

## Keynote and Workshop Descriptions and Presenter Biographies

### Monday, November 6, 2023

Plenary Keynote – *Singing New Songs*

2:00 – 4:30 pm ET / 5:00 – 7:00 am AEST (Tuesday, November 7)

#### **Singing A New Song**

##### **Thomas Conroy & Gage Purdy**

Singing a New Song means engaging with your worship community through music. In this keynote address, Gage Purdy and Thomas Conroy will offer insights and guidelines for healthy clergy/musician relationships as well as music resources and music-making solutions for transitional leaders to share with their congregations. How might you engage with a flourishing and active music ministry as a newcomer? In what ways might you lead or delegate the music-making in an interim scenario where there is a music-making void? What happens if the ministry of music depends solely on you as the interim minister? Yes, there will be singing, and we will also explore communal spoken word. We might even clap our hands and stomp our feet! In small group sessions, you will have an opportunity to share your concerns and unique experiences. In this opening plenary, together, we will begin to discover the sound of a joyful music ministry in your congregational context.

***Gage Purdy** is a Music Director with a passion for cultivating the emotional heart and beauty of choral music with 10+ years of organizing and motivating musicians. With a comprehensive background in varied forms of musical performance, education, and study, he aims to promote the enjoyment of choral music for both the musician and the audience. He developed a life-long love of research and learning to understand a composition in its purest form. He believes that music is a way by which to unite people in the human experience of being close and harmonious with one another; that music fundamentally shapes the mind and changes the heart to be more joyful, more passionate, and perhaps a little better equipped to find light in our world. Gage was born and raised in beautiful Sonoma County. He has sung in many groups and director of five choirs throughout the region (California Redwood Chorale, Occidental Community Choir, Manzanita Harmony, UUCSR, and the UUCSR Justice Choir).*

[gage.purdy@uusantarosa.org](mailto:gage.purdy@uusantarosa.org)

***Dr. Thomas Martin Conroy** studies theology in the Master of Divinity (2024) program at Virginia Theological Seminary. An Episcopalian, Tom had a strong Catholic upbringing comprising the Maronite-Lebanese and Roman rites. His current focus is on the Anglican Global Communion, ecumenism, inter-faith dialogue, and interim ministry training and family systems. He has sung professionally with the choir of St. Bartholomew's in New York, the San Francisco Symphony Chorus and Orchestra, and the Houston Chamber Choir. To commemorate the tenth anniversary of the Houston Chamber Choir, Tom composed the text and music for This Is Why I Sing, an anthem*

*for mixed chorus featured several times on NPR. In addition to his work in classical and church music, Tom has acted and conducted on five national tours and in regional theaters around the U.S. He is a graduate of St. John's College (Santa Fe) Great Books Master's Program. Tom earned the American Guild of Organists Associate (AAGO) and Colleague (CAGO) certificates under the tutelage of Dr. Ann Labounsky at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, PA. He completed his master's in composition at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music in 2003, where he was a faculty member from 2009 to 2013; and he earned his Doctor of Musical Arts in composition at Rice University in Houston, Texas in 2006. He served on the faculties of Texas A&M University, University of Houston, and Ball State University. Tom is a 2022-2024 scholar with The Society for the Increase of the Ministry. He is a member of the Compass Rose Society. He serves on the board of trustees for FOCCUS: Friends of Canterbury Cathedral United States. [tconroy@vts.edu](mailto:tconroy@vts.edu)*

## **Monday, November 6, 2023**

Plenary – **Meet and Greet**

5:00 – 6:00 pm ET / 8:00 – 9:00 am AEST (Tuesday, November 7)

Leadership in transitional times occurs in different settings (e.g., congregational, judicatory, not-for-profit) and is delivered in a range of ways (e.g., settled, consulting, intentional interim). The common goal is managing change through healthy transitions. Since we are a group of practitioners, we will take this opportunity to get to know one another better by learning from each other. We will talk about the following questions:

1. What's the BEST piece of advice you've ever been given about your leadership or ministry?
2. What's the WORST piece of advice you've ever been given about your leadership or ministry?
3. What is one significant learning you have from leading through transition that you would like to share?

## **Tuesday, November 7, 2023**

Concurrent Workshops

11:00 am – 12:15 pm ET / 2:00 – 3:15 am AEST (Wednesday, November 8)

### **Marketing Our Strengths: Tools for Sharing Stories and Deepening Spirituality Eric Clayton**

Too often in the ministry world, “marketing” is seen as a dirty word. But really, marketing ourselves – our churches, our congregations, our communities – is no different than discovering and sharing our unique stories. Our stories help us make sense of where we are in the history of our specific church and serve as tools to invite new members. As interim ministry leaders, we have the opportunity to help gather up past stories and invite our communities to discern potential future paths. Marketing tools can help us assess our strengths and weaknesses, our giftedness and our shadows. In this

workshop, author and communications professional Eric Clayton will use proven marketing methods, storytelling techniques, and principles of Ignatian spirituality to help us devise a way to engage and share the stories of our communities that is both strategic and spirituality fulfilling.

***Eric Clayton** is an award-winning writer, speaker, storyteller, and teacher. He is currently the deputy director of communications at the Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States. He joined the team in 2019 and produces content that invites audiences to reflect on how to integrate Ignatian spirituality in their everyday life. He guest hosts “AMDG: A Jesuit Podcast” and writes an award-winning weekly newsletter entitled “Now Discern This” for an audience of more than 20,000 subscribers. He has also managed social media channels for Maryknoll Lay Missioners, developed and directed retreats for the Sisters of Bon Secours, and was an adjunct professor in the Mass Communication department at Towson University. Eric’s work has earned him numerous awards, including the 2023 Illumination Book Award Gold Medal in Christian Living and recognition as a 2023 Independent Press Award Distinguished Favorite, both for his book, Cannonball Moments: Telling Your Story, Deepening Your Faith. He has a BA in creative writing and international studies from Fairfield University and an MA in international media from American University. He also has a graduate-level certificate from Creighton University’s program in the Ignatian Tradition. He is a one-time hedgehog owner and a life-long Star Wars fan. Eric lives in Baltimore, MD with his wife, two young daughters, and their cat, Sebastian. [eclayton@jesuits.org](mailto:eclayton@jesuits.org)*

## **Tuesday, November 7, 2023**

Concurrent Workshops

11:00 am – 12:15 pm ET / 2:00 – 3:15 am AEST (Wednesday, November 8)

### **New Paths for Conflict Engagement**

#### **John Beck**

For the last five years, in various transitional ministry settings, John has been exploring the interaction of local congregational norms and change processes. Norms are shared standards of acceptable behavior that can be formal or informal, such as conflict avoidance patterns. This workshop will explore how utilizing key norms can have an impact on change processes but can also have significant implications for managing conflict in ways that build up the community, instead of tearing it down. Participants will be introduced to the 10 key norms John works with, and in-workshop polling will identify norms that participants identify as either helpful or problematic in their settings. Finally, John will provide a brief introduction to the “influencer” model from Crucial Learning as an important tool for guiding effective change in organizations.

