

## UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISM: THE RELIGION

Many scriptures, not one  
here and now, not the hereafter  
freedom, reason, tolerance, love  
as overarching values  
deeds not creeds, show your work  
live your faith  
evolutionary theology, language changes  
we are saved by Love,  
we are made holy by character

We share with other religious liberal:  
no original sin, God is Love  
unity of experience: faith and knowledge,  
sacred and secular  
non-creedal, authority of conscience  
need for religious community  
congregational polity, democratic methods  
a spark of “divinity” of the highest good in every person  
a destination: an earth made fair,  
all of her people one, we co-create the world

prepared for the UUMA, March 8, 2002, Daniel O’Connell

## **WE ARE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS**

Are You Looking For a Religious Home?

Unitarian Universalists say:

“I want a religion that respects the differences between people and affirms every person as an individual.”

“I want a church that values children, that welcomes them on their own terms - a church they are eager to attend on Sunday morning.”

“I want a congregation that cherishes freedom and encourage open dialogue on questions of faith, one in which it is okay to change your mind.”

“I want a religious community that affirms spiritual exploration and reason as ways of finding truth.”

“I want a church that acts locally and things globally on the great issues of our time - world peace; women’s rights; racial justice; homelessness; gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender rights; and protection of the environment.”

“I want a church that provides comfort and support so I can carry on when difficult things happen in my life or the world.”

“I want a place where my partner and I can come where our differing religious beliefs will be honored.”

“I want a place where my non-traditional family can be welcomed.”

from **WE ARE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS**, by Marta Flanagan, copyright 1999, Unitarian Universalist Association

Perhaps you have been looking for a church where:

Your doubts are not ridiculed.

Your guilts are lightened.

Your griefs are comforted.

Your joys are celebrated.

Your children are taught all religions.

Your talents are nurtured.

Your concerns are shared.

Your reason is honored.

Your friendships are deepened.

Your love of art and beauty is expanded.

Your need to serve others is fostered.

Your need to laugh is encouraged.

Your individual decision is treasured.

Then you have been looking for the Unitarian Universalist Church. These are our aspirations. If they are yours, come join us and help us achieve them."

by Marjorie Achley, from *Becoming a Member*, Polly Laughland Guild, Unitarian Universalist Association, 1995

## **PRINCIPLES AND PURPOSES**

Our faith does not have a creed, but we enter into covenant with each other to respect our differences and lift up our similarities.

We the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalism Association covenant to affirm and promote:

The inherent worth and dignity of every person

Justice, equity and compassion in human relations

Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations

A free and responsible search for truth and meaning

The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and society at large

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

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

The living tradition 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 women and men 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 tradition 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 mutual trust and support. 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 above were adopted as Bylaws by the 1984, 1985 and 1995 General Assemblies.

# FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

## MISSION

The mission of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Columbus, Ohio, is to offer a strong, liberal religious presence in the Columbus area.

In order to fulfill our mission, our goals are:

The formation of a mutual and caring community

The pursuit of lifespan religious growth and education

The quest for social justice.

## VISION

As members of the congregation, it is our vision to:

Celebrate our congregational diversity as a strength and an asset for growth

Build strong connections with area congregations and assist with the development of other UU societies

Create opportunities for the arts to be experienced and integrated within our congregational life

Recognize and celebrate important life transitions

Offer buildings and grounds that meet the needs of our present and future members and the community of which we are a part

Facilitate opportunities for ministerial and denominational growth

Encourage commitment to social justice at a personal and congregational level

Integrate a spiritual base as an essential part of all aspects of church life.

**PROPOSED COVENANT OF RESPECTFUL RELATIONS**  
**First Unitarian Universalist Church**  
**Columbus, Ohio**

The well being, strength and good character of our church depend on the intentional cordiality of our deliberate community of members, friends, ministers, educators and other staff. Many Unitarian Universalist congregations have found it useful to adopt a relational covenant to outline and encourage such cordial and respectful communication among people of the congregation.

A relationship covenant is not a belief statement or creed to be recited during services. It's rather a set of agreed-upon guidelines, patterned on the kind of congregational agreements that go back to the very first congregations in our historical movement, as well as various sets of modern guidelines supporting the work of professional associations. These guidelines can serve as a common touchstone, a reminder of how to communicate with each other at all times, especially at congregational and committee meetings when either controversial subjects or divergent interpretations are present.

**COVENANT OF RESPECTFUL RELATIONS**  
**Proposed For Adoption On June 11, 2006**

We build our church community on a foundation of love with the goal of promoting justice and peace. Toward this end, I covenant to do the following:

Cherish the health and wellbeing of this congregation.

Accept responsibility for my own actions.

Be receptive to connecting with others by listening with care and compassion.

Speak my truth honestly and directly with care and compassion.

Honor the confidentiality and private disclosures of others.

Welcome new members and guests within this religious community.

Embrace our diversity as a source of communal strength and accept and care for others despite our differences.

When conflict occurs, remain engaged in the process with compassion and respect, knowing that truth and sound decisions emerge from an open exchange of ideas.

Use the Reconciliation Process when I believe the Covenant has been broken.

## Reconciliation Process Guidelines

**Step 1)** Talk directly with the person with whom you have a disagreement.

**Step 2)** If not reconciled, go to one of the ministers for counseling regarding the issue. If all parties agree, the minister may mediate. Otherwise the minister will direct the parties to a mediator.

**Step 3)** If still not reconciled, the matter is taken to one or more board-appointed mediators with knowledge of various aspects of church functioning.

**Step 4)** The Executive Committee and the Board will consider recommendations coming from the mediators and appeals from the parties subject to mediators' decisions. The Board can take actions outlined in the Policy on Disruptive Behavior.

*(A draft of the detailed Reconciliation Process Guidelines is in process and will be subject to approval by the Governance Documents Committee and the Board).*