



# Atlantic Central District



District Newsletter

September 2015

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## TRANSITIONS PART TWO

*"There is a time for everything, and a season for everything under heaven",  
(Ecc. 3:1)*



We ended last month article on transitions with the need to "let go".

In William Bridges book **Transitions - Making Sense of Life's Changes**, he says *"Transitions begin with endings"*. Before we move to the *neutral zone* and *new beginnings* the next two phases in transitions, we need to look at 5 aspects of the natural ending experience:

*..Disengagement, dismantling, disidentification, disenchantment, and disorientation.* (p 109)

All these start with "dis" a letting go process. Jesus disengaged when he began his ministry by going into the wilderness for forty days. Bridges summarized these 5 aspects this way:

*Looking back at the five words starting with dis, note that only "disengagement" refers exclusively to external things.*

*"Dismantling" can be either an internal or an external process, and "disidentification," "disenchantment," and "disorientation" all refer to internal things. It is the internal things that really hold us to the past. (p 129)*

For churches, which means the people, must be willing to work through the internal pain, sacrifice, and grief so a new season, a *new beginning* can be born. This process of "dis" throws us in the *neutral zone*. The *neutral zone* is a time of unease, a sense of loss - emptiness. Bridges describes the *neutral zone* this way:

*In fact, the neutral zones is a time when the real business of transitions take place. It is a time when an inner*

*reorientation and realignment are occurring, a time when we are making the all-but-imperceptible shift from one season of life to the next. Although such shifts cannot occur without an ending, and although they cannot bear fruit without a new beginning, is in the neutral zone that the real work of transformation takes place. (p 154)*

Whether it is the individual or a church staying in "it" (*neutral zone*) and "it" is the only way out to a *new beginning*. Churches get busy with **new** programs or **new** ministries or **new** preachers all in hope going back to the good old days. Individuals want to skip the pain of the *neutral zone* for a quick fix many times.

We avoid the uneasiness of the *neutral zone*, the silence, the not knowing and rush to the **new** thing.

We see examples in Jesus' life where He trusted God in those times of emptiness, rest, or withdraw. Jesus spends forty days in the wilderness before His ministry begins, withdraws to a lonely place, before choosing the disciples. Jesus goes to the Garden of Gethsemane and asks the disciples to pray and He goes off to pray Himself - to be alone with God.

The *neutral zone* can be a time we retreat and pray. We allow God to speak instead of fast forwarding or putting it into reverse. Jesus teaches we must first die to be born again. The grave was the ultimate *neutral zone* for Jesus - His willingness to trust God.

Are we willing to let something die so a *new beginning* or blessings can emerge? Are we willing to stay in it (*neutral zone*) long enough to be transformed?

Bridges' three phases of transitions - *ending, neutral zone,* and *new beginnings* are a secular way of saying what we know as *repentance, forgiveness/prayer,* and *resurrection*. My challenge to all of us, individually and corporately (church), is - are we willing to take the steps of faith into an ending, allowing God to be with us in our unease (*neutral zone*) long enough to experience a *new beginning* with God?

Let me close with Jesus' response to Nicodemus, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the Kingdom of God unless they are born again". (John 3:3)

What is it God is calling you to "let go" of and live in the neutral zone long enough to experience new life?

**Blessings,**  
**Gary**

## IN THE DISTRICT

### **Could your church use a Courage Grant?**

In order to assist local church in their commitment to making faithful disciples of Jesus Christ, the Atlantic Central District Committee of Church Development makes **Courage Grants** available. The **Courage Grant** enables church to develop innovative ministry beyond existing ministries of the church. Up to 50% of the funds needed for the project can be approved for a courage grant, with the commitment of the local church matching the allocated amount.



To receive the application, contact the District office at (772)299-0255. Grant applications are then taken to the Leadership Council for their review and approval.



As an extension of the Florida Conference and local UMCs, we are grateful to partner in ministry with you to young adults attending  
**Florida State University and Tallahassee Community College!**

We are looking to connect with as many **FSU Wesley Alumni** as we can to keep them updated on how the ministry is impacting local churches and beyond. Two of the easiest ways for alumni to stay in the know is through our FSU/TCC Alumni Page at: <http://on.fb.me/1dZLoLY/>, or join the email list on the alumni page of our website: [www.fsuwesley.com](http://www.fsuwesley.com).