***John Beck** is a student of congregational and leadership dynamics and an Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) pastor. He works to help grow capacity for ministry, especially when conflict has disrupted mission. He has a wide-ranging tool chest for*

*working in church contexts with the goal of strengthening relational and spiritual vitality. In addition to 30-plus years of parish experience, John has training as a chaplain, counselor, and seminary professor. He is an Associate and the Northwest Regional Director of the Kaleidoscope Institute and is a Qualified Administrator of the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI). His graduate work in journalism has strengthened his communication skills; his PhD in Marital and Family Therapy helped his understanding of family systems in church and homes; his experiences teaching in three seminaries helped broaden his theology. He is finishing his certification as a trainer with the Stanford Forgiveness Project and is currently a member of IMN's faculty.*  
[jhbech@msn.com](mailto:jhbech@msn.com)

## **Tuesday, November 7, 2023**

Concurrent Workshops

11:00 am – 12:15 pm ET / 2:00 – 3:15 am AEST (Wednesday, November 8)

### **Open Discussion: Demo of ChatGPT (AI-generated text)**

#### **Michelle Collins**

Have you wondered what all this hype is about artificial intelligence and ChatGPT and Bard and all the rest? And have you wondered what all you might be able to do with this new AI? Michelle Collins has been using ChatGPT for her ministry, resource research, and other endeavors and will demonstrate some of the things it does well as well as some ideas for how you might use it in your work. She will also show you how to get started with ChatGPT yourself and share some suggestions for creating effective prompts to enhance your results. (Note: This is a demonstration of AI. A discussion on ethics and implications will be hosted separately.)

*Michelle Collins is a Unitarian Universalist minister and has served a variety of congregations as an interim, contract, senior minister, associate minister, and briefly as a settled minister. She is currently serving as an intentional interim in Williamsburg, VA and truly enjoys being in a place of change and experimentation with congregations. She also has training in trauma response, grief recovery, conflict meditation, serves on her denomination's trauma response ministry, is a researcher for a monthly theme-based resource service, and is a member of IMN's faculty. She is a nerd in both her personal and professional life and enjoys tabletop games of a variety of kinds and particularly loves Dungeons and Dragons since it's an opportunity to do magic and have dragons be real.* [mcollins@uuma.org](mailto:mcollins@uuma.org)

## **Tuesday, November 7, 2023**

Plenary Keynote – ***Telling New Stories***

1:30 – 4:00 pm ET / 4:30 – 7:00 am AEST (Wednesday, November 8)

### **Planting Seeds of New Stories: Developing a Spirituality of Storytelling**

**Eric Clayton**

Storytelling is an essential tool for uncovering and sharing the history, values and hopes of a community. But storytelling is also a spiritual practice, a way in which we discover who and what we are in a world infused with the sacred. As interim ministry leaders, we hold these sacred stories reverently, helping our communities discern patterns and potential as new paths come into view. In this plenary, award-winning author Eric A. Clayton will share tools and insights from Ignatian spirituality: a spiritual path that asserts that the Holy is present in all things, including our stories. Participants will have the opportunity to apply Ignatian spiritual principles in their own lives and draw from the wisdom of others in bringing insights back to their own communities.

*Eric Clayton is an award-winning writer, speaker, storyteller, and teacher. He is currently the deputy director of communications at the Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States. He joined the team in 2019 and produces content that invites audiences to reflect on how to integrate Ignatian spirituality in their everyday life. He guest hosts “AMDG: A Jesuit Podcast” and writes an award-winning weekly newsletter entitled “Now Discern This” for an audience of more than 20,000 subscribers. He has also managed social media channels for Maryknoll Lay Missioners, developed and directed retreats for the Sisters of Bon Secours, and was an adjunct professor in the Mass Communication department at Towson University. Eric’s work has earned him numerous awards, including the 2023 Illumination Book Award Gold Medal in Christian Living and recognition as a 2023 Independent Press Award Distinguished Favorite, both for his book, Cannonball Moments: Telling Your Story, Deepening Your Faith. He has a BA in creative writing and international studies from Fairfield University and an MA in international media from American University. He also has a graduate-level certificate from Creighton University’s program in the Ignatian Tradition. He is a one-time hedgehog owner and a life-long Star Wars fan. Eric lives in Baltimore, MD with his wife, two young daughters, and their cat, Sebastian. [eclayton@jesuits.org](mailto:eclayton@jesuits.org)*

## **Tuesday, November 7, 2023**

Concurrent Workshops

4:30 pm – 5:45 pm ET / 7:30 – 8:45 am AEST (Wednesday, November 8)

### **When Two Are Better Than One: Creating a Covenant Partnership Between Faith Communities**

**Ruth Shaver**



Using the particular story of two congregations that are just beginning their journey as "yoked" churches, participants will have the opportunity to explore the possibilities afforded by the partnership of two (or more) faith communities to support the ministry of a pastor/rabbi while also maintaining individual identity and missions. The development of a strong relationship between members of communities is only part of the picture. Good partnerships start with curiosity about what's possible and willingness to be open to new ideas. Developing the partnership requires thoughtful conversations about issues large and small, from times of worship to who should subscribe to the other community's weekly e-mail newsletter. Living the partnership is ongoing work that when built on a solid foundation, is (mostly) joyful and rewarding. Workshop participants will have the opportunity to investigate the willingness of their current setting and availability of potential partners. While the partnership serving as the case study is a geographically close one, communities may not necessarily need to be close to each other for a partnership to be fruitful.

***Rev. Dr. Ruth Shaver*** is the Bridge Interim Minister at Lakeville United Church of Christ and North Congregational Church UCC and an Interim Consultant in the Southeast Region of the Southern New England Conference UCC. Her previous interim parishes were The Congregational Church of Mansfield, UCC, in Mansfield, MA, and First Church of Christ Congregational, UCC, in North Conway, NH. She previously served as settled pastoral staff in congregations in Attleboro, MA, and Schellsburg, PA. Ruth serves as the Moderator of the Old Colony Association of the Southern New England Conference United Church of Christ and as an ex officio member of the association's Committee on Ministry. She is deeply committed to clergy excellence through lifelong education, including her work as an IMN faculty member. Ruth is dedicated to non-seminary-based ministerial and lay leadership education through PATHWAYS Theological Education, Inc., where she serves as Academic Dean. Ruth's D.Min is from Lancaster Theological Seminary (2016), with work focused on intergenerational education at the intersection of faith and science. She is an alumna of the Sinai and Synapses Fellowship (2017-2019 cohort). Ruth holds a BA in Soviet and Eastern European Studies from the College of Liberal Arts and an M.Div. from the School of Theology, both at Boston University. She resides in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, where she enjoys cooking, reading, and binge-watching science fiction television shows.  
[revdruthucc@icor1348.com](mailto:revdruthucc@icor1348.com)

## **Tuesday, November 7, 2023**

Concurrent Workshops

4:30 pm – 5:45 pm ET / 7:30 – 8:45 am AEST (Wednesday, November 8)

### **Enough is Enough – When to Leave Interim Role**

**Melissa Douaire**

The challenges of an interim role are plentiful and can be rewarding. However, there are times and places when the challenges are beyond what an interim can do and still

maintain one's professional and mental health. When is it time to excuse yourself from the dysfunction of a church unwilling to do its transitional work? We will discuss, evaluate, and decide when to stay or when it is time to go.

