



ARTICLE II STUDY REPORT

2021-2023



Prepared By:

Article II Study Commission

TABLE OF CONTENTS

01	Introduction
02	Article II Study Commission Members
06	Charge to the Commission from the UUA Board of Trustees
10	Stakeholders
11	GA 2021 Responsive Resolution
12	Process and Timeline
13	Our Approach
17	Current Article II of the Unitarian Universalist Association Bylaws and Rules Article II Principles and Purposes
19	Proposed Revision of Article II Unitarian Universalist Association Bylaws and Rules
23	Conclusion

INTRODUCTION

Article II of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) Bylaws, Principles and Purposes, is the foundation for all of the work of our UUA and its member congregations and covenanted communities. It is the covenant to which all of our congregations and covenanted communities pledge themselves when they become members of our UUA.

Our current Principles and Purposes were last substantially revised in 1985. At General Assembly (GA) 2017, there was discussion of amending the Principles to add an 8th Principle, addressing racism, and an amended 1st Principle, addressing non-human life. The 5th Principle was the subject of a report in 2009, which dealt with the ways in which GA and other Unitarian Universalist (UU) gatherings do and don't embody an inclusive democratic process. The 7th Principle has also been the subject of discussions about possible amendments.

There have been many projects, resolutions, task forces and other strategies that have come from the Board, the Commission on Appraisal and grassroots groups which encourage us to take a look at our principles, purposes, bylaws and rules. It is time for us to do a review and make changes so that we are living into the Unitarian Universalism of the future, a Unitarian Universalism that holds us in times of great need and ethical, moral and spiritual crises. We are in one of those times now.

In response to those discussions, the UUA Board committed to establishing this Article II Study Commission to consider possible amendments to this Article. (See Charge to the Article II Study Commission, adopted June 8, 2020, below.).

ARTICLE II STUDY COMMISSION



Rev. Cheryl M. Walker, Co-Chair (2020-2023), currently serves as the Interim Minister of the Unitarian Society of Germantown, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Before going to Germantown she served as the Pastor of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Wilmington from 2009 to 2022. Prior to Wilmington, she served four years as the Assistant Minister at the Unitarian Church of All Souls in New York City. Rev. Cheryl is a past President of the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association. She has published essays in several Unitarian Universalist collections including, *Turning Point – Essays on a New Unitarian Universalism* (2016), *Centering – Navigating Race, Authenticity and Power in Ministry* (2017) and the *Unitarian Universalist Pocket Guide* (2019).

Dr. Rob Spirko, Co-Chair (2022-2023), is a member of the Foothills Unitarian Universalist Fellowship in Maryville, Tennessee, where he has been active as a worship leader, religious educator, and board co-president. Rob has served on the Southern Region Adjunct Staff Team and as dean for the Southern Unitarian Universalist Leadership Experience (SUULE). He is involved with EqUual Access and is a member of the Disability Caucus for General Assembly. He works as a Senior Lecturer in the English Department at the University of Tennessee, where he also serves as the co-chair of the Chancellor's Commission for Disabilities.

Becky Brooks, Co-Chair (2020-2022), is a religious educator and writer, focused on creating resources for faith formation in congregations. She has served on the boards of the Liberal Religious Educators Association and Starr King School for the Ministry. She received her M.Div from Starr King in 2003. Becky is the co-author, along with Rev. Erika Hewitt, of *Sparks of Wonder: Theme-Based Ministry for the Whole Congregation*. She lives in Baltimore, Maryland with her two partners, two children, and two cats.

Satya Mamdani, Youth/Young Adult Commissioner (2020-2023), is a member of First Universalist Church of Minneapolis, Minnesota, where she was active as a religious education teacher and worship associate. Satya is currently a freshman in college in Hartford, Connecticut.

Maya Waller, Youth/Young Adult Commissioner (2020-2023), is a member of the First Unitarian Church of Rochester, New York, where she was active in the youth group and as a worship associate. She has preached at both her church and the Unitarian Universalist Church of Canandaigua. Maya is currently a sophomore in college in the Philadelphia area where she is further discovering her passions and interests.

