

**The Ordination of
Rodney Lynn Lemery
to the Unitarian Universalist Ministry**

We Are Wounded Healers



First Unitarian Church of San José
Mount Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church
Church of the Larger Fellowship

Saturday, January 12, 2019, 2:00 p.m.
First Unitarian Church of San José



Service of Ordination

January 12, 2019

Musical Prelude Diane Saichek

A Cloud of Witnesses Rev. Lynn Ungar

Processional
“This is Me” *Music by Keala Settle, Ke\$ha, and Missy Elliott
from “The Greatest Showman: Reimagined”
(Please see green insert)*

Lighting of the Chalice Breanna Lemery & Michelle Jurado

Greetings/Call to Worship Rev. Nancy Palmer Jones

Musical Blessing Alegria Singers
“I Choose You” *Words & music by Jason Shelton*

Reading
“36 inches of counter and one bad decision” Carol Sue Cain

Hymn
“Just As I Am” *Words & music by William Batchelder Bradbury
modified by Rodney Lemery*

Just as I am, though tossed about
With many a conflict, many a doubt;
Fightings within, and fears without,
O Love of God, I come, I come!

Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind;
Sight, riches, healing of the mind;
Yes, all I need, in Thee to find,
O Love of God, I come, I come!

Just as I am, Thy love unknown
Has broken every barrier down;
Now, to be Thine, yea, Thine alone,
O Love of God, I come, I come!

- My “tribe”: Connie, Christe, Jess and Sara
- The congregations of First Unitarian Church of San José, Mount Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church, and Church of the Larger Fellowship
- My ordination committee: Mary Mary Feldman, Joyce Miller, Art Ungar, Arliss Ungar, and Bob Lane
- Special thanks to Moria Merriweather for her bubble knowledge
- Special thanks to Ed Lampo, Jim Botts, and Harry Miller for their photo, video, and streaming assistance
- All the musicians and choir members who participated in today’s service, especially John Ector and Mark Tuning
- Julia McLeod and Jo Balzer for making my beautiful stoles
- My mentors, advisors, and counselors: Dr. Sharron Welch, Rev. Darrick Jackson, Dr. Lee Barker, Dr. Mark Hicks, and Rev. Leslie Takahashi
- All of the staff and supervisors of the Community Care Chaplains, Dr. Geoff Tio, and Rev. Christiane Heyde
- The ministers and staff of the First Unitarian Church of San José
- My internship committee: Joyce Miller, Gautam Biswas, Gerrit Tenbrink, Cheri Goodman, and Margaret Trask
- The Chaplain Alvin Jackson and the staff of the Solano County Jail whose love has helped me grow into this call
- The faculty and staff of Meadville Lombard Theological School
- The many, many other people (too numerous to list) who continue to love, support, and encourage me.

James Lewis Stoll (1936–1994) The first ordained UU minister to come out as gay, which he did in 1969. His fierce acceptance of himself led the way for others like Rodney to serve the holy.

Matthew Shepard (1976–1998) We honor his life and his horrible, tragic death, which made this country face its homophobia and HIV/AIDS stigma.

Nelson Dale (1926–2015) and Veretta Dale (1931–2015) Rodney’s maternal grandparents, whose unconditional love he feels to this day.

Stanley Wayne Dale (1952–2015) and Kay Dale (1957–2015) Rodney’s maternal uncle and aunt, taken from us far too soon.

So many more names could be mentioned, and so many spirits surround each of us as we gather together in a community that spans the centuries. We are inspired and blessed by the cloud of witnesses that surrounds us.

Gratitude

I am eternally grateful to the Spirit of Life that flows in and through me and all things that were, are, and will be.

I offer my sincere thanks and appreciation to:

- My husband, best friend, supporter, and ultimate confidante, Errol Reyes. This journey was only capable of being due to your patience and love! I love the life we continue to create together, and I see this whole thing as our co-ministry together; me in the front of the house, you in the back.
- My mother Patricia and father Bruce Lemery without whose love I may have been left forever lonely and broken
- My family and friends, for your love and support

Offering Christe Lunsford
*to benefit the Worthy Now Ministry
empowered by the Church of the Larger Fellowship*

Offertory Music Christian Perry
“I Surrender All” *Arranged by Winfield S. Weeden, 1896*

Acts of Ordination Robert Strong, President
First Unitarian Church of San José

Michele Carroll, President
Mount Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church

Charles Du Mond, Representative
Church of the Larger Fellowship

Robert Strong: In our Unitarian Universalist tradition, the authority to ordain ministers rests solely with the congregation. Rodney, as your internship congregation, we have delighted in seeing you grow and develop through the past two years. In December of last year, the members of the First Unitarian Church of San José voted to ordain you into Unitarian Universalist Ministry.

