

SL4CC January 2023 Gatherings - chat & notes

6A January 24, 2023 - 1:00 to 2:30 PM (ET)

6B January 26, 2023 - 7:00 to 8:30 PM (ET)

Chalice Reading

from [Article II Study Report to the Board](#), page 16

Throughout this process, we have been guided by the idea of the Living Tradition. As James Luther Adams has said, “a living tradition is not bequeathed through some law of inheritance; it must be earned, not without dust and heat, and not without humbling grace.” Throughout the dust and heat, we have been humbled by the grace extended to us by all those who participated in our process. In our work, we sought to honor the work of those ancestors who came before, and to envision all of us Unitarian Universalists as good ancestors to those who follow us in the future. We hope this revision nurtures that living tradition so that it continues to flourish, and look forward to that future time when another Commission takes up this work to make it speak for their age.

What role(s) do you hold in your congregation? and what questions or insights were sparked for you by the [prework](#) for this gathering?

Group 6A

- Donna Savicki Duxbury she/her: Member of the Governing Board, co-chair of Social Justice Committee
- John H - Portland A2U2: I am on the Board and Stewardship Team. Also on Social Justice team
- Patty Shepard (she, her, hers) Winchester: chair of social action and out reach committee.
- Elizabeth Murphy | Framingham | she/her: Ministerial Intern
- Sara (she/her) Framingham, MA: Church Administrator/Membership Coordinator/Diversity & Equity Member
- Maryanne Bernini Caughlin, NorthamptonMA she/her: Team Leader Racial Justice Team. Formed in the fall of 2019. Also served on the Widening the Circle Team in our congregation.
- Davalene Cooper--Hingham, MA: Social Justice Council Chair
- Carol Larson Portland Maine: Member various social//racial justice teams and member of stewardship committee.
- Maryanne Bernini Caughlin, NorthamptonMA she/her: Pre-work prompted me to really want to see how other congregations are negotiating this
- Phil Alkana, Foxborough, MA: member of Foxborough Universalist and a member of the Social Justice committee. I'm interested in participating in a discussion of the revisions to Article II, among other things.
- Patty Shepard (she, her, hers) Winchester: How do other congregations manage to have a regular and thoughtful review process of their governance?
- Davalene Cooper--Hingham, MA: Assuming these new changes are approved, how do we make that change evident in our congregation?

- Mandy Neff (Providence RI Interim DRE; she/her): Interim Director of Religious Education. Insight: the link between the process of finding Core Stories of the Congregation for Spirit Play, and Core Stories of our faith at large
- Sara (she/her) Framingham, MA: Insight: how not only were specifics about process and timing of Article II but strong guidance on key values to be kept in the process and the result.
- John H - Portland A2U2: We are in liminal times, as preached wonderfully by Christine Solari. And we've been in it 3 years so are getting to realize this is good and there's no "going back".
- Elizabeth Murphy | Framingham | she/her: What does "regular basis" actually mean for reimagining core values?
- Edmund Robinson (he, him. his) First Church in Boston: I am the interim minister in The First Church in Boston. We are in search and our by-laws are kind of antique and I wonder if I can get the congregation behind a thorough revision while we are in search!
- Rev Claudia J, Asheville, NC (Ella/she): Minister of Faith Development, Justice lead. Pre-work: How do we prepare delegates to GA to discuss article II
- Carol Larson Portland Maine: How can you talk with folks who fear that too much change will make the church no longer UU, especially when those people have very limited long term historical understanding of the whole UU tradition and the whole larger organization structure and process.
- Mandy Neff (Providence RI Interim DRE; she/her): @Rev Claudia - yes! We are working to send a full slate of delegates this year. I look forward to meeting with the group around Article II

Group 6B

- Cathy Jackson, Hamden, CT she/her: I am a religious educator and a member of our Anti-Racism/8th Principle group. I was glad to get some historical background as well as what comes next in the process.
- Bobbi Pace, Hamden CT, she/her: Vice President...a structure for a regular review process and how often
- Abby Diamond-Kissida, Hingham. MA (she/her): Former board member. Currently chair of Welcoming Congregation Committee. How can I be the voice of positive change?
- Cheryl Dixon, Westport CT: Worship leader, IDI QA, 8th Principle social justice team leader,.... applying a review process when there hasn't been one for a long time.
- Kiki Giatis, Arlington MA (she/her): Leadership Development Committee, Program Council facilitator. Whole concept of covenant in reality

First break out session:

Questions

A Groups: How might your congregation faithfully engage in work similar to that of the Article II Study Commission and how might the practices of Spiritual Leadership help you with that?

- John H - Portland A2U2: Very moved by the level of anxiety that is still being felt in some in the congregations about shrinking attendance etc.
- Patty Shepard (she, her, hers) Winchester: Sociocracy methods, covenant groups, program councils and lots of small discussion groups are all helpful.

