of the Conference.

B. The Maine Conference commits to entering into this process of transformation as a three-year experiment through which we live into the new governance and staffing structure.

1. Throughout 2015 we will establish the necessary policies, structures, staffing configurations and financial foundations for living into the new models.

- 1 2. We will establish a New Dimensions Implementation Team to help with the
2 formation of Conference Deacons, Resource Teams, and Affinity Groups
- 3 3. The Interim Conference Minister will work with the Associate Conference
4 Minister and the Interim Associate Conference Minister to help with the
5 implementation of formation, coordination and nurturing of Resource Teams and
6 Affinity Groups; as well as the development of creative and new strategies for
7 staffing local church search committees and the church and ministry committees
8 of associations.

9 **C. A New Dimensions Implementation Team will be appointed to help facilitate,**
10 **coordinate and guide the transition into the new Networking/Community-based**
11 **model of Governance, Staffing and Programming.**

- 12 1. The Implementation Team will consist of the chairpersons of the three current
13 Commissions and members of the New Dimensions Transition Team or other
14 persons identified by the Mission Council as needed.
- 15 2. The Implementation Team will work to help the Mission Council strategize
16 and coordinate the transition of the Conference from the present model of
17 governance and staffing to the new model adopted by the Conference in
18 October 2014.

19 Governance

20 **A. Furthermore, the Coordinating Council will transition into a Mission Council**

21 *The Mission Council is the fulcrum of the “Moving Forward Together” Proposal. It will be*
22 *a flexible and leadership-oriented group that will work with the new Conference*
23 *Minister. The Mission Council and the Conference Minister will work together to discern,*
24 *strategize, and enact ministries for the 21st century.*

25 During this proposed time of transition the Mission Council will act as the
26 Coordinating Council and shall consist of the four offices of the Conference
27 (Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Clerk and Treasurer); eight persons with particular
28 skills, gifts, wisdom and love of the United Church of Christ elected to serve as at-large
29 members; the Moderator and Vice-Moderator of the Annual Meeting to serve as ex-
30 officio members with voice and vote; and the Conference Minister and Business
31 Manager as ex-officio members with voice but no vote.

32 **B. The Mission Council will serve as the administrative body of the Maine Conference**
33 **with particular focus on implementation of the Mission Plan adopted on May 31,**
34 **2013.**

- 35 1. The Mission Council will work through the Administrative Resource Teams
36 (formerly the Standing Committees of Finance, Auditing, Annual Meeting
37 Planning, Credentials, Resourcing the Local Church, Personnel, Trustees,
38 Nominating) to:
 - 39 a. develop, monitor and audit the Conference Budget (Finance);

- 1 b. plan the Annual Meetings of the Conference (Annual Meeting Planning);
- 2 c. provide funds to respond to the critical needs of local churches (Resourcing the
- 3 Local Church);
- 4 d. support, evaluate the work of the paid Conference Staff (Personnel) Note: The
- 5 Conference Minister will be evaluated by the Mission Council);
- 6 e. manage the investments and permanent funds of the Conference (Trustees);
- 7 and
- 8 f. lift up persons to serve in leadership positions for election by the Conference
- 9 (Nominating).

10 2. Although attention will be given to broadly-based representation on the
11 Administrative Resource Teams, priority will be given to skill and interest-based
12 participation. Exceptions are the Resourcing the Local Church, Nominating and
13 Personnel Resource Teams which will be formed with representation and
14 nomination from each Association.

15 **C. The Mission Council will provide oversight in implementing the Moving Forward**
16 **Together Strategic Plan**

- 17 1. Through the formation of Conference Deacons, Resource Teams and Affinity
- 18 Groups and the work of paid staff called and/or employed formed and dedicated
- 19 to implementing the Mission Plan.

20 **D. The Mission Council shall continue to develop the vision and mission of the Maine**
21 **Conference** through paying attention to prevailing trends in culture as they relate to
22 church life and engaging local churches, associations and clergy and lay leaders in
23 strategizing ways to express the Good News of God's love for the people of Maine and
24 beyond.

