

March 6, 2019

Greetings, members and friends of the Community Unitarian Universalist Congregation at White Plains, and a special “Hello!” to the children and youth.

I am delighted to be joining the CUUC staff in July! Faith community has held a central place in my life. As the daughter of a United Methodist Minister, I grew up witnessing the work of nurturing intentional community and appreciating the richness of relationships that bloom as a result. I honor my UMC roots and am grateful for Unitarian Universalism where I have been able to deepen my spiritual practice. For over ten years, I have been a UU Religious Educator and have served the other four UU congregations in Westchester County, twice serving two congregations simultaneously.

Last year, I had the pleasure of working with your Coming of Age youth and leaders when they attended the COA Credo Writing Retreat at Murray Grove, where we followed a curriculum I co-authored. COA and other aspects of youth ministry are important in a congregation’s Religious Education program. With two high school youth of my own, I see firsthand the intensity of teenager’s lives and their need for activities that support and engage them without overloading their already demanding schedules. On Sunday, March 17, we invite 6th–12th grade youth from all five congregations to connect with each other and explore ways in which you might like to build community. I look forward to spending the morning with CUUC youth!

Ongoing professional development and service to our denomination has kept me up to date with evolving approaches and resources for RE. I have held a number of leadership roles through the Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA) Metro NY Chapter as well as Continental LREDA, the Fahs Collaborative Laboratory for Innovations in Faith Formation, the Unitarian Universalist Association, and among Westchester UUs.

I embrace the call to live into the shared values of our faith and lean into ongoing learning. My spiritual practice is grounded in justice making, especially related to racial equity and TLGBPQ+ rights.

My education and experience include a Bachelor's degree in Political Science from Northern Illinois University, a Master's degree in Political Science from the *Universidade de Brasília*, Brasil, and a Master's degree (Ph.D. candidate) in Conflict Analysis & Resolution from George Mason University. I have over twenty-five years of experience as an educator that includes teaching undergraduate- and graduate-level courses in conflict transformation at George Mason University, Columbia University, and in the Dispute Resolution Program at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, CUNY. I bring these tools and skills into the service of my colleagues as a Good Officer for the Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA), and they are occasionally useful in congregational life.

The greatest source of joy in my life are my teenage sons, Aiden and Logan, and my partner, JR.

I look forward to learning more about the CUUC community and RE program, and exploring how we can work together toward your vision for RE. My gratitude to Christine Haran, Al Rocchi, Rev. Meredith, and the search committee for their service in this process and for their warm welcome.

In faith, Tracy Breneman