

BROOKLYN

The First Unitarian Congregational Society in Brooklyn

A UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

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Dear First Unitarian,

The sense of community and spiritual depth at the First Unitarian Congregational Society of Brooklyn excited my wife, Yumi, and I on our first visit over the summer when we first moved to Brooklyn. Now this fall, I am humbled and honored to be your new Community Minister!

In the Unitarian Universalist tradition, a Community Minister, also known as an Affiliate Minister, is a minister whose primary ministry is in the wider community. In my case, I am the Co-Director of the [Unitarian Universalist Ministry for Earth](#) (UUMFE) a public ministry to promote spiritual grounding, education and accountable actions with our congregations to cultivate environmental justice. The Affiliate Ministry role allows me to connect meaningfully to you at First Unitarian, for occasional preaching, teaching, and social justice work. I will be officially ordained to the UU Ministry on December 4th at First Church Boston.

In some ways, I'm in the family business. My 92 years young Portuguese American grandfather, Joseph, is a deacon in the Catholic Church, my Grandmother Cora is a retired religious education director, my mother, Cynthia, is a teacher, my father Bill is a homeless outreach worker, and my sister, Neha, and my brother David Uttam, have worked in health and the arts. While all of our languages of faith might not be exactly the same, their ongoing commitment to community work and religious practice is a family lesson I keep close.

I'm shaped by the people and places of my hometown, Providence, Rhode Island. I carry vivid memories of the industrial pollution in the rivers from my youth. Those memories inspire my work. Prior to seminary, I was a teacher in the small but mighty former mill town of Fall River, Massachusetts, and later development director for an early childhood literacy program in Oakland, California.

I'm a graduate of Brown University, Harvard Graduate School of Education, and most recently Boston University School of Theology, graduating in May. At BU, I was inspired by the ongoing legacy of Howard Thurman, a 20th Century Civil Rights leader and

teacher who was committed to inter-faith, inter-racial work for justice and healing. (You can read more on Thurman [here](#)).

My wife Yumi is an attorney at Etsy, is committed to young women's empowerment, and active in several non-profits. Yumi and I moved to Brooklyn this summer from Boston, and are excited to call this borough and now, First Unitarian, home!

Best Regards,

Daniel Lawlor