The Sacred Work of Ministry

October invites us to pause and give thanks for the faithful leaders who serve our congregations and communities with love, courage, and grace. Clergy appreciation month is not just a date on the calendar; it is an opportunity to recognize the sacred and often unseen work of those who walk beside us in times of joy and sorrow, who proclaim hope when the world feels uncertain, and who help us stay rooted in the promises of God. In the United Church of Christ, we understand that ministry is more than a role or a title; it is a living covenant. The Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers remind us that our ministry is grounded in ongoing spiritual formation, a deepening relationship with God, and a commitment to serving others with integrity. These marks guide clergy as they nurture their own spiritual well-being, engage in lifelong learning, build healthy relationships, and embody Christ's compassion in the world.

The work of ministry is both deeply personal and profoundly communal. Every sermon preached, every meeting led, every bedside prayer offered reflects the partnership between clergy, congregations, and the wider church. Together we participate in Gods transformative work each doing our part to create spaces of belonging, healing, and grace. As a Conference, we also recognize the unique challenges of sustaining one's spirit while caring for the spirits of others. In the months ahead we are offering opportunities for renewal and reflection through a series of gatherings on navigating burnout and reconnecting with one's call to ministry. Led by Rev. Nicole Havelka of Defy the Trend (defythetrend.com), this series including two online sessions and an overnight retreat is offering space for clergy to pause reflect and restore.

As we celebrate this month, I invite you to take a moment to express appreciation for the clergy, chaplains and spiritual caregivers who serve among us. A simple note, a word of encouragement, or an act of kindness can mean more than you know. Let us also remember our retired clergy and let them know that their ministry matters that their presence, faithfulness, and care continue to make a difference in the life of your church and community.

To all who serve in authorized ministry within the Florida Conference, thank you. Your dedication, creativity, and courage are a blessing to the church and to the world. May you find renewal in this season and remember that you are not alone in the work to which you are called.

With gratitude and peace,
Rev. Michelle Taylor
ACM for Committee on Ministry and Clergy Care,
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