**FSU Wesley** will be saying farewell to the Chapel of the Upper Room on September 26<sup>th</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup>, 2015 and we are inviting all alumni, family and friends to celebrate with us prior to its demolition in November. A new, multipurpose building will be built in its place and used for worship, meals, events, offices, and meeting spaces. If you would like more information, check out the news page of our website: [www.fsuwesley.com](http://www.fsuwesley.com). Also, be on the lookout for an invitation in the mail!

We would appreciate it if you would share this information with your congregation, as we know many of our alumni relocate once they've graduated. **FSU Wesley Alumni** are living and serving in each district of the Florida Conference - whether as clergy, lay leaders,

worship leaders, youth leaders, church members, or church volunteers. We would love the opportunity to come and share some of the wonderful things happening in this ministry, and would appreciate if you could provide potential dates when we can come and speak about the vibrant ministry at **FSU Wesley!** To do so, please contact Christina Pacelle at [Christina@fsuwesley.com](mailto:Christina@fsuwesley.com) or (850) 222-0251.

## AROUND THE CONFERENCE

### **Celebrating 35 Years of Amazing Grace** 35th Annual Clergy Mates' Retreat



#### **Calling all mates of Florida UMC Conference Clergy!**

Please make plans now to join with other mates at the 35th Annual Clergy Mates Retreat, November 5-7 at the beautiful LEC in Fruitland Park. The fall is such a great time to renew friendships, make new ones and connect with our Lord and Savior. Come enjoy the camaraderie of your sisters and be inspired by daily messages, fun, food and good fellowship. For more information, contact Amy Hill at [amy12481@hotmail.com](mailto:amy12481@hotmail.com) or Amanda Britt at [aejbritt7@yahoo.com](mailto:aejbritt7@yahoo.com).

When: Thursday, November 5, 2015 to Saturday, November 7, 2015

Where: FL UMC Life Enrichment Center, 4991 Picciola Road, Fruitland Park, FL 34731

### **October Retreat Dates Announced by Florida UMM**

#### **Waking to God's Dream - UMM Fall Retreat - Weekend #1**

October 9-10, 2015 - "Waking to God's Dream"

Friday and Saturday only. Speakers include:

- Dick Wills - Retired Memphis Conference Bishop
- Dale Locke - Lead Pastor, Community of Hope UMC - Loxahatchee, FL
- Russ Graves - Florida Conference Lay Leader
- Community of Hope UMC Praise Band -



#### **Partnering With God - UMM Fall Retreat - Weekend #2**

October 23-25, 2015 - "Partnering with God"

Friday through Sunday morning. Speakers include:

- Rev. Ed Diaz - Founder, 71:17 Ministries - Lakeland, FL
- Dr. Max Wilkins - President, The Mission Society - Norcross, GA
- Lighthouse Worship Band - Coral Gables UMC - Coral Gables,



\$165 per person includes room, meals and program.

\$62 Saturday only with lunch and dinner.

Family Campground Camp Site: \$44.00

Program: \$41 per person  
Meals: \$48 per person

[Click here](#) for registration information

### ***Great Expectations for Boomers & Beyond***

One of the fastest-growing population segments is those beyond 50. Churches are struggling to keep up with and address the unique needs and wishes of this group. As a result, the Beyond 50 Ministries of the Florida Annual Conference and First United Methodist Church Winter Park (FUMCHWP) have partnered to present a special statewide event, Great Expectations for Boomers & Beyond.



This statewide conference is especially for:

- People 50 years of age and beyond.
- Members of the clergy interested in starting or improving their 50+ programs.
- Laity involved in leading ministries for those beyond 50.
- Anyone who wants to learn more about addressing the needs of this rapidly expanding population.

WHEN: October 22 - 24, 2015

WHERE: First United Methodist Church - Winter Park

Cost: \$125 per person

Note: Early-bird registration by September 1st is \$100.

Questions: Rev. Gary Rideout, 407-644-2906x223, [garyr@fumcwp.org](mailto:garyr@fumcwp.org)

For more information [Click here](#).

To register for the event go to [Register](#) or contact Kathy Marshall at 407-644-2906 ext 224

## CALENDAR

### September

**2 Clergy Meeting-all clergy - 9:30 at Lakewood Park UMC**

**7 Labor Day Holiday - office closed**

**17 Leadership Council - 10:00 at Lakewood Park UMC**

### October

**6 & 7 Clergy Gathering**

- 20 Administrative Staff Training - 9:00 at Rockledge UMC**
- 21 Administrative Staff Training - 9:00 at Community of Hope UMC**
- 22 Administrative Staff Training - 9:00 at First UMC, Vero Beach**