*Rev. Melissa Douaire is an ordained United Church of Christ minister who served First Congregational Church of Glen Ellyn as Associate Minister of Pastoral Care for three years before moving into interim work. During the pandemic, Melissa started Whole Person Conversations, a company that presents grief webinars to universities, corporations, and organizations. She has had hundreds of conversations with individuals regarding death and non-death losses such as divorce, moves, and positive milestones including retirement and graduation, which impact identity, community, and purpose that are lost in transitions. As a divorced and remarried wife, mother of three young adult children, a former teacher, caregiver of an aging parent, and minister, Melissa is personally and professionally aware of life's transitions! Melissa earned a BA from DePauw University, her M. Ed from the University of Virginia, and her M. Div from Chicago Theological Seminary and a Certified Grief Counselor. [mmdouaire@gmail.com](mailto:mmdouaire@gmail.com)*

## **Tuesday, November 7, 2023**

Plenary: Something Fun!

6:30 pm – 7:30 pm ET / 9:30 – 10:30 am AEST (Wednesday, November 8)

### **Something Fun – You Can't Make This #!@\*&% Up!**

Stress brings things out in people and systems. Even the most well-balanced people and organizational systems can demonstrate some eye-opening behavior when they're feeling the pressure of change. As transitional leaders, we've seen evidence of this many times. Join your colleagues for appropriate story sharing about the trials and tribulations, the adventures and absurdities of transitional leadership. No names, locations, or other readily identifiable marks about the people or congregation/setting allowed. And keep in mind that our intention isn't to humiliate anyone but to share some of the real anecdotes that illustrate the wacky world of transitional leadership!

## **Tuesday, November 7, 2023**

Concurrent Workshops

8:00 pm – 9:15pm ET / 11:00 am – 12:15 pm AEST (Wednesday, November 8)

### **Open Conversation: Boundaries/Power in the Congregation**

#### **Dave Clements**

Healthy boundaries are essential to having a strong, healthy, resilient ministry. They can help you: 1) strengthen relationships with others and yourself, 2) avoid negative emotional triggers, and 3) protect yourself from being taken advantage of, overworking, overcommitting, feeling overwhelmed, and physical and emotional abuse or harm.

Come join the conversation about setting boundaries that make for good care of self and others.

**Dave Clements** is a Unitarian Universalist minister and Team Lead for IMN's Annual Conference. Prior to becoming a minister, Dave earned MA and MBA degrees in organizational development and business, worked in sales and marketing, and owned a fundraising consulting business. His mother was Jewish and his father was Catholic, so he was exposed to two religious practices before joining a Unitarian church in later life. After being active in the church in various roles, Dave enrolled in Meadville Lombard Theological School. During his studies, he served as a chaplain at a VA hospital in Cleveland and an intern minister at a church in Kent, Ohio. He received a Master of Divinity degree in 2017 and was ordained in the same year. Dave served as interim minister in South Africa, Illinois, and New Jersey, and is currently serving a UUA congregation in Santa Rosa. He has published a book about his experiences of living and working as a full time Unitarian minister in Cape Town South Africa titled, *When the Elephant Laughed*. Living and serving as a minister outside his native country has been and continues to be a life-changing experience. As an interim minister it is always exciting to him to learn new ways to engage the congregation, especially fostering deep and spiritual connections during this unique time of COVID-19 and as we are reinventing and reimagining church and ways to make it relevant in our world today. [dscvisionjd@gmail.com](mailto:dscvisionjd@gmail.com)

## **Tuesday, November 7**

Concurrent Workshops

8:00 pm – 9:15pm ET / 11:00 am – 12:15 pm AEST (Wednesday, November 8)

### **Change – Emotional Intelligence – Power**

#### **Mary G. McCurty**

How do beliefs about change and power impact results? Is emotional intelligence (EQ or EI) and power crucial during times of change? If power competence is having the ability to leverage your gifts and strengths to get what you want done, how can Emotional Intelligence increase your effectiveness during change? This webinar will explore the impact of Emotional Intelligence, specifically self-awareness, self-management, social-awareness, and relationship management, and the use of power during change. Emotional Intelligence captures the qualities that help people deal with change. During transitions, it is crucial to know and apply your power competence to manage relationships and get what you want done. Emotional Intelligence is the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and managing our emotions. Your ability to know your power competence begins with the heart of Emotional Intelligence, which is self-awareness. Social awareness builds trust and identifies sources of power that provide access to decision makers and remove obstacles to change.



**Mary G. McCurty** (M.S. ODHR) is an Organization Development Specialist. A native of Birmingham, Alabama, Mary currently lives in Palm Beach, Florida. She is a Lay Leader in the United Methodist Church, a successful facilitator, a passionate learner, and a servant leader. Her Organization and Leadership Development experience includes Training Manager at Verizon Communications, Inc. As a consultant, she collaborates with clients to create transformational processes for leadership development. She was the Lead Trainer for the IMPACT Silver Spring, MD community development program. She has also served as a Trainer at the Emotional Intelligence & HR Center. Mary completed her graduate studies in Organizational Behavior at Johns Hopkins University. She is certified to administer the Hay Group Emotional & Social Competency Inventory and Multi Health System EQ-I Emotional Intelligence Assessments and the Myers Briggs Type Indicator. [marygmccurty@gmail.com](mailto:marygmccurty@gmail.com)

## **Tuesday, November 7**

Concurrent Workshops

8:00 pm – 9:15pm ET / 11:00 am – 12:15 pm AEST (Wednesday, November 8)

### **New Paths for Conflict Engagement (Repeat)**

#### **John Beck**

For the last five years, in various transitional ministry settings, John has been exploring the interaction of local congregational norms and change processes. Norms are shared standards of acceptable behavior that can be formal or informal, such as conflict avoidance patterns. This workshop will explore how utilizing key norms can have an impact on change processes but can also have significant implications for managing conflict in ways that build up the community, instead of tearing it down. Participants will be introduced to the 10 key norms John works with, and in-workshop polling will identify norms that participants identify as either helpful or problematic in their settings. Finally, John will provide a brief introduction to the “influencer” model from Crucial Learning as an important tool for guiding effective change in organizations.

**John Beck** is a student of congregational and leadership dynamics and an Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) pastor. He works to help grow capacity for ministry, especially when conflict has disrupted mission. He has a wide-ranging tool chest for working in church contexts with the goal of strengthening relational and spiritual vitality. In addition to 30-plus years of parish experience, John has training as a chaplain, counselor, and seminary professor. He is an Associate and the Northwest Regional Director of the Kaleidoscope Institute and is a Qualified Administrator of the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI). His graduate work in journalism has strengthened his communication skills; his PhD in Marital and Family Therapy helped his understanding of family systems in church and homes; his experiences teaching in three seminaries helped broaden his theology. He is finishing his certification as a trainer with the Stanford Forgiveness Project and is currently a member of IMN’s faculty.