25 **E. The Coordinating Council transition into the Mission Council effective January,**
26 **2015.**

- 27 1. Through the three-year time of organizational experimentation, the Mission Council
- 28 will be formed from Officers presently elected by the Conference; plus those
- 29 Coordinating Council Members presently serving as at-large members; plus other
- 30 members (for instance the SYC Representative, Personnel Committee Chairperson,
- 31 Immediate Past Moderator, Trustees Representative, or the Finance Committee
- 32 Chairperson) that the Coordinating Council may wish to name from the
- 33 Coordinating Council to serve as at-large or as Moderator and Vice-Moderator of
- 34 the Annual Meeting.
- 35 2. Association Representatives elected to the Coordinating Council will be invited to
- 36 form the Annual Conference Planning Resource Team.
- 37 3. The chairpersons of the three Commissions will be asked to serve on the New
- 38 Dimensions Implementation Team with four members of the New Dimensions
- 39 Implementation Team.

40 **F. Our Associations continue to be the glue that keeps our covenant relationships across**
41 **the United Church of Christ moving and working together.**

42 In the United Church of Christ the Association is the place where authorization for
43 ministry resides. It is also the setting of the Church by which all local churches initiate

1 and maintain their membership in the United Church of Christ. Associations,
2 therefore, are vital to this or any other model for governance and staffing in the United
3 Church of Christ.

- 4 1. Particular responsibilities of the current nine associations of the Maine Conference
5 in this Networking/Community Model of governance include:
 - 6 a. the choice and Affirmation of the Ministries of the Conference Deacons;
 - 7 b. choosing representatives to serve on the Conference Nominating, Resourcing
8 the Local Church, and Personnel Administrative Resource Teams;
 - 9 c. choosing representatives to serve on the Conference-wide Planning Events and
10 their congregations to participate in them;
 - 11 d. Associations may develop their own Resource Teams, as well.
 - 12 e. Traditional tasks of collecting Association and Conference Fellowship Dues
13 and carrying on the vital work of the Church & Ministry Committee continue.
- 14 2. In order to promote positive, appropriate and realistic relationships between
15 Conference Staff and Associations, there will be a need for meaningful and
16 engaging conversation within and across Associations – through Association
17 Executive Committees and Church and Ministry Committees – seeking ways to
18 consolidate and re-imagine Maine Conference Associations, especially in the
19 Church and Ministry Committee setting.

Staffing

21 **Furthermore, there will be a reconfiguration of Conference staff to most effectively**
22 **support the network:**

- 23 • The primary focus for the Conference staff shall be leading and facilitating the
24 transition of the Maine Conference to a network-driven model of ministry as
25 described in “Moving Forward Together”
- 26 • The Conference Staff shall assist the Conference in the implementation of the
27 Vision and Strategic Plan ultimately adopted by the Annual Meeting (probably in
28 October, 2014).
- 29 • While being held accountable to the Mission Council through the Conference
30 Minister and Business Manager, the Conference Staff shall be responsible for the
31 day to day operations of Conference ministries, programs, resource teams, affinity
32 groups and administration.

33 **A. The Conference Staff shall consist of lay and ordained persons, volunteers and paid**
34 **employees, filling both full and part-time positions, deployed regionally and**
35 **centrally to perform roles in three different aspects of Conference life:**

- 36 1. Conference Ministry;
- 37 2. Conference Administration; and
- 38 3. Conference Programming

39 **B. There shall be persons called and/or employed to serve on the Conference Ministry**
40 **Team.**

