



October 3, 2025

“Here I am, Lord...It is I, Lord. I can hear You calling in the night...”

Those lyrics spoke to me as I began my term as Chair. As a lay person, a single mom of two adult men, an active supporter of youth and adult mental health, an educator, and a very proud member of the Maine Conference, United Church of Christ, I was nervous. Maybe even a bit overwhelmed and worried. I am very aware that I am the first female layperson to hold this position. Additionally, there hasn't been a layperson as Chair in over 20 years. Still, I jumped into this seat ready to help guide and move our ship forward. I heard God's call to me and followed Him joyously.

Over the last 12 months, the Board and I have done some truly uplifting and exciting work. We have started the process of brainstorming our vision and mission statements. We created (with the expertise, videography, and editing skills of Ian Lynch) a video message on the importance of and explanation of Basic Support (OCWM to some, Our Churches Wider Mission to all). We have begun visiting churches to make ourselves more accessible to you, the members and delegates of the Maine Conference, UCC.

One project I am especially proud of is the decision the Board of Directors made to move the Conference Offices to the Farmhouse at the entrance of Pilgrim Lodge. When I joined the Board six years ago, I asked about our reason for paying rent instead of owning property. Many others over the years had asked the same questions. After some lively conversations and considerable deliberation, a committee was established to explore the possibility of renovating the Farmhouse or relocating our offices. The Exploratory Committee worked tirelessly, comparing rental costs to building costs, looking at and drawing plans, measuring offices, and meeting many times via Zoom as well as in person. In April 2025, the decision to start a building/renovation project was made by a unanimous vote of the Board. The “Farmhouse Project” is very exciting. We hope to celebrate its completion in October 2026.

It has not been an easy year for maintaining our volunteer members on the Board or on our Committees. We said farewell to Treasurer John Thompson and then welcomed a new Treasurer, Jerrod Oltman. There are still many opportunities to serve on a committee or the Board. I wholeheartedly thank the Governance Committee for their work, which began right after Annual Meeting 2025 and, to be honest, might still be ongoing as you read this. They have done and continue to do a fantastic job recruiting our most vital entity—VOLUNTEERS! THANK YOU!

In June, I was honored to join Marisa in welcoming the First Congregational Church of Scarborough into the Maine Conference, UCC. Then, after a full week at Elementary Adventures at Pilgrim Lodge, I joined the Maine delegation at General Synod.

I want to take a moment to thank my fellow Board of Directors—Vice Chair Brad Hirst, Treasurer Jerrod Oltman, Clerk Sue Burgess, Annual Meeting Committee Chair Bill Bliss, Oscar Wallace, Beth Haynes, Ian Lynch, John Hogue, Bob Evans, Pam Burnham, and Carol Kerr. THANK YOU

all for your dedication to our work as a Board, for your love of God, Church, and the Conference, and for being such a wonderful, cohesive group of people. I am so blessed to know you and to spend time with you.

Finally, to you—the reason I do this work—the good people of the Maine Conference, UCC, thank you. For your support, your commitment, your time, and your love. You are all the reason I agreed to serve as Chair—to help our conference look and move into our future. To not only hear God's call but to live into it with love, hope, and courage. I am so excited to see where the next year takes us all. I hear a call... to a bright future.

In Love and Peace,
Stephenie Michaud, Chair