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## **Tuesday, November 7**

Concurrent Workshops

8:00 pm – 9:15pm ET / 11:00 am – 12:15 pm AEST (Wednesday, November 8)

### **Transitions Beyond the Interim Period**

#### **Arlen Vernava**

The American Heritage Dictionary (5th ed.) says *transition* is “change from one form, state, style or place to another...” and *interim* means “an interval of time between one event, process or period and another... belonging to, serving or taking place during an intermediate interval of time...” Communities of faith, and practitioners who serve them, have long leaned into two frames: 1) Those who lead during transition are “... serving during an intermediate interval of time” and have also accepted that adaptive, complex, and intersectional work has primary and focused attention during transition and this dedicated intentional interim period. 2) This time gives primary and focused attention to a custodial posture – support, manage, maintain, and advance an overall stable enterprise. Indeed, the lived experiences of Loren Mead and others, in the now distant beginnings of transition and interim-time ministry, posited the value and transformative power of dedicated time – for community and for practitioner. Transition during the interim period as described above remains a powerful, positive, life-giving enterprise. Today, transition beyond the interim period looks, tastes, and feels normative. But what are the frames and thinking that advance transition beyond the interim period? Come join the conversation!

***Arlen G. Vernava**, M.Div., EPC, serves as Faculty and Team Lead for Education with the Interim Ministry Network. He is a Senior Consultant with Design Group International, Inc. Arlen’s vocation of over 38 years focusses on “helping you live into your vocation.” Arlen grew up in Rhode Island, the Ocean State, the home of the founder of First Baptist Church of America, Roger Williams, who was a Baptist for a New York minute, then became a life-long friend and ally to Chief Canoncus and the Narraganset Indians. Arlen calls the American Baptist Churches, USA, his ordination home, and like Williams, has long allied across religious communions and with all kinds of people. “Being with and walking alongside” describe Arlen’s deep gladness and his vocational posture: as a coach to leaders and teams, as an external consultant with faith-based organizations, as an embedded strategic intentional interim, and as faculty. He is a teacher and guide at heart. Always learning. Always curious. Ready and glad to join with.*

[agvernava@gmail.com](mailto:agvernava@gmail.com)

## **Tuesday, November 7**

Concurrent Workshops

8:00 pm – 9:15pm ET / 11:00 am – 12:15 pm AEST (Wednesday, November 8)

## **Open Conversation: Proper Farewell/Lift up the Successor Legacy**

### **Wayne Macpherson**

“So long, farewell, auf Wiedersehen, good night.” Like the Von Trapp children in *The Sound of Music*, we have our farewell rituals. During our conversation, let’s talk about what’s worked and what hasn’t. Let’s share the “unique” stories that make transitional ministry surprising, fulfilling, and challenging (often at the same time). Bring a beverage if that’s your ritual.

*Rev. Wayne MacPherson was ordained in the United Church of Christ in 1992, Wayne has just completed an interim time at Epiphany UCC on the north side of Chicago. He’s returned to the choir of his home church, First Congregational Church of Evanston UCC, for the time being. He loves the music of the church (All-But-Certified Hymn Geek) and the music often called “the great American songbook.” His #1 Karaoke Song, though, is Paul Simon’s “Bridge Over Troubled Water.” His partner of many years, Vince McCoy, sometimes finds this endearing. [Wjmacp@aol.com](mailto:Wjmacp@aol.com)*

## **Wednesday, November 8, 2023**

Concurrent Workshops

11:00 am – 12:15 pm ET / 2:00 – 3:15 am AEST (Thursday, November 9)

### **Trust Matters: Strategies for Nurturing Trust**

#### **Michelle Collins**

One of the most important factors impacting the success of an organization is the level of trust in the leaders of that organization. Nothing can happen faster than the "speed of trust." But contrary to popular understanding, trust is not a soft thing that cannot be defined. Instead, it is concrete, measurable, and can be specifically and strategically addressed. In this workshop, we'll delve into those definitions and strategies and give participants an opportunity to apply them to their leadership setting.

*Michelle Collins is a Unitarian Universalist minister and has served a variety of congregations as an interim, contract, senior minister, associate minister, and briefly as a settled minister. She is currently serving as an intentional interim in Williamsburg, VA and truly enjoys being in a place of change and experimentation with congregations. She also has training in trauma response, grief recovery, conflict meditation, serves on her denomination's trauma response ministry, is a researcher for a monthly theme-based resource service, and is a member of IMN's faculty. She is a nerd in both her personal and professional life and enjoys tabletop games of a variety of kinds and particularly loves Dungeons and Dragons since it's an opportunity to do magic and have dragons be real. [mcollins@uuma.org](mailto:mcollins@uuma.org)*

## **Wednesday, November 8, 2023**

Concurrent Workshops

11:00 am – 12:15 pm ET / 2:00 – 3:15 am AEST (Thursday, November 9)

### **Bridging Spirituality and Emotional Intelligence to Sustain Spiritual Wellness** **Judy Joseph Mc Sween**

As transitional leaders, we experience the challenges associated with sustaining meaningful relationships with self, others, and God, as we simultaneously navigate the uncertainty and rapid changes in our external environment that have become norm. Successfully navigating this requires clarity of purpose, resilience, inner peace, and the ability to maintain strong connections with self, with Creation, and with our Creator. Emotional Intelligence (EQ or EI) is about developing a presence and awareness of self that allows us to be attentive and more effective in managing our thoughts, emotions, and behaviors, influencing those of others towards building strong relationships. Spiritual Intelligence (SQ) Spirituality and spiritual wellness are about purpose/meaning, and about connections to oneself, to others, to nature, and to the transcendent. This workshop will explore the correlation between spirituality and Emotional Intelligence – as a vehicle for finding hope in the new as you encounter pathways for sustaining spiritual wellness, engaging those who may have become averse to structured religion, clarifying whether you are operating in alignment with your purpose, improving your overall effectiveness as a transitional leader, and measuring your **Spiritual Emotional Intelligence (SEQ)**.

***Judy Joseph McSween** is a certified coach, specializing in the areas of Emotional Intelligence, Spiritual Intelligence, Conversational Intelligence® and a group leader of the Caribbean arm of the World Community for Christian Meditation. She facilitates Human Formation with lay, religious and ordained in Caribbean diocese. She is a trained Organization Development Consultant and holds an MBA in Export Management and International Business and a BSc in Industrial Chemistry. Her theoretical background, 30 years of practical experience at executive levels in the corporate sector along with her highly intuitive skills, provides diverse resources as she engages her corporate and faith-based clients in transformational experiences. Judy has served as a Board Member and Trainer with Emotional Intelligence and Human Relations (EQHR) Center. She is a Trainer and former board member for the NTL Institute for Applied Behavioral Science. Her combination of a grounded spirituality, theoretical knowledge, industry-wide practical experience, and contemplative practice have been applied to the development of the Time Out Suite of Interventions. Time Out is a highly introspective approach that facilitates individuals, teams, and organizations to become whole, as they bridge their intelligences to become the best version of self.*

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## **Wednesday, November 8, 2023**

Concurrent Workshops

11:00 am – 12:15 pm ET / 2:00 – 3:15 am AEST (Thursday, November 9)

### **Worried about the Future? Facing Fears of Institutional Death**

**Diane Kenaston**

“The building is falling apart.” “No one will volunteer.” “We can’t afford the next settled pastor.” Many interim/transitional ministers serve congregations facing existential questions about their future. These congregations wonder whether they can continue to exist, raising “death anxiety” in clergy, laity, and judicatory leaders. Workshop participants will face their own fears about institutional death and become ready to lead congregations into an unknown future.

