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Frequently Asked Questions

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Worship & Music

What are we “worshiping” on Sunday mornings? The word “worship” doesn’t resonate with me.

Individual Unitarian Universalists must decide for themselves whether they can arrive at a personal understanding of a word or concept that they can relate to. In our Unitarian Universalist tradition, we do not impose specific understandings of language on each other.

As such, there may be those among us who find the word “worship” comforting, familiar, and/or meaningful. There may be some who have arrived at a re-definition of the word that works for them. And there may be some for whom the word doesn’t work and never will.

If we listen carefully to how UUAA’s leaders relate to the language we use in our community, you will begin to notice unspoken commas that separate interrelated ideas; these commas offer us choice, offering us different ways to arrive at the same concept. One example of this is the way that our coming together on Sundays is equally described as “worship, a Sunday service, and/or the gathering of our community.” The

intentional use of multiple words to describe a similar concept is one way in which our community nurtures non-dogmatic inclusivity. You will hear other examples of this, as well, such as UUAA being referred to as a “church, congregation, and/or community.”

Unitarian Universalists get to “choose your own adventure.” We UUs individually choose what works for us, without imposing what works for us personally on others. It is through such graciousness - not expecting or requiring others to think exactly as we do - that we build together a loving and diverse congregation.

Isn't the concept of “covenant” a Judeo-Christian concept? What does it mean in our Unitarian Universalist context?

The term “covenant” has specific theological meanings within the Jewish and Christian contexts. In those contexts it typically refers to a set of promises or agreements between God (the holy, the sacred) and the Jewish or Christian people.

Within Unitarian Universalism, the concept is used in a humanistically defined way. In our UU context it refers to agreements or promises that we - the people - make to one another within the context of voluntary association. We, UUs, voluntarily choose to be with one another, and in so doing we promise to be together in certain ways.

UUAA's covenant, a modified version of a covenant written by James Vila Blake in 1894 (a covenant that is widely used within Unitarian Universalism), is stated thus: “The spirit of this church is love, and service is its law. This is our covenant with each other: to dwell together in peace, to search for truth in love, and to help one another.”

Who is going to be leading a particular Sunday service? I prefer to be present when the Senior Minister is going to preach.

UUAA does not advertise which individuals may or may not be leading or participating in a Sunday service, except for special guest visitors, as those are often one-time opportunities that we don't want community members to miss. Aside from special visitors, one significant values-driven purpose underlying UUAA's Sunday services is the gathering of the community: the community shows up to support one another and to be in community with one another. The long-term success of our congregation is built not on individual staff leaders, but rather the strength of the connections we nurture with one another, within community.

In addition, UUAA's approach to Sunday services (for over a dozen years) has been one of collaborative, team-based leadership within our Sunday services. There is a difference between “who is preaching” (or offering a reflection) in a Sunday service and

who is an integral part of the Sunday service in any number of ways, as part of a team-based approach.

Unitarian Universalism is a tradition profoundly shaped by Transcendentalist philosophy which honors the wisdom that resides within each of us – lay or ordained. In alignment with this spiritual-ethical understanding, UUAA maintains a pulpit in which a variety of competent, skillful leaders collaboratively take turns leading different elements within our Sunday services. The full chancel team helps plan every Sunday service. Who is physically present in a given Sunday service depends on multiple factors, such as staff members being away on routine leave or having other work obligations on that specific day.

I would like to see more lay involvement and participation in UUAA's Sunday services. Is that happening?

This deeply held longing in our community directly led to the creation of the Lay Worship Leaders Program, a lay training program to help UUAA live into this aspiration. Since this program's inception in September 2022, UUAA has been adding more lay voices and lay leaders to our Sunday services.

The ability to participate in this program is open to all who are interested in making the significant, ongoing time commitment to participating in the requisite skills-building, training, planning, and reflection processes that this program requires. If you are personally interested, please contact the Senior Minister to determine the best potential timing for joining this program.

How is the music for Sunday services selected?

The Worship Team (worshipteam@uuuaa.org) strives for every UUAA service to be an exploration of important spiritual-ethical themes, especially ones that deepen our collective commitment to UUAA's vision and priorities. The team collaborates intensely, blending ritual, stories, meditation, reflections, and music to feed into a particular Sunday topic. In doing so, the team considers music from diverse religious and secular sources worldwide, along with musical pieces contained within the living tradition of Unitarian Universalism.

