



June 12, 2012

To Whom It May Concern:

Laura Neff joined the Unitarian Universalist Church of Charlotte approximately ten years ago. During this past decade she has distinguished herself as a much-respected leader here in our congregation.

Early in her tenure here, Laura was entrusted to lead our whole membership process. She was the face on our congregation for those visiting and moving toward membership. In that role she distinguished herself with an effective amalgam of "heart" and "head," warmly welcoming those who were discovering our liberal religion while creating a well-structured, strategic approach that enabled those who were interested to move toward involvement here. She was able both to articulate with sensitivity who we are and to lead the program with a keen awareness of critical dynamics. We continue to benefit from Laura's work in this area.

A few years back Laura was elected by the congregation to serve on our nine-member Board of Trustees. In our system, Board Members are our visionary leaders, those who we entrust with the responsibility of envisioning the kind of congregation we can and should be. Laura was well-placed in this critically important role. She was an affable, effective leader. She assumed, in part, the responsibility to help guide a particularly important part of our strategic planning and, again, did so with aplomb. She distinguished herself repeatedly in a group where she was one of the younger members and, by her third year on the Board, this group regularly looked to her for leadership and took seriously her insights on a wide range of important issues.

Just a few weeks ago, Laura completed her service on our Assistant Minister Selection Team. This group was charged to guide the selection of our first-ever assistant minister and, yet again, Laura proved to be an invaluable member of this very hardworking group. I was regularly impressed with her capacity to think and lead strategically, calling on the group at critical junctures to think through our process with care. As usual, she was able to assert herself while maintaining her warmth and affability, an impressive feat amidst a most demanding set of responsibilities.

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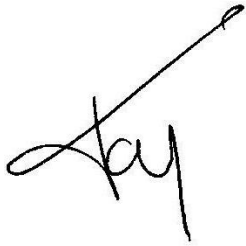
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Alongside these major roles, we've entrusted Laura to lead classes here and the groups she has led have always responded with high praise. We've also regularly called upon her to help lead our Sunday services, a role that comes with high expectations. She has consistently proven up to the task, offering insights in ways that attendees find both valuable and accessible.

In her decade or so as a member, Laura has consistently looked for ways to lead and has excelled in every leadership role that she accepted. I have every confidence that she will continue to excel here and in any other setting that is fortunate enough to benefit from her involvement. Not one to approach things lightly, she brings the full force of her amble intellect, keen sensitivity, and extensive experience to her life engagements. She has my profound respect and the profound respect of this congregation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jay", with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Rev. James C. (Jay) Leach
Senior Minister
Unitarian Universalist Church of Charlotte