



17747 Esprit Drive
Tampa, Fl 33647

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revsaraz@aol.com

Dear Potential Candidates and Colleagues,

Now a year after retiring from full-time ministry and my settled position at UUCT, I see clearly some things we did well together, and some of our growing edges as congregation and minister. I share these insights with you for their potential value to you in your discernment while in search.

The things we did well together:

- Nurturing, supporting, mentoring
 - Supporting Jay Wolin who approached me to be his intern supervisor. Initially, my enthusiasm to become Jay's supervisor was not matched by Board members, who were unfamiliar with UU roles and expectations of interns and supervisors, and expressed some reluctance and concern that it would take too much of my time. Soon, however, they agreed, and later, they could not have been more proud to have had a part in Jay's success. They were becoming a Teaching Church.
 - Then, for the next two years, nurturing, supporting, and mentoring, first Brock Leach, and then Roger Grugel in their part-time internships while each completed units as student chaplains at Tampa General Hospital.
 - Supporting the choice of the RE Search Committee's selection of UUCT member Erin Powers to be the new DRE, and nurturing and supporting Erin in this new role. I had urged Erin to apply – this was a by-the-book search – and rejoice now when I hear about her continued success, and her enthusiasm for this role.
 - Supporting Katie Culbert in her choice of resigning her long-held role as DRE to attend Meadville Lombard Theological School with a goal of parish ministry. Katie is now entering her fourth and final year at MLTS and is currently interning at the Clearwater church.

- Offering (non-monetary) support and nurturing me while I completed the Doctor of Ministry at MLTS. At the time of my call in 2007, I was mid-way through the requirements. I am grateful for the support and encouragement the congregation gave me during the next two years when I needed to attend one-week intensive classes in Chicago. (I received the D. Min. in 2009.)
- Supporting my initiative to apply to the Fund for Unitarian Universalism for a grant to create a UU curriculum entitle, “Spirituality, Science and Healing.” Members of the church wrote letters to the Fund in support of the project, and the Fund approved a grant of 5K benefitting UUCT; the money was used to support the videography of Sunday morning sermons by six presenters (two ministers, and four lay persons) and their transportation costs to Tampa. All sermons were filmed in the sanctuary of UUCT. The completed project is available as a DVD. It includes the Adult RE curriculum “Spirituality, Science and Healing” as six sermons and downloadable PDF file of a six-session Instructional Guide.
- Getting the building built!
 - Mutual support and hand-holding and cooperative spirit (with a few very minor skirmishes) while we completed a long anticipated building project together: the beautiful multi-purpose, RE building.

Some of the things we could have done better together; a few of the growing edges:

- None of the interns were paid.
- Raises and benefits were not always a priority because of other financial demands on the budget.
- Social justice issues were not adequately addressed.

I am aware that UUCT is addressing the financial needs, including the need to keep the staff salaries at least within UUA guidelines, and am glad to hear that. Overall, I recommend the UU Church of Tampa as a great place to be, with some unbelievably outstanding, excellent lay leaders. As the only UU church in Hillsborough County, it has the potential to grow its membership and become a well-establish program church.

My best to you in your process,

Sara

Rev. Dr. Sara Zimmerman