

# BROOKLYN

The First Unitarian Congregational Society in Brooklyn  
A UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

48 Monroe Place, Brooklyn, New York 11201 Website: [www.fuub.org](http://www.fuub.org)

Phone: 718-624-5466 • Fax: 718-797-2916 Email: [office@fuub.org](mailto:office@fuub.org)



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Dear First U Community,

Hi, my name's Ethan Loewi—I'm a second-year seminarian at Yale Divinity School, and I'm thrilled to have the chance to serve as your new Intern Minister! A little about me, starting with dull background data: I spent the first 13 years of my life in beautiful Portland, Oregon, where I was raised by a coven of middle-aged hippies. I was an English major at Harvard, before earning my MFA in creative writing (fiction) at New York University. I'm currently pursuing an MDiv—my second master's degree—and at this point just want to be done with school by my late forties. I'm an aspiring minister in the Unitarian Universalist tradition, and spent this summer working as a chaplain at the VA hospital in West Haven, Connecticut. I currently live in New Haven for its proximity to my classes, but lived in Brooklyn prior, and plan to move back the second I get the chance. My body is usually in Connecticut; my heart is always in Gowanus.

My mother is an organist, so I grew up in church; my father is Jewish and secular. The result was a multi-faith childhood that sparked a lifelong fascination with religion. It's also in my ancestral water supply, so to speak: my maternal grandfather founded one of the largest Christian radio stations in Ohio, and my father's side of the family tree holds a number of rabbis. I've long been drawn to the gifts of religious community: the wisdom, fellowship, and inspiration it can bring, as well as the social good it can accomplish. I'm eager to work with your community to realize that promise, and profoundly grateful for the opportunity.

My first service at First U will be Sunday, August 25<sup>th</sup>: I'd love to see you there, and have the chance to meet. The service is about being in process: the important, perpetual, challenging work of trying to live our values as a religious

community. At the risk of tipping my hand, the sermon I'm delivering makes the case that we will always be in process: there is no perfect, utopian state we can reach, where all our ideals are concretized forever. So, we should take a deep breath, forgive each other our imperfections, and focus on what we can do to help others today. Immersed in a single sacred moment—a single act of helping someone—I think our worries and divisions melt away. The title I'm using is "The Moment of the Rose," taken from this T.S. Eliot line:

**The moment of the rose and the moment of the yew-tree  
Are of equal duration.**

To make my point a bit more clearly: I believe that in our finite time, and finite work, we will find pockets of infinity. Anyways—thanks for reading my spiel, and looking forward to meeting all of you in person!

--Ethan