

Transitions are hard, very hard and yet transitions are a constant in our lives. Here I sit in the middle of my empty house waiting for the movers to arrive and deliver the furniture. Transitions are like seasons, moving from autumn to winter, winter to spring, spring to summer. So I trust that as the movers come in with my furniture and my mess, you'll come join me in my transition.

The United Methodist Church is in the midst of many transitions. Our church is being reformed and renewed through discernment and clarity of identity. But the uncertainty and anxiety that often accompany transitions can overwhelm and blind us to God's future. Pastors and their families are most adept to seasons of discernment leading to transitions. Appointment changes in transition impact everybody involved - churches and pastors and pastors families. It's easy to forget that United Methodist pastoral appointments are for only one year at a time. Whether it's a transition in your personal life or a transition in your church, moving from what was to what will be is very scary and unsettling. And it can make us lose sight of God's desires for our beautiful future.

Anxiety in transition is as real as the paralysis I'm experiencing facing these cardboard boxes with precious movers bringing in furniture. All of this contains some mystery from my life in Mississippi. So may we decide together that we will first breathe. Don't let the transition and anxiety take away your breath. Then we can decide together that when we experience anxiety, we will turn it into prayer.

In Philippians, we hear these words, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Turn your anxiety into a request to God. That's prayer. Transitions don't get the last word. God is with us, sustaining us through our transitions, and we never transition alone. We do it together.

So if I'm feeling a little anxious, uncertain, or overwhelmed because of these boxes that have been delivered, I will turn it into a prayer for all of you feeling the overwhelm of transition. I'm praying for God's comfort and peace and joy and hope to be upon you through your transition, through your church's transition. Will you do the same for me? I need to go now and empty these boxes and pray for you. Perhaps experiencing God's grace and peace through transitions is but another way we learn to practice graceful hospitality.