



2023

STRATEGIC UPDATE

IMN Mission & Vision

Mission

The Interim Ministry Network strengthens the spiritual and organizational health of faith communities by equipping and supporting those who lead during times of transition.

Vision

As a result of work of the Interim Ministry Network, faith communities are stronger because they have effectively managed transition and are better able to share with their members and society God's love that brings hope and joy in times of change.

Core Values

- Providing praxis-oriented education and training for clergy and lay leaders.
- Providing learning experiences that reflect professionalism, excellence, and innovation.
- Seeking and affirming inclusivity in living out the mission.
- Strengthening faith communities.
- Building healthy relationships among colleagues and within faith communities.

2023 Strategic Priorities

- **Mission Alignment** – Do not attempt to be everything to everybody
- **Thought Leader** – Become an acknowledged voice on transitional leadership
- **Leadership Support** – Build a unique skill set for leaders in transitional settings beyond intentional interim ministry
- **Curriculum Update** – Revise with current circumstances in view
- **Faculty** – Increase size and diversity through apprentice program
- **Communication** – Emphasize the value and impact of IMN and its trained members on congregations in transition
- **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice, Belonging (DEIJB)** – Incorporate this commitment throughout our organization
- **Trauma Informed Ministry** – Broaden this focus
- **Resources** – Explore how these can be used in a broader range of transitional contexts
- **Judicatories** – Enlarge and deepen judicatory connections
- **Global Connections** – Embrace more fully
- **Membership** – Expand into more diverse environments
- **Endowment** – Implement for more solid financial footing
- **IMN's Transition** – Practice what we teach in our own organizational transition

From Rev. Jenny Stephens, Board President

In its 43rd year, IMN has ample evidence that the world needs what we have to offer now more than ever. Uncertainties and divisiveness remain pervasive, and pressures on local faith communities and judicatories continue to mount as a widespread, deep change affects us all. In the midst of this, IMN has remained focused on its mission and true to its calling to equip and support those who lead during times of transition. We have embraced our own organizational transition with the arrival of our new Executive Director, Rev. Dr. Jonathan New.



Jonathan brings passion and commitment to the mission and vision of IMN and has garnered the respect of staff and volunteers alike.

This has been a year of forming and nurturing relationships – new and old. A year-long conversation with **Emotional Intelligence Human Relations (EQHR) Center** leaders resulted in IMN's receipt of legacy gifts from the Center as it dissolves corporately. (See below.) We will continue working with former EQHR Center trainers, exploring how IMN might bring emotional intelligence training more fully into IMN's life and mission. We've refreshed conversations with our **Australian interim trainers**, tending a three decades-long relationship, and rethought our Annual Conference schedule to allow for live engagement of Australian attendees. Quarterly **judicatory conversations** this year have deepened our understanding of leadership needs, as well as the ways transitional leadership may be delivered. (See below.) Frequent **Chat With Us** conversations hosted by IMN Board members and a series of **Town Hall Meetings** have helped us hear the concerns of IMN members and how we might respond to support them even better.

Acting on initiatives coming from the 3Q task group report, IMN continues to live its values. The strategic priority of helping IMN express its **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice, and Belonging (DEIJB)** throughout our organizational life was fostered through the creation of a DEIJB Advisory Group, and the development and circulation of a request for proposal that would call a consultant/facilitator to assist us with this work in 2024. (See below.) IMN leaders are also committed to ensuring that we're doing all that's possible with **staff compensation equity**. Information gathering was begun this year with the assistance of an HR consultant, helping us better understand where IMN with compensation in relation to organizations of similar type and size.

Our 2023 Annual Conference theme – The New Brings Hope – tells a story of where IMN is and where it is headed. We can look on what has passed with appreciation, but we know we can't go back to former days. There is a new context for religion and faith communities, and a significant need for transitional leaders to help congregations adapt well and assist with the birthing of emergent forms. IMN will remain alive to the work of God's spirit in the world, helping transitional leaders serve congregations well for their faithful response. As I leave the role of President, I am grateful for the team of staff and volunteers committed to IMN's mission and vision.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jenny Stephens". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

From Rev. Jonathan New, Executive Director



This has been a year of hitting the ground running, steep learning curves, and big shoes to fill. It's also been one of the richest professional experiences of my life, as my appreciation for IMN and its leaders has continued to grow. I'm blessed to wake up every day knowing that there's important work to do and dedicated staff and volunteers to join with in the effort. God is good!

