

# 1. Introduction

Welcome to the Article II comments and suggestions form. Thank you for taking time to give your responses on this important document and at this important time for our faith.

The UUA Commission on Appraisal has been engaged in study and review of Article II of the UUA Bylaws. The Commission was appointed by the UUA Board of Trustees to conduct this review, which started in 2006. Based on two years of extensive comments and suggestions from congregations and individuals, the Commission has produced the draft version below. As the final phase of study and review, the Commission seeks comments and suggestions about this draft version. You are invited to complete the questionnaire below and submit your answers before the firm deadline of October 16, 2008.

When possible, the Commission encourages congregations to hold workshops for people to discuss this proposed version in groups. If your congregation does this, there will be a place to indicate this on the survey. This form also allows for individual responses.

The Commission will review the results of this survey at its meeting that begins October 23, 2008. At that meeting, the Commission will produce a final proposal to be presented to the Board of Trustees for consideration at its January 2009 meeting. With the Board's approval, the final proposal will go to the delegates at the 2009 General Assembly for preliminary approval (majority vote required). Before the delegates vote, there will be a mini-assembly where further revisions can be proposed. The vote for final approval and adoption will take place at the 2010 General Assembly (2/3 vote required).

A hard copy of this survey is being mailed to all congregations. You may also download a copy to print and fill out at [www.uua.org/coa](http://www.uua.org/coa) Please spread word of this survey as widely as possible.

## 2. Process

Through a long series of congregational workshops, hearings at District Meetings and General Assemblies, and many other processes, hundreds of congregations and thousands of Unitarian Universalists have given their responses to the Commission on Appraisal for what to do with Article II. The commission has worked diligently to collect and interpret this information and to create a document that will live up to the hopes and desires that people have expressed to us through this long period of inquiry.

Please click "next" to view the Commission's draft for Article II, created through that process of responses and work by the Commission.

You will first be given a chance to read the draft proposal as a whole (this is on two consecutive pages of this survey). This will be followed by an opportunity to give responses section by section and then finally by an opportunity at the end to give responses on the draft proposal as a whole.

1 **ARTICLE II: Covenant**

2 **Section C-2.1 Purposes.**

3 As a voluntary association of free yet interdependent congregations, the Unitarian Universalist  
4 Association will support the health and growth of existing congregations and the formation of new  
5 congregations. The Association will devote its resources to and exercise its corporate powers for  
6 religious, educational, and humanitarian purposes. It will empower the creation of just and diverse  
7 congregations that enact Unitarian Universalist Principles in the world.

8 **Section C-2.2 Identity.**

9 The Unitarian Universalist Association is composed of congregations rooted in the heritage of two  
10 religious faiths: the Unitarian heritage ever questioning and ever seeking the unity in all things, and  
11 the Universalist heritage ever affirming the power of hope and God’s infinite love. Both traditions  
12 have been shaped by heretics, choice-makers who in every age have summoned individuals and  
13 communities to maintain their beliefs in spite of persecution and to struggle for religious freedom.

14 **Section C-2.3 Sources.**

15 The living tradition we share draws from many sources.

16 Unitarianism and Universalism are grounded on more than two thousand years of Jewish and  
17 Christian teachings, traditions, and experiences. Unitarian Universalism is not contained in any  
18 single book or creed. It draws from the teachings of the Abrahamic religions, Earth-centered  
19 spirituality, and other world religious traditions. It engages perspectives from humanism,  
20 mysticism, theism, skepticism, naturalism, and feminist and liberation theologies. It is informed by  
21 the arts and the sciences. It trusts the value of direct experiences of mystery and wonder, and it  
22 recognizes the sacred may be found within the ordinary.

23 Wisdom and beauty may be expressed in many forms: in poetry and prose, in story and song, in  
24 metaphor and myth, in drama and dance, in fabric and painting, in scripture and music, in drawing  
25 and sculpture, in public ritual and solitary practice, in prophetic speech and courageous deed.

26 Grateful for the traditions that have strengthened our own, we strive to avoid misappropriation of  
27 cultural and religious practices and to seek ways of appreciation that are respectful and welcomed.

28 **Section C-2.4 Principles.**

29 In order that we might work together in harmony to make our communities and our world more  
30 likely to protect and nurture all that is positive and hopeful; and in order that members of our  
31 congregations might find spiritual challenge to become their best selves as they worship and work  
32 together to create the Beloved Community, we, the member congregations of the Unitarian  
33 Universalist Association, covenant to honor and uphold:

34 *The inherent worth and dignity of every person*

35 At the core of Unitarian Universalism is recognition of the sanctity of every human being  
36 across the lifespan. We are relational creatures, capable of both good and evil. We have  
37 experienced enough brokenness, including in ourselves, to seek the power of forgiveness and  
38 reconciliation. We are called to make choices that help to heal and transform ourselves and  
39 the world, and to move toward solidarity with all beings.

