

# Introduction to the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle

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Welcome and thank you for being here!

First, a few words about the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle  
Task Force

# Members of the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle Task Force

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Ann Kunze

Ann Taylor

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# 8<sup>th</sup> Principle Task Force

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We are a Policy Board-appointed task force.

Our mission is

- To educate the congregation about the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle and
- To bring congregational adoption of the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle up for a vote in May or June of 2022.

# The 8<sup>th</sup> Principle states:

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***We, [a] member congregation 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.***

In today's Sunday Forum we will introduce the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle by asking

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What is meant by Beloved Community?

Why a new Principle?

Don't the existing 7 Principles have it covered?

Why the focus on racism?

We will then go to break out rooms to ask

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What would our adoption of the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle mean to me?

What would adoption of the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle mean to our fellowship?

We...covenant to affirm and promote

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**Journeying toward spiritual wholeness**

We...covenant to affirm and promote

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**Journeying toward spiritual wholeness**

**By working to build a diverse multicultural  
Beloved Community**

# What is meant by *Beloved Community*?

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The UUA defines Beloved Community in the following way:

Beloved Community happens when people of diverse racial, ethnic, educational, class, gender, abilities, sexual orientation backgrounds/identities come together in an **interdependent relationship of love, mutual respect, and care** that seeks to realize justice within the community and in the broader world.

# Journeying toward spiritual wholeness

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by working to build a diverse multicultural  
Beloved Community

by our actions that accountably dismantle  
racism and other oppressions in ourselves  
and our institutions.

# Why a new principle?

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**Unitarian Universalism is a living faith tradition.**

- The principles are not dogma but rather a covenant—that is, a sacred promise.
- Principles are dynamic and evolve over time as our collective understandings change.
- All principles are currently under review by the UUA Article II Study Commission (A2SC), as required in the UUA Bylaws.
- The existing 7 Principles and the proposed 8<sup>th</sup> Principle will all be under review. ( The Article II Study Commission will report in 2023.)

# Don't the existing seven principles have it covered?

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The 8<sup>th</sup> Principle is a **call to action** and accountability.

Our existing 7 principles imply the 8th Principle, but do not **explicitly hold us accountable** for addressing racism and other oppressions directly, especially at the systemic level. Many UUs contend that the absence of any mention of racism and other oppressions in the 7 Principles is a grave omission.

The 8<sup>th</sup> Principle makes dismantling racism and other oppressions **central** to who we are.

The 8<sup>th</sup> Principle creates a picture of **who we can be**.

# Why the focus on racism?

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The 8<sup>th</sup> Principle is a long-term initiative with a [historical context in our country and in Unitarian Universalism](#).

This is work of truth and reconciliation.

When we engage in the practice of being deeply welcoming, we are living our faith.

# Racism in the UUA: 1969

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## **Background:**

Black Americans respond to UU active engagement in the Civil Rights movement.

**Imagine, at the 1969 GA, 1/3 of attendees are people of color.**

# Racism in the UUA: 1969 cont'd

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**1969 GA** the Black Affairs Caucus is taken to task in a long and grueling business meeting with pro and con mics. Many white UUs spoke out against the hopes and desires of the majority of Black UUs. The tenor of the exchanges was ugly by all accounts. It was extremely hurtful to the Black Affairs Caucus whose very existence was being called into question.

- The result of that meeting: Anger, grief, fear – **a walkout.**
- Wounds that last 50 years

# Racism in the UUA: present day

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In 2020 the UUA's Commission on Institutional Change(COIC) issued its report Widening the Circle of Concern. In a three year process, the COIC conducted a racial audit of the UUA using testimonies, focus groups, individual interviews, surveys and other means.

Over 650 pages of transcripts and 80 plus hours of audio/video tape was analyzed.

## Racism in the UUA: present day (cont'd)

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The COIC also contracted with an international consultant firm to analyze UUA leadership structures.

**Widening the Circle of Concern reveals systemic racism within the UUA at the Associational, Regional and Congregational level.**

**One of the conclusions of the report is that racism at the congregational level is the most difficult to overcome.**

## From Widening the Circle of Concern

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In 2020... [UU] religious professionals of color [still ]struggle to maintain their jobs and many end up deciding to leave or being asked to leave.  
(p.ix)

The gift of *Widening the Circle of Concern*

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Despite their disappointments, our Black, Indigenous and people of color UUUs have given the denomination a gift...

# So to return once more to the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle

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***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.***

## Questions for Discussion

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What would our adoption of the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle mean to me?

What would adoption of the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle mean for our fellowship?

# Upcoming 8<sup>th</sup> Principle Events

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**Virtual Town Hall Thursday Jan 13 at 7 pm**

**Cottage Meetings February and March  
Dates TBA**

# For further research

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***Darkening the Doorway: Black Trailblazers and Missed Opportunities in Unitarian-Universalism*** by Mark Morrison-Reed

<https://www.uuabookstore.org/Darkening-the-Doorways-P17147.aspx>

**UUA 8<sup>th</sup> Principle Website:** <https://www.8thprincipleuu.org/what-is-beloved-community>

**UUA Article II Study Commission Website**

<https://www.uua.org/uuagovernance/committees/article-ii-study-commission>

***Widening the Circle of Concern: Report of UUA Commission on Institutional Change*** <https://www.uua.org/uuagovernance/committees/cic/widening>

**Wilderness Journey** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LK86pRn3b-4>

# Credits

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- UU Church of Fairfax 8<sup>th</sup> Principle Team
- UUA 8<sup>th</sup> Principle Website <https://www.8thprincipleuu.org/>
- UUA Article II Study Commission Website <https://www.uua.org/uuagovernance/committees/article-ii-study-commission>
- *Widening the Circle of Concern: Report of the UUA Commission on Institutional Change*  
<https://www.uua.org/uuagovernance/committees/cic/widening>
- Wilderness Journey <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LK86pRn3b-4>