- 1 1. **Conference Minister** (Full Time)
- 2 a. Head of Staff of the Conference directly accountable to Mission Council,
- 3 serving as an ex officio member of Councils, Teams, Groups, boards and
- 4 committees with voice but not vote.
- 5 b. Search and Call Officer and Coordinator of Staff presence with and
- 6 coordination of Association Church and Ministry Committees coordinating the
- 7 efforts of the Conference Ministry Associates
- 8 c. Coordinator of the Conference Deacons.
- 9 2. **Associate Conference Minister** (Full Time)
- 10 a. Directly Accountable to the Conference Minister.
- 11 b. Working in cooperation with the Conference Minister, coordinates and
- 12 supports the work, ministry and of the Resource Teams and Affinity Groups.
- 13 c. Helping the Resource Teams and Affinity Groups develop and assess their
- 14 operative mandates within the Vision and Mission of the Maine Conference
- 15 and assisting them in developing budgets and any funding requests for the
- 16 advice and consent of the Mission Council.
- 17 d. The Call Agreement of the Associate Conference Minister for Small Church
- 18 Development will be reworked to reflect the transitional nature of the position
- 19 according to the Moving Forward Together Strategic Plan. These negotiations
- 20 will be completed by the end of 2014.
- 21 3. **Two Conference Ministry Associates** (Half Time, Deployed Regionally)
- 22 a. Directly Accountable to the Conference Minister.
- 23 b. Staff and/or coordinate the staffing of Local Church Search Committees under
- 24 the direction and guidance of the Conference Minister. Special attention will
- 25 be paid to developing new and creative ways to gather churches involved in the
- 26 Search & Call Process for mutual support and instruction. We will also develop
- 27 teams of persons to act as coaches with churches in pastoral transition.
- 28 c. Staff and/or coordinate the staffing of Association Church and Ministry
- 29 Committees. Special attention will be paid toward the creative coordination of
- 30 Policies and Procedures employed by these committees on a Conference-wide
- 31 basis: particularly in the areas of fitness reviews and boundary awareness
- 32 training.
- 33 d. The Interim Associate Conference Minister will work with the Conference
- 34 Minister and, initially, the Associate Conference Minister for Small Church
- 35 Development in transitioning the present model into the Moving Forward
- 36 Together Strategic Plan model that utilizes two half-time, regionally deployed
- 37 positions.
- 38 4. **Ministries Assistant** (Full Time)
- 39 a. Directly Accountable to the Business Manager.

- 1 b. Supports the work and ministry of the Conference Minister and Conference
2 Ministry Associates in the areas of Search & Call and Church and Ministry.
- 3 c. Maintains the records pertaining to Church & Ministry and Search & Call
4 matters.
- 5 d. Coordinates the sharing of UCC Ministerial Profiles with Churches that are in
6 the Search & Call Process.
- 7 e. Convenes the meetings of the Search & Call Ministry Team (Conference
8 Minister and Conference Ministry Associates) to ascertain the sharing of
9 ministerial profiles received with churches that are searching.
- 10 f. Serves as Registrar of the Conference: establishing and collating the registration
11 of participation in events, courses, meetings, etc.
- 12 g. Serves as the support person to the Annual Meeting Planning Committee.

13 **5. Thirty to Forty Conference Deacons (Volunteer)**

- 14 a. Directly Accountable to the Conference Minister
- 15 b. Conference Deacons are not “staff” in the normal sense of the word, but are
16 lay and clergy leaders chosen to serve for a limited term because of their
17 spiritual and emotional maturity.
- 18 c. Conference Deacons will be chosen by the Associations in consultation with
19 the Conference Minister and will be affirmed in their ministries to the Maine
20 Conference by their Associations. (On average there will be a Conference
21 Deacon serving every 4-6 churches.)
- 22 d. They serve as “connectors” within the body.
- 23 e. They will be available for celebration of significant days and events in
24 congregations;
- 25 f. They will express appreciation on behalf of the whole Conference and wider
26 church for the witness and various contributions of congregations and
27 individuals;
- 28 g. They will connect congregations with each other according to their needs and
29 strengths; and communicate to, from and between congregations about local,
30 cluster, association, conference and wider church events.

31 **C. There shall be persons called and/or employed to be part of the Conference**
32 **Administrative Team.**

33 **1. Business Manager (Full Time)**

- 34 a. Directly Accountable to the Mission Council and the Conference Minister
- 35 b. Ex-officio member of the Mission Council
- 36 c. Chief Administrative Officer
- 37 d. Human Resources Director
- 38 e. Staff to the Conference Trustees, Finance Committee and Mission
39 Interpretation Team

