

ENDORSEMENTS



Rev. Dr. Michael Tino with Kimberlee and Erik Carlson

I have known and worked with Erik David for a number of years now, beginning when he was a young adult conference attendee and I the UUA Director of Young Adult and Campus Ministry.

Over those years (and later serving with Erik on the UUA Board), I have watched him develop and grow tremendously. I have seen him claim and articulate his call to the ministry, do the serious introspective work of ministerial formation and emerge from that work a strong and capable minister. I am proud to now call him a friend, blessed to call him a colleague, and honored to have been asked to conduct his wedding. As you might imagine based on this rich and varied history, I have seen him in a number of different situations over the years, and it is on the basis of all of this observation that I enthusiastically recommend him today.

His competence for ministry shines most especially in high-pressure situations. I am sure that others will comment on his service in traumatized, post-Katrina New Orleans; this is but one example of this skill. I have seen his response to crisis first-hand as well. As a candidate for the ministry, Erik David volunteered to be a conference chaplain at the annual young adult conferences in the summer of 2006. While we expected some drama with 120 young adult UUs in the woods of rural eastern Maryland, we were not prepared for what Erik had to deal with—including three hospitalizations (including of one attendee who, unbeknownst to us, came to the conference with a known severe heart condition), stress over changes in young adult programming and a conference kitchen staff dealing with the sudden decision of one of its members to begin hormone therapy for a gender transition without the advice of a medical professional.

As you might imagine, our two conference chaplains were called on a lot that week. Erik handled these situations with skill, grace and care. He was able to mediate tense situations in the staff and help them function. He spent an entire night at the hospital caring

for the young woman with the heart condition. He also managed to keep the anxiety level at the conference minimal so that the entire conference did not erupt with it. While Erik was able to vent his frustrations privately (and appropriately) to me, he was a consummate professional with the conference staff and was able to make serious recommendations about conference policies when debriefed later.

Erik David is a highly relational minister. He is capable of connecting with a wide variety of people—from different racial and class backgrounds, of different ages, and with different amounts of power. He is also persistent in his pursuit of real and deep relationships, and this becomes evident quickly in one's interactions with him. Erik David is deeply committed to the future of Unitarian Universalism and to the health and strength of our congregations. He is also committed to the ongoing work of anti-racism, anti-oppression and multiculturalism. He is a skilled worship leader with the added bonus of an incredible talent for music. On several occasions, I have called upon Erik to work with me to present worship to large groups of people, including the opening worship at 2009's Allies for Racial Equity conference. He brought a refreshing eye for creative liturgy that helped make a wonderful worship service. In addition, he readily stepped up at that conference to lead small group processes when I was in need of extra facilitators (and did so with skill). He speaks naturally and eloquently, and is on the short list of people being considered as keynote presenters at future Allies for Racial Equity conferences.

I hope that this has helped you have a fuller picture of Erik's fitness for the UU ministry. Please let me know if I can be of any assistance to you in the future.

Rev. Dr. Michael Tino

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