

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE 8<sup>TH</sup> PRINCIPLE**  
**FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF ALBUQUERQUE**  
[HTTPS://UUABQ.ORG/THE-8TH-PRINCIPLE/](https://uuabq.org/the-8th-principle/)

General Questions	Responses
What is the proposed 8th Principle?	“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.” <a href="https://www.8thprincipleuu.org/">https://www.8thprincipleuu.org/</a>
What is the origin of the 8th Principle?	"Paula Cole Jones, JPD (Joseph Priestley District—the mid-Atlantic district of the UUA, now subsumed into the larger Central East Regional Group, CERG) Director of Racial & Social Justice, developed the idea of the existence of 2 different paradigms in UU circles: the UU 7 Principles and Beloved Community (deep multiculturalism). After working with congregations on these issues for over 15 years, she realized that a person can believe they are being a “good UU” and following the 7 Principles without thinking about or dealing with racism and other oppressions at the systemic level. Evidence: most UU congregations are primarily European-American in membership, culture (especially music), and leadership, even when located near diverse communities. She realized that an 8th Principle was needed to correct this, and talked with Bruce Pollack-Johnson about some of the components that should be in it. Bruce put together an initial draft in 2013, and the two of them worked with a group of anti-racist activists in the JPD to refine it. Bruce’s congregation (the UU Church of the Restoration in Philadelphia) incorporated it into their Covenant at that time, then in May 2017 formally adopted it for themselves and recommended that the UUA adopt it." <a href="https://www.8thprincipleuu.org/background">https://www.8thprincipleuu.org/background</a>
What is the process for adoption of the 8th Principle by the Unitarian Universalist Association?	The Article II Study Commission (A2SC) has been established to review all of our principles and purposes including the proposed 8th Principle. Paula Cole Jones, co-author of the 8th Principle, is a member of the commission. At General Session V of General Assembly 2021, 91% of the delegates voted in favor of asking the A2SC and the Board of Trustees “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.” In consultation with the General Assembly 2021, the Board of Trustees has charged the A2SC to include the essence of the 8th Principle in its recommendations. The Study Commission will present its recommendations to the UUA Board of Trustees in January 2023 for inclusion in the business of the 2023 General Assembly. If passed by the General Assembly in 2023, the Article II Study Commission (A2SC) recommendations will be voted on again in the 2024 General Assembly as required in the UUA Bylaws. <a href="https://www.uua.org/uua/governance/committees/article-ii-study-commission/blog/8thprinciple">https://www.uua.org/uua/governance/committees/article-ii-study-commission/blog/8thprinciple</a>

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<p>Historically, haven't UUs been strong advocates for multiculturalism and been engaged in anti-racism?</p>	<p>"UUs and the UUA have done very good work in fighting racism, such as during the Civil Rights Movement and in the 1990's (passing a resolution in 1997 at GA, after a precursor resolution in 1992, to become an Anti-Racist, Anti-Oppression Multi-Cultural, or ARAOMC, Organization), but the funding and support started to wane in the 2000's – our accountability mechanism failed us. UU's also have a mixed record historically in other areas of racial justice: e.g., we had people on both sides of Abolitionism (including people like Jefferson who was a slaveholder), and Unitarians were proponents of Eugenics (leading to some of the racial extremes of Nazism and Apartheid in South Africa). For people identified as white, it is too easy to ignore these issues, which is exactly what keeps the system of racism in our society alive and in fact worsening right now. We need to de-center whiteness and other dominant cultures in UUism. The 8th Principle came from a feeling that we need something to renew our commitment to this work, to hold ourselves accountable, and to fulfill the potential of our existing principles." <a href="https://www.8thprincipleuu.org/background">https://www.8thprincipleuu.org/background</a></p>
<p>What is the process for our congregation voting on the 8th principle?</p>	<p>The Board created a Charge to the 8th Principle Task Force that outlines the goal, responsibilities, deliverables &amp; timeline, and approach that will prepare the congregation to vote on adopting the 8th Principle at the Annual Meeting in January 2023. <a href="https://uuabq.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Charge-to-the-Eighth-Principle-Task-Force.pdf">https://uuabq.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Charge-to-the-Eighth-Principle-Task-Force.pdf</a></p>
<p>Why is the UUA considering adopting the 8th Principle?</p>	<p>"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." <a href="https://uuabq.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Charge-to-the-Eighth-Principle-Task-Force.pdf">https://uuabq.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Charge-to-the-Eighth-Principle-Task-Force.pdf</a></p>
<p>Aren't the 7 Principles enough?</p>	<p>The Unitarian Universalist Principles were designed to be dynamic, not a fixed creed. It means we want to always continue to be educating ourselves, exploring truth, and raising our consciousness. When we get to a new level of understanding and clarity, our structure makes it possible to reflect that. UU is the only religion that intentionally builds in that flexibility to acknowledge the importance of ongoing revealed truth. This happened when environmental awareness reached a critical mass and got added as a 7th Principle (although it also has multicultural relationship implications). We are approaching a similar critical mass level of awareness with the systemic nature of racism and other oppressions. <a href="https://www.8thprincipleuu.org/background">https://www.8thprincipleuu.org/background</a></p>

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Isn't the 8th Principle already implied in the existing 7 Principles?	"Our existing 7 principles <i>imply</i> this 8th principle, but do not <i>explicitly</i> hold us accountable for addressing these oppressions directly, especially at the systemic level." <a href="https://www.8thprincipleuu.org/other-comments">https://www.8thprincipleuu.org/other-comments</a>
What happens after the 8th Principle?	"The 8th Principle is really just the beginning of action, rather than the ultimate goal. It should lead to restoring funding and support for Jubilee Anti-Racism trainings for any UUs who want them and the other programs of the late 90s, as well as starting an anti-racism version of the Welcoming Congregation program that was so effective for LGBTQIA+ awareness and progress. Many people of color have been attracted by the values and potential of UUism, but their souls have been repeatedly wounded by its whiteness. Let's make our actions match our values. Let's be a UU movement that feeds them. That would be spiritual wholeness." <a href="https://www.8thprincipleuu.org/other-comments">https://www.8thprincipleuu.org/other-comments</a>
How did the task force come about?	"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." Members of the congregation requested that the Board create a task force to support and guide this effort. <a href="https://uuabq.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Charge-to-the-Eighth-Principle-Task-Force.pdf">https://uuabq.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Charge-to-the-Eighth-Principle-Task-Force.pdf</a>
Who is on the task force & where do we contact?	Members of this task force: Dámaris Donado (co-chair), Jane Davis (co-chair), Heather Clark, Maya Stephenson, and Gary Carlson. Email Contact: <a href="mailto:8thprincipleuabq@gmail.com">8thprincipleuabq@gmail.com</a>
How were the members of the task force chosen?	The Board created an application process for interested individuals to apply to the task force. They also developed a "Charge to the 8th Principle Task Force" and it states:"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." <a href="https://uuabq.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Charge-to-the-Eighth-Principle-Task-Force.pdf">https://uuabq.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Charge-to-the-Eighth-Principle-Task-Force.pdf</a>

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What is the role of the First Unitarian 8th Principle Task Force?	"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." - <a href="https://uuabq.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Charge-to-the-Eighth-Principle-Task-Force.pdf">https://uuabq.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Charge-to-the-Eighth-Principle-Task-Force.pdf</a>
What does the task force do?	"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." <a href="https://uuabq.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Charge-to-the-Eighth-Principle-Task-Force.pdf">https://uuabq.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Charge-to-the-Eighth-Principle-Task-Force.pdf</a>