**Maine District Church of the Nazarene Profile**

Our district leadership, pastors, and lay people have met and prayed together, seeking God’s will and guidance for this process of searching for and identifying our next district superintendent for the Maine District.

The Maine District has been in existence since 1960 when it separated from the New England District.  The district encompasses the entire State of Maine, known for its rocky coastline, Acadia National Park, Baxter State Park where one finds Mt. Katahdin, the terminus of the Appalachian Trail; its many lakes, ski mountains, and beautiful seasons.  The Maine District consists of 42 organized churches, approximately 2,700 members, and over 80 licensed and ordained clergy.

The State of Maine is home to more than 1.3 million people, spread across 16 counties and 35,400 square miles.  By far, the majority of its population is in the southern portion of the state.  Maine is home to Bowdoin College, Bates College, Colby College, the University of Maine System, as well as several other academic institutions throughout the state. Some of Maine’s major industries include fishing, lumber and tourism which help shape the population.

**Strengths of the Maine District**

One of the greatest strengths of the Maine District is the diversity of its people, not particularly in ethnicity, but in education, socio-economics, and demographics.  We are blessed with a solid, strong team of pastors and lay leaders who love each other and are unified in our mission of bringing the Word of God and the gospel of Jesus Christ to the mission field called Maine. Thankfully, the District is blessed with strong financial resources which contribute to the ministries of Maine. These things all demonstrate that the Maine District is blessed with significant resources. Along with these resources, this corner of God’s creation also offers an unmatched quality of life.

It is the perspective of the District that Maine has a strong NMI, active in Work & Witness, both globally and locally, an active NYI which provides many opportunities to unite our youth through events such as Teen Camp, Snow Camp, and NYC; and an SDMI ministry which holds its annual camps for children and other events throughout the year. Overall, within the Maine District there is a strong commitment to support the Nazarene denomination and its doctrine, supporting it financially through the World Evangelism Fund and other allocations.  The District also shows support for its regional educational institution, Eastern Nazarene College, both financially and by sending students. The Maine District has a district-wide compassionate ministry center and is on mission together to meet needs in our communities.

**Challenges Faced by the Maine District**

While the Maine District is fortunate to have these strengths, we also face some challenges, and some are found within the strengths.  Geographically, we are a large state with a great deal of distance between churches, which can make it difficult to bring pastors and congregations together, can influence district communication, cause disconnect, or make it difficult to facilitate community.  The diversity of cultures within our state can pose challenges.  Most of Maine’s churches are small with aging congregations.  Indeed, Maine has one of the oldest populations in the U.S., a fact which is reflected in our communities and churches. Many of our churches’ buildings and facilities are in need of maintenance.  Most of our pastors are bi-vocational.  We, however, recognize that the challenges of an aging population and an inclination to attempt to find answers in the past or to “turn back time” are also opportunities to raise up new leaders with new methods and perspectives. This requires an openness to include all people and to help each one reach his or her full leadership and ministerial potential through the person of Jesus Christ.  It has been said that New England in general, and Maine in particular, is the most secular region of our country.  While this is indeed a challenge, it also presents a rich harvest field.

As a result of the pandemic, the District of Maine is experiencing a notable surge of people moving into the state.  We need to develop a unified approach that incorporates a variety of needs – from the young professionals working remotely to the outdoor enthusiasts to the new retirees – an approach that is genuine, effective and organic.

**Moving Forward**

As we look forward, there is excitement and expectation. Our hope is established in Jesus Christ and we move into the days ahead with certainty for the way in which the Maine District can prayerfully serve God's Kingdom.  Our pastors and lay people share a deep desire for revival, both individually and corporately; a desire to renew and refresh our existing congregations who can then reproduce by sharing the Good News and bringing hope to those currently outside of the church.