From these sources, we can expect to encounter personally familiar or favorite hymns and anthems in addition to others that challenge us and push our comfort boundaries – perhaps even, at times, including a piece of music that one of us might not personally resonate with.

Our community's covenant and vision invite us to remain open and curious about our personal experience of what we encounter within UUAA's Sunday services, including the music, and to notice how it helps us live into our deepest collective values and take action in the world.

In addition, being a large and diverse community with many different needs and preferences, we are called to understand that others within our beloved community might be yearning for the very thing that we might not prefer or could do without. Given this, our Sunday services reflect a rotating variety of approaches and musical genres, so that our Sunday services are able to speak to the community as a whole, over time.

How can I provide input or express ideas for music in the Sunday services?

A primary responsibility of the Music Ambassadors (MA) Team is to facilitate communication between the congregation and the Director of Music Ministries, who, in consultation with the MAs, the Music Team, and the Worship Team, selects music for Sunday services. Ideas, feedback, and suggestions of specific pieces of music or musical genres, can be emailed to musicambassadors@uuaa.org. These emails go to both the Music Ambassadors and to the Director of Music Ministries. We warmly welcome your input and suggestions and will follow up with you.

How can I announce my group's event at UUAA? Can it be announced during a Sunday service?

Announcements about what is going on in the congregation help us live into our priority area of Radical Welcome. Congregational activities and events are essential to who we are and help foster new and continuing relationships within the community.

In Fall 2023, UUAA began showing announcement slides before and after each service, as well as during social hour. Those signing on to the livestream early will see the same announcement slides that run in the sanctuary. If your group wants a slide announcement, it may be requested through [this form](#).

Groups are also encouraged to submit news with more details to the weekly news, using the [same form](#). Note deadlines for submission. For those who use social media, the UUAA Community Facebook Group is another place where congregants can share announcements about UUAA activities and programs.

In addition, a [directory of UUAA groups](#) is now available on the UUAA website, and announcements may be sent to individual groups/group leaders who may have a particular interest in the event, and who may choose to share the information with their group members.

At times, individuals or groups will request an announcement from the pulpit on Sunday mornings; aside from some standard items that are announced weekly (for example, newcomer welcome opportunities), Sunday worship is not a time for general

announcements. On certain occasions, announcements that fall in one of the 3 categories listed here may be included in the welcome or at other points in the liturgy during a worship service.

1. Events impacting the congregation as a whole, for example:
 - a. Congregational meetings which are required by the Bylaws to be announced on Sunday mornings for 2 weeks prior to the meeting
 - b. The annual auction
2. General Assembly/UUA/denominational-level events
3. Items directly related to the congregation's Vision 20/50 and priority areas (Social Justice/Anti-Racism-Anti Oppression, Climate Justice, Radical Welcome)
4. Stewardship/pledge campaign related events
5. SGD and YRUU related events
6. Fundraising efforts that benefit local non-profit organizations
7. Friday Fun Nights

Note: ministers may at their discretion make announcements that do not fall into any of the above categories.

If your group's event falls into one of the above categories, send a request to the worship team worshipteam@uuaa.org at least 2 weeks before the service in question. You will be notified if your announcement can be used in worship.

When deciding whether or not to include announcements, the worship team considers the above categories, relevance and alignment with the congregation's vision, and the timeliness of the request.

[Updated – 5/27/2024 worshipteam@uuaa.org]

Newsletter & E-Communications

I want to write op-ed pieces for the UUAA newsletter (or other UUAA e-communications), but the newsletter policy doesn't allow op-eds. Why not? Isn't this a limitation or stifling of personal opinion within our community?

The purpose of the newsletter is to keep the congregation informed about the events and business of UUAA, to occasionally share spiritual reflections or resources, and to share important pastoral information. It is not the purpose of these communications to

be a place for public debate. However, there are other ways that members and friends of UUAA can share their personal opinions.

If you have an opinion that you want the leadership of the congregation to know about, you can contact the relevant team. For example, the Music Ambassadors (musicambassadors@uuaa.org) for anything related to music or the worship team (worshipteam@uuaa.org) for anything related to Sunday services. The Shared Ministries Team (sharedministriesteam@uuaa.org) can be contacted regarding operational policies or other operational matters. The Board of Trustees (bot@uuaa.org) can be contacted regarding matters of institutional governance. The following links provide specific guidance on who to contact within UUAA regarding specific issues, needs, or concerns: [Governance & Operations - UUAA](#) and [Lay Leader Tools - UUAA](#) .

