

Dear UU Congregation of the Hudson Valley,

The kindness of the community at UU Congregation of the Hudson Valley was my first impression upon guest preaching this winter. I could tell the care and intentionality practiced by the worship committee in preparation for Sunday, and was inspired by your passion for Religious Education and your commitment to Allies for Racial Equity. My wife, Yumi, and I are inspired by caring communities seeking to connect and do good. I am humbled and honored to be your new part-time Contract Minister!

In the Unitarian Universalist tradition, a Contract Minister, sometimes known as a Consulting Minister, is a minister hired by the congregation's board for specific, defined supports and tasks related to the mission and worship life of the congregation. As a part-time minister, I will be with you for two Sunday worship services per month starting in September, with weekly availability on Wednesdays and the equivalent of one other weekday. This will average out to 20 hours per week. In addition to the UU Congregation of the Hudson Valley, I am the part-time Co-Director for the Unitarian Universalist Ministry for Earth, a public ministry to promote spiritual grounding, education and accountable actions with our Unitarian Universalist congregations to cultivate environmental justice.

I was officially ordained to the UU Ministry on December 4, 2021 at First Church Boston, and am the affiliated Community Minister with the First Unitarian Congregational Society in Brooklyn.

In some ways, I'm in the family business. My dear, late 92 years young Portuguese American grandfather, Joseph Braga, was a 40 year 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, work in hospitality 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 - and the impact of the pollution on people and family- inspire my work. Prior to seminary, I was a teacher in the small but mighty former milltown 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 Summa Cum Laude in May 2021. At BU, I was inspired by the ongoing legacy of Rev. Dr. 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 NYU grad, an attorney at Etsy, and is committed to non-profits supportive of young women's empowerment. Yumi and I moved to Brooklyn last summer from Boston, and are grateful to call New York our chosen home.

I'm excited to be in ministry with you!

Best Regards,
Rev. Daniel Lawlor