

UU Church of Columbia, MO
Rev. Dr. Molly Housh Gordon, Minister

Celebration of Ordination
For Monica Clark-Robinson

Prelude – “A Celtic Medley,” performed by Rev. Dr. James Westerfield

Welcome – Kim Wade, UUCC President

Processional Hymn #188 – “Come, Come, Whoever You Are”

Opening Words – “Welcoming the Ancestors” – Paula Turner and Jordan Alexander, intern committee chairs at Church of the River in Memphis and UUCC

Chalice Lighting and Words of Affirmation – Dr. Greta Robinson, Minister’s Wife™

Hymn #108 – “My Life Flows On In Endless Song”

Message for All Ages – Stephanie “Fin” Judkins, Director of Religious Education at Unitarian Universalist Church of Little Rock

Invitation to Generosity – Rev. Paul Beedle

Today’s special offering will be divided equally between two recipients: The Living Tradition Fund of the UUA, which supports UU ministers and seminarians experiencing financial hardship; and The Center Project, a local nonprofit organization that provides safe, affirming space, programs, and resources for

LGBTQIA+ people in Mid-Missouri. Online donations may be made at <https://uucomo.org/give>. Choose “Haney Fund” in the dropdown menu.

Offertory – “Blue Boat Home” by Peter Mayer, performed by Maddie and Beatrice Robinson

Reading – “Wild Geese,” by Mary Oliver, read by Rev. Dr. James Westerfield

Prayer/Meditation – Rev. Dottie Mathews

Reading – “Remember” by Joy Harjo, read by Jamila Batchelder

Sermon – “A Ministry of Courage, Sanctuary, and Holy Imagination”
Dr. Emma Farrell

Musical Interlude – “I Am Willing” by Holly Near, performed by Violet Vonder Haar and Renee Janski

Act of Ordination – Kim Wade, UUCC President

Members of UUCC: We, the members of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Columbia, do hereby ordain you, Monica Clark-Robinson, to the Unitarian Universalist ministry. We charge you to listen deeply, to remain open to wonder, to lead with humility, to speak your truth with courage, and to trust the transforming power of love. We send you forth into the work of ministry with our blessing, our trust, and our love.

All Gathered: With joy and pride, we affirm this ordination. We have encouraged and witnessed you as you worked and prepared for this day and all the days to come. We offer our continuing love and support. May your ministry nourish you and help to bring a more loving and just world into being.

Exchange of Gifts – Kim Wade and Jordan Alexander, presenting the congregational gift; family members presenting the family gift

Laying On of Hands and Prayer of Ordination – Rev. Sam Teitel

Collegial Welcome – Rev. Sam Teitel

Charge to the Minister – Rev. Dr. Molly Housh Gordon

Charge to the Congregation/Attendees – Rev. Dr. Molly Housh Gordon

Closing Hymn – “This Joy,” by Shirley Caesar

*This joy that I have, the world didn't give it to me.
This joy that I have, the world didn't give it to me.
This joy that I have, the world didn't give it to me.
The world didn't give it, the world can't take it away.*

This strength...

This love...

This pride...

This peace...

This joy...

Benediction – Monica Clark-Robinson

Postlude – “Amazon Warrior Princess” by Renee Janski, performed by Renee Janski and Violet Vonder Haar

About the Participants (In Order of Appearance)

Rev. Dr. James Westerfield is the director of music at the Church of the River in Memphis.

Kim Wade is the President of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Columbia, Missouri.

Paula Turner is a lay leader at Church of the River in Memphis and was chair of Monica's intern committee during her year there.

Jordan Alexander is a lay leader at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Columbia and was chair of Monica's intern committee during her year there.

Dr. Greta Robinson is Monica's wife and supporter-in-chief.

Stephanie “Fin” Judkins is the director of religious education at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Little Rock and also a family friend of Monica's for over three decades.

Rev. Paul Beedle is the minister of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Little Rock, which is Monica’s home congregation.

Maddie and Beatrice Robinson are Monica and Greta's most excellent progeny.

Rev. Dottie Mathews is an affiliated community minister and leader at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Columbia.

Jamila Batchelder is the director of religious education at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Columbia.

Dr. Emma Farrell is the future minister of the Countryside Church Unitarian Universalist congregation and is also Monica's "seminary wife" at Meadville Lombard, where they both attended.

Violet Vonder Haar is the director of music ministry at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Columbia.

Renee Janksi is the director of ministries at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Fayetteville, Arkansas.

Rev. Sam Teitel is a chaplain at Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare and was Monica's supervisor during her first year of ministry internship.

Rev. Dr. Molly Housh Gordon is the minister at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Columbia and was Monica's supervisor during her second year of ministry internship.

GRATITUDE

The making of a minister is a collective, communal process—I have been supported and shaped by so many beloved family members, friends, congregants, colleagues, and mentors.

First—always first—is my dear family, Greta and Maddie and Beatrice, who have loved me through the past few years and have always been my biggest cheerleaders. I love you all.

Thanks to my parents, who shook their heads at yet another graduate degree but supported me and watched my sermons on Zoom. Love you!

And then, to my two internship supervisors, Molly and Sam. I quite literally would not be here without your support and advocacy. You both saved my ass multiple times and I cannot imagine a better duo to teach someone how to do the work of ministry than the two of you. From the bottom of my heart, I thank you.

For my intern committee chairs, Paula and Jordan, and all the members of my committees: you all were a delight and supported me so beautifully. You will always have a place in this minister's heart.

For my home congregation and the staff and lay leaders there: thank you for nurturing me as I discerned my call to ministry. I love and miss you all!

To the staff at my internship congregations in Memphis and Columbia: you all were terrific to work with and I am so grateful for the time I spent with you! I will miss you all in the coming years.

I'm so grateful, too, to my colleagues in formation at Meadville Lombard, especially my dear Emma. You're the best, boo! I can't wait to be ministers together in the years ahead!

Gratitude goes out to my professors at Meadville Lombard and to my chaplaincy teachers at Sankofa CPE—y'all were the best and I've learned so much from you!

And to all the members of the congregations who nurtured me in Little Rock and Memphis and Columbia: I love you all and will carry you with me as I enter this work.