

Charge to the 8th Principle Task Force

8th Principle

The Unitarian Universalist Association is considering adopting an 8th Principle to explicitly commit to anti-racism/anti-oppression efforts to move our faith to be multicultural and to ensure that our doors and our institution are open to people of color, people of all classes and life experience, people of all gender identities, and people of different physical abilities.

“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 accountability dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.”

First Unitarian adopted a Strategic Plan in January 2022 that asked the congregation to spend a year learning and discerning about what the 8th Principle means, what adopting it would look like for our congregation, what it would mean for our church as an institution, and what each of us is invited to do in our personal journeys to evolve in our ability to be with one another in ways that are not oppressive in our relationship to each other.

The Board is creating an 8th Principle Task Force to guide the congregation to explore the benefits and challenges of diversity, inclusion, and equitable church practices. The goal is to prepare the congregation to vote on adopting the 8th Principle at the Annual Meeting in January 2023.

Task Force Members

The 8th Principle Task Force will consist of 2 board representatives and 3 non-board members of the congregation, for a total of 5 people. The board will choose task force members to ensure a balance of skills in emotional intelligence, commitment to work collaboratively, organization, time to devote to this effort, ability to respect different views, communicate across differences, as well as a balance of representative identities. To the extent possible, task force members should be recruited to represent different race/ethnicities, ages, classes, gender identities, and physical abilities. The task force will have co-chairs, one from the Board and one from the Congregation. The ministers will work with the task force.

Board Members:

- Dámaris Donado - Co-Chair

- Maya Stephenson

Congregation Members:

- The Reverend Jane E. Davis
- Heather Clark
- Gary Carlson

Charge

The task force is charged with *communicating* to the congregation, church groups, and the board about the 8th Principle during this year of focus and action; *organizing and guiding* the work of exploring what adopting the 8th principle means at all levels and in all areas of church; and *summarizing* the learning and next steps identified during this year to shape future efforts.

Responsibilities

The task force is not responsible for solving all problems or even identifying all barriers to and issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion; rather, the task force will help think through, organize, communicate, and move the church forward in *assessing* where we are and what's needed in the future.

Responsibility 1: Offer/coordinate ongoing learning opportunities about the 8th Principle

- *Example:* Researching and coordinating with other churches who have taken on the 8th principle
- *Example:* Offer/coordinate forums or learning circles to explore what the 8th Principle is and how naming anti-racism/anti-oppression and multiculturalism explicitly brings value and intentionally supports inclusion, diversity, and equity beyond the 7 Principles
- *Example:* Create an insert with the 8th Principle and summary of our congregations year of learning and action to each hymnal

Responsibility 2: Organize, coordinate, and offer opportunities at the personal, interpersonal, and institutional levels to learn and discern where we are on the multicultural journey, scope out the work that's needed to move toward multiculturalism and inclusion, and identify actions that can be taken now and in the future

- *Example at the personal level:* Curate resources about anti-oppression, anti-racism, and multiculturalism on an 8th Principle webpage on the church website

- *Example at the interpersonal level:* Offer or coordinate healing circles / learning forums / reading groups / workshops on microaggressions and repair; cultural humility
- *Example at the institutional level:* Guiding existing church groups through an assessment of existing documents, policies, practices, and procedures to find structural barriers, oppressions, and opportunities for progress on a multicultural / anti-racism / anti-oppression journey
 - *Key groups:* Board, Board's Policy Task Force, Staff, Personnel Committee, Social Justice Council, RE Council, Worship Committee, Worship Service Coordinators, Music Program, etc.

Responsibility 3: Decide how to allocate 8th Principle fund for trainings, learnings, and discernment

- *Example:* Contracting with community organizations / experts in diversity, equity, inclusion to offer trainings and workshops

Responsibility 4: Figure out who we don't typically reach, who we need to reach, what they need to know, what we need to know, and how to reach them.

- *Example:* Coordinate with the Membership/Communications Director, Membership Committee, and Hospitality/Inclusion (HI) Committee to reach new members and people not currently in church groups
- *Example:* Develop strategies to help people to understand their value and responsibility in this work

Deliverables & Timeline

The following deliverables are offered as baseline milestones that should be reached with approximate timelines. The task force may decide to adjust the timelines as needed to move "at the speed of church." The task force may coordinate with the board to adjust the milestones as needed to meet the needs of the congregation to be ready to vote on the 8th Principle at the Annual Meeting in January 2023.

- **May:** Gather information on other churches' 8th Principle journeys, First Unitarian groups to interact with, and existing engagement opportunities to leverage
- **June:** Develop and distribute a baseline survey of the congregation and church groups
- **July - September:** Task and support all church groups to complete an anti-racism / anti-oppression assessment of themselves, their work, and their processes and identify barriers/oppressions, areas/intentions for improvement, and potential next steps.
 - *Example:* Anti-racism Rubric developed by Julica Hermann de la Fuente

- <https://www.uusc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Anti-Racism-Recipe-for-UU-Congregations.pdf>
 - Example: Intercultural Development Inventory
 - <https://idiinventory.com/generalinformation/the-intercultural-development-continuum-idc/>
 - Example: Continuum on Being an Anti-racist Multicultural Organization developed by Crossroads Ministry, Chicago, IL
 - <https://philanos.org/resources/Documents/Conference%202020/Preread%20PDFs/ContinuumAntiRacist.pdf>
- **October:** Host inter-group learning sessions where people can share what they learned, explore overlapping lessons, and identify common challenges and opportunities.
- **November – December:** Develop, distribute, and analyze a progress survey of the congregation and church groups
- **January:** Summarize efforts, learnings, and next steps for the Annual Report and at the Annual Meeting.
- **Ongoing:** Host and coordinate in-person and online opportunities to learn about the 8th Principle
- **Ongoing:** Maintain an 8th Principle webpage on the church website
- **Monthly:** Write a brief article for the Messenger
- **Monthly:** Summarize progress and request assistance as needed from the Board and staff, either in person or in writing

Approach

- The task force should lead in love, modeling intentional action, vulnerability, compassion, transparency, creativity, grace, and humility.
- The task force should *invite* people to this exploration of their personal journeys and our shared covenant as a Unitarian Universalist congregation, with love and compassion for where we are even as we hold each other accountable for the ways that we can do better.
- The task force should aim to over-communicate with the congregation, church groups, staff and ministers, and the board.
- The task force should prioritize relationships over urgency. At the same time, the task force should recognize that over-complicating and over-thinking are sometimes strategies of foot-dragging and opposition and often signal a desire to protect white comfort, which is counter to the intent of this year of action.
- The task force should remain mindful of the learning edge that maintains momentum and keeps us moving in our multicultural journeys, as well as the counter-productive resistance when people are pushed too far, too fast, or with judgment as opposed to love, compassion, and invitation.
- The task force should approach conflict as a generative part of community-building and high emotions as a signal of personal and interpersonal work to be done. The

task force should lean into naming and inviting this work to be done, without taking on the responsibility of doing it. Finding and offering resources is a supportive response.