Dr. Paula Cole Jones, (2020-2023) is a member of All Souls Church Unitarian, Washington, D.C., a life-long Unitarian Universalist and a Management Consultant with over twenty years of experience in designing and

facilitating workshops and dialogues for leaders and organizations. She is an innovator of institutional change. In 1999, Paula founded ADORE, A Dialogue on Race & Ethnicity. She has conducted hundreds of group discussions and workshops across the country for faith organizations, community groups and government agencies. Her work includes being a leader in advancing the 8th Principle and the Community of Communities as practices for the Beloved Community.

Paula is the author of a UU World Magazine cover story, *Reconciliation as a Spiritual Discipline*. She is also the editor of a Skinner House book, *Encounters: Poems about Race, Ethnicity and Identity* and a contributing author to three Skinner House books. Recently, her home congregation established an annual award in her name, The Paula Cole Jones Transformation Award, and honored her as the inaugural recipient. In 2022, Paula was recognized with an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from Meadville Lombard Theological School.

UUA Board and Administration Liaisons

Co-Moderator Rev. Meg Riley (2020-2023), was installed as Co-Moderator and Chief Governance Officer at General Assembly 2020. A lifelong Unitarian Universalist (UU), Meg Riley grew up in congregations in Charleston, West Virginia and Akron, Ohio. Since 1983, she has served UU congregations, organizations, and enterprises in many capacities. On UUA staff for 21 years in a variety of roles, Riley also served as Senior Minister of the Church of the Larger Fellowship for ten years before becoming Minister Emerita in 2020. Always deeply collaborative, Riley has worked to create new opportunities for advancing strong leadership, especially the leadership of younger people, people of color, disabled people and GLBT people, wherever she has served.

Trustee Kathy Burek, (2020-2023) is an active volunteer at many levels of our Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). She is a member of the UUA Board of Trustees and serves as the Board's Financial Secretary.

As an Adjunct Consultant for the MidAmerica Region, Kathy facilitates retreats for small Unitarian Universalist (UU) congregations in the Midwest. Kathy also served as a board member of the International Women's Convocation, an international organization of UU women working to empower women.

Kathy was a member of the UUA's Employee Benefits Trust Board and chaired the board 3 times. In her role as President of the Prairie Star District, she was elected President of the District Presidents' Association, and was part of the team that led to the creation of the MidAmerica Region. Kathy was then elected to the first MidAmerica Region Board. In her home congregation, Michael Servetus Unitarian Society, Fridley, Minnesota, Kathy served in many leadership positions including President of the Board. Kathy received the UUA President's Award for Volunteer Service in 2014.

Trustee Rev. Dr. Gregory C. Carrow-Boyd (2020-2021) (he/him) is a Master Credentialed Religious Educator. He serves our congregation in Honolulu, Hawaii as Executive Minister of Religious Education. He also serves our wider Association as a member of the General Assembly Advisory Council. Greg loves to dance and to spend time with the special young people in his life. In his free time, Greg conducts research about and writes religious education, racial justice, and sexuality education curricula.

Project Manager to the Office of the President, Rev. Marcus Fogliano (2020-2023), brings to their work with the Study Commission project management experience from public housing and community organizing, as well as a background in government and nonprofit boards and commissions. They have engaged in LGBTQ advocacy and community building across Illinois. They were raised and ordained as a Jehovah's Witness engaged in deaf ministry in Central Illinois. They found Unitarian Universalism through the Unitarian Universalist Church of Bloomington-Normal in Illinois in 2012 and found their national calling to service after serving as a General Assembly delegate for the Unitarian Universalist Church of Peoria, Illinois in 2016.

CHARGE TO THE COMMISSION

The Article II Study Commission is hereby charged to review Article II of the UUA Bylaws, and propose any revisions that will enable our UUA, our member congregations, and our covenanted communities to be a relevant and powerful force for spiritual and moral growth, healing, and justice. Proposed changes should articulate core UU theological values. The Board believes that one core theological value, shared widely among UUs, is love.

The Commission on Appraisal, in its report, *Engaging Our Theological Diversity*, cites Robert Miller's study of Unitarian Universalism, stating "UUs ranked loving as an instrumental value and mature love as a terminal value more highly than did respondents from other groups, religious and nonreligious." Dr. Cornel West says that "justice is what love looks like in public." Our commitment to personal, institutional and cultural change rooted in anti-oppression, anti-racism, and multiculturalism values and practices is love in action, and should be centered in any revision of Article II.