As Dean of the IMN Faculty, I've had the strategic priority of ensuring that our core training remains responsive to current needs in view. Faculty members have been re-engaged in the **Fundamentals of Transitional Ministry (FTM) curriculum revision** and work has begun, with a target date of mid 2024 for completion. (See below.) The revision is gaining insights from the successful experiment of a 2022-2023 **Unitarian Universalist FTM pilot** that offered our training with new content and an alternative structure. (See below.) With the last revision haven taken place several years ago, the new curriculum is apt to look quite a bit different. The composition of our faculty is also shifting as we've deepened our faculty bench through the **apprenticeship program**. One new faculty member has been added this year, with six more in the pipeline.

Part of my work this year has been helping IMN claim its place as an **acknowledged thought leader** on transitional leadership. I've been listening carefully to IMN members, judicatory leaders, and congregational researchers. The current context is one of a higher proportion of smaller and lower capacity congregations, uncertainty about the future of faith communities and religion, increased divisions and a deep sense of loss, a need for higher cultural intelligence, and an acute shortage of transitional leaders. Yet we're also learning about other ways transitional leadership is or might be delivered beyond the in-place, years-long, between-clergy-leaders model. I'll be assuring that IMN continues to be aware of these circumstances and that it considers how its trainings and programs will take them into full consideration.

Many other developments this year are a faithful expression of how we're trying to live into our missionally-related strategic priorities. Our staff is working on improvements to the IMN member portal to be unveiled in late 2023 that should help members stay better connected with IMN, each other, and prospective employers. An Endowment Committee will begin helping IMN become more financially secure. And our Annual Conference Team will begin its work early to plan our 2024 Conference as well as an in-person Annual Conference in 2025. In small ways and large, IMN is seeking to be more vibrant and resilient in the expression of its mission.

I look forward to continuing to wake up each day with more to learn, more to do, and more things to consider as IMN seeks to equip and support transitional leaders and the congregations they serve in these uncertain days.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jonathan New". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

IMN Snapshot

MEMBERSHIP

Our diverse backgrounds strengthen our network and broaden our field of vision.

- **806** Individual Memberships
- **24** Judicatory Offices
- **11** Countries Represented
- **40** Denominations (plus non-denominational congregations)

TRANSITIONAL MINISTRY TRAINING

Two main courses of study form our core curriculum: Fundamentals of Transitional Leadership (FTM) – The Work of the Leader (FTML), The Work of the Congregation (FTMC), plus fieldwork – and Effective Transitional Leadership (ETL).

- **269** Individuals Participated
- **19** Classes Held
- **17** Faculty Members

CONTINUING EDUCATION

A wide range of webinars and seminar topics, often expanding FTM coursework, are created and led by IMN members.

- **189** Individuals Participated
- **22** Programs Offered
- **54** Program Hours
- **20** Presenters

SUPPORTING EVENTS

We support each other through Virtual Cafés, monthly Virtual Support Groups, weekly Friday meetups, Chat With Us sessions, Town Hall conversations, and judicatory gatherings.

- **248** Individuals Participated
- **208** Event Sessions
- **6** Types of Events
- **146** Volunteer Hours

Equipping & Supporting Transitional Leaders in 2023

In 2023, IMN pursued its mission to strengthen the spiritual and organizational health of faith communities by equipping and supporting those who lead during times of transition through:

Equipping Transitional Leaders

- **Fundamentals of Transitional Ministry (FTM)** – A core course, divided into the 4-day Work of the Leader (FTML) and the 6-day Work of the Congregation (FTMC) sessions, plus fieldwork, reaching about 225 individuals in 2023. FTML was offered 10 times and FTMC was offered 5 times in 2023, and as a judicatory contracted event.
- **Effective Transitional Leadership (ETL)** – A two-day introductory and refresher course, based on FTM content. Offered three times in 2023, including as a judicatory contracted event.
- **Understanding and Working With Conflict** – A two-day seminar, offered twice in 2023, that goes deeper on this crucial topic, providing participants with training in how to manage and work constructively with conflict on the congregational setting.
- **Webinars** – 90-minute topic-driven learning opportunities. In 2023 we offered 21 webinars on topics such as “Using a Time of Transition to Review and Update Governance Documents” and “Can We Talk? Closing, Merging, Right-Sizing.”
- **Virtual Cafés** – 90-minute topic-driven conversations. In 2023 we offered 10 Cafés on topics such as “Congregations Behaving Badly” and “Ministry During and After Trauma.”
- **Annual Conference** – An education-focused event with around 150 participants, featuring keynote speakers, workshops, and open conversations on transitional leadership issues.