Also, the Board of Trustees allows any member of the community to briefly share comments or opinions at the start of a monthly Board meeting, with advance written request and coordination. Please contact UUAA's President (president@uuaa.org) to request such an opportunity.

You may also be able to collaborate with a recognized congregational group in creating and hosting a forum or other event related to the topic of interest, which could then be publicized in the community.

The Living Our Values (LOV) Team

What is the role and purposes of the Living Our Values (LOV) Team?

Our UUAA covenant is a voluntary pledge that we make to each other, on a weekly basis, about how we - as congregants - will be with one another within community. LOV Team members are available to facilitate the repair of damaged relationships, within the context of a shared covenant, through restorative conversations whenever requested or needed.

The LOV Team is not charged with monitoring, judging, or adjudicating behaviors or conflict/differences between congregants.

The LOV Team is a resource that can help individuals and groups work through challenging or difficult interpersonal situations with a loving/caring spirit, always with the goal of maintaining healthy relationship within the context of community.

As time permits, the Team also proactively leads or offers workshops and seminars on topics related to the work of the team and activities that promote relational skills-building in support of our shared covenant.

What does being “out of covenant” with another congregant mean?

In our beloved UUAA community we covenant to dwell together in peace, to search for our truth in love, and to help each other - all in the spirit of love.

Our actions, words, deeds, and/or behaviors (not our humanness) may fall short of our covenant with each other on occasion, when we (intentionally or unintentionally) may not treat one another with love, care, respect, or dignity.

Often this occurs when something is said or done in the heat of the moment, or without forethought, and is not intended as hurtful.

Still, someone may feel harmed or hurt by particular actions, words, deeds, or behaviors, and it is up to the individual or individuals who feel that way to decide if their sense of covenant within the community has been harmed or damaged.

What does it mean for someone to be “out of covenant” with the UUAA community as a whole?

We covenant with each other “to dwell together in peace, to search for truth in love, and to help one another.”

This commitment is sidelined when someone experiences words, deeds, tone, or a pattern of behavior that is received by others, within community, as harmful and then refuses to engage in reparative activities and/or restorative dialogue.

The spirit of our covenant asks us to be present to and show up if a beloved tells us that they feel hurt or harmed by our behaviors, actions, words, or deeds. When this minimal expectation is not met, someone’s behavior may be considered “out of covenant” with the UUAA community.

Such instances likely include multiple attempts, without fruition, at creating conversation and dialogue aimed at deepening shared understanding, supporting healing, and restoring healthy relationship among those directly involved.

If multiple such attempts are refused or do not lead to healthier patterns of interaction within our community, the Healthy Congregational Response Team (HCRT) may be convened for the purposes of taking additional, formal action in support of protecting the relational fabric of our community.

Leadership Development and Nominating Processes

Why does UUAA have a nominating committee (Leadership Development Team, or LDT) that proposes one person for each open position in elections of lay leaders? Isn’t that inherently undemocratic?

The Leadership Development Team (LDT) serves as our community’s elected nominating committee. The LDT’s nominating process and criteria are described in detail at this link:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1lhDNTgIEnpXjNHYrjoIOGSsWJeIDjHih/view?usp=sharing>.

It is important to note that UUAA's democratic processes are not the same as U.S. civic or political processes.

In those civic political processes, elected officials determine vision and overall direction. This is not the case for our UU community. The community as a whole participates democratically in defining UUAA's overarching vision and priorities (i.e., the direction that the community is moving in).

Following that democratic, community-wide work within UUAA, the role of the Board of Trustees is to shepherd and guide the community in the fulfillment of that democratically established vision.

One does not serve on UUAA's Board of Trustees in order to personally create a new vision or direction for the whole community. Rather, one serves on UUAA's Board in order to help fulfill the community's democratically identified vision, priorities, and overall direction.

For More Information:

- LDT: <https://uuaa.org/leadership-development-team/>

- UUAA Bylaws:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ocGt541P6YKeSriEOJAIL8FxLGZ28IWZ/view>

- Unitarian Universalist Association Congregational Governance:

<https://www.uua.org/leadership/learning-center/governance/polity/47009.shtml>

How do people get on the Board of Trustees?