The new Principles and Purposes should guide us in the transformation of ourselves, our communities and our faith into active networks of collective care, restoration, and justice. The Principles and Purposes you will prepare should be a living document that challenges Unitarian Universalists to place the liberation, in all its dimensions, of all, at the center of our lives. They should be honest about our past, name what we are facing and our aspirations and where we hope to be not for just today but looking out at the horizons. They should ask us to choose Love in Action as the path forward.

Our commitment to anti-racism, anti-oppression, and multiculturalism is love in action, and should be centered in any revision of Article II. Finally, the Principles and Purposes should lead us into the second quarter of the 21st Century, while honoring the historic roots of our liberal, progressive faith.

We therefore charge this commission to root its work in Love as a principal guide in its work; attending particularly to the ways that we (and our root traditions) have understood and articulated Love, and how we have acted out of Love.



As it conducts its work, the Commission shall seek to engage the active participation of UUs across all demographics, identities, and theological philosophical beliefs. The Commission shall be open and transparent in its work, communicating progress frequently with UUs through as many channels and communication media as possible.

Further, the Commission shall de-center habitual practices that reinforce white supremacy culture. The Commission is instructed to include in its considerations and deliberations the clear call at GA 2017 for the inclusion of another principle, explicitly calling us to be committed to active anti-racism (see attachments about the 8th Principle Project). We also note that there is a growing urging (heard even before the last review of the Principles, at Minneapolis, in 2010) for us to better articulate our recognition of rights of being for all beings.

The Commission should consider how this might be included. We specifically direct their attentions to the 2010 proposals, recognizing how very close those came to passing; there is good work there that should be salvaged for our time.

The Commission is charged with reviewing all sections of Article II, and is free to revise, replace, or restructure them as needed to meet the objectives stated above. There is nothing sacred about the number of principles or sources, nor their specific wordings, nor in the way that Article II is laid out. We encourage creativity. The Board would like to see an Article II that is inspirational, memorable and poetic. The language should be inclusive and welcoming, and explicitly anti-racist. Article II, it must be remembered, are broad statements of Principle and Purpose, not detailed programmatic or implementation plans.

The Commission is urged to carefully consider the existing language for its implications, and for the errors or inadequacies of those implications. We recognize that one steady criticism over decades has been that the language of the principles is not poetic. We encourage the Commission to consider framings of our principles that allows them to be brief and poetic (perhaps by transferring explanatory clauses and expansions to a subsidiary document that expounds on what the Commission sees as included and intended in that shorter form).

We particularly urge the Commission to review the Sources; the revised listing from the 2010 proposal and its explicit inclusion of Unitarianism and Universalism as our Sources seems timely to us. And there are other recommended Sources in that proposal. In addition, there have been energetic discussions about how other faith traditions such as Buddhism and Islam (among others) might be included or put on footings more equal to those of Christianity and Judaism.

Proposed changes must be submitted to the UUA Board of Trustees in January 2022 2023*, so that they may be considered by the Board, and then be placed on the 2022 2023* General Assembly Business Agenda for the first vote. (See Bylaws, Article XV Amendment).

The Commission is further charged with submitting regular reports to the Board of Trustees on its plans and progress to meeting its goals and deadlines. (See Board and Commission Responsibilities, p. z).

The Board of Trustees is grateful for the work of this Commission. Please call on us if we can support you in any way.

Mr. Barb Greve and Elandria Williams, Co-Moderators

* The initial charge provided the Article II Study Commission with less than the bylaw allotted time of two years to conduct its study. With the advice of counsel, the Article II Study Commission, having been fully seated and convened in the Fall of 2020, will conduct its study through the Fall of 2022 and present its recommendations to the Board of Trustees no later than January 2023, and it will then be placed on the 2023 General Assembly Business Agenda for the first vote.



