

Greetings First Unitarian Church of Albuquerque,

My name is Dámaris Donado and I am a member of the board and the co-chair of our 8th Principle Explorations Task Force. And I want to invite you to our annual meeting on **Sunday, January 29th, at 2pm**, where we will have the opportunity to vote on adopting the 8th Principle.

The 8th Principle reads: “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.”

Unitarian Universalism is a living tradition. It is time for us to make changes so that we are living into the Unitarian Universalism of the future, a religion that holds us in times of great need and ethical, moral, and spiritual crises. We are in one of those times now.

At our annual meeting in 2022, our congregation decided to embark in a yearlong exploration of the 8th Principle. The board created an 8th Principle Explorations Task Force comprised of 5 members of this congregation, Rev. Jane Davis, and I as co-chairs, Heather Clark, Maya Stephenson, and Gary Carlson, a group representing a diversity of social and cultural identities.

In May of last year, we began working on the board’s charge for our exploration’s task force. Our goal was to guide the congregation to explore the benefits and challenges of diversity, inclusion, and equitable church practices with love and compassion for where we are even as we hold each other accountable for the ways that we can do better.¹

Our volunteer group researched other congregations embarking on this work. Like other UU churches, we quickly realized that our *first step* needed to be an exploration of our *congregation’s capacity for intercultural relationships*.

We hired a consultant, Julica Hermann de la Fuente who is an anti-racism/anti-oppression educator and trainer in a variety of capacities over the past 2 ½ decades. She served as our administrator of an assessment called the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI).² And what we found is consistent to what other UU churches have found. We have a gap between our *perceived* developmental orientation and our *actual* developmental orientation.

Of the 64 individuals who participated in this inventory, most believed themselves to be on the IDI continuum in Acceptance of cultural differences. However, responses to the questions on the IDI indicated an actual developmental orientation of Minimization, reflecting a tendency to highlight commonalities across cultures that can mask important cultural differences in values, perceptions, and behaviors. Individuals who took the inventory were invited to explore their results in small group discussions to learn more about their orientation and ways they could potentially grow towards Acceptance of cultural differences.

¹ <https://uuabq.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Charge-to-the-Eighth-Principle-Task-Force.pdf>

² <https://idiinventory.com/generalinformation/the-intercultural-development-continuum-idx/>

We also held a churchwide 8th Principle discussion where more than 60 individuals participated. If you were unable to attend, a link to the recording is referenced on this page.³

By the end of last year, our 8th Principle Explorations Task Force met with over 28 key church groups. What we learned is there's **overwhelming support for adopting the 8th Principle**.

Out of 121 individuals who answered our survey question "What do you think about the church adopting the 8th Principle?", 105 stated they *support* its adoption, 14 had *not yet* formed an opinion, and only 2 *opposed* its adoption.

Some may be asking, what changes will we make if we adopt this principle? Our vote to adopt the 8th Principle represents a **COMMITMENT**. The answer to what is next depends on whether WE as a congregation commit to becoming a Beloved community that is anti-racist and embraces cultural differences.

³<https://uuma.zoom.us/rec/share/fTmAnGRn7Q4BzxAQL7cyvzr6CWNzC7AMacaPIAYWgvThaBXbrQPThj8iX5yAR1op.S4MreEfgGpdMg5tG?startTime=1672967054000>