The Leadership Development Team (LDT), a congregationally-elected body, cultivates, develops, and identifies leaders on behalf of the congregation. The LDT always seeks individuals from across a wide spectrum of the congregation to serve on the Board of Trustees.

The process of identifying the specific skills that may be needed on the Board typically starts in September and is completed by April.

Based on this work, the LDT prepares a slate of nominees that are submitted for election at the late spring (May/June) annual congregational meeting. Following those elections, newly elected Board members begin their service typically in June.

Any UUAA member can email the LDT at ldt@uuaa.org and nominate themselves to serve on the Board of Trustees.

Governance

Why is it that at every congregational meeting, we have a vote on whether to allow people to vote if they've been members for less than 4 months? We always vote yes, so what's the point?

Bylaws, at times, allow an organization to address worst case scenarios that everyone thinks will never happen. In this case, the relevant UUAA bylaw reads:

2.1. Voting Privileges

Voting privileges begin four months after Full Member or Associate Member status has been conferred. The four-month requirement may be waived by a two-thirds (2/3) vote at a duly called congregational meeting.

In a highly contentious situation, this bylaw would prevent a faction of the congregation from recruiting a large number of people to temporarily join the congregation just to vote on the contentious issue. While such a situation may sound unlikely, this very scenario has occurred in UUAA's history.

In our UUAA community, we hope and trust that our voting members are actually engaged, participating members of our UUAA family, and this bylaw is designed to help safeguard that.

What's the difference between "Governance" and "Operations"?

Governance refers to matters related to the overall direction of the congregation - its mission, vision, and priorities. Matters of governance are directly led or guided by the Board of Trustees.

Operations refers to day-to-day matters, such as the congregation's programs, services, and activities. Decisions related to these matters are fully delegated by the Board of Trustees to the Senior Minister, and through the Senior Minister to other staff members and/or lay-led teams.

The Board retains broad oversight in ensuring that the authority it has delegated to operational leaders (professional and lay) is used in service to the community's democratically defined vision and priorities.

As further background, in his book "Governance and Ministry," Dan Hotchkiss describes the line between governance and ministry (what we at UUAA refer to as operations) in this way:

Governance is holding the whole institution and its work in trust, voicing its intentions, and taking responsibility for its performance. Ministry is the rest of what a congregation does – the daily work of building a community, managing resources, and transforming lives.

Given this division of labor within UUAA, questions about how our community is achieving its democratically determined mission, vision, priorities, etc. should go to the Board of Trustees.

Questions about day-to-day operations (most day-in, day-out matters, including building hours, staffing, communications, technology, health and safety policies, and much more) should go to the staff, lay leader, or team/group with direct responsibility for that area.

More information about UUAA governance and operations is available on our website:

[Governance & Operations - UUAA.](#)

What role do policies and procedures play at UUAA?

In a fairly large community like UUAA, there are many different and at times conflicting needs among our diverse congregants. The existence of publicly available policies and procedures is intended to ensure transparency and fairness with respect to how different and diverse needs within our community are mediated. In the absence of publicly available guidance regarding how UUAA makes certain decisions, and what

guides and informs those decisions - i.e. policies that apply equally to all - any individual could claim that any specific outcome is arbitrary, non-transparent, or worse self-serving on the part of those who are in leadership.

What are “governing policies” and what are “operational policies”?

“Governing policies” are the policies that the Board of Trustees adopts to govern and guide its work. Such policies may address how the Board itself functions and runs; they may also address how the Board carries out and manages the roles and responsibilities that are uniquely its. The Board’s governing policies are publicly available here:

[BoardOfTrusteesGoverningPolicies.pdf](#).

“Operational policies” are the policies that UUAA’s operational leadership has adopted to guide the day-to-day work, activities, programs, and services of the congregation.

UUAA’s operational policies are publicly available here:

<https://uuaa.org/our-operational-policies/>.

What do we at UUAA mean when we use the phrases “Shared Leadership” and “Collaborative Leadership”?

At the level of institutional culture, we at UUAA have embraced “shared leadership” as an integral part of our congregation’s governance structure. Shared leadership involves a dynamic partnership between the members of the congregation, the Board of Trustees (BOT), which is elected by and represents the congregation as a whole, the ministers and staff, and any number of lay groups/teams. From this perspective, we all share in the success and/or short-comings of our community, and if something is not to our liking or needs improvement, any of us can ask ourselves, “What could I constructively do or contribute in helping make things better?” Shared leadership invites us, within community, to always be thinking about the greater “we.” We succeed together, and when we fall short, we fall short together.