40

- 1 2. **Business Assistant** (3/4 Time)
- 2 a. Directly accountable to the Business Manager
- 3 b. Assists Business Manager in managing, recording, reporting and accounting
- 4 for the fiscal aspects of the Conference
- 5 3. **Accounting Assistant** (1/4 Time)
- 6 a. Directly accountable to the Business Manager
- 7 b. Assists the Business Manager in areas of taxation, vendors, payroll and
- 8 payments due.
- 9 **D. There shall be persons called and/or employed to be part of the Conference**
- 10 **Program Ministry Team.**
- 11 1. **Resource Center Director** (3/4 Time)
- 12 a. Directly accountable to the Business Manager
- 13 b. Manages the Resource Center at the Maine Conference Center
- 14 c. Consults with local churches, Associations, and individuals regarding
- 15 available resources through the UCC or our ecumenical partners
- 16 d. Researches items of interest and import to the ministries of the Maine
- 17 Conference
- 18 2. **Conference Communications Director** (Full Time)
- 19 a. Accountable to the Conference Minister and the Business Manager
- 20 b. Manages the Conference Website
- 21 c. Maintains digitally based audio and video hardware and software
- 22 d. Produces, directs, edits synchronous and asynchronous streaming events,
- 23 classes and meetings
- 24 3. **Dean Maine School of Ministry** (Half-Time)
- 25 a. Directly Accountable to the Associate Conference Minister
- 26 b. Works collegially with the Maine School of Ministry Board to manage the
- 27 ministry of the Maine School of Ministry
- 28 c. Develops, coordinates, and promotes and publicizes MESoM's educational and
- 29 formational offerings
- 30 d. Provides guidance and support for Members in Discernment (MIDs) as they prepare
- 31 for authorized ministry
- 32 e. Provides guidance and support for Members in Discernment (MIDs) as they prepare
- 33 for authorized ministry
- 34 f. Communicates with Association Committees on Ministry regarding the progress of
- 35 MIDs enrolled in MESoM's certificate programs
- 36 g. Explores ecumenical and UCC partnerships for ministry education and formation
- 37 h. Serves as Dean of Students
- 38 i. Recruits and supports faculty.
- 39 j. In collaboration with the MESoM Advisory Board develops the program budget,
- 40 controls expenses and revenue and reports results to the Advisory Board.
- 41 k. Attends meetings of the Maine School of Ministry Advisory Board.

- 1 2. Resource Teams may be identified and initiated by the Mission Council or by
2 individuals or groups from any setting of the Church in our local congregations
3 or Associations.
- 4 3. In order to gain recognition as a Conference entity each Resource Team will
5 create a mandate describing the scope of work and ministry in relation to the
6 Mission Plan of the Conference. The Mission Council will receive, comment and
7 vote on the mandate before the Resource Team can obtain recognition and
8 funding.
- 9 4. Once the mandate is given and funding authorized by the Mission Council, the
10 Resource Team works to live out the mandate faithfully and freely.
- 11 5. It should be noted that every group that seeks funding of the Conference must
12 develop and gain approval from and annually report to the Mission Council for
13 its mandate and continuing recognition as a ministry of the Conference.
- 14 6. We will seek persons who by virtue of their experience, trustworthiness, and
15 ongoing learning can provide some basic conference services with excellence.
16 Members serve out of interest and Mission Council authorization, not by
17 election.
- 18 7. Resource Team Members will:
 - 19 • Engage in continuing education and training,
 - 20 • Be accountable to their own peer community,
 - 21 • Regularly communicate with the conference minister,
 - 22 • As carefully recruited volunteers, they will be reimbursed for their expenses.
- 23 8. Present Programs working in the Resource Team Model
 - 24 • Communities of Practice/Pastoral Excellence
 - 25 • Maine School of Ministry
 - 26 • Small Church Ministry Team
 - 27 • State Youth Council
 - 28 • Maine Honduras Partnership Team
 - 29 • Mission Interpretation Team

30 **B. We will implement an intentional strategy of building up Affinity Fellowship**
31 **Groups.**

32 We will encourage the continuation of current Affinity Fellowship Groups, while
33 also encouraging the development of new groups. Current groups include the
34 Outdoor Ministries Committee, and the Interim Ministers Network groups.

35 New groups may include a group for choir directors; middle school youth.

36 **C. We will develop a Communications system.**

- 37 1. The Maine Conference aims to live into our mission plan, adapt our Conference
38 Center facilities, and network with our ministry partners in order to move into a new
39 model for doing collaborative ministry, information and communication services
40 and educational opportunities.