- Edmund Robinson (he, him. his) First Church in Boston: What is sociocracy? How do we make decisions now, and how could this be more empowering and liberating if we could switch to another system or format?
- Sara (she/her) Framingham, MA: Practice covenant and inner work in current small groups before cottage meetings to discuss mission.
- Naomi Yanis (she/her) Amherst, MA: thinking about how to change everything can be discouraging. Starting within small groups, as a model, whether small group ministry, or a particular committee, is easier to think about.
- Carol Larson Portland Maine: That multiple churches are at the very beginning in bringing spiritual practices such as covenants into their process
- Sara (she/her) Framingham, MA: Build relationships in every activity, uplift gifts with appreciation

B Groups: How might your congregation faithfully engage in/with the national UUA conversation about changes to Article II and how might the practices of Spiritual Leadership help you with that?

- From Donna Savicki Duxbury she/her: wasn't aware the UU principles were "going away"
- Davalene Cooper--Hingham, MA: How do we help our congregations understand the relationship between the Art, 2 revisions and the move to approve an 8th principle?
- Elizabeth Murphy | Framingham | she/her: Balancing promotion of of 8th principle adoption alongside Article II revisions and moving away from centering principles at all is VERY TRICKY in a congregational setting!
- Rev Claudia J, Asheville, NC (Ella/she): challenge of concurrently working on Article II and 8th principle during a challenging endemic COVID time
- Maryanne Bernini Caughlin, NorthamptonMA she/her: A lot of good ground work is being done but how to get a good idea of where the congregation as a whole is, not just those who show up for discussion groups etc. or have the most vocal reactions, but those who don't tend to join in but will vote.
- Davalene Cooper--Hingham, MA: Issue of youth for whom the principles are foundational
- Mandy Neff (Providence RI Interim DRE; she/her): there are lots of similarities in the emotional process and responses congregations are going through. There are good resources out there from the Article II Commission! I'm excited to share them now that I've seen them.
- Phil Alkana, Foxborough, MA: We should consider having congregational discussions that compare the eight principles and the changes in Article II.

Next steps you feel inspired to consider

- Davalene Cooper--Hingham, MA: newsletter article with links to report and recording, followed by a time for conversation later in the month
- Patty Shepard (she, her, hers) Winchester: share the recording of the recent Article II commission's presentation to the UUA Board with other members of my congregation.

- Sara (she/her) Framingham, MA: Work on liberating covenant and inner works in Maintenance Council, join forces with Music Director on how to do this.
- Naomi Yanis (she/her) Amherst, MA: continuing to work on implementing sociocracy principles wherever we can effectively
- Rev Claudia J, Asheville, NC (Ella/she): Newsletter link and invitation to review the report; set a date for a reflection person online and Zoom; personally invite delegates already identified
- Edmund Robinson (he, him. his) First Church in Boston: Naomi just said something about making changes incrementally because it is so intimidating to think of wholesale change. If we start small, where do we start?
- Maryanne Bernini Caughlin, NorthamptonMA she/her: The Racial Justice Team is doing the service Sunday with listening circles following. After that we hope to have a much better idea of where congregants are and what our next steps will be. Our teams have been working for the past three months on specific questions based on what it would mean for their team to work as if the 8th principle was adopted by our congregation. They will share their reflections at the service Sunday.
- Phil Alkana, Foxborough, MA: How can we access the recording of the Article II Commission's presentation to the UUA Board? I attended that presentation and found it very useful. I plan to ask our chair to include information about Article II in our weekly congregational email.
- Bobbi Pace, Hamden CT, she/her: Start putting ongoing info on Article II in regular newsletters (FYI)
- Cathy Jackson, Hamden, CT she/her: Convene the people who have been delegates at GA the last few years and who may be the most knowledgeable of Article II and together make a plan for disseminating the information to the congregation starting with our Board and Committee of Chairs.
- Cheryl Dixon, Westport CT: Identify the key people who may be past delegates or attended past GAs; gather them together to brainstorm ways of talking with congregants, the board and committees about Article II.
- Abby Diamond-Kissiday, Hingham. MA (she/her): Write email/letter summarizing today's meeting and send to key leaders, deacons, interim minister team, former GA attendees and board. While we are processing how to talk & listen to one another, keep in mind the out come to be creating a new covenant. While we work on our own covenant to look at Article II and see how they go together.
- Kiki Giatis, Arlington MA (she/her): Talk for a couple of minutes at the next Program Council meeting and put an article or two in the google drive. Think more about how to share importance of delegate rep at GA particularly in 2024

Closing

From "I Call That Church Free" by James Luther Adams – #591

I call that church free which brings individuals into a caring, trusting fellowship,

That protects and nourishes their integrity and spiritual freedom; that yearns to belong to the church universal;

It is open to insight and conscience from every source; it bursts through rigid tradition, giving rise to new and living language, to new and broader fellowship.

It is a pilgrim church, a servant church, on an adventure of the spirit.