UUAA’s commitment to collaboration, or collaborative leadership, allows us to honor lines of responsibility and accountability while softening those lines for the sake of shared or collective conversation, dialogue, discernment, and creativity. We recognize that each human being possesses wisdom and meaningful life experience in any number of ways, and tapping into the full creativity of our community, across formal lines of responsibility or accountability, can result in stronger, more creative outcomes than if we otherwise limited our dialogue and discernment processes.

What is the UUA and what is the relationship between the UUA and our local UUAA congregation?

UUAA is a member congregation of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). While the UUA is at times informally or casually referred to as our “denomination” and Boston (where the UUA is located) as our “denominational headquarters,” this informal language is technically not correct. The UUA is a voluntary association, grounded in covenant, which UUAA and other UU congregations choose to affiliate with. As a voluntary association, the UUA has no power over its member congregations. UUAA remains fully independent, in its own right, with the ability to make decisions that are in our community’s best interests.

UUAA's voluntary association with the UUA connects us with a larger, national UU presence and voice, in addition to connecting us with other like-minded UU communities. For example, national-level social justice work, in alignment with our Unitarian Universalist values, is often spearheaded and/or coordinated by the UUA. In addition, our association with the UUA results in tangible support for our community. For example, the UUA serves its member congregations as an important resource on matters of congregational governance and operations, providing UU congregations ways to share best practices across our communities. The UUA maintains credentialing processes and ethical standards for the UU professionals that serve our congregations. It also supports congregational search processes for new professionals, when vacancies arise. To explore further the multitude of ways in which the UUA supports its member congregations, please visit: <https://www.uua.org/congregations>.

What has the UUAA Board of Trustees done with a petition requiring it to hold a special congregational meeting on the topic of Palestine?

In February 2019, the UUAA Justice in the Middle East (JME) group submitted a petition to the Board of Trustees signed by 72 members and friends of our congregation. It asked the board to call a special congregational meeting for the purpose of considering for adoption a resolution endorsing the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) Movement in support of Palestinian human rights.

Input from members of our community made it clear that the congregation was not ready to vote on a resolution at the June 2019 congregational meeting. The Board of Trustees and leaders of JME agreed to pause on the possibility of convening a special congregational meeting while the community was completing the Vision 20/50 process. Subsequently, because of the COVID-19 pandemic and a contentious U.S. presidential election cycle - which saw many UUs in our community engaged in local, grassroots activism - JME further paused on moving forward with convening a special congregational meeting in 2020.

Since the submission of the petition, in 2019, UUAA's President and Vice President have been in regular communication and close collaboration with the leadership of JME.

Through this dialogue, the Board and JME have agreed on several points:

- Preserving the health of our beloved UUAA community throughout this process is paramount;
- A healthy congregational meeting will be possible only with considerable education, engagement, and conversation in advance of a special congregational meeting on this topic;
- It is currently premature to set a date for a special congregational meeting on this topic; and,
- It is JME's responsibility to develop and promote opportunities for conversation and education about BDS in the congregation.

JME invites members of UUAA to engage in a process to learn about the issues raised by the petition and to decide together what actions our congregation can take to support the human rights and dignity of the Palestinian people.

JME is committed to fostering a thoughtful dialogue where all views can be heard and respected. If the congregation decides to move forward with a resolution supporting Palestinian human rights, members of the community will have the opportunity to provide input on the content and wording of the resolution, including, possibly, an amended or different resolution than was originally crafted.

JME has invited the Living Our Values (LOV) team and the Shared Ministries Team to advise them in planning for these conversations and meetings.

While the UUAA Board has not taken a substantive position on this topic, the Board strongly encourages congregants to participate as fully as possible in upcoming discussions and forums. This is an excellent opportunity for all of us to live into our covenantal commitment – “to search for truth in love.”

Social Justice

I am interested in social justice issues. What programs or Social Justice causes does UUAA support?

Between 2019-2021, our congregation developed [A Congregational Vision](#) prioritizing our community's justice efforts in three areas: climate justice, anti-racism/anti-oppression, and radical welcome. Much good work is happening in these areas, which is coordinated by UUAA's Vision Support Committee (VSC). To learn more about these vision-related activities, or to get involved, you may contact the VSC at vision@uuaa.org.