Michele Carroll: Rodney, as your home congregation, MDUUC has witnessed you grow from lay leader and congregant to a newly formed minister in our faith. In December of last year, the members of the Mount Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church has voted to ordain you into Unitarian Universalist Ministry.

Charles Du Mond: Rodney, as the representative of the Church of the Larger Fellowship, we have witnessed you blossom into a prison minister supporting our Worthy Now program. In December of last year, the members of the CLF have voted to ordain you into Unitarian Universalist Ministry.

All Three: Today is the realization of that vote, as we exercise our authority and ordain you. It is with great pride and joy that we gather today for this sacred purpose.

Robert Strong: Will the members of the First Unitarian Church of San José please rise, in body or in spirit?
[FUCSJ members rise.]

Michele Carroll: Will the members of the Mount Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church please rise, in body or in spirit?
[MDUUC members rise.]

Charles Du Mond: Will the members of the Church of the Larger Fellowship please rise, in body or in spirit, in person or online?
[CLF members rise.]

Rodney, please come forward. Are you ready to enter into Unitarian Universalist ministry?

Rodney: Yes, I am.

Members of FUCSJ, MDUUC, and CLF: We, the members of the First Unitarian Church of San José, Mount Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church, and the Church of the Larger Fellowship do hereby ordain you, Rodney Lynn Lemery, to the Unitarian Universalist ministry. In your various roles in our congregations, we have observed your love, compassion and unwavering commitment to justice and building Beloved Community. Among us and wherever you may be called to serve, preach the word of truth in the spirit of love, ministering alike to our joys, concerns and sorrows, building community, magnifying justice, peace, and freedom, and setting forth no less by your example than by your words the principles of our free faith. We pledge our love and support to you and your ministry.

where we find ourselves today, although the oak-lined hills and valley undoubtedly had known earlier Indian inhabitants and migrations, now lost to history and prehistory. We ask forgiveness from those whose lives were brutally displaced due to colonialism and thank them for the land on which we now celebrate.

Rev. Hosea Ballou (1771–1852) An early Universalist minister, whose evangelical message of salvation for all informs Rodney's own life and ministry.

Esther Lorance Moore (1776–1842) and Sylvanus Rayburn (1763–1850) Rodney's seventh generation maternal great-grandmother and great-grandfather, who both braved the journey to this country from Ireland. Rodney's life would have been much different without them and the sacrifices and struggles they and their families undertook to build a better life.

Rev. Charles Spear (1803–1863) Universalist minister, army chaplain and prison reformer, whose message of compassion, love, and acceptance of the broken aids and inspires Rodney in his own ministry today

Anthime Lemery (1904–1986) Rodney's paternal great-grandfather, whose death initiated a move from Texas to New York State that would forever change Rodney's life for the better.

John Lemery (1928–2010) Rodney's paternal grandfather, who brought Rodney's father into being; a fact worthy of celebration!

Lydia Lemery (1952–2004) Rodney's paternal aunt, whose love and affection he received. Her struggle with the shadows was inspirational. She is tremendously missed.

Marsha P. Johnson (1945–1992) A fierce activist, this trans woman of color participated in the riots at Stonewall and advocated through ACT UP to fight AIDS. Rodney gives thanks for her strength in helping to liberate queer people of America.