*Rev. Diane Kenaston is the co-founder of the Good Friday Collaborative, a ministry supporting congregations concluding ministry. As a United Methodist elder with a decade of experience pastoring churches in West Virginia and Missouri, she has led congregations through realignment, parsonage sales, and merger. Diane is a board member of Young Clergy Women International, and she recently served in the United Kingdom as County Ecumenical Officer for Churches Together in Cambridgeshire. Today she is a clergy coach and writer based out of New Haven, Connecticut. You can learn more at [www.dianekenaston.com](http://www.dianekenaston.com) and [www.goodfridaycollaborative.com](http://www.goodfridaycollaborative.com). [rev.diane.kenaston@gmail.com](mailto:rev.diane.kenaston@gmail.com)*

## **Wednesday, November 8, 2023**

Concurrent Workshops

11:00 am – 12:15 pm ET / 2:00 – 3:15 am AEST (Thursday, November 9)

### **Open Conversation: Bullying and Other Bad Behaviour**

**Rev. Pegi Ridout**

In response to anxiety and fear, many congregations are experiencing a rise in unacceptable behaviours, bullying among them. How do we as leaders respond to congregants exhibiting their not-best selves? How do we sustain a “non-anxious” presence? What do we do to limit the disruption such behavior creates? What steps can we take toward health for congregations and for ourselves? This workshop will offer an opportunity for conversation about what you’re trying to manage, what’s been helpful (and not), and how you are caring for yourself in the pandemonium.

*Rev. Pegi Ridout (she/her) has been an Intentional Interim Minister for the past 2 decades serving seven congregations and a retreat centre. In 40+ years of ordained ministry in the United Church of Canada, she has served a variety of rural, urban, and suburban churches in Southwestern and Niagara regions of Ontario, Canada. As well as being a member of the IMN Faculty, she coaches interims, is a conflict mediator, and facilitates work in intercultural competency and racial justice. [pjridout@rogers.com](mailto:pjridout@rogers.com)*



## **Wednesday, November 8, 2023**

Concurrent Workshops

3:00 pm – 4:15 pm ET / 6:00 – 7:15 am AEST (Thursday, November 9)

### **Alternative Delivery Modes for Transitional Leadership**

#### **Panel Discussion Moderated by Jonathan New**

The problem of securing good transitional leadership for congregations that can't access it – either because of a shortage of transitional leaders and/or limited financial resources – is coming up more frequently. The interim shortage is a reality in many places and judicatory staff wonder how to support lower capacity congregations as they face transitions or many kinds. In addition, transitional leaders/interims are looking for a wider variety of avenues to use their training and experience. Some of these challenges are being met and opportunities are being explored through alternative delivery of transitional leadership – interim consultants, interim consultant teams, coaches to clergy or laity in place, and virtual delivery. Join us for a panel discussion with a representative sampling of those already doing and/or experimenting with transitional leadership alternative delivery, including a Q&A period and consideration of next steps.

*Rev. Dr. Jonathan New, IMN's Executive Director, is an ordained minister of the United Church of Christ (UCC) who has spent over twenty-five years helping faith communities be their best, most faithful selves. After serving as a settled pastor, Jonathan received IMN training and went on to work with six congregations as an intentional interim. He served in judicatory ministry with the Massachusetts Conference (UCC) where he oversaw Conference fundraising and provided direct support to local church leaders on finance, stewardship, organizational structure and management, and congregational vitality. He also led the Conference's Threshold Ministry support to congregations considering closure and has contributed to the UCC's church closure and legacy efforts. Jonathan has followed a calling to teaching ministry as well, offering workshops for clergy and laity, and serving as faculty for the Massachusetts Conference Christian Education Certification program and the Vermont Academy of Spiritual Training, and as adjunct faculty at Andover Newton Theological School. Prior to entering the ministry, he was Associate Director of News and Public Affairs at Harvard University. Jonathan is a graduate of Oberlin College (B.A.) and holds theological degrees from Harvard Divinity School (M.T.S.) and Andover Newton Theological School (M.Div., D.Min.). He makes his home in Vermont with his wife, Debbie, and spends much of his free time keeping up with the exploits of his two adult daughters, Sarah and Ellie. [Jonathan@imnedu.org](mailto:Jonathan@imnedu.org)*

## **Wednesday, November 8, 2023**

Concurrent Workshops

3:00 pm – 4:15 pm ET / 6:00 – 7:15 am AEST (Thursday, November 9)

### **Deliberately Creating Community: Responding to America's Public Health Crisis** **Katrina Palan**

This workshop will explore the way faith communities are uniquely set up, regardless of size, to address what Dr. Vivek Murthy (US Surgeon General) calls a “Public Health Crisis.” The newly released Surgeon General Advisory calls attention to loneliness, isolation, and lack of connection in the U.S., naming it an epidemic. Murthy connects the epidemic to health crisis and health risk. He offers six foundational pillars to help overcome this epidemic. The 6th pillar, “Cultivate A Culture of Connection,” is a place where the local faith communities can make a difference in their neighborhood or community. This is not a program, expense, or tool to grow membership. It is a unique opportunity for faith communities to serve their local communities, love one’s neighbor, and help decrease an epidemic of loneliness and isolation while increasing connection with those who need it.

**Rev. Katrina Palan** is an ordained minister with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). She is in a time of transition having completed her ninth interim position, two of which were judicatory ministry positions. She is currently living in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma close to six of her eleven grandchildren. Katrina is on the IMN Board of Directors and serves on its Annual Conference planning team, hybrid Conference task force, meditation site planning team, and instructional design team. She is also an IMN Virtual Support Group co-host and a “Chat-With Us” co-host. Katrina is a military veteran and serves on the Moral Injury Institute Board of Directors. She has experience in hospital, police, and sheriff chaplaincy. Katrina is currently a level-3 Chaplain with the Salvation Army Disaster Team. She has extensive experience in working with people in traumatic situations. Katrina is currently working on her D.Min at Brite Divinity in Fort Worth, TX. Her Dissertation title and emphasis is “How Can Spiritual Practices Help to Minimize the Consequences, Responses and Feelings Encountered by Veterans Impacted by Moral Injury.” [revpalan@gmail.com](mailto:revpalan@gmail.com)

## **Wednesday, November 8, 2023**

Concurrent Workshops

3:00 pm – 4:15 pm ET / 6:00 – 7:15 am AEST (Thursday, November 9)

### **Demonstration of AI-Generated Images (using Midjourney)**

#### **Michelle Collins**

Artificial intelligence generated images and art are an up-and-coming area with huge potential for applications across many fields. Michelle Collins will demonstrate Midjourney, one of the current AI-image generators, to show some of its potential and how you can get started with it or other AI image generators. Michelle started using Midjourney this past summer and is now using it instead of stock images or creative commons zero images in her ministry, and she is also using it to create art to sell on Etsy and to use as part of some Kickstarter campaigns that she is creating. (Note: This is a demonstration of AI. A discussion on ethics and implications will be hosted separately.)

