



Questions about the 8th Principle

The Antiracism Initiative team has addressed several questions we've heard from FRS members below. Please stop by our 8th Principle table in the vestibule or reach out to a member of our ARI team to learn more – thank you!

Is the 8th Principle's focus on anti-racism and anti-oppression necessary? Don't the current 7 Principles already commit us to this work?

The 8th Principle was initiated by people of color and their UU allies because the first seven principles don't explicitly address issues of racism. A person can believe they are being a 'good UU' by following the 7 Principles, without thinking about or dealing with racism and other oppressions at the systemic level. The 8th Principle asks us to act toward achieving justice for all. It asks us to hold ourselves accountable and to fulfill the potential of our existing principles.

Have other UU congregations adopted the 8th Principle, or is this only an FRS initiative?

More than 275 UU congregations across the US have adopted the 8th Principle. It was first drafted in 2013 to increase awareness of systemic racism and other oppressions by UU congregations that are primarily European-American in membership, culture, and leadership. FRS adoption of the 8th Principle will demonstrate our support for Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism (BLUU) and Diverse Revolutionary UU Ministries (DRUUMM) and will help us to reach our mission to advance justice and put courageous love in service to our community and our world.

The 8th Principle language is wordy and a little hard to understand. Can the words of the 8th Principle be changed?

No, the words of the 8th Principle cannot be changed. This wording was created by UU BIPOC leaders who initiated this movement. The language has been very carefully selected to center the principle objectives of this initiative, including committing to building a diverse, multicultural community, dismantling systemic racism, and holding ourselves accountable. For those of us who identify as white, supporting the 8th Principle exactly as it is worded is an opportunity to show our support and commitment to persons who experience racial and social justice oppressions during their daily lives.

How will adoption of the 8th Principle affect FRS church services, Board initiatives and policies? (5/1 & 5/5)

Adoption of the 8th Principle essentially means that the Board, Rev. Rebecca as CEO, and FRS lay leaders will use it as a lens when making future decisions. We can draw an analogy with sustainability. For example, if FRS had voted to commit to meeting the highest sustainability standards, every decision made regarding our campus facilities would need to be considered through the lens of those sustainability standards. Adoption of the 8th Principle is an important “next step” toward uncovering and addressing barriers to equity and inclusion that may exist at FRS – in our actions, policies, and connections with others. We believe the outcomes of its adoption will be enriching and reflective of our highest values.

I would like to hear what Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) and other groups are saying about the 8th Principle. Where can I find that information?

Here are several statements from BIPOC Unitarian Universalists in a published FAQ document by the River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Brookfield, WI. April 2021:

- As a POC I want to be in a congregation open to and interested in combatting racism and white supremacy; otherwise, the UU 7 principles do not ring true to me.
- The 8th Principle is about action; the other 7 principles are about beliefs and vision, not action.
- Adopting the 8th Principle will give us a framework to examine everything we do internally and spiritually for ourselves, and to talk about racism and other issues explicitly. It will give BIPOC and people affected by other oppressions permission to call it out.
- Youth and young adults looking for a congregation will expect something like the 8th Principle.
- Adopting the 8th Principle is a tangible expression of love.

Two videos/websites you might review to learn more:

- The 8th Principle Matters to Members of the BIPOC Community.
<https://www.uua.org/leadership/library/bipoc-and-8th-principle>
- The 8th Principle Matters to Religious Educators.
<https://www.uua.org/leaderlab/re-and-8th-principle>