



Southern
Region



Winter 2015

My Colleague,

Let me be among the first to welcome your interest in a ministry in Florida. There are challenges and delights for Unitarian Universalism in the Sunshine State.

Our congregation in Tampa is a growth opportunity waiting to happen. After a stabilizing and effective ministry by Sara Zimmerman, and an enlivening interim with Doak Mansfield, the congregation is healthy and well poised for its future. This is a good congregation ready for effective ministerial leadership.

The Tampa Bay is historically underserved, given its population. There is room for significant growth, in numbers and in social impact for Unitarian Universalism. The congregation is a broad and deeply giving congregation. They have made significant progress in recent years focusing their ministry. In church speak, they are more than ready to move from *pastoral* to *program* church size.

The addition of a new multi-purpose/education center has fulfilled a long held dream, demonstrating the congregation's capacity and faith in itself. Given the congregation's proximity to the University, there is an opportunity for a vigorous campus ministry to students and faculty. The city of Tampa is a vibrant, diverse culture. A Unitarian Universalist minister can readily find a voice in the cultural conversation.

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Tampa is part of the Florida District, linking congregations together in clusters and shared learning experiences. The Florida UUMA meets twice annually, in the fall for depth learning experiences, and for three days prior to the annual assembly in April. As Florida is a diverse and large geography, these collegial gatherings are essential to a healthy ministry.

The Florida District, in turn, is part of the Southern Region which unites Florida with Southwestern, Mid-South, and the Southeast Districts in collaborative programs of ministry. Served by an innovative team of ten field staff, the Region champions congregational health, leadership development, and serves to increase our impact on the larger society, an ambition captured in our slogan, "Evangelizing the South for Unitarian Universalism."

Florida, now the third largest state, has much to have earned the nickname of "paradise." It is a great place to live. However, it is not the Garden of Eden. Economically, environmentally, and culturally there are challenges for ministry. If you have energy for outreach, you will find fellow travelers also seeking to promote human dignity, social justice, and an environmental respect for this beautiful place.

Please give me a direct call if I an address question's that arise as you consider this ministry. I look forward to the day of personally welcoming you here!

Reverend Kenneth Gordon Hurto
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