**Michelle Collins** is a Unitarian Universalist minister and has served a variety of congregations as an interim, contract, senior minister, associate minister, and briefly as a settled minister. She is currently serving as an intentional interim in Williamsburg, VA and truly enjoys being in a place of change and experimentation with congregations. She also has training in trauma response, grief recovery, conflict meditation, serves on her denomination's trauma response ministry, is a researcher for a monthly theme-based resource service, and is a member of IMN's faculty. She is a nerd in both her personal and professional life and enjoys tabletop games of a variety of kinds and particularly loves Dungeons and Dragons since it's an opportunity to do magic and have dragons be real. [mcollins@uuma.org](mailto:mcollins@uuma.org)

## **Wednesday, November 8, 2023**

Plenary Keynote – ***Engaging New Ways***

6:00 – 8:30 pm ET / 9:00 – 11:30 am AEST (Thursday, November 9)

### **How to Do More with Less**

#### **Rebekah Simon-Peter**

“How can we do more with less?” This question has worried many faith communities in the post-pandemic world. For congregations that were already diminished in size or energy before the pandemic, it's an urgent question. The truth is, you have more than you think you have. Discover surprising new ways to access hope through this empowering keynote with Rebekah Simon-Peter.

**Rebekah Simon-Peter** is passionate about reconnecting spiritual leaders with their God-given powers to co-create miracles with the divine. Her award-winning group coaching program, *Creating a Culture of Renewal®*, has energized church leaders across the country to reclaim their calling and to grow their ministries. Known for teaching leaders how to bring out the best in the people who frustrate them the most, her work transforms church leaders and the congregations they serve. Rebekah is the author of *Forging a New Path: Moving the Church Forward in a Post-Pandemic World* (Market Square Publishers, 2022), *Dream Like Jesus®*, *The Jew Named Jesus*, *Green Church*, *Green Church Leader Guide*, and *7 Simple Steps to Green Your Church*. A dynamic speaker, Rebekah has engaged and challenged audiences around the country. Rebekah is an avid hiker, dog mom, wife to Jerry, lover of coffee, and a gratitude junkie. **For more information about Rebekah Simon-Peter, call (307) 333-5990, email [office@rebekahsimonpeter.com](mailto:office@rebekahsimonpeter.com), or visit [www.rebekahsimonpeter.com](http://www.rebekahsimonpeter.com).**

## **Thursday, November 9, 2023**

Concurrent Workshops

11:00 am – 12:15 pm ET / 2:00 – 3:15 am AEST (Friday, November 10)

### **Resistance and Restructuring**

#### **Thomas Conroy**

Resistance often points to a need for restructuring. Restructuring often induces and incites resistance. Interim ministers face this conundrum again and again. How can we confidently enter new spaces where we are expected to solve unexpectedly complex or tangled problems? This workshop provides ways and means for the interim minister to begin problem solving by recognizing and living fully into (1) self-awareness, (2) consciousness of the needs of others, (3) naming and framing intentions and expectations, and (4) tempering self-patience and self-critique as fundamental components for effective and joyful outcomes. Drawing on the guidance and philosophy of Rowan Williams, 104th Archbishop of Canterbury, and the principles and methods of Eric Law and his team at The Kaleidoscope Institute, we will face resistance, survive restructuring, and thrive and grow as interim ministers.

*Dr. Thomas Martin Conroy studies theology in the Master of Divinity (2024) program at Virginia Theological Seminary. An Episcopalian, Tom had a strong Catholic upbringing comprising the Maronite-Lebanese and Roman rites. His current focus is on the Anglican Global Communion, ecumenism, inter-faith dialogue, and interim ministry training and family systems. He has sung professionally with the choir of St. Bartholomew's in New York, the San Francisco Symphony Chorus and Orchestra, and the Houston Chamber Choir. To commemorate the tenth anniversary of the Houston Chamber Choir, Tom composed the text and music for This Is Why I Sing, an anthem for mixed chorus featured several times on NPR. In addition to his work in classical and church music, Tom has acted and conducted on five national tours and in regional theaters around the U.S. He is a graduate of St. John's College (Santa Fe) Great Books Master's Program. Tom earned the American Guild of Organists Associate (AAGO) and Colleague (CAGO) certificates under the tutelage of Dr. Ann Labounsky at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, PA. He completed his master's in composition at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music in 2003, where he was a faculty member from 2009 to 2013; and he earned his doctor of musical arts in composition at Rice University in Houston, Texas in 2006. He served on the faculties of Texas A&M University, University of Houston, and Ball State University. Tom is a 2022-2024 scholar with The Society for the Increase of the Ministry. He is a member of the Compass Rose Society. He serves on the board of trustees for FOCCUS: Friends of Canterbury Cathedral United States. [tconroy@vts.edu](mailto:tconroy@vts.edu)*

## **Thursday, November 9, 2023**

Concurrent Workshops

11:00 am – 12:15 pm ET / 2:00 – 3:15 am AEST (Friday, November 10)

## **Worried about the Future? Facing Fears of Institutional Death (Repeat)**

### **Diane Kenaston**

“The building is falling apart.” “No one will volunteer.” “We can’t afford the next settled pastor.” Many interim/transitional ministers serve congregations facing existential questions about their future. These congregations wonder whether they can continue to exist, raising “death anxiety” in clergy, laity, and judicatory leaders. Workshop participants will face their own fears about institutional death and become ready to lead congregations into an unknown future.

Rev. Diane Kenaston is the co-founder of the Good Friday Collaborative, a ministry supporting congregations concluding ministry. As a United Methodist elder with a decade of experience pastoring churches in West Virginia and Missouri, she has led congregations through realignment, parsonage sales, and merger. Diane is a board member of Young Clergy Women International, and she recently served in the United Kingdom as County Ecumenical Officer for Churches Together in Cambridgeshire. Today she is a clergy coach and writer based out of New Haven, Connecticut. You can learn more at [www.dianekenaston.com](http://www.dianekenaston.com) and [www.goodfridaycollaborative.com](http://www.goodfridaycollaborative.com).

## **Thursday, November 9, 2023**

Concurrent Workshops

11:00 am – 12:15 pm ET / 2:00 – 3:15 am AEST (Friday, November 10)

### **Open Conversation: Working Across Faith Transitions**

#### **Mary Ellen Dolan**

As our ministry reaches out more and more to the world around us, what is your experience of collaborating across faith traditions, and how can we enrich shared service to our communities? Please come and share your ideas and experiences.

*Mary Ellen Dolan is an Episcopal priest who has been involved in Interim Ministry in Europe since 2007 and has participated in the IMN Annual Conference since 2006. Before embarking on transitional ministry, Mary Ellen served in America and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Her interests include raising the importance of language and culture in ministry and in the global mission of the Church. She has served on the Board of Interim Ministries in the Episcopal Church and is the Secretary of the Francophone Network of the Anglican Communion. [priest1295@yahoo.fr](mailto:priest1295@yahoo.fr)*

## **Thursday, November 9, 2023**

Plenary Keynote – **Seeking New Paths**

1:30 – 4:00 pm ET / 4:30 – 7:00 am AEST (Friday, November 10)

### **The 3 S’s of Post-Pandemic Community**

#### **Rebekah Simon-Peter**



We live in one of the loneliest times in human history. Even as we have more ways to connect, we are increasingly disconnected. What is missing is the deep sense of belonging, of community. Rebekah Simon-Peter's keynote will explore a new/ancient path for communities of faith: being social, being spiritual, and being of service. This will include experiential components appropriate for non-Christian settings, too.

