



6/9/2021 SPECIAL EDITION-INTERIM MINISTER

The Board of the Unitarian Society of Hartford
and the Interim Minister Search Committee
are very pleased announce
our incoming Interim Minister starting August 15, 2021

Reverend Terry Cummings



In this time of transition, there will be many new beginnings. As USH entered the search for an interim minister earlier this year, the Board and the Interim Search Committee received your input to understand your ideas and feelings about USH's interim minister over the next two years while we prepare to call our next settled minister.

We sought a minister who embodies compassion, leads spiritually nourishing worship, is called to pastoral care, and will guide USH on a caring and transformative learning journey through this next chapter of our congregational life.

We are thankful to have matched with Reverend Terry.

Her passion for ministry, rich life experiences, commitment to justice and caring heart made her our first choice. We are thrilled that we were her first choice as well, and have faith that she will support USH well over the next two years.

Four ways that you can begin to get to know Reverend Terry:

1. Read Rev. Terry's **Greeting Letter to the Congregation** below
 2. Watch Rev. Terry's [Video to USH](#) below
 3. Visit www.TerryCummings.org to learn more about Reverend Terry and her ministry
 4. [Register to attend](#) the **UU Annual Women's Breakfast (via Zoom), Wed. June 23 from 10:00-11:45 am.**
- Rev. Terry will leading prayers during the event and all are welcome.



A Letter from Reverend Terry

Dear Members and Friends of the Unitarian Society of Hartford,

We are beginning our journey together at a unique moment in history.

The world is reeling from the effects of a global pandemic.

Our country often feels like a house divided along political, racial, class and religious lines.

Against this backdrop, USH is undergoing a change in ministerial leadership, which often brings up many complex feelings and emotions.

I am beginning my service to you at a time when many are experiencing personal grief, as well as the collective grief that so often accompanies traumatic events like the pandemic.

A colleague of mine remarked a few months ago that we Unitarian Universalists have a habit of moving from outrage to action, without giving ourselves the time we need to lament. To cry out to the universe that all is not well.

Perhaps you, like me, sometimes feel that you need permission to express grief.

I pray that we all may know that we have that permission, granted to us by the Spirit of Life, to take the time to shed some tears right now. Or do whatever else we might need to do in order to find comfort in a world that has been turned upside down.

I am sure that many of you will be curious to know more about your new interim minister, and in the months ahead I will certainly share many things about myself, and my two grown children, and grandchildren.

I thought, however, that I would start by sharing with you a personal story from my childhood.

When I was about twelve years old, my history teacher shared with the class that the day before he had played tennis with our school physical

education teacher, and won. This news troubled my ordered childhood world.

Up to that point in my life, I had imagined that our teachers were the best at what their job title was. Thus, I expected my history teacher to know more about history than, say, my geography or my physics teacher. And, I expected that by virtue of being the physical education teacher, that person would always be able to win a tennis match with the history teacher.

This turned out to be an important life lesson, that life is not neatly ordered, and labels and job titles do not always have exclusive meanings.

This lesson from my childhood, which disrupted my simple and neat view of the world, has stayed with me during my career in ministry. My role as the spiritual leader of the congregation does not mean that I am the most spiritual person in the community. I am sure that I will encounter many among you who are deeply centered spiritually.

I also fully expect that there will be more well-read theologians than me. There will be folks who are more available to do social justice work than me. And there will be those among you who are better managers than me. There are probably very few things with regard to which I will be the most accomplished person in the church.

Perhaps it is because of my childhood memory that I am comfortable with the knowledge that ministry does not require that I always be the best at everything the congregation does. This will allow me to focus on the work of

building trust in the ministerial role in the congregation. It will help me to focus on the things that are central to my call as a minister, above all else, trying always to lead with love.

I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to serve as your minister over the next two years. These are some of the most uncertain of times, to be sure, in the world of Unitarian Universalism.

For me, there is no better time to be in ministry than right now, with the world as imperfect and as challenging as it is. I would not want to be serving at a time when there were no challenges, where everything was smooth sailing. Somehow, that would not feel like ministry to me.

And, I am confident in our chosen faith. I am optimistic that we UUs will endure, and grow in faith and in commitment to our shared values as we move ahead together.

I am looking forward to meeting you all, to walking beside you in your journey of discernment and search for your new minister.

Thank you again, for this great opportunity.

In faith, Rev. Terry Cummings

What's next?

In the coming weeks, Reverend Terry will be relocating to the Hartford area from York, PA.

Her first official day as Interim Minister will be August 15th, 2021.

She will spend time in August and early September getting to know our staff on a daily basis, meet with Board members and other leaders, and learn about the congregation.

Reverend Terry will lead Sunday Worship for the first time at In Gathering, which will be held in-person in the Meeting House sanctuary on September 12th.

Watch your e-news for upcoming news and updates!