40 *Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations*

41 Grateful for the gift of life and mindful of our own mortality, we seek to respond with  
42 generosity and loving action. We are called to live in right relationship with others.

43 *Acceptance of one another and encouragement of spiritual growth*

44 We seek to enter dialogue with one another in mutual love and respect, honoring our varied  
45 backgrounds and paths. We are called to stretch and deepen our faith through religious  
46 education, creative engagement, and spiritual practice in our congregations and in our lives.

47 *A free and responsible search for truth and meaning*

48 Unitarian Universalism is an evolutionary religion that encourages and supports lifelong  
49 spiritual exploration. Unitarian Universalist religious authority lies in the individual,  
50 nurtured and tested in congregation and wider community. In a spirit of humility and  
51 openness, we are called to seek truth and meaning, wherever found, through experience,  
52 reason, intuition, and emotion.

53 *The right of conscience and the use of democratic processes*

54 We seek to ensure that all voices are heard, especially those often left out on the margins.  
55 We are called to promote fairness, accountability, honesty, and transparency.

56 *The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all*

57 We seek to create, sustain, and celebrate multi-generational and multi-cultural communities  
58 where oppression cannot thrive and where hope and peace flourish. We are called to  
59 counter legacies of injustice and to foster reconciliation.

60 *Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part*

61 Inspired by the beauty and holiness of the Earth, we become more willing to relinquish  
62 material desires. We recognize the need for sacrifice as we build a world that is both just  
63 and sustainable. We are called to be good stewards, restoring the Earth and protecting all  
64 beings.

65 As free yet interdependent congregations, we enter into this covenant, promising to one another our  
66 mutual trust, kindness, and support. Should we break this covenant, we will seek to repair the  
67 relationship and recommit to the promises we have made.

68 **Section C-2.5 Inclusion.**

69 We strive to be an association of congregations that welcome persons of every identity while calling  
70 them to act in right relationship. We encourage the fullest participation allowed by law, with no  
71 person excluded solely on the basis of age or identity.

72 Structures of power have traditionally created barriers for persons and groups with certain identities,  
73 abilities, and histories. Dissatisfied with mere non-discrimination, we commit to structuring  
74 congregational and associational life in ways that empower and enhance the efforts and experiences  
75 of every participant.

76 **Section C-2.6 Freedom of Belief.**

77 Freedom of belief is central to the Unitarian Universalist heritage. Nothing in these bylaws shall be  
78 deemed to infringe upon individual freedom of belief. Although no statement of belief can be  
79 required as a creedal test for individual membership in a congregation or congregational affiliation  
80 with the Association, congregations are free to establish their own statements of purpose, covenants,  
81 and bonds of union.

**Name of Person Completing Survey:**

---

**Congregation name (no abbreviations please)**

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**City where congregation is located**

---

**State, province or territory congregation is in**

---

**Are you a religious professional (e.g. Minister, DRE, Music Director)**

**Yes      No**

    

**Age \_\_\_\_\_ How many years have you been a Unitarian Universalist? \_\_\_\_\_**

**We invite you to share your "race"/ethnicity/LGBTQQ identity**

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**Answers based on group discussion in congregation?**

**Yes      No**

    

**If "yes", number participating in discussion \_\_\_\_\_**

**Question 1: Title**

(please give comments on just the title of Article II)

**Article II: Covenant**

<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Okay</b>	<b>Not Acceptable</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Comments:**

**Question 2: Section C-2.1 Purposes.**

As a voluntary association of free yet interdependent congregations, the Unitarian Universalist Association will support the health and growth of existing congregations and the formation of new congregations. The Association will devote its resources to and exercise its corporate powers for religious, educational, and humanitarian purposes. It will empower the creation of just and diverse congregations that enact Unitarian Universalist Principles in the world.

<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Okay</b>	<b>Not Acceptable</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Comments:**

**Question 3: Section C-2.2 Identity.**

The Unitarian Universalist Association is composed of congregations rooted in the heritage of two religious faiths: the Unitarian heritage ever questioning and ever seeking the unity in all things, and the Universalist heritage ever affirming the power of hope and God’s infinite love. Both traditions have been shaped by heretics, choice-makers who in every age have summoned individuals and communities to maintain their beliefs in spite of persecution and to struggle for religious freedom.

**Excellent**

**Good**

**Okay**

**Not Acceptable**

**Comments:**

**Question 4: Section C-2.3 Sources.**

The living tradition we share draws from many sources.

Unitarianism and Universalism are grounded on more than two thousand years of Jewish and Christian teachings, traditions, and experiences. Unitarian Universalism is not contained in any single book or creed. It draws from the teachings of the Abrahamic religions, Earth-centered spirituality, and other world religious traditions. It engages perspectives from humanism, mysticism, theism, skepticism, naturalism, and feminist and liberation theologies. It is informed by the arts and the sciences. It trusts the value of direct experiences of mystery and wonder, and it recognizes the sacred may be found within the ordinary.