In addition, our UUAA community supports a wide range of social justice causes. To learn more about these groups and activities please click here ([Social Justice Groups - UUAA](#)) to be linked to UUAA's social justice groups directory and a brief description of some of these groups.

What if the social justice issue that I am interested in is not currently organized as a group or activity at UUAA?

UUAA has [A Congregational Vision](#), which prioritizes our congregation's justice efforts in three areas: climate justice, anti-racism/anti-oppression, and radical welcome. Much good work is happening in these areas.

In addition, the Social Justice Council has a process for starting new social justice groups. You can contact the Social Justice Council at socialjustice@uuaa.org to explore how an activity/program/interest might fit with our congregation's existing justice work and priorities. The Social Justice Council can also advise you regarding the practical steps to take in potentially establishing a new social justice group.

I am having trouble getting more congregants involved with a social justice cause. How do I get more engagement from my lay peers at UUAA?

There are several ways to promote an existing social justice activity or program. You can post articles to UUAA's weekly e-news or the monthly newsletter. In addition, you can post notices to the “Our UUAA Community” group on Facebook.

In addition, various social justice groups are afforded the opportunity to share about the good work that they are doing during a Sunday service through what is called a “Social Justice Connection.”

For more information about Social Justice Connections or for additional ideas/possibilities on how best to engage community members, please feel free to contact the Social Justice Council at socialjustice@uuuaa.org.

How do I get the Board of Trustees or the ministers and staff to help promote a social justice cause that I’m interested in?

Given the variety of interests and needs in our fairly large community, UUAA’s elected leaders and staff often have to juggle significant and divergent needs within our congregation, striving whenever possible to find an appropriate balance.

In order to avoid favoritism toward a particular activity or cause, elected leaders and staff may choose not to personally promote certain events or activities. In other cases, in which justice needs are clearly in alignment with UUAA’s vision and priorities (see [A Congregational Vision](#)), and when the impact and timing of an event or activity is opportune, they may do so.

Given the potential complexity with this kind of request, if the issue falls under the scope of an existing social justice group, please first speak with the leaders of the relevant social justice group, and/or the Social Justice Council, before approaching the ministers, the staff, or the Board of Trustees with a request to promote a specific social justice activity, program, or event.

If your concern/issue involves something not presently being worked on within the UUAA community, please contact the Social Justice Council (socialjustice@uuuaa.org) regarding the possibility of starting a new social justice group or creating a special project.

Community

What’s the definition of “anti-Semitism,” “Islamophobia,” “racism,” “transphobia,” and other such terms and concepts that are used in our culture to distinguish between those who are on the ‘correct’ side of an issue and those who are not?

Answer:

Language is a tool that can both build and harm relationship. Given the complex needs of our day, there can be genuine confusion over how to understand and talk about a particular issue without causing others harm. Our intention may be good - we may be grounded in the desire to further justice, not cause harm - but we may be unsure how to live into that intention. At other times, we may be surprised to learn that despite our

good intention we said or did something that was experienced by others as disappointing or harmful.

While many organizations offer googleable definitions of concepts such as anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, racism, transphobia, etc., at the end of the day most definitions are open to subjective interpretation. Harm is always experienced in relationship with other human beings, not in isolation. As such, we should turn our attention to relationships that can inform our understanding of when, how, and why harm is experienced.

Being in dialogue and relationship with others who are directly impacted by societal harm is a good way to begin deepening one's understanding of these terms. For example, what does someone who identifies as Muslim experience as Islamophobic? What does someone who identifies as Black, Indigenous, or as a Person of Color (BIPOC) experience as racist? What do Jewish people experience as anti-Semitic? What do our trans siblings experience as transphobic?

At the same time, it is important to be aware that across individuals and sub-groups there can be diverse experiences and understandings. For example, what one group of BIPOC individuals experience as racist might be different from what another group of BIPOC individuals experience as racist. In addition, language itself evolves, which can lead to new and different understandings of what is anti-Semitic, Islamophobic, racist, transphobic, etc. over time.

It is through dialogue across difference that one can begin to understand how harm is experienced by those who are most directly impacted. Members of UUAA's Living Our Values (LOV) Team can be a resource in supporting UUAA groups and congregants in further reflection on this set of needs.