



Why does the 8th Principle matter to our congregation?

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) covenant to affirm and promote:

- 1. The inherent worth and dignity of every person;*
- 2. Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations;*
- 3. Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;*
- 4. A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;*
- 5. The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;*
- 6. The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;*
- 7. Respect for the interdependent web of existence of which we are all a part;*
- 8. 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.***

This June, the FRS membership will vote on whether to adopt the 8th UU Principle. In preparation for this vote, the Anti-Racism Initiative encourages all individuals, groups, and committees within the congregation to consider what its adoption means to you personally and how it may intersect with the work of your group.

More information about the 8th Principle can be found at:

<https://www.8thprincipleuu.org/>

What is the origin of the 8th Principle?

After working with congregations on justice issues as a UUA field staff consultant for over 15 years, Unitarian Universalist Paula Cole Jones realized that a person could believe they are a “good UU” simply by following the 7 Principles, without having to think about racism and other oppressions at a systemic level. Disregarding these issues is what keeps the system of racism alive in our society. She and several other anti-racist activist UUs drafted an “8th Principle” to remedy this. Congregations have been voting to adopt it since 2013.

Why are we singling out racism?

Systemic racism intersects with other oppressions and justice issues, such as classism and poverty, LGBTQ+ rights, ableism, and environmental justice. When working to dismantle racism, other oppressions and injustices will also be addressed. By adopting the 8th Principle, we agree to continue learning about how we’ve all been impacted by systemic racism, how it has contributed to other oppressions, and what we can do to dismantle it.

Why are we voting as a congregation to adopt the 8th Principle in June? Aren’t the Principles a covenant among congregations?

The 7 UU Principles are a covenant between all UU congregations and the UUA that were voted on and approved by the UUA’s General Assembly. Adopting the 8th Principle at the local level is an act of covenant-making among our FRS members, to affirm our support of racial justice and anti-oppression. In doing so, we would join the almost 300 UU congregations that have already adopted it.

What does it mean to adopt the 8th Principle? What will change?

The 8th Principle, should we adopt it, will serve as a guide. Like how we refer to our Vision, Mission and Ends to help steer our way, we’ll use the 8th Principle to inform our decision-making. As with the original 7 Principles, we’ll carry out the mission and business of the church while upholding this ideal—whether it’s through our practices in worship and Young Church, programs for spiritual development and education, our partnerships with other organizations committed to dismantling racism, or through hiring practices and vendor relationships.

It's important to note that adopting the 8th Principle is upholding love and justice. UUs of color—through Black Lives of UU (BLUU) and Diverse, Revolutionary Multicultural Ministries (DRUMM)—have asked us to adopt it. Doing so is an act of solidarity and respect. Adopting the 8 Principle will help us to grow spiritually towards wholeness both individually and collectively. Racism has been called the “original sin” in the founding of this country. Acknowledging that history and deepening our knowledge and skills to combat racism provide a path towards forgiveness, restoration, and justice.