***Rebekah Simon-Peter*** is passionate about reconnecting spiritual leaders with their God-given powers to co-create miracles with the divine. Her award-winning group coaching program, *Creating a Culture of Renewal*®, has energized church leaders across the country to reclaim their calling and to grow their ministries. Known for teaching leaders how to bring out the best in the people who frustrate them the most, her work transforms church leaders and the congregations they serve. Rebekah is the author of *Forging a New Path: Moving the Church Forward in a Post-Pandemic World* (Market Square Publishers, 2022), *Dream Like Jesus*®, *The Jew Named Jesus*, *Green Church*, *Green Church Leader Guide*, and *7 Simple Steps to Green Your Church*. A dynamic speaker, Rebekah has engaged and challenged audiences around the country. Rebekah is an avid hiker, dog mom, wife to Jerry, lover of coffee, and a gratitude junkie. **For more information about Rebekah Simon-Peter, call (307) 333-5990, email [office@rebekahsimonpeter.com](mailto:office@rebekahsimonpeter.com), or visit [www.rebekahsimonpeter.com](http://www.rebekahsimonpeter.com).**

## **Thursday, November 9, 2023**

Concurrent Workshops

7:00 pm – 8:15 pm ET / 10:00 – 11:15 am AEST (Friday, November 10)

### **Deliberately Creating Community: Responding to America's Public Health Crisis (Repeat)**

#### **Katrina Palan**

This workshop will explore the way faith communities are uniquely set up, regardless of size, to address what Dr. Vivek Murthy (US Surgeon General) calls a "Public Health Crisis." The newly released Surgeon General Advisory calls attention to loneliness, isolation, and lack of connection in the U.S., naming it an epidemic. Murthy connects the epidemic to health crisis and health risk. He offers six foundational pillars to help overcome this epidemic. The 6th pillar, "Cultivate A Culture of Connection," is a place where the local faith communities can make a difference in their neighborhood or community. This is not a program, expense, or tool to grow membership. It is a unique opportunity for faith communities to serve their local communities, love one's neighbor, and help decrease an epidemic of loneliness and isolation while increasing connection with those who need it.

***Rev. Katrina Palan*** is an ordained minister with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). She is in a time of transition having completed her ninth interim position, two of which were judicatory ministry positions. She is currently living in Broken Arrow,

*Oklahoma close to six of her eleven grandchildren. Katrina is on the IMN Board of Directors and serves on its Annual Conference planning team, hybrid Conference task force, meditation site planning team, and instructional design team. She is also an IMN Virtual Support Group co-host and a “Chat-With Us” co-host. Katrina is a military veteran and serves on the Moral Injury Institute Board of Directors. She has experience in hospital, police, and sheriff chaplaincy. Katrina is currently a level-3 Chaplain with the Salvation Army Disaster Team. She has extensive experience in working with people in traumatic situations. Katrina is currently working on her D.Min at Brite Divinity in Fort Worth, TX. Her Dissertation title and emphasis is “How Can Spiritual Practices Help to Minimize the Consequences, Responses and Feelings Encountered by Veterans Impacted by Moral Injury.” [revpalan@gmail.com](mailto:revpalan@gmail.com)*

## **Thursday, November 9, 2023**

Concurrent Workshops

7:00 pm – 8:15 pm ET / 10:00 – 11:15 am AEST (Friday, November 10)

### **Trust Matters: Strategies for Nurturing Trust (Repeat)**

#### **Michelle Collins**

One of the most important factors impacting the success of an organization is the level of trust in the leaders of that organization. Nothing can happen faster than the "speed of trust." But contrary to popular understanding, trust is not a soft thing that cannot be defined. Instead, it is concrete, measurable, and can be specifically and strategically addressed. In this workshop, we'll delve into those definitions and strategies and give participants an opportunity to apply them to their leadership setting.

*Michelle Collins is a Unitarian Universalist minister and has served a variety of congregations as an interim, contract, senior minister, associate minister, and briefly as a settled minister. She is currently serving as an intentional interim in Williamsburg, VA and truly enjoys being in a place of change and experimentation with congregations. She also has training in trauma response, grief recovery, conflict meditation, serves on her denomination's trauma response ministry, is a researcher for a monthly theme-based resource service, and is a member of IMN's faculty. She is a nerd in both her personal and professional life and enjoys tabletop games of a variety of kinds and particularly loves Dungeons and Dragons since it's an opportunity to do magic and have dragons be real. [mcollins@uuma.org](mailto:mcollins@uuma.org)*

## **Thursday, November 9, 2023**

Concurrent Workshops

7:00 pm – 8:15 pm ET / 10:00 – 11:15 am AEST (Friday, November 10)

### **“The Presbytery Project”: Applying Transitional Ministry to Judicatory Transformation**

**Rev. Dr. Rob McFarlane**

We often think that Transitional or Intentional Interim Ministry is an intervention in a congregation overseen by a judicatory body. However, the principles that we embody in IIM can be used within judicatories themselves. “The Presbytery Project” is a work-in-progress across the 12 Presbyteries of the Synod of NSW & the ACT within the Uniting Church in Australia. We are seeking transformational change from a systems perspective towards having presbyteries that are focused on growing missional, disciple-forming congregations. The workshop will outline how we are seeking to bring about this transformation and will also engage workshop participants in co-designing next steps in our Project.

**Rev. Dr. Robert McFarlane**, an IMN Board Member, serves as Presbytery Ministry Leader within the Parramatta Nepean Presbytery – PNP – (Synod of NSW and the Australian Capital Territory – NSW/ACT – within the Uniting Church in Australia). PNP has 60 congregations with 35 ministers, serving a region of 2,000,000 in western Sydney, characterized by cultural diversity and new housing areas. This means that he works with congregations to help them be as healthy in their own life, and as strong in their mission and service in their communities as they can be. Rob also works with ministers to help them be as spiritually and emotionally healthy as possible, and as effective in their ministry as they, too, can be. Rob oversees the placement of ministers in congregations (including IIM), continuing education for ministry, and ministry retreats. He also works with congregations in mission planning and discernment using IIM-related skills, notably Appreciative Inquiry and Asset Mapping.

[edofficer@moretonriverspresbytery.org.au](mailto:edofficer@moretonriverspresbytery.org.au)

## **Friday, November 10, 2023**

Concurrent Workshops

11:00 am – 12:15 pm ET / 2:00 – 3:15 am AEST (Saturday, November 11)

### **Accessing the Possible: An Introduction to Quantum Leadership**

**Aliza Robinson**

Are you ready to find hope in the new? Discover an innovative approach to Quantum-Based Leadership in your transitional and interim ministry work. By embracing fresh perspectives, new narratives, and limitless possibilities, you'll guide yourself and others towards transformative journeys through transitions. The field of the quantum is the realm of infinite possibilities and unlimited potential. As Rumi says: “Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and right doing, there is a field, I'll meet you there.” In this session, you will

learn the art of quantum thinking, how to unlock your potential for generating novel ideas. You will enhance your intuition and decision-making abilities, enabling you to make informed choices. You will learn a new way to organize your problem-solving skills, to navigate challenges with a mindset of exploration and open to new possibilities.

