

*An Invitation to All Members and Friends of
The Unitarian Universalist Church of Birmingham*

*From your Ministerial Candidate
The Reverend Lone Jensen Broussard*



Let us get to know one another!

I write this letter of introduction with an open heart and a sense of destiny and joy. By now most of you will know that I have accepted the Search Committee's offer to be your candidate for the settled ministry at UUCB. Now our task is to get to know one another better during the meet the candidate week of May 7-17. Please bring your hopes for the future, your questions and any concerns you may have.

For my part these are some of the reasons I believe we are a good match: You are a congregation that I would be proud to serve with your civil rights history and your continued work for social justice. This gives us a strong foundation and identity on which we can build as we look toward a new decade of shared ministry. I understand and appreciate Unitarian Universalism in the South, the courage it once took and sometimes still takes to declare one's self a member, and how important it is to have a beloved community such as UUCB.

As a minister, I bring years of experience with congregations in the South and in the South West. I am at a point in my life where I have nothing to prove and no agenda other than to help a congregation become the very best it can and wants to be.

I know the last few years have been challenging for this congregation when it comes to ministry and that before we can build a true shared ministry there must be a sense of trust. The first step is for us to get to know one another. So, I have included the first few pages of my Ministerial Packet, my life and work experience, and a link to the packet should you wish to learn more. I am looking forward to getting to meet all of you and hear some of your stories in a few weeks.

Ministry is how we all build the Beloved Community-Together!

Peace and Blessings

Lone Jensen Broussard

http://www.arizonastreet.com/lone_jensen_broussard/ministerial_packet_nov_2009.pdf

It is a large file and takes about 2 minutes to load.



The Danish Cajun connection: with my husband Bruce at my Citizenship Ceremony

Life and Work

My early roots are in Denmark where I was born and lived until my 18th year. It was a country marked by the recent occupation and war. I grew up with a deep appreciation for suffering, the value of freedom and how one has to make a moral choice. I also grew up in the State Church in the liberal Lutheran tradition though my father was a freethinker who told me that Jesus was a great teacher and a man. My parents were both educators. My mother was forty when I was born and my father was born in 1889. He was a writer and a great storyteller, qualities I may have inherited. He told me about the Nordic Gods and the Sagas and what the world used to be like when he was a child. To this day, I value knowing history and tradition as a wellspring of spiritual resources. My brother and I grew up rather lonely. So I read voraciously and lived in my own fantasy world.

At fourteen I was confirmed into the Lutheran faith. Shortly afterwards I became a confirmed atheist. The world seemed rudderless, out of kilter, and I wrestled with the question of how a good God could allow so much suffering and death of the innocent.

Personally I went through a turbulent, depressed period as I struggled with my morals, my life, my hormones and how to make sense of any of it.

At 18, I fell in love with an Iraqi veterinarian who was studying in Denmark. We married and I went to live in Baghdad, Iraq, for more than six years. During those years, I got to know Islam as my in-laws were Shiite Muslims and I found parts of this religion very attractive. I especially liked the image of the faceless, nameless Allah who is far greater than any human imagination. Of course, there were also things with which I could not agree, such as legalistic requirements that seemed out of touch with modern life. My in-laws, especially my mother-in-law, were kind and loving and overall it was a good experience. My son was born in 1965. The political situation was unstable with several coups and shortly after the Baathist party got back into power we realized we had to leave. So I know first hand what it is like to live under political tyranny and in fear. We emigrated to the States where I spent the next five years putting my husband through school and working many "pink collar jobs" in retail. We lived in Ames, Iowa, Champaign-Urbana, Illinois, and St. Louis, Missouri. Then he got a job as assistant professor at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. Shortly after that, we were divorced.

The next few years I spent in school while working full time and taking care of my son. After graduation, I worked as an Art Therapist and later taught art both at the university level and in the schools. But something was missing in my life. For years I had tried different churches and synagogues but I would always come up against their creed, words I could not say and believe. One day a friend took me to the Unitarian Church in Baton Rouge and I was hooked. Here I had found my religious home and the acceptance and freedom I needed to pursue my quest for meaning and a faith that would "hold water." Over the next thirteen years, I became a very active lay leader and held many different positions in the church. Gradually the idea of becoming a minister grew in

me. At first I pushed the notion aside; after all I was pursuing my Ph.D. in Art Education, had a happy marriage to Bruce (whom I had met while working as an Art Therapist at a State Hospital), a great house and many friends. But the call kept following me much like a stray puppy with big pleading eyes: take me in! Here was something worthy to which I could devote my life. Nothing seemed more worthwhile than to help to create the kind of caring community of which I was a part. And I wanted to make a difference and help to heal the world for which I still feel our religion holds a hope and a promise. So I gave up my comfortable life, my husband Bruce retired and we moved to Chicago where in the next four years in seminary I took on a new identity: Minister. Through hard study, interactions with the other students and teachers, CPE, intern ministry and by asking all sorts of existential questions, my soul was forged and strengthened like metal in the fire until it was capable of doing ministry.

