

2022-2023 ENCOUNTERING DIFFERENCE

MAY MONTHLY FOCUS:

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISM

Unitarian Universalism (UU) is a liberal religion that was created when two faith traditions, Universalism and Unitarianism joined together in 1961. The two traditions had a long history before the merger. The Universalist Church of America was founded in 1793 and the American Unitarian Association in 1825.

The UU faith is covenantal, not creedal, meaning there is no belief requirement or creed one has to say to join a UU community. There are requirements for how we want to be together and how we want to set about the work of creating Beloved Community with one another. Our covenants are how we practice our faith together and often set forth our aspirations for how we want to be in the world.¹

Key Terms

- Seven Principles – Strong values and moral guides that UU congregations affirm and promote. They are not dogma or doctrine, but a guide for those who choose to participate in the UU faith.²
- Sources of Our Living Tradition – Six sources from the living traditions many UUs draw from that have been affirmed by UU congregations.
- Eighth Principle – A grassroots effort to center racial justice within the UU values and moral guides. It states, “We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote: journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.”
- Article II Amendments – Art. II of the UUA Bylaws, Principles, and Purposes is the foundation for the work of the UUA and member congregations. It is what contains the Seven Principles and the Sources of Our Living Tradition. After extensive discussion and study, there is an effort to amend the current Art. II to be voted on at the 2023 General Assembly.
- General Assembly – Annual meeting of the UUA in which people worship together, learn together, and engage in the democratic process to make policy for the Association.
- Commission on Institutional Change – Commission established and charged by the UUA Board of Trustees to conduct an audit of white privilege and the structure of power within UUism.

Words of the Tradition

“...“imagine justice and mercy...hold fast to our vision...see hope in our history...find courage...work for constant rebirth.” *William G. Sinkford*

“Life becomes religious whenever we make it so.” *Sophia Lyons Fahs*

“We are all bound up together in one great bundle of humanity, and society cannot trample on the weakest and feeblest of its members without receiving the curse in its own soul.” *Frances Watkins Harper*

“Each of us is meant to have a character all our own, to be what no other can exactly be, and do what no other can exactly do.” *William Ellery Channing*

“I call that church free which enters into the covenant with the ultimate source of existence. It binds together families and generations, protecting against the idolatry of any human claim to absolute truth or authority.” *James Luther Adams*

“The word *hairesis* in Greek means choice; a heretic is one who is able to choose.” *John A. Buehrens, A Chosen Faith: An Introduction to Unitarian Universalism*

¹ <https://www.uua.org/southern/blog/why-covenant#:~:text=Unitarian%20Universalists%20are%20a%20covenantal,the%20boundaries%20of%20our%20faith.>

² Rev. Barbara Wells, <https://www.uua.org/beliefs/what-we-believe/principles>