

Dear friends in the Maine Conference,

In the time since our annual meeting in November of 2019, the Board of Directors has continued to work towards the commitments that we spelled out in our time together to address the issues identified in the [report](#) of the Rev. Dr. Larry Peers and in the various reports of the Conference Minister and the Board at Annual Meeting 88. The board wishes to assure you of its commitment and responsibility to

In the last months, the Board has worked towards the following areas of improvement.

Supporting improved responsiveness of Search and Call ministry:

- Funded and helped to create job descriptions for Church Support Consultants: to provide contract ministry positions to supplement Conference Staff in this essential work with our congregations in time of leadership transitions. These openings should post in the coming month.

Improving staffing structure, support, policy and evaluation:

- Contracted with *KMA Human Resources Consulting* for a thorough analysis of our current staffing and job descriptions, and support for the Board and its Personnel Committee in the essential work of creating a full and effective staffing pattern for a new day in ministry. Initial interviews with existing staff have already been completed. Additionally, *KMA* will work with our Personnel Committee to revise and renew Employee Handbook and other policies and best practices. We have also retained the services of *Seven Tree Solutions* for necessary facilitated conversations that might assist working relationships between staff.
- Established a team of Board Members to implement an evaluation for our Conference Minister, including feedback from board, staff, clergy, churches, and association officers. This work will be presented to the board and concluded no later than May 2020.

Improving connection and opportunities for relationship between conference leadership and our members:

- Continued to create opportunities for conversation with board members and various settings of the Conference. (Nov. 7th – Falmouth, Feb. 8th – Bethel, March 12th – Bangor). Stay tuned for more Conference Conversations in the future...

Continuing to chart a course forward for the health and improvement of our mutual ministry:

- Met in retreat in January to review our commitments as a body, and to create board objectives for the year ahead. They are reproduced for you on the reverse page.
- Continued to support new and existing ministries within the Maine Conference through the work of our committees, resource teams, and staff.

Finally, we mark with sadness—but also with thanksgiving for what has been—the resignation of our Associate Conference Minister, The Rev. Darren Morgan. Over 12 years, Darren has provided faithful and meaningful service to our conference and its congregations. We owe him our gratitude and prayers for the future thriving of his ministry and walk in Christ. Stay tuned for an opportunity to gather with, bless, and give thanks for Rev. Morgan and his service with us all.

As our Conference Minister, The Rev. Deborah Blood, spells out in [her letter](#) accompanying Darren's, we will be hiring interim or bridge staff to be in place and assure continuous ministry and service as Darren departs. This change obviously impacts the important work of improving and revising our staffing pattern, and as the board does this work, there may be adaptations to how ministry responsibilities are designated to make our ministry to the conference more effective and responsive.

As always, we give thanks to you for your support and spirit in our work together as the Maine Conference, United Church of Christ, and for the chance to serve Christ's church with you.

Blessings,

The Board of Directors 2019-2020

2020 Board Objectives

- **Revise and renew Human Resources Program** including:
 - Revised and clarified Employee Job Descriptions
 - Clear goals / objectives and evaluation processes and cycles for all employees, including the Conference Minister.
 - Revised employee policy handbook.
- **Support staff in increased responsiveness and adaptation of Search and Call** through staffing and resources.
- With the Pilgrim Lodge Leadership Team and Outdoor Ministry Director, **create milestones and timeline Pilgrim Lodge in line with Sustainability Plan.**
- Build up our connection between congregations, and congregations and the conference, focusing particularly on **Access, Resources, Communications. (ARC)**
- **Build a Development and Stewardship team** to identify and nurture new and continued models for funding and sharing gratitude in the Conference.
- Continue to develop and support programs and resources to **equip faith communities with tools needed for ministry in a changing world.**