

January 24, 2023

To Whom it May Concern,

It is my absolute pleasure to write a letter of recommendation for Rev. Roger Bertschausen.

Roger has been Interim Lead Minister with us at White Bear Unitarian Universalist Church (WBUUC) in Mahtomedi, MN since August 2021. Roger joined us at a time of incredible transition. Not only was it a deeply felt ministerial transition, with an extremely beloved minister leaving after 20+ years of service, there were other current and very recent long-term staff transitions in our music leadership positions and our youth leadership. Plus, it was at the stage in the pandemic when we were just beginning to return to in person services and groups, maintaining virtual services and connections while we expanded back into being with each other in person in our beloved building. The feeling of blinking in the bright light of change as we emerged from our homes and virtual worlds to be together again was intense.

Roger's leadership as the congregation navigated this time of intense and deeply felt change was heartfelt, grounding, and incredibly well-informed. At the start of his tenure with us, Roger listened intentionally, earnestly, and compassionately. He brought the congregation into small and larger group conversations, creating an atmosphere of openness, asking, listening, validating, and supporting. He reassured us that our experience, our feelings, our fears, and our hopes were valid, made sense, and could help us see our way into the future. He guided our grieving, excited, unsure, hopeful, doubtful, and thriving congregation through the changes, honoring the past, grounding us in the present, and helping us imagine the future. He listened keenly to our shared history and experiences and guided our synthesis of our past, current, and future into the guideposts of his interim ministry. As a minister, he is clear, practical, funny, endearing, collaborative, wise, and calm. The congregation has received his preaching well and will miss him dearly when he goes. Yet, he has taught us about growing through change and prepared us to move on, too.

Additionally, his work with the Board and Staff was masterful. He was able to bring to us best practices from other churches, his experience, and the UUA. He highlighted those areas that were going well, what might need to change or evolve, and brought ideas and timing proposals for that change, all with great openness to discussion and a marked humility and calm. He integrated into and simultaneously led the staff in a way that created a renewed sense of togetherness and effectiveness in the leadership team. Through so much change, there was much joy and appreciation shared amongst the leadership team that was palpable to the Board and congregation. As President, his counsel to me has been informed, direct, resourceful, and forward thinking. I and the Board have learned so much from him about leading through change, governance, and supporting our staff.

He is setting us up exceptionally well to be ready for our new Lead Minister and our shared future, which is exactly what we needed and hoped for in an Interim Lead Minister. Any church that gets him next is incredibly lucky in our estimation.

Kind Regards,

Jillian Lampert, WBUUC President

jillian.lampert@gmail.com