

The Maine UCC Personnel Committee met monthly with the Conference Minister (CM), Marisa Laviola. Our primary role is to serve as a regular sounding board for the CM on various issues, including staffing and resource challenges, conflict resolution, providing historical context to the Maine Conference, and ensuring the CM receives adequate time for rest and renewal.

While the Personnel Committee does not oversee any staff except the CM, we noted how much time and energy are spent on staff transition, hiring, and bringing in new staff. Rebuilding a staff in the wake of retirements can easily go unnoticed behind the scenes, but it is one of the most essential processes to a healthy Maine Conference. We sense a turning point where Rev. Laviola can shift time into other essential priorities as new staff continue to absorb and embrace their job responsibilities

We spent a great deal of time designing, implementing, and reflecting on a new evaluation process. The previous year was the first evaluation for the CM position in several years. We started simple, beginning with Rev. Laviola's self-evaluation and an extended conversation about needs and priorities. This year, we expanded the process and asked for written feedback on the CM from all staff, most of the Committee on Ministry chairs, and several pastors who had worked with Rev. Laviola. The surveys we received contained many thoughtful insights into how people are experiencing life in the Maine Conference, as well as Rev. Laviola's role with their work. We were encouraged by both the support and challenges raised, as well as the CM's open engagement with feedback. These reflections have led to new initiatives to engage more of the clergy in the Conference.

We have been refining our process based on last year's experience, and we will launch a new evaluation soon after the Annual Meeting, which will include all staff and a different group of Conference leaders. We hope to continue strengthening the Maine Conference's ability to engage in meaningful conversations and create helpful feedback loops.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Todd Weir, Chair
Pastor, Boothbay Harbor Congregational Church, UCC