

The Ordination of Latifah Griffin



The Unitarian Society of Germantown
6511 Lincoln Drive
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Sunday, April 16, 2023, 4 pm

About the Participants

(In order of appearance)

Ms. Andrea Barsevick and her family have been members of USG since 1986. She has held numerous volunteer posts including president of the Board of Trustees, chair of the Child Spiritual Development Committee, participant in the Widening the Circle group, and teacher in the "Our Whole Lives" sexuality education programs for children and adults.

Ms. Elizabeth Ann Terry is delighted to bring greetings from the world of Unitarian Universalism. Elizabeth is fascinated by the power of religious institutions to have meaningful impacts on their communities. She has been a witness to congregations who apply the principles of Asset-Based Community Development and Appreciative Inquiry to move their congregations and communities into bright and purposeful futures. With nearly 50 years of providing training, technical assistance and consulting to nonprofit organizations and congregations her intention is to continue to be of service to communities of faith who believe that collective gifts of the head, heart, and hands can change to world. Currently Elizabeth serves you as a Congregational Giving Officer at your Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations. Honored to be an Elder with Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism, (BLUU) and to serve on the Planning Team of Finding Our Way Home, an annual retreat for UU religious professionals of color. Elizabeth is also a Spiritual Director in private practice.

The Reverend Dr. Catherine E. Williams is Assistant Professor of Preaching and Worship at Lancaster Theological Seminary and serves as the seminary's Director of Chapel Worship. Dr. Williams is a *summa cum laude* graduate of Westminster Choir College, where she earned her Bachelor of Music degree in Church Music. She earned her Master of Divinity Degree from Palmer Theological seminary and her PhD. In Homiletics from Princeton Theological Seminary. Her research interests lie in the intersection of preaching and music. Called to both the church and the academy, Dr. Williams most recently served as Associate Pastor for over seven years at Princeton United Methodist Church in Princeton, NJ. She is an ordained Elder in full connection with the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church.

The Reverend McKinley Sims (he/him) is the settled minister of UUs of Mt. Airy, a historically Universalist congregation in northwest Philly. A Universalist and a Restorationist, McKinley hails from West Texas and is the proud owner of a very prolific tulsi plant named St. Basil. He began his ministry at UUs of Mt. Airy in 2018. He discovered and fell in love with Unitarian Universalism when he was an intern minister at the Unitarian Society of Germantown.

The Reverend Elizabeth Haralam Shuba is thrilled to be celebrating this day. She graduated with Latifah from Lancaster Theological Seminary and serves as the affiliated community minister for the UU Church of Lancaster. She is the lead oncology chaplain at Penn Medicine's LG Health ambulatory cancer clinic.

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Processional Hymn	<i>"Wake, Now, My Senses,"</i> No. 298 Thomas J. Mikelson Traditional Irish melody
Call to Worship	Ms. Andrea Barsevick
Chalice Lighting	The Rev. Elizabeth Haralam Shuba <i>"A Big Enough Box"</i>
Hymn, Doxology	Praise God, No. 365
Greetings	
From the UUA	Ms. Elizabeth Ann Terry
From the Lancaster Theological Seminary	The Rev. Dr. Catherine E. Williams
From the Priestley Kingsbury Chapter	The Rev. McKinley Sims
Invitation to Generosity to the Living Tradition Fund	Ms. Andrea Barsevick
Offertory	<i>"It is Well with my Soul"</i> Arranged by Mark Hayes
Story for All Ages	The Rev. Hannah Capaldi
Interlude	<i>"His Eye is on the Sparrow"</i> Arranged by Mark Hayes
Sermon	The Rev. Jacqueline Brett <i>"A Transformative Call"</i>
Musical Response	<i>"I Need Thee Every Hour"</i> Arranged by Mark Hayes

Piano played by Baker Purdon, Music Director; Lyrics for Hymns appear on page 5 of this program.

Act of Ordination

Unitarian Society of Germantown Board President, M. Lee Meinicke - In the living tradition of Unitarian Universalism, the authority to ordain a minister rests solely with the congregation. It is both a centuries-old sacred ritual and a unique one-time event; a joyous occasion when we - as a congregation - have the opportunity to recognize a special person who has felt the call to ministry in our faith tradition. Latifah, we have witnessed and walked with you on your journey through many stages of becoming a minister: from what felt like an initial, "I'm surprised to find myself here;" to "my soul has found its spiritual home within Unitarian Universalism." Welcome home. You have been recognized by the Ministerial Fellowship Committee of our Association as ready to serve, and we now join together to affirm your call and to bless your ministry. Are you ready to accept this calling and enter into ordained religious leadership?

