

*Hello! My name is Nico Van Ostrand, my pronouns are they/them, and I offer Spiritual or Pastoral Care through the MN Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Alliance—this means I offer confidential, spiritually grounded conversations with UUs like you, in which we may talk about anything in your life that is impacting your social justice work. You decide what fits that description; my role is to help hold some of the mess, and to remind you of the spiritual tools and resources that you already have within you.*

*The reason I am doing this is because I'm doing my Clinical Pastoral Education or CPE hours, which is a requirement for ordination in UU ministry. This is often done in a hospital setting, but after the election in November—when I was getting ready to apply for CPE—I knew two things.*

*First, I needed to offer my CPE hours in support of a community I care deeply about—this narrowed it down to social justice organizations in Minnesota. I am rooted here, I am rooted in racial justice and immigration work especially with the Filipino community, and I also work with trans and BIPOC youth. And I am UU, which is intertwined with my social justice commitments, as I know it is for so many of you too.*

*The second thing I knew after the election is the other side of that coin—I needed to learn how to offer spiritual care to people doing justice work in an immensely difficult political landscape. I am moving towards BIPOC-centered congregational UU ministry. It is impossible to be a UU minister without knowing how to minister to people who are trying to change oppressive systems. Every personal struggle is related to the political, and all of that is wrapped up in existential and spiritual questions. Social justice work is hard. We need each other, and we need spiritual care.*

*You can read more about who I am, what I offer, and how to set up a conversation with me on the MUUSJA website. And for real—I am required to do 300 hours of Spiritual Care conversations for my program, so do not feel like you are bothering me. I am here for you. This time is for you.*

*I look forward to connecting, and thank you for all the good work you do in the world.*