- 1 2. We foresee engaging a consultant who will help us determine the best audio-visual
2 equipment (along with necessary software and other information technology)
3 available to outfit our Conference Center and key locations throughout the State of
4 Maine.
- 5 3. We are an organization with two offices (Augusta, and West Gardiner, Maine),
6 many in-state regional (9 associations) and local community partner organizations
7 (mostly about 160 churches). We will have some employees who telecommute, and
8 will collaborate with sister and affiliated organizations located in the US Northeast,
9 across the US, and internationally. It is critical to living into our mission plan to use
10 this opportunity to implement a state-of-the-art AV system. There are four main
11 goals to accomplish:
 - 12 a. Create a flexible ministry environment that allows for planned and impromptu
13 meetings and collaboration among governance policy-makers, staff, volunteers,
14 educators, local church leaders, and mission and ministry partners in our areas
15 of involvement.
 - 16 b. Create a high quality, high definition, state-of-the-art IT/AV system in our
17 meeting, training, and conference rooms to facilitate trainings, meetings,
18 presentations, and community functions.
 - 19 c. Create and enhance meeting spaces in which our Conference Center staff,
20 volunteers, governance groups, and various ministry partners can interact in
21 real-time with each other from satellite locations and with partners all over the
22 US and internationally.
 - 23 d. Create and deliver WEB-based streaming audio and video experiences to reach
24 and draw folks in from substantial driving and flying distances for events,
25 classes, and meetings.
- 26 4. **We will gather a Communications Resource Team:**
 - 27 a. To research the costs and equipment needed to develop such a system as well
28 as the possibilities for cooperating with other agencies or denominations that
29 may already have a system in place or that would be interested in sharing in the
30 development of such a system.
 - 31 b. To make proposals for the potential Communications System to the Mission
32 Council

33 **D. The New Dimensions Implementation Team will also work on the development,**
34 **expansion and/or maintenance of the following projects as integral parts of the**
35 **Maine Conference experience:**

36 **New Dimensions Implementation Team Project 1: Clergy Peer Groups**

37 We will build and expand upon the Communities of Practice and Pastoral
38 Excellence programs.

39 **New Dimensions Implementation Team Project 2: Conference and/or**
40 **Association/Cluster Mission Projects:**

41 We will encourage congregations to partner in various mission opportunities.

42 **New Dimensions Implementation Team Project 3: A Conference-wide**
43 **approach to assessing and supporting churches in understanding their context.**

1 We will explore, analyze and share and seek to understand together cultural,
2 economic, and demographic data, changes and trends, to help local churches,
3 associations and the conference understand the reality of communities in the
4 state, and the state as a whole.

5 We will recognize the wide range of challenges for Maine churches in the 21st
6 century, where some communities are experiencing population decline
7 (especially through economic forces) and others are experiencing growth, some
8 communities are essentially retirement communities and others have lots of
9 young families, etc.

10 We appreciate that we must understand our communities in order to minister
11 effectively and engage in meaningful outreach, while we also appreciate that our
12 call is to be faithful, and to share God's love and welcome, even when our
13 numbers are small.

14 **New Dimensions Implementation Team Project 4: An initiative to develop**
15 **new faith communities.**

- 16 a. Reconnect with the centrality of our mission to make new disciples.
17 b. Recognize the opportunities for the development of new faith communities
18 that will explore new ways of being church, new ways of engaging in mission
19 and ministry, and new opportunities for sharing resources and networking in
20 the growing areas in the State of Maine.

21 **CONCLUSION**

22 The following three motions were submitted to the Conference for consideration and
23 adoption at the annual meeting on October 18, 2014.

- 24 1. On behalf of the Coordinating Council I (we) move the adoption of the Moving
25 Forward Together Strategic Plan as the operative mode of governance, staffing and
26 programming on an experimental basis until the Annual Meeting of the Maine
27 Conference in 2017.
- 28 2. On behalf of the Coordinating Council I (we) move that \$250,000 be made available
29 from the money remaining in the Rockcraft Fund for the support of the new staffing
30 initiative as described in the Moving Forward Together Strategic Plan.
- 31 3. On behalf of the Coordinating Council I (we) move that with the adoption of the
32 Moving Forward Together Strategic Plan and the permission of the Conference to
33 use money from the Rockcraft Funds to support the Plan, the Finance Committee
34 adapt the Conference Budget for 2015 accordingly for the presentation and vote of
35 the Conference.

36 The Conference overwhelmingly passed these three motions.

37
38 Respectfully submitted,

39
40 The Coordinating Council
41 Maine Conference United Church of Christ