***Aliza Bloom Robinson** is a powerful and engaging professional speaker, nationally recognized as a leadership expert and for her proven principles that elevate empowerment. She is a member of the Interim Ministry Network and has been serving in transitional ministry positions. Affectionately known as Rev. Aliza, she brings wisdom, joy, and delight to every presentation. Aliza is the author of six Amazon books, including her most popular *Falling Into Ease – Release Your Struggle and Create A Life You Love*. Since 2000, Aliza has been delivering programs to 1000s of people across the nation and globally. Her *Leadership Embodiment, becoming the leader you know you can Be*, includes personal growth, consciousness, and leadership development components. Aliza is both well-grounded and practical while bringing the highest spiritual consciousness available. She works with boards and leadership groups of all sizes to create a deeper synergy, coherence and consciousness in the team that translates to the workplace in profound and productive ways. [Revalizab@gmail.com](mailto:Revalizab@gmail.com)*

## **Friday, November 10, 2023**

Concurrent Workshops

11:00 am – 12:15 pm ET / 2:00 – 3:15 am AEST (Saturday, November 11)

### **So You Think Your Church Needs to Amalgamate?**

**Rev. Helen Prior**

In this workshop we'll discuss the current trends of church amalgamation. Over the years many churches have reaped the rewards and overcome the challenges, but with time found themselves back in the same place, facing the concept repeatedly. As churches navigate this path, issues of grief, culture, conflict, property, polity, and mission often come to the fore. In this workshop we will consider the different models of amalgamation which will be defined as Absorption, Co-Existence, and New Creation. With each model we will review the benefits and identify some hazards as we share a mix of theory and experience.

***Helen Prior** is an Ordained Interim Minister in the United Church of Canada. Over her 30 years in ministry, she has served four pastoral charges as a settled minister and completed seven intentional interim ministries in Saskatchewan and southern Ontario. An IMN faculty member, Helen has a reputation for using her pastoral skills and sense of humour to invite congregations into dialogue and to help polarized groups come closer together. Helen has helped churches discern to amalgamate, disband, or close. Most recently she completed a three-way amalgamation where formerly floundering congregations are now thriving. When away from work, Helen enjoys being walked by*

*her pups, being staff to her cats, travel, good music, and spending time with friends and family. [2bliminal@gmail.com](mailto:2bliminal@gmail.com)*

## **Friday, November 10, 2023**

Concurrent Workshops

11:00 am – 12:15 pm ET / 2:00 – 3:15 am AEST (Saturday, November 11)

### **Open Discussion: Ethics and Implications of Artificial Intelligence**

#### **Michelle Collins**

With the recent proliferation of artificial intelligence for both images and as a large language model (ChatGPT and others), many are asking questions and raising concerns on implications and a variety of ethical matters. Come and join this open discussion to engage with some of these issues and concerns and to hear a variety of perspectives on them.

*Michelle Collins is a Unitarian Universalist minister and has served a variety of congregations as an interim, contract, senior minister, associate minister, and briefly as a settled minister. She is currently serving as an intentional interim in Williamsburg, VA and truly enjoys being in a place of change and experimentation with congregations. She also has training in trauma response, grief recovery, conflict meditation, serves on her denomination's trauma response ministry, is a researcher for a monthly theme-based resource service, and is a member of IMN's faculty. She is a nerd in both her personal and professional life and enjoys tabletop games of a variety of kinds and particularly loves Dungeons and Dragons since it's an opportunity to do magic and have dragons be real. [mcollins@uuma.org](mailto:mcollins@uuma.org)*

## **Friday, November 10, 2023**

Plenary Presentation

1:30 – 2:45 pm ET / 4:30 – 5:45 pm AEST (Saturday, November 11)

### **The State of Transitional Leadership**

#### **Jonathan New**

We know the world and the circumstances in which congregations find themselves are changing rapidly. We've seen more lower-capacity and smaller faith communities, an increase in the number and frequency of closures, weaker denominational structures and supports, on-going and still emerging post-pandemic impacts, and the many ways congregational life is shifting and new forms of religious life are emerging. Concurrently, we've experienced what might be called the "deregulation" of intentional interim ministry and, in general, both the weakening and the strengthening of the "ecosystem" that has long supported transitional leadership. What do these changes mean for those of us who practice transitional leadership? In this combination presentation and small group



discussion, we'll unpack these changes, name emerging trends, recognize some opportunities these changes afford, and reflect together on what all of this means for us.

**Rev. Dr. Jonathan New**, IMN's Executive Director, is an ordained minister of the United Church of Christ (UCC) who has spent over twenty-five years helping faith communities be their best, most faithful selves. After serving as a settled pastor, Jonathan received IMN training and went on to work with six congregations as an intentional interim. He served in judicatory ministry with the Massachusetts Conference (UCC) where he oversaw Conference fundraising and provided direct support to local church leaders on finance, stewardship, organizational structure and management, and congregational vitality. He also led the Conference's Threshold Ministry support to congregations considering closure and has contributed to the UCC's church closure and legacy efforts. Jonathan has followed a calling to teaching ministry as well, offering workshops for clergy and laity, and serving as faculty for the Massachusetts Conference Christian Education Certification program and the Vermont Academy of Spiritual Training, and as adjunct faculty at Andover Newton Theological School. Prior to entering the ministry, he was Associate Director of News and Public Affairs at Harvard University. Jonathan is a graduate of Oberlin College (B.A.) and holds theological degrees from Harvard Divinity School (M.T.S.) and Andover Newton Theological School (M.Div., D.Min.). He makes his home in Vermont with his wife, Debbie, and spends much of his free time keeping up with the exploits of his two adult daughters, Sarah and Ellie. [Jonathan@imnedu.org](mailto:Jonathan@imnedu.org)

## **Friday, November 10, 2023**

Plenary Keynote Panel

4:30 – 6:00 pm ET / 7:30 – 9:00 am AEST (Saturday, November 11)

### **Practitioner Panel**

#### **Moderated by Dave Clements**

A panel of transitional leaders will bring their responses to the conference theme and the keynote presentations by answering the question, "How do I see this showing up in the settings where I serve?" and "What am I taking home from the IMN Annual Conference." Group discussion will follow.

**Dave Clements** is a Unitarian Universalist minister and Team Lead for IMN's Annual Conference. Prior to becoming a minister, Dave earned MA and MBA degrees in organizational development and business, worked in sales and marketing, and owned a fundraising consulting business. His mother was Jewish and his father was Catholic, so he was exposed to two religious practices before joining a Unitarian church in later life. After being active in the church in various roles, Dave enrolled in Meadville Lombard Theological School. During his studies, he served as a chaplain at a VA hospital in Cleveland and an intern minister at a church in Kent, Ohio. He received a Master of Divinity degree in 2017 and was ordained in the same year. Dave served as interim minister in South Africa, Illinois, and New Jersey, and is currently serving a UUA

Wednesday, November 01, 2023

*Program details are subject to change.*

*congregation in Santa Rosa. He has published a book about his experiences of living and working as a full time Unitarian minister in Cape Town South Africa titled, When the Elephant Laughed. Living and serving as a minister outside his native country has been and continues to be a life-changing experience. As an interim minister it is always exciting to him to learn new ways to engage the congregation, especially fostering deep and spiritual connections during this unique time of COVID-19 and as we are reinventing and reimagining church and ways to make it relevant in our world today.*

[dscvisionjd@gmail.com](mailto:dscvisionjd@gmail.com)