Ms. Latifah Griffin - I am.

President - Will the members of the Unitarian Society of Germantown please rise in body or spirit? By this rite of ordination, we acknowledge our own calling to be engaged and active partners in our covenantal tradition. We affirm our own commitment to the shared ministry of our Unitarian Universalist faith, our community and our world. Are we prepared to renew these responsibilities and confer ordination on Latifah Griffin?

Members of the Unitarian Society of Germantown - we are.

We, the members of the Unitarian Society of Germantown, do hereby ordain you, the Reverend Latifah Griffin, to the Unitarian Universalist ministry. May you always speak the truth as you know it, and may you minister from your whole self: heart and mind, body and spirit. We charge you to serve with compassion and joy, bravery and hope, and with empathy and love. May you feel our love and support for you always.

President - Will Latifah's family, friends and colleagues please rise in body or spirit to add their voices on this day of ordination?

Family, Friends and Colleagues - With joy and confidence we celebrate and affirm your ordination. You have touched our lives in many ways, and we are proud to see you reach this accomplishment. We pledge our love and support to you and your ministry; may it be a blessing for you and to the world.

Prayer of Ordination	The Rev. Cheryl M. Walker
Laying of Hands	The Rev. Cheryl M. Walker
Gift to the Minister	Unitarian Society of Germantown, presented by Children's Spiritual Development and Ordination Committees
Charge to the Minister	The Rev. Roberta Finkelstein
Right Hand of Fellowship	The Rev. Kent Matthies
Recessional Hymn	Guide My Feet, No. 348
Benediction	The Reverend Latifah Griffin

**Lyrics to Wake, Now, My Senses,
Processional Hymn**

Wake, now, my senses, and hear the earth
call;
feel the deep power of being in all;
keep, with the web of creation your vow,
giving, receiving as love shows us how.

Wake, now, my reason, reach out to the new;
join with each pilgrim who quests for the
true;
honor the beauty and wisdom of time;
suffer thy limit, and praise the sublime.

Wake, now, compassion, give heed to the
cry;
voices of suffering fill the wide sky;
take as your neighbor both stranger and
friend,
praying and striving their hardship to end.

Wake, now, my conscience, with justice thy
guide;
join with all people whose rights are denied;
take not for granted a privileged place;
God's love embraces the whole human race.

Lyrics to Wake, Now, My Senses (continued)

Wake, now, my vision of ministry clear;
brighten my pathway with radiance here;
mingle my calling with all who will share;
work toward a planet transformed by our care.

Lyrics to Guide My Feet, Recessional Hymn

Guide my feet, while I run this race.
Guide my feet, while I run this race.
Guide my feet, while I run this race.
For I don't want to run this race in vain!
Hold my hand, while I run this race.
Hold my hand, while I run this race.
Hold my hand, while I run this race.
For I don't want to run this race in vain!
Stand by me, while I run this race.
Stand by me, while I run this race.
Stand by me, while I run this race.
For I don't want to run this race in vain!
Search my heart, while I run this race.
Search my heart, while I run this race.
Search my heart, while I run this race.
For I don't want to run this race in vain!

Special Thanks from Latifah Griffin, to --

The members of Unitarian Society of Germantown who helped make this day extra special with food, decorations, designing of programs, and everything else. Thank you to the Ordination Committee: Lois Murphy - Ordination Committee Chair, Treva Burger – Marshal, Jenn Leiby, Janet Haas, Vanessa Lowe, Betsy Gabriel, M. Lee Meinicke.

Baker Purdon and the Unitarian of Society Germantown choir.

My Internship Committee at the Unitarian Society of Germantown: Jenn Leiby, Lisa Dutton, Shobhana Kanal, Janet Haas, and the dearly missed Jess Slivak. Your support and care during my internship and beyond have helped me grow in a number of ways. I am especially grateful for each of you!

The Children's Spiritual Development committee: Brandi Kirksey, Sharon Mafuru, and Emily Stordahl. We've been in the trenches the past year! Thank you for your dedication to the program. Keep exploring and painting rocks!

My Seminary Cohort Members: Rev. Elizabeth Haralam Shuba, Rev. Martha Lester Harris, Pastor Robert Garvey, Shawn Gray, and James Smurl. We've laughed together, cried together, traveled to Palestine together...You are my family in ministry. Thank you for your friendship on the journey!

