

Associate Conference Minister for Pastoral Transitions:
Annual Report 2025

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Hi, Everyone!!!! It's been a whole year, already?? That's, for lack of better words, WILD.

My report will cover the following topics: Personal Highlights, Experiences of Wholeness, What "Keeps Me Up At Night", METAMORPHOSIS, Spirit Sightings, and My Prayer In This Moment.

Personal Highlights:

- The hiring of Rev. Dr. JJ Flag as the Relationship Manager to ILUCC Churches in Transition. He serves as support staff for the Lilly Grant while I serve as Director in addition to my ACM duties. He is **AAH-MMAZZIINNNGGG!!!** (*Jan 2025*)
- Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference (*February 2025*)
- Presentation of Metamorphosis to IL Conf Council @ Pilgrim Park (*April 2025*)
- Brush Harbor: Clergy Retreat for Pastors of Color @ Tower Hill Camp (Co-founded by Rev. Michelle Hughes) (*October 2025*)
- Joining the Franklinton Center at Bricks Board of Trustees (*October 2025*)

Experiences of Wholeness?

My surprises in ministry never cease to amaze. I am always caught off guard at how our Conference staff job descriptions are all so detailed and yet at the same time nowhere near comprehensive of all we do and all we are called to be. I am at my most whole when I am at my most vulnerable with the Ministry Leadership Team. It is during the times of misunderstanding, confusion, and the seeking of answers that I am consistently met

with grace, collaborative thinking, and affirmation for who I am – just as I am. It is within the team, that even when we show up with “missing pieces”, we come together and all equal 100%.

What “keeps me up at night”?

In terms of our churches: the vast urgency of “now” ...correction, the vast urgency of “yesterday” is of constant concern. The anxiety is palpable as churches reach out to us to speak about their vibrant past, their unnamed current relativity, and the work necessary to script their own future. My attempt at part of a “solution” (...*she said sarcastically. Knowing full well that for every solution there is, indeed, a problem waiting to be found...*) is METAMORPHOSIS! Metamorphosis, while my brainchild, is a completely collaborative effort that could NOT be done alone. Should NOT be done alone. Will NOT be done alone. (*Did I mention how AH-MAZING Rev. JJ is, yet!?*)

What is METAMORPHOSIS?

The program created for churches who are in “transition” (per the guidelines of the Lilly Grant for ILUCC) is defined as any church in the ILUCC that currently sits between the crossroads of the announcement of a Pastor leaving and the installation of a new Pastor.

Per the dictionary: **METAMORPHOSIS** - (n) - a change of physical form, structure, or substance especially by supernatural means; a striking alteration in appearance, character, or circumstances.

What is METAMORPHOSIS as it pertains to ILUCC Churches in transition?

TL;DR: An innovative way at approaching Search & Call. Taking local churches beyond just filling out a profile and praying for a Pastor. Instead, inviting them to take a deeper look within and find out how God is still speaking to them in this very moment.

Longer Response: In our journey through life, we find ourselves constantly **remembering** the moments that have shaped us; each memory acts as a thread woven into the fabric of our existence. As we reflect, it becomes essential to engage in **reassessing** our past choices and experiences, ensuring that we learn from our successes and failures alike. Ultimately, this leads us to a powerful transformation: **reimagining** the future with renewed vision and purpose, allowing us to dream bigger and pursue new possibilities with unyielding passion.

That being said, through Metamorphosis, the Pastoral Transitions team will be inviting our churches in transition to take holy risks and discover innovative pathways to commune with the Divine in new and profound ways.

Wanna know more?? Stop by our table at Annual Celebration, send an email to us at PastoralTransitions@ilucc.org, or check your inboxes for the Faithful Fridays newsletter starting at the first of the new year for more information!

Spirit Sightings?

I see Spirit every day! I most recently saw it when I was not only approved for medical leave to have a major surgery but repeatedly told to stop working when I would log on to meetings and respond to emails prior to my medical release date. I have seen and continue to see it when I encounter smiling faces on ZOOM that join me for 3-hour (minimum) meetings weekly. I feel it when I am having thoughtful dialog with local church leaders on the unseen possibilities of tomorrow. I feel it when I am stopped short of making an apology for doing the best I can – but rather told that I am enough and reminded that within covenant grace freely abounds. I encounter it when I am able to witness all of the Conference staff name that there are not enough hours in the day but still be pushed to care for themselves because who they are (not just what they do) really and truly matters. I cannot explain enough how only Spirit is responsible for the meeting and infusing of energies dedicated to seeing the Church continue to evolve and shine its brightest reflecting God's glory. On days when nothing else makes sense – it is always the Spirit that keeps us going.

What Is My Prayer in This Moment?

My prayer is that we, as the ILUCC, and as people who are responsible for the care of one another in this world – will work harder to learn and routinely speak each other's language. To dwell in the discomfort longer than we may desire knowing that God will continue to cover and surround us through the pruning and shearing. I pray that the hope I've witnessed in the fierce determination of people to not die in the many ways that death is possible – endlessly reverberates and penetrates the hearts and minds of those who believe that the best has still not been witnessed. I pray for a collective faith that allows room for personal moments of doubt – knowing that doubt is necessary in order to truly believe. Also, for a shapeshifting faith that remains strong enough to weather the daily storms in which it finds itself resulting in a more powerful presence of peace and security. My prayer is for covenant to reach beyond paper and historically approved words – and to become tangible through deliberate acts of relationship and intimacy development. Essentially, to affirm the divinity of humanity in one another by seeing God's reflection and proclaiming outwardly that, "It. Is. Good." Amen.