STAKEHOLDERS

In conducting its work, the Commission should actively reach out to these groups of stakeholders (and any others the Commission deems relevant):

- Congregational leaders, lay* and professional*
- Professional Associations*
- Identity Groups* (e.g., DRUUMM, BLUU, TRUUst, EqUUal Access, etc.)
- Philosophical and Theological Groups* (e.g., UU Humanists, UU Christians, etc.)
- 8th Principle and 1st Principle advocates*
- Past GA attendees* (these people are the ones most likely to be voting on the proposed Principles)
- Commission on Institutional Change*
- Journey Toward Wholeness Transformation Committee*
- Former UUs who have left the faith* (i.e., those who left because they were harmed)
- Unchurched UUs who still identify as UUs, but don't belong to UU congregations* (i.e., those who just don't feel compelled to be members of a UU congregation)
- Members of 2010 Commission on Appraisal
- UUA staff
- UU seminaries
- UUSC
- UU Issues groups (e.g., UU Earth Justice Ministry, UUs for Justice in the Middle East, etc.)



GA 2021 RESPONSIVE RESOLUTION



The following resolution was adopted by the General Assembly of 2021:

The Article II Study Commission stated in their report that they are requesting feedback about what to include in their recommendation for revising Article II, the Principles, Sources, and Purposes, of the UUA Bylaws.

For that reason, we ask the Article II Commission and the Board to ensure proposed changes to Article II include in the Principles a clear and direct statement that accountable systemic anti-racist and anti-oppressive actions to build Beloved Community are part of what it means to be Unitarian Universalist.

Process and Timeline

The Article II Study Commission convened in the fall of 2020, developing a shared understanding of its charge developed by the Board of Trustees in consultation with the 2018 and 2019 General Assemblies, the history of Article II, and the study process. In the Spring of 2021, the Study Commission began hosting theological panel discussions with surveys to gain an understanding of the values and sources of inspiration shared amongst Unitarian Universalists. At General Assembly 2021, the Commissioners introduced the Article II study process in a General Session, and engaged attendees in focus groups.

Congregational resources for small group ministry and group discussion were developed and shared in the fall of 2021. Focus groups, individual interviews, and surveys continued through the winter and spring of 2022. Draft language was prepared and shared during General Sessions at the 2022 General Assembly. Focus groups and surveys were used to collect feedback on these drafts.

In the fall of 2022, the Article II Study Commission, via their Outreach Team, held feedback sessions and surveys on different drafts of Article II, each draft informed by previous feedback sessions and surveys. At the end of this feedback cycle, the Article II Study Commission will submit its recommendation for a new Article II to the Board of Trustees in January 2023.

Over the course of its work, the Commission engaged in 45 feedback sessions, with 4,611 total participants. Their videos reached 7,765 viewers, and their 29 surveys generated a total of 10,925 responses.

After the Board of Trustees receives the recommendation, Article II Forums will be held, so people can learn more and talk about the proposal. Congregations are encouraged to have conversations to gather input from their members to inform their GA delegates. There will be opportunities for delegates to

recommend amendments to the proposal including at a mini-assembly at General Assembly. The Board will also be able to recommend amendments. Amendments to the proposal from delegates and the Board of Trustees will be prioritized and placed on the General Assembly agenda for consideration.



The final version of Article II, as amended by the Board of Trustees and/or the 2023 General Assembly, must receive a simple majority vote to move forward for a final vote at the 2024 General Assembly. It will take a 2/3rd majority vote at the 2024 General Assembly to be adopted as the new Article II of the UUA bylaws. If either vote fails, a similar proposal cannot be considered for two years.

OUR APPROACH

We started our work together developing trust and understanding in our relationships, something we felt mandatory for success in this two-year-long, intensive process. We reviewed our charge and the scope of our work, learned about the history of Article II and analyzed its functions and purpose.

The main functions of this article in our bylaws are legal and organizational. It defines who we are in a legal sense, and sets up the parameters of the UUA as an organization. In that first phase of the process, it became clear to us that in addition to these main functions, which are required of any bylaws, there were many other functions that UUs expected it to fulfill. These include:

- Theological: helps us articulate our shared values and theology
- Social: serves as a shared cultural touchstone
- Educational: lists concepts to teach and sources to draw from
- Personal: serves as a personal code of ethics

- Evangelical: a way to explain to others who we are and draw their interest
- Rhetorical: used in public situations to define our beliefs or morality in legal or political contexts

This is a different set of functions than many organizations expect from their bylaws. We suspect that because we do not have a creed or a confession of faith, which other religions rely on to fill these roles, these functions have fallen to Article II as the closest analogy because it is a shared agreement between congregations and we have a congregational polity.

