

## Report on Special Meeting of the Gathered Conference – August 4, 2018

On Saturday, August 4, nearly 150 official delegates and authorized clergy, representing 65 churches, gathered at the Laconia Congregational Church, UCC. Despite the pouring rain, the energy level was high as we celebrated a worship service full of welcome and heard words for the future from the Reverend Gordon M Rankin, the search committee's recommendation for the New Hampshire Conference Minister. Gordon delivered a lively sermon including some insights into his past, such as being the son of a minister and living for a time in Hampton! As Gordon indicated, while he is currently serving as the Transitional Conference Minister and living in South Dakota, he feels like returning to New Hampshire is "coming home"! Gordon highlighted his work with the Lakota tribe churches initiating dialog and developing relationships where there had never been any before. A central theme of his message underscored local churches being the focal point for ministry, with the conference office providing the resources to help each local church succeed in being the best they can be. He also emphasized that each church should be mindful of their current environment or context and needs to adapt, change and take risks! Then realize that if what is tried doesn't work, it is okay to move on to try something different.

After the service, Gordon and his family left the sanctuary and we convened our special business meeting. Neal Cass of the First Congregational Church of Hancock, UCC, and chair of the Conference Minister Search Committee introduced and thanked the other members of the Search Committee: KellyAnn Donahue, Paulo Franca, Heidi Heath, Eric Jackson, Stacey Kullgren, Ken McGarry, Evelyn Robbennolt-Jones, Laura Sevigny and Glenn Vodra. After describing their process, he provided additional background, details and insights gleaned by the committee through their discernment and meetings with the candidates. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the committee unanimously recommended Gordon to be the next called Conference Minister. A few questions were asked and the vote taken. It was unanimous to call the Reverend Gordon Rankin as the New Hampshire Conference Minister!

Thanks were extended to the search committee members and the Conference staff who helped with the logistics of the process details of the various gatherings and the meeting was adjourned.

Gordon, his wife Paige, and daughter Emily returned to thunderous applause and an impromptu singing of "Amen".

Gordon added a few words with additional thanks to the Laconia church, the team who arranged the meet and greets, and all the folks present.

As the letter of call was signed, everyone moved to the church hall for refreshments and a celebration!

I would like to add my thanks to the team that arranged the many details for Gordon's time in New Hampshire, including the meet and greets. Led by Carolyn Keilig, that team included Norma Brettell, Paul Gile, Dale Hemen, Stacey Kullgren, Laura Sevigny and Ann Desrochers. Additionally many thanks to the Gorham Congregational Church, the United Church of Christ in Keene and the Conference Office and for so graciously hosting the meet and greet gatherings.

Finally, many thanks go to Charles Buck and Richard Slater who have lead us so smoothly through this time of transition!

So, as we move through these last few months of transition, please share your thanks to those who have moved us forward, by giving of their time, using their gifts and dedicating their energy in completing the hard work needed to find and call a new Conference Minister. We anticipate, with great joy, the start of this next chapter in the life of the New Hampshire Conference.

We look forward to Gordon's arrival around October 10<sup>th</sup> and are excited that he will be joining us for our Annual Meeting on October 20<sup>th</sup>.

With grateful thanks for our many blessings,

Marcie Miller, Conference President