Wisdom and beauty may be expressed in many forms: in poetry and prose, in story and song, in metaphor and myth, in drama and dance, in fabric and painting, in scripture and music, in drawing and sculpture, in public ritual and solitary practice, in prophetic speech and courageous deed.

Grateful for the traditions that have strengthened our own, we strive to avoid misappropriation of cultural and religious practices and to seek ways of appreciation that are respectful and welcomed.

**Excellent**

**Good**

**Okay**

**Not Acceptable**

**Question 4 Comments:**

**Question 5: Section C-2.4 Principles.**

In order that we might work together in harmony to make our communities and our world more likely to protect and nurture all that is positive and hopeful; and in order that members of our congregations might find spiritual challenge to become their best selves as they worship and work together to create the Beloved Community, we, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to honor and uphold:

<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Okay</b>	<b>Not Acceptable</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Comments:**

**Question 6: *The inherent worth and dignity of every person***

At the core of Unitarian Universalism is recognition of the sanctity of every human being across the lifespan. We are relational creatures, capable of both good and evil. We have experienced enough brokenness, including in ourselves, to seek the power of forgiveness and reconciliation. We are called to make choices that help to heal and transform ourselves and the world, and to move toward solidarity with all beings.

<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Okay</b>	<b>Not Acceptable</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Question 6 Comments:**

**Question 7: *Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations***

Grateful for the gift of life and mindful of our own mortality, we seek to respond with generosity and loving action. We are called to live in right relationship with others.

**Excellent**      **Good**      **Okay**      **Not Acceptable**  
                 

**Comments:**

**Question 8:** *Acceptance of one another and encouragement of spiritual growth*

We seek to enter dialogue with one another in mutual love and respect, honoring our varied backgrounds and paths. We are called to stretch and deepen our faith through religious education, creative engagement, and spiritual practice in our congregations and in our lives.

**Excellent**      **Good**      **Okay**      **Not Acceptable**  
                 

**Comments:**

**Question 9:** *A free and responsible search for truth and meaning*

Unitarian Universalism is an evolutionary religion that encourages and supports lifelong spiritual exploration. Unitarian Universalist religious authority lies in the individual, nurtured and tested in congregation and wider community. In a spirit of humility and openness, we are called to seek truth and meaning, wherever found, through experience, reason, intuition, and emotion.

**Excellent**      **Good**      **Okay**      **Not Acceptable**

**Comments:**

**Question 10:** *The right of conscience and the use of democratic processes*

We seek to ensure that all voices are heard, especially those often left out on the margins.  
We are called to promote fairness, accountability, honesty, and transparency.

**Excellent**      **Good**      **Okay**      **Not Acceptable**

**Comments:**

**Question 11:** *The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all*

We seek to create, sustain, and celebrate multi-generational and multi-cultural communities where oppression cannot thrive and where hope and peace flourish. We are called to counter legacies of injustice and to foster reconciliation.

**Excellent**      **Good**      **Okay**      **Not Acceptable**

**Question Comments:**

**Question 12:** *Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part*

Inspired by the beauty and holiness of the Earth, we become more willing to relinquish material desires. We recognize the need for sacrifice as we build a world that is both just and sustainable. We are called to be good stewards, restoring the Earth and protecting all beings.

<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Okay</b>	<b>Not Acceptable</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Comments:**

**Question 13: Principles - Closing Paragraph**

As free yet interdependent congregations, we enter into this covenant, promising to one another our mutual trust, kindness, and support. Should we break this covenant, we will seek to repair the relationship and recommit to the promises we have made.

<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Okay</b>	<b>Not Acceptable</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Comments:**

**Question 14: Section C-2.5 Inclusion.**

We strive to be an association of congregations that welcome persons of every identity while calling them to act in right relationship. We encourage the fullest participation allowed by law, with no person excluded solely on the basis of age or identity.

Structures of power have traditionally created barriers for persons and groups with certain identities, abilities, and histories. Dissatisfied with mere non-discrimination, we commit to structuring congregational and associational life in ways that empower and enhance the efforts and experiences of every participant.

**Excellent**

**Good**

**Okay**

**Not Acceptable**

**Comments:**

**Question 15: Section C-2.6 Freedom of Belief.**

Freedom of belief is central to the Unitarian Universalist heritage. Nothing in these bylaws shall be deemed to infringe upon individual freedom of belief. Although no statement of belief can be required as a creedal test for individual membership in a congregation or congregational affiliation with the Association, congregations are free to establish their own statements of purpose, covenants, and bonds of union.

**Excellent**

**Good**

**Okay**

**Not Acceptable**

**Comments:**

**Question 16: Additional Comments**

**Please mail completed survey to**

Commission on Appraisal  
C/O Julie Shaw  
Unitarian Universalist Association  
25 Beacon St.  
Boston, MA 02108