

Side by Side Comparison 2024 Proposed Revision of Article II of the Bylaws of the Unitarian Universalist Association

Context & Timeline*

- *The UUA Bylaws were adopted in 1961 when the Universalist Church in America and the American Unitarian Association merged. Article II established vital characteristics of the new Unitarian Universalist Association and outlined the original 6 Principles that reflected its fundamental beliefs and aspirations. There were significant disagreements over content that nearly derailed the merger process. Article II must be reviewed at least every 15 years.*
- In 1967, Section 4 was added to Article II, opposing discrimination and affirming inclusivity. Efforts to update the 6 Principles began in the 1970s, focusing initially on eliminating sexist language. The revised 7 Principles and original 5 Sources were adopted at the General Assembly (GA) in 1985 with wide popular support.
- A 6th Source, Earth-centered spirituality, was added in 1995 at GA.
- An Article II Study Commission formed in 2006 but delegates rejected its revisions at GA in 2009.
- In 2013, at GA, the Article II section on “Non-Discrimination” became “Inclusion.”
- Separately in 2013, an 8th Principle was drafted centering anti-racism in the UUA. In 2017 a Responsive Resolution passed at GA calling for a Study Commission to consider adding the 8th Principle to Article II.
- The current Article II Study Commission started in 2019 and the Commission was launched in 2020, just as covid hit. Its work period was extended with the final report due in 2023, rather than in 2022.
- Widening the Circle of Concern: Report of the UUA Commission on Institutional Change, was presented to the Board of Trustees and General Assembly in June 2020
- The proposed Article II revisions were considered at the General Assembly in Pittsburgh in June, 2023. Delegates, representing UU congregations from across the country, approved the proposed revisions with amendments with the support of 86%.
- Final proposed Article II revisions, reflecting adopted amendments from 2023 GA, were released in the Fall of 2023.
- Opportunities to amend the set adopted in June 2023 last year were provided in the last few months. Deadline for submission was February 1st 2024.
- Amendments to the 2024 proposed Article 2 recently submitted will be considered at the upcoming GA. At this point, those amendments have not been released. (They will be made available to our congregation when they are released.)
- After considering the amendments, the final proposed Article 2 will be considered by GA delegates. Approval requires a 2/3 vote.

*Based on Context and Timeline from Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Cleveland

**This Table is a Side by Side Comparison of the Current Article II (1st column)
and the final Proposed Article II (2nd column)**

<u><i>CURRENT ARTICLE II</i></u>	<u><i>PROPOSED ARTICLE II</i></u>
<p>Section C-2.1. Principles.</p> <p>THIS SECTION WOULD BE REMOVED AND REPLACED WITH NEW SECTION C-2.2 VALUES AND COVENANT</p> <p>We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <p>THE PORTION ABOVE LISTS THE 7 PRINCIPLES</p> <p>ELEMENTS OF THE 7 PRINCIPLES HAVE BEEN USED IN THE NEW SECTION C-2.2 VALUES AND COVENANT</p>	<p>Section C-2.2. Values and Covenant</p> <p>ALL NEW LANGUAGE</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Inseparable from one another, these shared values are:</p> <p><i>[Note: See proposed Image and narrative at the end of this document. It would be inserted here in the Bylaws.]</i></p> <p>Interdependence</p> <p>We honor the interdependent web of all existence. With reverence for the great web of life and with humility, we acknowledge our place in it.</p> <p>We covenant to protect Earth and all beings from exploitation. We will create and nurture sustainable relationships of care</p>

and respect, mutuality and justice. We will 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 within our congregations, our Association, and society at large.

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.

THE PORTION BELOW CONTAINS OUR 6 SOURCES

THE CURRENT SIX SOURCES ARE REWRITTEN INTO A NEW SECTION C-2.3 INSPIRATIONS (in column on the right below the value of EQUITY)

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;

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

NEW SECTION - ALL NEW LANGUAGE (based on current 6 Sources)

Direct experiences of transcending mystery and wonder are primary sources of Unitarian Universalist inspiration. These experiences open our hearts, renew our spirits, and transform our lives. We draw upon, and are inspired by, sacred, secular, and scientific understandings that help us make meaning and live into our values. These sources ground us and sustain us in ordinary, difficult, and joyous times. We respect the histories, contexts, and cultures in which these sources were created and are currently practiced. Grateful for the experiences that move us, aware of the religious ancestries we inherit, and enlivened by the diversity which enriches our faith, we are called to ever deepen and expand our wisdom.

• 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-2.1. Purposes

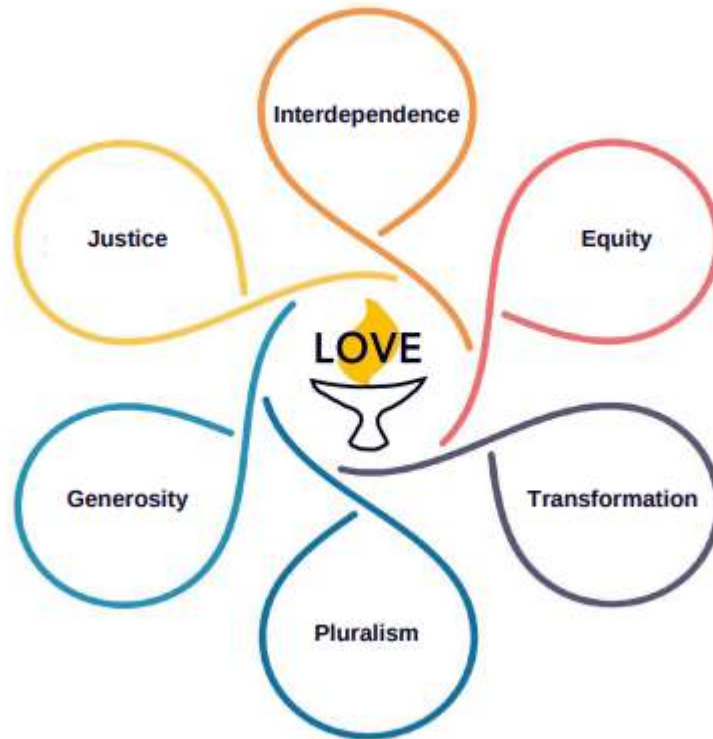
The Unitarian Universalist Association will devote its resources to and **use its organizational** powers for religious, educational, and humanitarian purposes. **Its primary purposes are:**

to assist congregations in their vital ministries,
to support and train leaders both lay and professional,
to foster lifelong faith formation and spiritual development,
to heal historic injustices,
to support and encourage the creation of new Unitarian Universalist communities, and

	<p><u>to advance our Unitarian Universalist values in the world. The Unitarian Universalist Association will actively engage its members in the transformation of the world through liberating Love.</u></p>
<p>Section C-2.3. Inclusion</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Section C-2.4. Inclusion</p> <p>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 <u>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.</u></p>
<p>Section C-2.4. Freedom of Belief.</p> <p>CURRENT LANGUAGE REPLACED</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Section C-2.5. Freedom of belief</p> <p>ALL NEW LANGUAGE</p> <p>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.</p>

Image and description to be added. See Note in Section 2.2 Values and Covenant.

Shared Unitarian Universalist Values



PROPOSED REVISION TO ARTICLE II

Image Description: This image is of a chalice with an 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 (Blue), Generosity (Green), and Justice (Yellow).

[Suggested shift to Rule and recommended edits] The UUA may create visual representations of the values, which put love at the center and interconnect each value, and may periodically update that image. A version of this image shall be included, with image description, after "Shared Unitarian Universalist Values" in the published version of these bylaws.