



June 14, 2014

Dear Prospective Ministers:

It was my good fortune to serve as ministerial intern at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Tampa a few years ago, and I want to share what a blessing it was to be part of this warm, welcoming and committed group, to be nurtured by them, and to learn from their good example of what it means to be a healthy religious community.

Mine was the first internship that UUCT had hosted, and they could not have done a better job. Under the supervision of Rev. Sara Zimmerman, I was mentored by a superb committee of wise church leaders, past and present. I was given every opportunity to learn and to participate in all aspects of church life, and I was warmly welcomed from the first day of my internship through to my ordination. I formed many lasting friendships there, and it's been a joy to occasionally return and reconnect ever since.

Having known them now for the last five years, I want to highlight several special qualities of this congregation for you to consider in choosing your next settlement:

First, this church has an unusually clear sense of its mission in the larger community that directly informs its priorities: a central emphasis on religious education and spiritual growth for people of all ages. This focus befits a church that is set in the heart of the Tampa Bay region's largest academic, technology and medical research center and one that has attracted an open, diverse and authentically inclusive group of religious seekers of all stripes. From Pagan to Christian, Buddhist to Humanist these are people who genuinely value learning from one another. It was this shared vision that led the church to prioritize the building of a new RE center a few years ago. It's also reflected in a vibrant group of young adults and a disproportionately large children's RE program, both of which are unusual in Florida.

Second, UUCT is an emotionally mature congregation with a healthy appreciation of ministry, a long practice of good governance, and a clear understanding of differentiated roles. I experienced lay leaders who embraced their responsibility for improving and sustaining the institution, understood themselves to be in a shared ministry with professional leadership to foster the growth of the church and the wellbeing of its members, and relied upon the minister for religious leadership and direction of all the related programs. I was witness to a mutually supportive relationship that fostered continued learning and improvement.

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If this all sounds like a good fit with you and your calling to ministry, I hope you will seriously consider the UU Church of Tampa. You will find abundant generosity of spirit, health, vitality and great promise for continued growth-- both personally and as a congregation.

Best wishes for a successful journey through the settlement process. Please feel free to contact me at any time (contact info below) if I can answer questions about the UU Church of Tampa or offer help along the way.

In shared ministry,

Rev. Brock Leach