



Member Services cultivates relationships and a feedback-rich environment with Unity ministries and leaders. Through leading-edge services and resources, we collectively prosper and evolve in spiritual community.

## Transitional Ministry Consulting Services

Transition times are pivotal times for all of us. Transitions are times of change, and change always entails some loss. Embracing change and loss consciously opens us to new growth and new opportunities. This conscious embrace of the transitional process is the intention behind Unity Worldwide Ministries' (UWM's) Transitional Ministry Consulting Services.

Our Transitional Consulting Services are facilitated by UWM Certified Consultants who assist our ministries in creating an intentional period of transition allowing them to explore any emotions associated with the transition, to gracefully release their past, and to consciously live into their ongoing spiritual journey together. Through the transitional processes, our spiritual communities form a sense of who they are without the previous minister, thereby creating the space to form a rich and nourishing relationship with a new minister.

Our Transitional Services combine deep knowledge of the dynamics of spiritual community with skilled facilitation. With the assistance of a Transitional Consultant, communities are supported in embracing the complexities of ministry, coming to know themselves better, and beginning to intentionally create their future together.

This transitional work has 5 focal points. These focal points were formally called developmental tasks by the Interim Ministry Network. This term was re-evaluated and changed in 2012 reflecting a deeper understanding of the nature of interim work, and the role of the consultant as the facilitator and coach rather than outside expert. The consultant creates the space for the ministry to engage these focal points and collaborate with one another in creating an intentional process for moving through the transition period, deepening relationship with one another, and embracing a new leader to support them in fulfilling its mission. The **5 focal points of transitional ministry** are:

- **Heritage:** This focal point is about exploring and coming to appreciate the journey of one's ministry. Through facilitated processes, dialogue and storytelling, our consultants provide the space for community members to share, understand and reflect upon their history. This helps identify organizational values, patterns of behavior and meanings. Through this intentional process of storytelling, members develop a shared identity, and an ability to embrace the future together.
- **Mission:** This focal point is about deepening a community's sense of purpose and commitment to making a difference in the world. In *Transitional Ministry Today*, John Keydel says: "Mission

brings the historical awareness of heritage into dialogue with the congregation's contemporary expressions of its identity and core values.... To have a mission is to be sent out of the present into the future, and full engagement with this focus point allows a congregation to set out on that journey with faith, clarity, and confidence.”

- **Connections:** This focal point is about discovering and deepening relationships beyond the walls of the individual ministry. We live in an interconnected world, and the transitional period provides rich opportunities to link with one's denomination, network with community organizations, and reach out in sacred service to others. It is also a wonderful time to update technologies and social media communications.
- **Leadership:** This focal point is about exploring membership needs in light of mission, and to organize and develop effective leadership to fulfill the mission. During the transitional period, it is important to recognize and honor leaders from the past. It is equally important to embrace new ideas, perspectives and leaders to help move the ministry forward. This focus on leadership is about everyone, and needs to focus not just on who leads, but identify gifts, skills and passions.
- **Future:** This focal point is about re-visioning and developing a future-oriented expression of the ministry's core values and mission. This may entail creating new vision and mission statements to galvanize the congregation, or it may be about re-connecting and re-committing to a mission that is still alive and meaningful for the congregation. This focal point is also about engaging new clergy who fit the passions and desires of the congregation, and who can align with them around the mission.

Transitional Consulting is especially important if:

- The previous minister had a long tenure with the ministry and is deeply loved by the community.
- There was tension with the departure of the previous minister.
- There is chronic anxiety in the congregation.
- The ministry is in decline or doesn't have a clear sense of identity.

We have a number of different transitional consulting options to address the unique needs of your congregation:

- **Full-Time Transitional Consulting:** These individuals work with a ministry in a full-time capacity, and provide some day-to-day support for the ministry. However, they serve in a special capacity, and their role is about working with the community, facilitating an exploration of the 5 focal points, and preparing for a permanent minister to lead them into a new future defined by their mission.
- **Part-Time Transitional Consulting:** These individuals are present in the ministry 2 weekends a month and the intervening period between. They facilitate transition processes, conduct 2 Sunday services, consult with the board and leadership, and support and guide as needed.
- **Monthly Transitional Consulting:** These individuals conduct transitional processes as needed, generally being present at the ministry one weekend a month in which they facilitate a process, conduct the Sunday service, and consult with the board and leadership.

Please contact UWM's Member Services (Cynthia Vermillion-Foster, [Cynthia@unity.org](mailto:Cynthia@unity.org)) to find out more about Transitional Consulting Services or to engage a consultant to assist you.