**What is our Association purpose, who do we include and what is our freedom of belief?**

At the General Assembly in June 2020, a study commission was formed to study Article 2 of the UUA bylaws for possible amendments or revisioning. The UUA bylaws is the document that lays out how our association of congregations covenant with each other on how to carry on the business of the association but more importantly, who we are in our purpose and ideals. Article 2 of those bylaws currently contains our principles and sources of wisdom, our statement of purpose, our statement of inclusion and our statement on Freedom of Belief.

The Study Commission re-visioned the entire Article 2 and presented their proposal at the General Assembly in June 2023. At that assembly, the congregational delegates voted overwhelmingly to continue the study for one more year to allow congregations to hold conversations around the proposed changes before the next General Assembly in June 2024. A Final Revised version (incorporating changes approved at the prior GA) was published in October 2023 and additional amendments that had 15+ congregations support had to be submitted by February 1, 2024.

What follows is a detailing of our current statements of purpose, inclusion and freedom of belief along with our current source of wisdom(inspirations) and the proposed changes to those sections so that you can become familiar with what is proposed, process it, and think about what it would mean for our Faith, our Congregation, and you if the proposed Article 2 is adopted or not at the next General Assembly. The other portion of Article 2 of our UU Principles moving to UU Values is in a separate reading found on our website under Adult Programs for Article 2 or [**HERE**](https://www.uusrq.org/uploads/5/6/6/9/56696373/what_happened_to_our_uu_principles.docx).

**STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

When considering the purpose of the Association, remember this is where we feel as a collective, we should be putting our financial and other resources towards.

**Our current Statement of Purpose as stated in Article 2 of the UUA Bylaws:**

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.

**The Proposed Revised Statement of Purpose:**

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
* 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.

**INSPIRATIONS:**

Currently our Inspirations are known as our sources of wisdom and are included in the same section as our principles. However, the proposed Article 2 has the Inspirations standing alone in a new Section C 2.3.

**Our current sources of wisdom.**

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;
* 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.

**The Proposed Section- Inspirations**

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.

**STATEMENT OF INCLUSION:**

**Our current Statement of Inclusion:**

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.

**The Proposed Revised Statement of Inclusion:**

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 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.

**STATEMENT OF FREEDOM OF BELIEF:**

**Our current Statement of Freedom of Belief:**

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.

**The Proposed Revised Statement of Freedom of Belief:**

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.