

FIRST UNITARIAN  
CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY  
**BROOKLYN**  
A UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

**Transforming Lives**

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(Member since January 15, 2017)



My first experience with Unitarian Universalism was during an ethnography project. I attended services in order to study the subculture in this small town in Georgia. I attended services with a notebook, taking notes on the sermons, the music choices, the way the congregants behaved during and after services. As part of this study, I interviewed one of my professors who regularly attended services. I expected something basic and vaguely hippie-ish. I did not expect my professor to confess her trauma of being sexually assaulted in her church community when she was a child. She talked to me of how UU congregations became a healing space for her to access her spirituality again and come to a better wholeness in herself.

As a child, I was extremely spiritual, but that part of me didn't come with me as I aged. I became disillusioned with the Catholic church I grew up in. I watch those who attended UU services gather together because they wanted to, not because they were worried about the fate of their souls if they did not. However, I never attended regularly.

When I moved to New York, I called my friend who happens to be a theology student complaining about the difficulty of moving to a new city and the struggle of making friends as an adult. Especially in trying to make other gay friends outside of a bar setting. His suggestion was to join a church, to which I laughed. He knew my struggles with Christianity and he sent me several links to New York LGBT friendly religious communities and First U was among them. At First U, I found a thriving young adult community, a spiritual community that saw LGBT perspectives as important, and a group that felt that conversations about belief were possible without lecturing.

I learned, at First U, that I was allowed to have a spirituality and religion that included all of me and my complexities. That saw my identities and my trauma is integral to my spiritual journey, not hurdles to be overcome. That I didn't need to be confident in my answers. That beliefs could be followed through with actions. And that I could change my mind. And that is the healing I needed.

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