Once we had established these roles that Article II played, we broke the article down into four areas that allowed it to fulfill these functions: Mission, Values, Covenant, and Inspirations. These guided our initial set of conversations and surveys.

From the beginning, we envisioned an organic, iterative process, where we would be in conversation with a wide variety of UUs, including the stakeholder groups. Regardless of whether our proposal passed or not, we wanted these conversations, and the process as a whole, to have value for the participants. We wanted UUs to think more about their own relationship to Unitarian Universalism, and the relationships of congregations to each other and the UUA.

As we proceeded, we saw patterns emerging fairly quickly. In group after group, setting after setting, we were getting a range of answers, but with definite areas of commonality and overlap. It then fell to us to discern the collective, spiritual truths within them and translate that into writing. The challenge was to be both broadly inclusive but also discerning of prophetic moments of insight in both our own and others' responses.

What was clear to us was that both strands, the representative and the individual, called for change.

The principles express a shared ethic and imply a certain theology—one that values the individual, growth, the natural world, and diversity. But it does not name these values explicitly, nor does it name many other values important to us collectively. It also gives no guidance on how we might approach living out these values in our congregations and the world. It declares itself to be a covenant, but the only actions it asks of congregations are to “affirm and promote” certain concepts. We believe we should expect more from a covenant. As one member put it, “we need more verbs.”

For some, the current Principles also serve as a theological statement, a personal code of ethics and a way to evangelize by explaining who we are.

For all these reasons, we felt we would be better served by a structure in which we articulate our shared values and then use these values as the ground for aspirational statements of action.

Seven single-word values (each with a short sentence of explication) are easier to remember and use as touchstones in our conversations, in congregational governance, and in educational settings.

With Inspirations, we are aware that many value the current list of Sources. Nothing in what we propose contradicts this list. We felt a better use of the Bylaws would be to articulate what our inspirations **do** and how we should approach any source of inspiration. We tie them explicitly to our values and to the practices of cultural respect. If people feel an official list is necessary, we would suggest a process that includes theologians, ministers, religious educators, musicians, artists/writers and laypeople.

With the Inclusion section, we found that as the most recently adopted section of Article II, it was largely in line with current thinking and future needs.



For the Freedom of Belief section, many found the legalistic language and convoluted wording to be confusing. We felt that restating it more simply and directly was the most appropriate way to address these problems, while maintaining our strong commitment to congregational polity and individual right of conscience. We want to note that congregational polity is also explicitly protected in Article III.

Throughout this process, we have been guided by the idea of the Living Tradition. As James Luther Adams has said, “a living tradition is not bequeathed through some law of inheritance; it must be earned, not without dust and heat, and not without humbling grace.” Throughout the dust and heat, we have been humbled by the grace extended to us by all those who participated in our process. In our work, we sought to honor the work of those ancestors who came before, and to envision all of us Unitarian Universalists as good ancestors to those who follow us in the future. We hope this revision nurtures that living tradition so that it continues to flourish, and look forward to that future time when another Commission takes up this work to make it speak for their age.



CURRENT ARTICLE II OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION BYLAWS AND RULES

Unitarian Universalist Association: Bylaws and Rules

Article II Principles and Purposes

Section C-2.1. Principles.

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all;
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

The living tradition which we share draws from many sources:

- Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life;
- Words and deeds of prophetic people which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion and the transforming power of love;
- Wisdom from the world's religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life;
- Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves;

- Humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit;
- Spiritual teachings of Earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.

Grateful for the religious pluralism which enriches and ennobles our faith, we are inspired to deepen our understanding and expand our vision. As free congregations we enter into this covenant, promising to one another our mutual trust and support.

Section C-2.2. Purposes.

The Unitarian Universalist Association shall devote its resources to and exercise its corporate powers for religious, educational and humanitarian purposes. The primary purpose of the Association is to serve the needs of its member congregations, organize new congregations, extend and strengthen Unitarian Universalist institutions and implement its principles.

Section C-2.3. Inclusion.

