# Planting Life in Liminality: Thresholds are Spaces of Hope

Liminality is a theological concept drawn from the Latin word for "threshold"- it describes those uncertain, transitional spaces between what was and what will be. In anthropology, it refers to moments in rites of passage when participants stand "betwixt and between"; old identities and new possibilities. For churches, liminality occurs whenever the future is unclear, traditions are unsettled, and communities must adapt without knowing what comes next. Rather than a place of comfort, liminal space is often marked by ambiguity, vulnerability, and spiritual openness—where God leads into new forms of life even as old patterns fall away.

***Narratives of Hope*** Jeremiah 29:1, 4-7 was written to people going through significant change, yet the message goes beyond exile to speak to every community in transitional times. God's word, "Build houses and live in them, plant gardens and eat what they produce…seek the welfare of the city," is not just about survival but about finding purpose in uncertain places. Likewise, the story of Naaman (2 Kings 5:1-15) focuses on a commander who finds healing through humility and unexpected guidance—his transformation only occurs when he dares to step into the unknown. Liminality is neither loss nor arrival—it is the holy ground of becoming, a "messy gap"; where familiar comforts are left behind and new identities are just beginning to form. For Florida Conference churches navigating leadership changes, demographic shifts, or cultural transitions, this in-between space is sacred and generative.

***Possibility*** Liminality is not stagnation but invitation. God calls communities in liminal times to plant gardens of hope, invest in relationships, and seek the welfare of neighbors. These actions create new patterns for flourishing.

***Humility and Healing*** Like Naaman, churches discover deep renewal not by grasping for control but by learning from unexpected voices and trusting God's quiet work in uncertainty.

***Interconnectedness*** Healing and growth in liminal seasons arise when communities recognize that their well-being is bound to the dignity and freedom of others.

**Practices for the In-Between:**

- ***Sow Seeds of Hope*** Invest in life and relationships where you are, even when outcomes are unclear.
- *Extend Radical Hospitality* Learn from and embrace those at the margins, honoring gifts that emerge from places of vulnerability.
- ***Rooted in Identity and Mission*** Like Indigenous communities who share resources without losing their sacred stories, maintain faith foundations while engaging the wider world.
- ***Embrace Uncertainty*** Accept that liminal space is uncomfortable, yet trust that God creates new life in the "betwixt and between".

Liminality challenges and transforms. The Florida Conference is called to see the transitional season not as emptiness but as a threshold for God's surprising possibilities. By planting, building, and seeking the welfare of neighbors, churches become agents of hope and renewal, living out a theology of the present and trusting God's grace at work in every in-between moment. May our congregations flourish in liminality—marked by humility, hospitality, and radical openness to God's new creation.

Rev. LaTrell Harrison
ACM for Search and Call and Congregational Care
Florida Conference United Church of Christ
October 16, 2025