

June 15, 2020

Dear friends in Christ, and in the Maine Conference,

We write with significant news in the life of our Conference. After a time of mutual conversation and discernment, the Board of Directors and our Conference Minister, The Rev. Deborah Blood, have agreed that our ministry together is just about complete. Although our current by-laws call for an indefinite term for the Conference Minister, our original Agreement called for a 5-year renewable term of service. It is our view that this season of our ministry together has reached its end, and that God is calling the Conference and Rev. Blood into the next seasons of our respective ministries.

These 5 years have seen substantial change and stress in our Conference: in our common life together, and in the ministries of our congregations. Both the Board and Rev. Blood acknowledge those strains, and our parts in them, and also give thanks to God for the important ministry that we have undertaken together. We will part with mutual respect, with blessings offered, and with confidence that seeds planted during this time will yet bear fruits of the Spirit.

Rev. Blood will continue to serve through August 31, 2020 and will attend to creating a smooth transition to a Transitional Conference Minister, who will begin ministry on September 1st.

In order to make that transition successful, the Board has been hard at work, and has created a Transitional Conference Minister Search Committee constituted of our Executive Committee and a member of the Personnel Committee. The Transitional Search Committee has moved quickly in reviewing and interviewing candidates. In this work, we are staffed and supported by The Rev. Lee Albertson, Conference Minister Search Coordinator for the United Church of Christ. We have already benefitted from Rev. Albertson's deep experience and connections in the wider church in identifying and connecting us with skilled candidates for the work to come.

The Board has clarified that we will seek a Transitional Conference Minister to do important work of healing, listening, and supporting among us as we prepare to search for, discern, and call the next settled Conference Minister of the Maine Conference over the course of the next 18-24 months, and that the Transitional Conference Minister will not be eligible to be a candidate for that settled position. The Board expects to make an announcement introducing our Transitional Conference Minister in the coming weeks. As we approach the fall, we will create ways for you to meet, welcome, and connect with this person as we join in ministry together.

We ask, above all, that we persist in prayer: for one another in the Conference, for Rev. Blood, and for the leader who will come to journey with us in the season ahead. In the weeks to come, we will announce a time in August to gather remotely, worship together, and then bless and release Rev. Blood from her covenant of care for our Conference with thanksgiving and grace.

May the peace of Christ be with us in these days, and all those to come.

Blessings,



The Rev. Geoff Parker
Chair - Board of Directors, Maine Conference



The Rev. Deborah Blood
Conference Minister, Maine Conference