Revs. Kent Matthies and Roberta Finkelstein, thank you for all you taught me and for giving me my first Unitarian Universalist ministerial wings.

My mentor and friend, Rev. Cheryl M. Walker, thank you for teaching me how to be comfortable with me, the art of storytelling (which I am still learning) and the realities of ministry. Your presence in my life is invaluable. Thank you for everything and all that is to come.

The nuns at Neumann University, Sr. Suzanne Mayer and Sr. Lynn Lavin, you recommended that I attend seminary after getting my Pastoral Counseling degree. Four years after your recommendation, I did it. Thank you for your encouragement.

To the Revs. Jeri and Larry Williams, the seeds for my ministry were planted with you. Check out the growth! Thank you to Drexel Hill Baptist Church and The Green Church for my ministerial beginnings.

My mother, Patricia Johnson, thank you. You believed in me before I believed in me. Thanks for pushing me to be the best, not perfect, but the best me I can be. I am me, because of you. I thank you so much for life and your love. I love you, old lady.

My sisters, Kiara and Tiyanina Johnson, thank you. We have been each other's biggest cheerleaders. Thank you for your hearts, your ears, your shoulders, all of which I've needed more in the past year than ever before. Thanks for the unconditional love.

My son, Spencer, thank you for showing me how to slow down and teaching me unconditional love.

About the Participants (continued)

The Reverend Hannah Capaldi serves as the Minister for Faith Formation at the First Unitarian Church of Philadelphia. She is a lifelong UU who hails from New England, having been raised and ordained at the First Parish of Concord, Massachusetts. A graduate of Union Theological Seminary and Oberlin College, Rev. Hannah settled in Philadelphia in 2018 where she happily roots for the Sixers. She lives in West Philadelphia with her wife, Livia and toddler, Antonia. In her free time, she loves to grill, garden, swim, and read long-form journalism.

The Reverend Jacqueline Brett (she/they) is Lead Minister of the Eno River Unitarian Universalist Fellowship in Durham, North Carolina. Rev. Brett received M.Div. and MALS degrees from Meadville Lombard Theological School (Chicago) where she was also a member of the Board of Trustees. She currently serves on the Unitarian Universalist Ministerial Fellowship Committee (MFC) which guides the competencies and credentialing of UU ministers, and she is also a member of the Board of Trustees for the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC), which advances human rights globally. Locally in North Carolina, Rev. Brett serves on the Strategy Team and as Co-chair of the Durham CAN clergy caucus, a multi-faith coalition of congregations, associations, and neighborhoods that addresses local issues of justice and equity for the county's most marginalized communities. Rev. Brett is also honored to have been mentored by Rev. Cheryl M. Walker.

Ms. M. Lee Meinicke currently serves as Board President of the Unitarian Society of Germantown. At USG she is also a member of the Investment Committee, has facilitated Our Whole Lives for middle- and high-schoolers, supported the Youth Group, served as the Consolidated Investment Fund Treasurer, and previously served as co-chair of the board at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington Virginia. A UU for almost 30 years, she is honored and pleased to have this particular opportunity to be of service within her chosen denomination.

The Reverend Cheryl M. Walker is currently the Interim Minister for the Unitarian Society of Germantown. Born in New York City, Rev. Cheryl previously served for 13 years as the settled minister of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Wilmington, North Carolina. Rev. Cheryl also serves as co-chair of the Article II Study Commission for the UUA.

The Reverend Roberta Finkelstein is a life-long Unitarian Universalist. She was raised in the Community Church of New York. Her early UU experiences taught her that the church could and should be a place of prophetic witness, courage, and transformation. Ministry is a second career for Rev. Roberta. She was a nurse and certified nurse-midwife. She has served in consulting ministries, a new congregation start up, and several settled ministries. She is an Accredited Interim Minister, having served interim congregations in Frederick, MD, Orlando, FL, Ridgewood, NJ, Burlington, VT, Westport, CT, Jacksonville, FL, and Clearwater, FL. She also completed a four-year Developmental Ministry in Wilmington, DE. Rev. Finkelstein retired from full time ministry last May. She is the author of chapters in several books about transitional ministry and she has an essay in the most recent version of the UU Pocket Guide.

The Reverend Kent Matthies is a life-long Unitarian Universalist. Kent graduated from Meadville/Lombard Theological School and was ordained in 1998. Kent served for 20 years as Minister of the Unitarian Society of Germantown. Currently Kent is training and working as an Intern Family and Marriage Therapist at the Council for Relationships in Philadelphia.



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of Germantown**
Philadelphia, PA