Systems of power, privilege, and oppression have traditionally created barriers for persons and groups with particular identities, ages, abilities, and histories. We pledge to replace such barriers with ever-widening circles of solidarity and mutual respect. We strive to be an association of congregations that truly welcome all persons and commit to structuring congregational and associational life in ways that empower and enhance everyone's participation.

Section C-2.4. Freedom of Belief.

Nothing herein shall be deemed to infringe upon the individual freedom of belief which is inherent in the Universalist and Unitarian heritages or to conflict with any statement of purpose, covenant, or bond of union used by any congregation unless such is used as a creedal test.

PROPOSED REVISION OF ARTICLE II

Unitarian Universalist Association: Bylaws and Rules Article II Purposes and Covenant

Section C-2.1. Purposes.

The Unitarian Universalist Association will devote its resources to and use its organizational powers for religious, educational, and humanitarian purposes. Its primary purposes are to assist congregations in their vital ministries, support and train leaders both lay and professional, to foster lifelong faith formation, to heal historic injustices, and to advance our Unitarian Universalist values in the world.

The purpose of the Unitarian Universalist Association is to actively engage its members in the transformation of the world through liberating Love.

Section C-2.2. Values and Covenant.

As Unitarian Universalists, we covenant, congregation-to-congregation and through our association, to support and assist one another in our ministries. We draw from our heritages of freedom, reason, hope, and courage, building on the foundation of love.

Love is the power that holds us together and is at the center of our shared values. We are accountable to one another for doing the work of living our shared values through the spiritual discipline of Love.

Inseparable from one another, these shared values are:

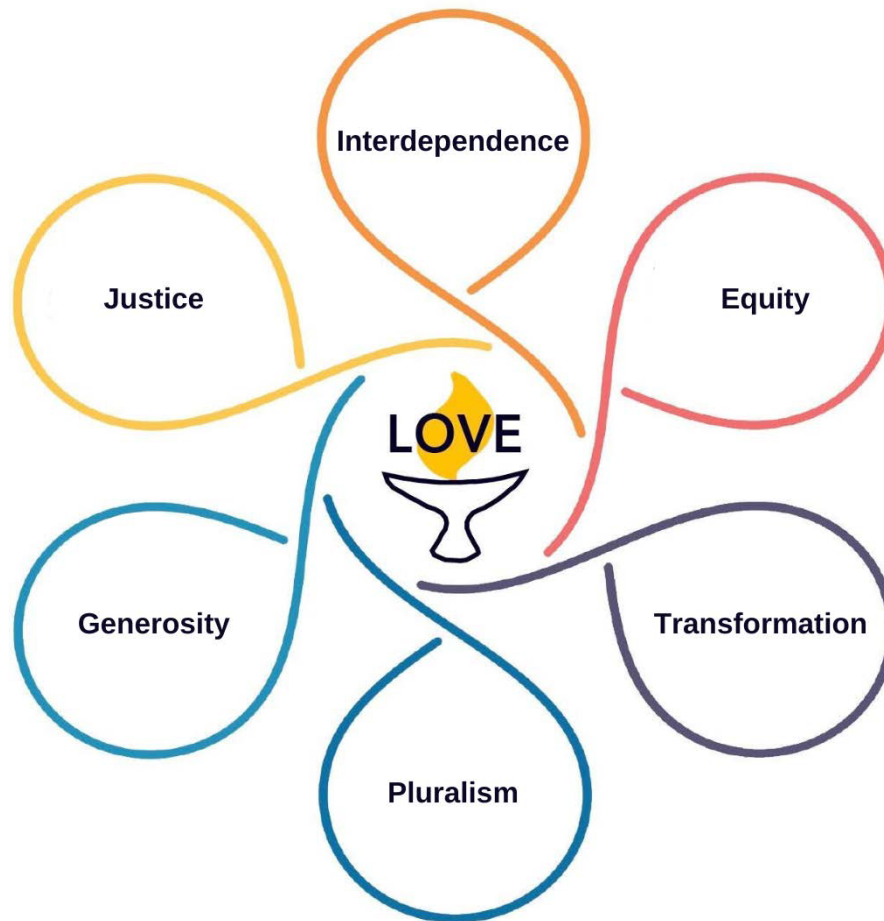


Image Description: This image is of a chalice with and overlay of the word love over the flame, with six outstretched arms that create a circle around each of the core values and form a six petal flower shape. Each arm is a different color and clockwise they are: Interdependence (Orange), Equity (Red), Transformation (Purple), Pluralism (Dark Blue), Generosity (Teal), and Justice (Yellow).

