

**Article II Study Commission**  
[Article II Study Report to the Board of Trustees \(uua.org\)](https://uua.org)

by Penny Reid

Article II of the Unitarian Universalist Association Bylaws dates to the 1961 merger of the American Unitarian Association and the Universalist Association. It is a “C” bylaw, intended to be more difficult to amend than non- “C” bylaws. In 1985 the article was amended for gender-neutral language and the addition of the Seventh Principle, with slight revisions after that, but the language has largely not changed since 1985.

The title of Article II of the UUA Bylaws is “Principles and Purposes,” and it currently contains the seven Principles and six Sources which guide our actions and priorities and provide the context and grounding for these Purpose and Principles.

**PRINCIPLES:** 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.**

**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.**

**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 UUA Bylaws mandate a review of Article II every fifteen years but allow the Board of Trustees to appoint a commission to do so at any time. **In 2020, the board created the Article II Study Commission.** The Commission was charged [Charge to the Article II Study Commission | UUA.org](https://uua.org) to “review Article II of the UUA Bylaws, and propose any revisions that will enable our UUA, our member congregations, and our covenanted communities to be a relevant and powerful force for spiritual and moral growth, healing, and justice.” The charge elaborated that “Proposed changes should articulate core UU theological values. The Board believes that one core theological value, shared widely among UUs, is love.”

In addition to the charge from the board to the Commission, delegates to the 2021 General Assembly adopted a resolution requesting that the Commission and the Board “ensure proposed changes to Article II include in the Principles a clear and direct statement that accountable systemic anti-racist and anti-oppressive actions to build Beloved Community are part of what it

means to be Unitarian Universalist.” [Article II Study Report to the Board of Trustees \(uaa.org\)](#)

The Study Commission’s process included theological discussion groups, focus groups, including at the 2021 and 2022 General Assemblies, surveys sent to various congregations, and feedback sessions. Over the course of its work, the Commission engaged in 45 feedback sessions, with 4,611 total participants. Their videos reached 7,765 viewers, and their 29 surveys generated a total of 10,925 responses.

The final version [www.uua.org/uuagovernance/committees/article-ii-study-commission/final-proposed-revision-article-ii](http://www.uua.org/uuagovernance/committees/article-ii-study-commission/final-proposed-revision-article-ii) of the proposed Article II, as amended by the Board of Trustees, was presented at the 2023 General Assembly, and a majority vote approved the amended version to move forward for a final vote for approval at the 2024 General Assembly. This 2024 vote requires a two-thirds majority to pass. If it fails in 2024, a similar proposal cannot be brought forward for two years. The UUA Board is considering amendments, which can be submitted until February 1, 2024. The form for submitting an amendment is available on the UUA website.

Each submitted amendment must have a primary congregational sponsor, must only apply to a single section of the Article II proposal, and must be supported by at least 15 certified UUA congregations. Amendments that meet the standards will be publicly posted on an online discussion forum on a yet-to-be determined date.

The current final version of the proposed Article II eliminates the delineation of the Seven Principles and Six Sources currently in the bylaws, focusing instead on seven values: Justice, Interdependence, Equity, Transformation, Pluralism, and Generosity. The current final version of the proposed article II can be found on the UUA website at <https://www.uua.org/uuagovernance/committees/article-ii-study-commission/final-proposed-revision-article-ii>

Agreement with the proposed changes is not universal. You can find differing points of view at:

[Help Save Unitarian Universalism – A rewrite of the UUA bylaws abandons our liberal religious heritage](#)