While in seminary, I did my intern ministry (August 18-March 15, 1990) at the Second Unitarian Church in Chicago and thus got to know first hand what an urban ministry is like. (Among other things no parking!) In 1991, I was a student minister at Mukwonago, Wisconsin. Then came a wonderful summer ministry experience at South Church, Portsmouth, New Hampshire in June 1991-September 1991. That was my first introduction to a truly large church and one that was growing rapidly. Nineteen members joined the summer I was there.

In my last year in seminary, I worked as an interim part time Director of Religious Education for the Unitarian Universalist congregation in Napierville, Illinois. That gave me the opportunity to better understand the issues involved in maintaining an excellent Religious Education Program for children and youth.

My first call was to Wilmington, North Carolina, in August 1992. During my years there, I became a more seasoned, wiser, less naïve but more effective minister. In a sense we grew up together,

this newly hatched seminary graduate and a Fellowship in search of a mission. I was told that the congregation needed to change from a closed family church (the interim minister called it a country club) to an open, welcoming, growing congregation with a sense of mission and purpose. That largely happened and I feel good about my work there. We also became an official Welcoming Congregation.

The congregation grew from 92 to 185 members and from 12 - 45+ children as we added a Religious Education annex during my tenure. We added a choir, a paid music director and a paid Director of Religious Education. We went to two services and attendance grew to the point where we conducted a capital campaign. They have since built a new sanctuary and offices and it was a joy to be invited to return for the building dedication. I am grateful to the lay leaders for all that I learned in those eight years. We grew together as we created and maintained a healthy community. I understood in ways I never learned in seminary the realities of responsible finances, pledging and fundraising. Love alone will not do it and yet without that nothing will really work either.

When I was called to Valley Unitarian Universalist Church in mid August 2001, I was delighted to serve a mid-sized congregation. It has indeed been an amazing adventure and I have loved "walking in front of their parade" as they asked me to do in the beginning. I expected to work on organizational issues and help the congregation adopt a style of governance that would work for its actual size as a program church. From the very beginning with two services, attendance boomed and held steady. The Music Program was delightful and Religious Education well attended and supported. Space and enough staff were issues that held us back. We began to plan a Capital Campaign and employed new administrative staff, among those a professional bookkeeper. Then the unexpected happened as a large Catholic Church (perfect for our dreams) came on the market and we had to decide fast. We

managed to buy it, get a bridge loan and moved. Adjusting to this new space, a beautiful campus, was made more complicated by having to do a Capital Campaign on the fly and a congregation used to doing things for itself adjusting to a professional staff. But we continued to work on growing the congregation. We expanded the Music Program and Religious Education and became a Teaching Church with our first intern, Karla Brockie. Having a colleague and supervising her was a joy. I have grown to love and care deeply for this creative, lively and gutsy congregation and wish them well on their journey as our paths diverge.

One of our tasks as ministers is to love the people we are called to serve but we must also "tell them the truth in love" and it is often a hard balance. But much of ministry is balance between conflicting demands, private and public life and all the areas of the church that vie for your attention. There is the need to be true to your own beliefs and the need to feed spiritually and intellectually those whose beliefs differ. Ministry requires much: that we are able to walk gracefully the tight rope across the ideological abyss every Sunday morning, that we can sit quietly with someone who is dying, that we can celebrate, praise and offer encouragement, keep secrets, participate in the give and take of democratic leadership, see the big picture, hold all of us to our ideals and convictions and most of all keep hope alive. It is a call I have never seriously regretted even in times of great pain and disappointment. It is what I want to do with the rest of my life.



Formal Education:

Masters of Divinity, Meadville Lombard Theological School, June 1992

Masters of Fine Arts (Painting and Drawing), Louisiana State University, 1980

Bachelor of Arts (Psychology), 1978.

CPE Rush St Lukes, Summer 1989

Work History:

Minister: Valley UU Church 2001- present

Minister in Residence Meadville Lombard Theological School 1997

Chaplain Associate, Adjunct Faculty, Wilmington, NC 1992-2001

Minister: UU Fellowship of Wilmington 1992-2001

Interim Director of Religious Education, Du Page Unitarian

Church, Napierville, Illinois,

Nov-June 1991-92

*Summer Minister, South Church, Portsmouth, New Hampshire,
June-September 1991*

Intern Ministry, Second Unitarian Church Chicago, Illinois.

Student Ministry, Muckwanago, Wisconsin 1991-92

*Art Teacher K-12, Franklinton School System, LA
1986-88*

*Lecturer in Art Education LA University Art Ed
1985-86*

*Art Therapist East La State Hospital
1980-83*

While putting my first husband through school and while in Graduate School, I sold Singer Sewing machines, worked in fabric stores, department stores, nursing homes and fast food places. It gave me a sense of the many economic layers of our society and how hard it is to survive on near minimum wage.

