

In my work as a religious educator, it has been my absolute pleasure to have the opportunity to serve alongside Rev. Roger Betchausen during his time as interim minister at White Bear UU Church. For the last two years, our congregation has been well-served by Roger's compassionate clarity and collaborative style as we navigated multiple challenging transitions, including the departure of several long-time staff members and navigating what it means to be a congregation during an ongoing pandemic.

Roger has been so skilled at helping us all name and hold space for the complicated feelings that often come along with these transitions, and Roger's ability to speak openly and honestly with deep love and care has been nothing short of transformational for our staff and our congregation. Not only has this skill created space for healing, but it has modeled a communication style that I know will serve our congregation and staff well in the future.

Roger is also deeply committed to collaboration; it has been a joy to be a part of creating meaningful, engaging, and increasingly multigenerational worship services with Roger and the rest of the worship team. We often hear from congregants about how much they enjoy our cohesive and meaningful worship services, and this is an absolute testament to the culture of joyful collaboration that Roger has cultivated among the staff team at WBUUC.

During Roger's tenure, he has also made the work of covenant and right relationship a priority; this included helping our staff team create a staff covenant, work on a congregational covenant of right relationship, as well as prioritizing work around support for the 8th Principle. All of this work has helped WBUUC keep covenant and right relationship at the center of all we do. Roger has also worked with our board to clarify our strategic priorities, including a focus on centering youth voices and welcoming new members and families with children. Roger has been vocal about holding intentional space to help our community be more accessible and welcoming to people of all ages. This support has made a huge difference in how we hold our Spiritual Growth programs for all ages, enabling us to do the work of de-siloing our programs and implementing a more integrated approach to lifespan education.

And, on top of this, Roger helped us return to in-person services and programs as well as launch a successful multiplatform ministry. He engaged the staff and congregation in thoughtful discernment around when and how to re-open, as well as in the process of the creation and implementation of COVID policies.

All of this work has been led with compassion, deep listening and so much joy—our time with Roger has been a delightful reminder of how important and joyful collaborative ministry can be—especially in the midst of difficult transitions!