Interdependence. We honor the interdependent web of all existence.

We covenant to cherish Earth and all beings by creating and nurturing relationships of care and respect. With humility and reverence, we acknowledge our place in the great web of life, and we work to repair harm and damaged relationships.

Pluralism. We celebrate that we are all sacred beings diverse in culture, experience, and theology.

We covenant to learn from one another in our free and responsible search for truth and meaning. We embrace our differences and commonalities with Love, curiosity, and respect.

Justice. We work to be diverse multicultural Beloved Communities where all thrive.

We covenant to dismantle racism and all forms of systemic oppression. We support the use of inclusive democratic processes to make decisions.

Transformation. We adapt to the changing world.

We covenant to collectively transform and grow spiritually and ethically. Openness to change is fundamental to our Unitarian and Universalist heritages, never complete and never perfect.

Generosity. We cultivate a spirit of gratitude and hope.

We covenant to freely and compassionately share our faith, presence, and resources. Our generosity connects us to one another in relationships of interdependence and mutuality.

Equity. We declare that every person has the right to flourish with inherent dignity and worthiness.

We covenant to use our time, wisdom, attention, and money to build and sustain fully accessible and inclusive communities.

Section C-2.3. Inspirations.

As Unitarian Universalists, we use, and are inspired by, sacred and secular understandings that help us to live into our values. We respect the histories, contexts and cultures in which they were created and are currently practiced.

These sources ground us and sustain us in ordinary, difficult, and joyous times. Grateful for the religious ancestries we inherit and the diversity which enriches our faith, we are called to ever deepen and expand our wisdom.

Section C-2.4. Inclusion.

Systems of power, privilege, and oppression have traditionally created barriers for persons and groups with particular identities, ages, abilities, and histories. We pledge to replace such barriers with ever-widening circles of solidarity and mutual respect. We strive to be an association of congregations that truly welcome all persons who share our values. We commit to being an association of congregations that empowers and enhances everyone's participation, especially those with historically marginalized identities.

Section C-2.5. Freedom of belief.

Congregational freedom and the individual's right of conscience are central to our Unitarian Universalist heritage.

Congregations may establish statements of purpose, covenants, and bonds of union so long as they do not require that members adhere to a particular creed.



CONCLUSION



We recognize the fact the proposed version of Article II we have presented is indeed a significant departure from our current version, just as past changes to Article II were significant changes from their predecessors. The 1985 version which first introduced the Principles was a radical change from the Purposes and Objectives of the previous version. We are continuing in the line of proposing changes that fit the times in which we live. We fully expect that one day another Commission will review our work and significantly change it. We are writing this in pencil, not etching it in stone.

From the very beginning our goal was to listen to what Unitarian Universalists from all sectors of our faith communities felt and thought about the current Article II and what we should keep, what we should change and what we should add. We knew we were not writing this for ourselves alone, but for our larger community. We also knew that we would never write something that

everyone thought was perfect; perfection was not the goal. We knew that no matter what we produced there would be things people wished we had added, things people did not like, and things people appreciated. What we tried, and what we think we succeeded in doing, was to create an Article II that articulated our faith, today and in the near future.

Whenever there is change, there is loss, and where there is loss there is grief. We honor the fact that there is a loss in changing what has become so familiar to us. We were also mindful that we need not lose everything. You may have noticed that many of the words and themes of our current principles remain in the new Article II, just in a new format.

We are very grateful to all the people who engaged in the process of studying and revising Article II. Your input was of great value to us and shaped the directions we took. We are also pleased that this process has begun a new dialogue within our communities about what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist. We hope that this dialogue will continue and will result in a renewed commitment to our shared Unitarian Universalist faith.

Faithfully Submitted,
Your Article II Study Commission



Imagines © 2023 Nancy Pierce/UUA

With Gratitude to Tanya Webster who designed the Flower of Values