Michele Carroll President, Board of Trustees, Mount Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church

Charles Du Mond Member, Board of Trustees, Church of the Larger Fellowship

Rev. Geoff Rimositis Teaching Pastor, colleague, and Minister Emeritus, First Unitarian Church San José

Rev. Leslie Takahashi Professor, colleague, and Lead Minister, Mount Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church

Rev. Christiane Heyde Rodney's Clinical Pastoral Education supervisor, chaplain extraordinaire, UU minister, and life-saving lover of healing

Rev. Carol Thomas Cissel Settled minister of the UU Fellowship of Centre County in State College, PA, new friend, and wonderful worshiper

Rev. Constance Simon Member of Rodney's "tribe", Minister of First Unitarian Church in Cincinnati, OH, confidant and member of his found family

Jessica Starr Rockers Member of Rodney's "tribe", Unitarian Universalist Minister, confidant, and member of his found family

Cloud of Witnesses

Each of us is here today only through the grace and love of others, a cloud of witnesses that inspires and sustains us. We call into the room now the names of some of those whose love, support, successes, struggles, and failures have influenced the minister and person Rodney is today.

The Tamien-speaking Ohlone Indigenous People They are the first documented inhabitants of the Santa Clara Valley region

Rodney: With abiding hope and a deep sense of faith, I accept this ministry into which you ordain me. I pledge to minister with full engagement of my spirit: to serve humbly, to speak the truth with love, and to live with integrity. I promise to work hard, and be kind to myself and thoughtful of others.

Charles Du Mond: Will Rodney's family, friends, congregants, colleagues and all who are gathered here please rise in body or in spirit and join in affirming this act of ordination? *[All rise.]*

All: We, the gathered congregation, recognize and affirm you, Rodney Lynn Lemery, as an ordained minister. May your ministry be a source of inspiration, strength, and love. We pledge our love and support to you today and for all the days to come. Go forth with our blessings: living into love.

Anthem
"Draw the Circle Wide"

Ordination Choir
*Music by Mark A. Miller,
words by Gordon Light*

Presentation of Stole

Julia McLeod & Joyce Miller

Pastoral Prayer

Rev. Geoff Rimositis

Musical Blessing

"Potter's House"

Ordination Choir
featuring Rev. Ranwa Hammamy
Music & words by Tramaine Hawkins

Sermon

Rev. Constance Simon

Laying On of Hands

Rev. Leslie Takahashi

Right Hand of Fellowship

Rev. Christiane Heyde

Musical Offering

“Here’s Where I Stand”

Laura Zucker

*Music by Michael Gore,
words by Lynn Ahrens*

Charge to All of Us

Rev. Carol Thomas Cissel

Chalice Call

“When I am Frightened”

Jessica Starr Rockers & Chaplains

Music and words by S. J. Denham

When I am frightened, will you reassure me?
When I'm uncertain, will you hold my hand?
Will you be strong for me, sing to me quietly?
Will you share some of your stories with me?
If you will show me compassion,
then I may learn to care as you do, then I may learn to care.

When I am angry, will you still embrace me?
When I am thoughtless, will you understand?
Will you believe in me, stand by me willingly?
Will you share some of your questions with me?
If you will show me acceptance,
then I may learn to give as you do, then I may learn to give.

When I am troubled, will you listen to me?
When I am lonely, will you be my friend?
Will you be there for me, comfort me tenderly?
Will you share some of your feelings with me?
If you will show me commitment,
then I may learn to love as you do, then I may learn to love.

Benediction

Rev. Dr. Rodney Lynn Lemery

Recessional

“Everyday People”

Combined Choir & Congregation

*Music & words by Sly Stone
(Please see green insert)*

Please join us after the service for a reception.

Participants

Diane Saichek Accompanist extraordinaire from First Unitarian Church of San José

Rev. Dr. Lynn Ungar Minister, Church of the Larger Fellowship

Breanna Lemery Rodney’s niece who basically went through seminary and Clinical Pastoral Education with him for almost three years!

Michelle Jurado Rodney’s middle sister who has become a wonderful friend as well.

Rev. Nancy Palmer Jones Teaching Pastor, colleague, and Senior Minister of First Unitarian Church of San José

Carol Sue Cain Friend and member of Mount Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church, Director of IT at the Solano County Jail

John Ector Director of Music at First Unitarian Church San José

Mark Tuning Director of Music at Mount Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church

Christe Lunsford Member of Rodney’s “tribe”, Intern Minister at the Unitarian Universalist Church at Rockford, IL, confidant, and member of his found family

Christian Perri Nephew-In-Love and former housemate extraordinaire!

Laura Zucker Friend and member of Mount Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church, singer, songwriter, and performer extraordinaire

Robert Strong President, Board of Trustees, First Unitarian Church of San José