Supporting Transitional Leaders

- **Virtual Support Groups (VSGs)** – Peer support communities of practice, free to members.
- **Chat With Us Conversations** – Weekly open conversations, open to anyone, hosted by members of IMN’s Board of Directors.
- **Town Hall Meetings** – Periodic gatherings to discuss the congregational context, the state of transitional leadership, and IMN’s life and mission.
- **Judicatory Conversations** – Quarterly gatherings with judicatory leaders and staff to discuss transitional leadership needs and how IMN is and might respond.
- **Communication** – Two weekly newsletters keep the IMN community informed about educational opportunities and upcoming events, invite research participation, and share ideas and perspectives about transitional leadership. Social media presence through Facebook, Instagram and Meta. Resources posted at imnedu.org, with a new member’s portal coming in late 2023.

Reports on Strategic Initiatives

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice, Belonging (DEIJB)

The IMN Board of Directors set as a 2023 strategic priority movement toward full embrace of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice, and Belonging (DEIJB) throughout IMN and its work, recognizing this is a long-term goal. A DEIJB Advisory Task Group convened in early 2023 recommended that consultant/facilitators be engaged. A request for proposals (RFP) was developed and forwarded to consultants suggested by the IMN community. We are seeking an assessment of where IMN is in its DEIJB commitment and a plan of action by April 2024 and first steps begun with IMN leaders by September 2024.

Emotional Intelligence Human Relations (EQHR) Center

IMN began exploratory conversations with the EQHR Center in early 2023 about a closer partnership. Not long into 2023, the Center's Board informed us that the EQHR Center would dissolve corporately. IMN agreed to become the legacy beneficiary of the Center's intellectual property, resources, contact lists, etc., to be transferred to IMN in late 2023. With EQHR Center trainers, IMN has been exploring how EQ training might fit into IMN's mission with transitional leaders. Two EQ-related workshops are being offered at our 2023 Annual Conference, led by former EQHR Center trainers.

“
This was one of the best continuing education events I have attended – definitely worthwhile and helpful to my ministry.
”

Judicatory Relationships

IMN leaders engaged judicatories in 2023 through quarterly gatherings. These meetings included consideration of the current context of congregational life, including lower capacity congregations, divisiveness, conflict, and grief. Judicatory staff shared needs for more intentional interims, refresher programs, cultural intelligence training, and assistance with amalgamations and closure. Alternative delivery of transitional leadership – interim consultants, teams, coaches – were also discussed. Support for all clergy leaders around transitional leadership was affirmed. These conversations have informed our curriculum revision, future programming, and new contracted trainings. Judicatory staff welcomed the news of judicatory resources to be added to our website, and that the new IMN member's portal will allow members to choose to allow their information to be made known to judicatory staff for possible employment opportunities.

Reports on Strategic Initiatives

Curriculum Revision

Revision of the Fundamentals of Transitional Ministry (FTM) training has been a top priority in 2023. Faculty members were asked to share their thoughts about the current curriculum, name areas of needed improvement, and name desired training outcomes. A Faculty Curriculum Revision Steering Group began work this fall. Full attention will be given to considering FTM content and sources, given the current context and new leadership insights. The Steering Group is clarifying who is taking FTM training and for what purposes, and is reassessing course structure, training timeframe, delivery mode(s), team teaching approaches, adult learning best practices, and the place of assessment. An FTM revision is targeted for mid-2024.

“The IMN Annual Conference is where my ‘tribe’ meets! I’m not referring to Episcopalians but to the Transition practitioner community.”

“I’ve been strengthened and enriched by the two IMN courses I took. I’m serving my second interim position and the benefits to the congregation have been immense.”

