



Diocese of Toronto
Anglican Church of Canada

2021 Diocese of Toronto Clergy Conference
Leading in a Liminal Season
June 8 & 9, 2021

Susan Beaumont is a consultant, coach, author and spiritual director.

Susan has worked with hundreds of congregations and denominational bodies across the United States and in Canada. She is known for her ground-breaking work in the leadership dynamics of large congregations.

Before establishing her own practice, Susan worked for nine years as a Senior Consultant with the Alban Institute. Susan has also served on the faculty of two business schools, teaching graduate level courses in leadership, management and organizational behavior. She has corporate experience in human resource management and organizational development. She currently teaches at Wesley Theological Seminary.



Susan is the author of [How to Lead When You Don't Know Where You're Going: Leading in a Liminal Season](#), and [Inside the Large Congregation](#). She is co-author of [When Moses Meets Aaron: Staffing and Supervision in the Large Congregation](#).

Rev. Beaumont is an ordained minister within the American Baptist Churches, USA.

Susan's educational background includes a M.B.A. from Northwestern University and a M.Div. from McCormick Theological Seminary. She is a graduate of the Shalem Institute Spiritual Guidance program.

Susan is known for engaging the best of business practice, filtered through the lens of careful theological reflection. She moves easily between discernment and decision making, and nurtures the soul of the leader along with the soul of the institution.

Leading in a Liminal Season

In the fall of 2019 Susan Beaumont published the book, *How to Lead When You Don't Know Where You're Going: Leading in a Liminal Season*. One wonders if she knew how relevant the book would become a few months later, thanks to a global pandemic.

Liminal lim·i·nal | \ 'li-mə-nəl, adjective: of, relating to, or being an intermediate state, phase, or condition: in-between, transitional *2021 Merriam-Webster, Incorporated*

While many words have been used to describe 2020 liminal seems to be a very good description of how many of us are feeling. Over the course of two days Susan will guide us through 4 sessions on Leading in a Liminal Season.

Session 1: Negotiating a Liminal Season

Liminality refers to the quality of ambiguity or disorientation that occurs during transition, when a person or group of people is in between something that has ended and something else that is not yet ready to begin. During this session, we introduce liminality and explore the challenges and opportunities facing organizations in liminal space. We will explore this pandemic season as a liminal season requiring a unique leadership stance and a different body of leadership work.

Session Two: Engaging the Soulfulness of the Institution

The soul is the authentic and truest self of the organization, the source of its divine calling and character, and the protector of institutional integrity. In liminal seasons we rely upon the soul of the institution to guide our leadership choices and our learning. This session explores spiritual shifts and practices that will help leaders connect with the soul of the institutions they lead.

Session Three: Moving from Decision Making to Discernment

Most congregations rely on rational decision making to guide their leadership choices. Liminal seasons invite us to shift out of rational decision-making mode and into a discerning mindset. Discernment is an attentiveness to God that, over time, develops into a shared sense of God's intention for us and our community now. During this session, we will explore the challenge of working with discernment in communal settings during times of high anxiety and uncertainty.

Session Four: Coaxing Order out of Chaos

Eventually, the disorientation we are experiencing will find resolution. The process by which this happens is known as emergence. Reorientation will occur; it is the natural order of things for coherence to emerge out of chaos. Emergence is naturally leaderless activity. Leaders cannot manage the process on behalf of the organization, but leaders can nurture a climate of disruption, innovation, learning and risk-taking, supporting the emergence of new order as it appears. In this final session of the four-part series, we will focus on inviting meaning making, finding new purpose, and fostering innovation.