

Rev. Dr. Margret A. O'Neill, AIMIT – Interim Minister

I am an intentional interim minister. My great joy is to work with a congregation whose leaders are intentional, who understand the value of using the transitional time between settled ministries to come to a deeper understanding of the patterns, gifts and possibilities of the congregation, and to exploring avenues to strengthen the congregation's resources and skills for shared ministry. That is the work we are doing together at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo.

My commitment to transitional work in congregations grows out of my love for the deep and compelling work of organizational transformation: defining and centering on mission, creating healthy relational patterns, building leadership competence, developing ever greater power to transform both the people inside the walls and the world outside.

The work of congregational transition, as defined within the profession of intentional interim ministry, includes engagement with the history and identity of the congregation; strengthening lay and ministerial leadership; deepening connections to other congregations, districts and the national movement; and preparing the way for the ministry of the church as it creates and steps into its future. This work must take place with extensive participation and leadership of the congregation, transparency and trust in the process, and a deep appreciation for the resources, strengths and resilience of the assembled faith community.

Coming from a 35-year career in the public, not-for-profit and academic sectors prior to entering the Unitarian Universalist ministry, I have long experience in organizational analysis, facilitating processes for vision, discernment and decision-making, leadership development, creating and strengthening management systems, conflict resolution and mediation, inter-organizational collaboration, and development of community connections. I have been a leader and a facilitator in many roles and in many organizations, as a leader, a member and as an outside consultant. I also have long experience as a volunteer leader in a church, having taken on nearly every task in congregational life. My own transition into ministry has anchored for me the vital importance of open communication, mutual understanding, clear role definition and collaboration between the congregation and its minister.

My ministry is developmental and managerial, with a commitment to key areas of congregational life, including:

Management coherence and integrity, including staff leadership and team development, data systems, and communication;

Membership and stewardship, with a focus on responsible participation and the importance of a spiritual and institutional commitment for congregational health;

Shared ministry and leadership development in all areas of congregational life, including small group ministry, pastoral care, worship, and coherent systems of governance in covenantal relationship;

Worship and Music as a collaborative venture that reaches across and connects generations and diverse values as the spiritual center of congregational life;

Lifespan Religious Education for faith development that explores possibilities, deepens connection and enriches lives of commitment in the congregation;

Social Justice to support congregational initiatives with integrated social-justice themed worship services, outreach and community presence in interfaith coalitions

I love church, I value continuity, I embrace change. It is a joy to do this work with you.