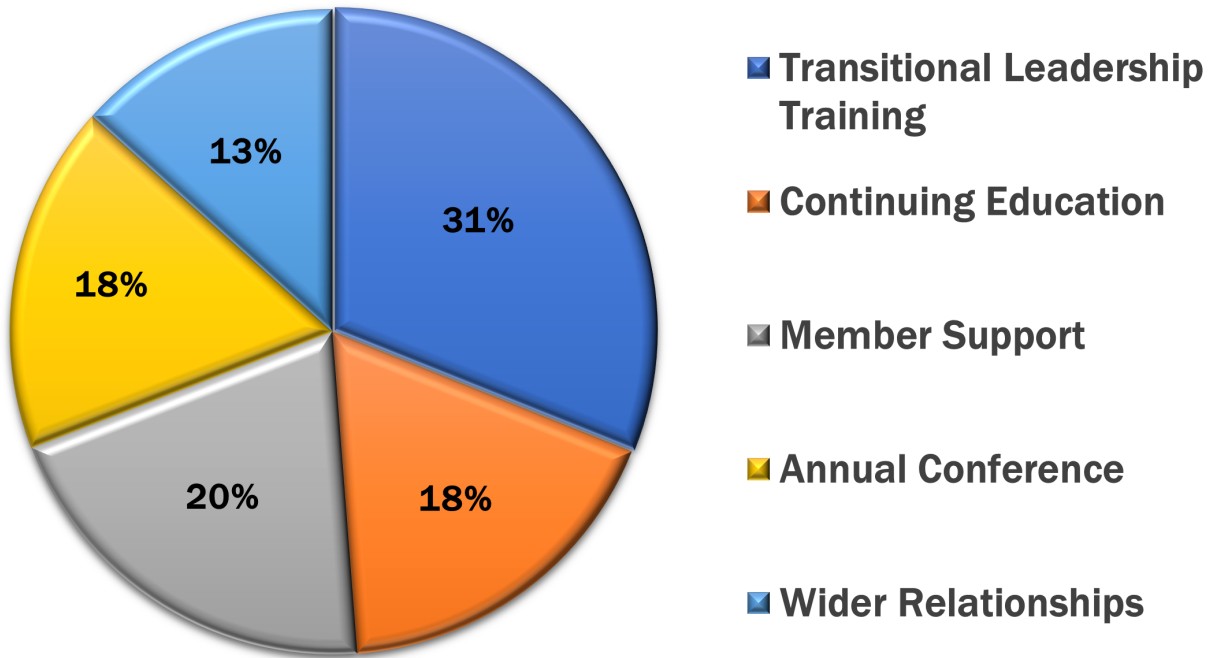
Unitarian Universalist FTM Pilot

Informing the curriculum revision process are learnings from an FTM pilot run for the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), taught over a nine-month period, 2022-2023, with 30 participants. The course integrated the usually separate Work of the Leader (FTML) and Work of the Congregation (FTMC) trainings. It also began with an in-person gathering in Montgomery, Alabama, to enhance participant connections and advance the UUA’s commitment to grounding leaders in anti-racism, anti-oppression, and social change. These elements were woven throughout the course and tied to transitional leadership approaches. Course sessions were interspersed with small groups where participants had support for their leadership that also emphasized a praxis model – learning, application, and reflection. UUA denominational leaders report that participants were more invested and involved, with several having transformative experiences. The course is being offered again for 2023-2024 with another group of 27 people.

IMN's 2023 Missional Investment

IMN's operating budget represents the annual investment it makes in living into its mission, vision, and values. Below is a pie chart that presents percentages of IMN's 2023 annual budget devoted to five essential missional areas. A table below it lists the total amounts that each of these missional areas include.

Percentage of 2023 Annual Expense by Missional Area



Missional Area	Investment	Percentage
Transitional Leadership Training	\$ 117,087	31%
Continuing Education	\$ 66,732	18%
Member Support	\$ 76,771	20%
Annual Conference	\$ 66,030	18%
Wider Relationships	\$ 50,322	13%
Total	\$ 376,943	100%



THE POWER OF YOUR 2023 TRANSITIONING FORWARD CONTRIBUTION

For over 40 years, IMN has prepared thousands of dedicated clergy and lay leaders to assist congregations in navigating times of change.

Your 2023 Transitioning Forward contribution will help IMN fund specific mission-focused and values-aligned efforts in the coming year that might otherwise be impossible:

- **Scholarships** – Expressing our commitment to making IMN’s training and the Annual Conference experience accessible to those who otherwise would be shut out.
- **Emotional Intelligence** – Looking to our future by exploring the EQHR Center legacy gifts and exploring how we might incorporate the essential capacity of emotional intelligence into our training and support of transitional leaders.
- **DEIJB** – Living our values as we seek to be the diverse, equitable, inclusive, and just organization in which all people can find belonging.
- **Mentoring** – Enhancing our support of transitional leaders through one-on-one guidance for leaders in this moment when managing congregational change is harder than ever.

Please consider making a financial gift through the Transitioning Forward Appeal and helping us expand IMN’s capacity to serve our members and the faith communities they lead.

Go to <https://imnedu.org/support/>
or scan this QR code



or mail a check to: Interim Ministry
Network at the address below.

IMN’S IMPACT

“The tools gained from the education by IMN and the way the facilitators modeled and shared, not only theory, but the experiential components of the materials was life-giving. As a leader, my work is more effective with the tools gained from IMN.”

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