

Annual Report for Annual Meeting of the Maine Conference. ACM, Rev. John Fiscus

“Whatayataalk?

Ya can talk, ya can talk, ya can bicker ya can talk,

Ya can bicker, bicker bicker ya can talk all ya want

But is different than it was.

No it ain't, no it ain't, but ya gotta know the territory.”

Meredith Wilson’s the Music Man has long been a favorite of mine. Its music is catchy and the main plot line is about an outsider whose dubious intentions are transformed through love. Although I come to Maine as an outsider my intentions are far from dubious. It has always been my intention to bring hope, kindness, and my skills into the conference to love and hold prayerfully the churches and pastors here. By the time of the annual meeting I will have completed two months of my new journey. My one observation is that in Maine, you gotta know the territory. Over these two months I have been present in Board meetings, Committee on Ministry meetings, and had conversations with dozens of our churches and pastors. I am slowly learning the territory and like Harold Hill falling in love.

My portfolio includes search and call, Communities of Practice, and staff liaison to multiple conference committees. As of my writing this there are thirteen churches in active search through the denomination portal, and thirty-six churches in transition. Communities of practice are submitting evaluations and will be reforming soon. The Anti-racism team, Social Action committee and Resourcing the church team are all active and doing amazing work on behalf of the conference and our churches. These are all part of the territory I am coming to know and love.

My favorite way of learning and listening is through being present in worship. I have been in Winthrop, Waterville, Freeport, and Brewer so far and loved all the kind and engaged people there. I now shift into preaching mode. My preaching calendar is nearly full but I have all of 2025 open as a clean slate. On that note I am also not opposed to a good Sunday morning drive. Don’t think of your setting as remote think of it as part of the territory I need to know, Worshiping with the good people of Maine and offering the good news of the Gospels feeds my spirit and deepens the love that I already have for this beautiful place called Maine. I look forward every day to deeply learning the territory