

To the Point

Quick!

What's Unitarian Universalism?

Here is a diverse collection of brief responses to that question—short enough for an elevator ride, cashier line, or sidewalk chat. If you are wondering what Unitarian Universalism is, this may serve as an intriguing introduction. If you are a UU, perhaps this will help inspire your own responses.

Judith A. Frediani,
former UUA Curriculum Director

Unitarian Universalism is a BIG faith and we have a big message—that there is one Spirit of Life that moves within and between us and calls us to care for each other. Our faith celebrates the beauty, diversity, and goodness of all creation—all life. We believe in love and compassion for all—and in using our best learning to make the best choices we can.

—Rev. Natalie Maxwell Fenimore, Manhasset, New York

At its best, Unitarian Universalism is a religion of people who covenant to treat one another well, care for the earth, and protect the beautiful tapestry of cultures and communities that make up the people of the world. Love is the core value from which we build.

—Rev. Sunshine Jeremiah Wolfe,
Syracuse, New York

Unitarian Universalism is a non-judgmental religious home that will accept and support you wherever you may be in life's journey. It is composed of diverse communities operating without a common belief about God, the universe, and death. Instead of creed, we share a spirit and vision of radical inclusivity, individual agency, and social justice. It is a safe space to stand out, stand up, and change your mind, particularly during life's transitions. We embrace personal discovery and growth through learning, engagement, and service. Our only doctrine is love.

—Victoria Mitchell, Eugene, Oregon

Unitarian Universalists believe:
It's a blessing you were born.
It matters what you do with your life.
What you know about god is a piece of the truth.
You do not have to do it alone.

—Laila Ibrahim, Berkeley, California

Both Unitarianism and Universalism sprang from liberal Christianity. Unitarianism speaks to the nature of God as One: Holy, Transcendent, Immanent, Whole, Mystery. Universalism speaks to the nature of our relationships—with the Divine, with ourselves, with each other, and with the planet which we call home.

—Rev. Michelle Buhite,
Cheektowaga, New York

Unitarian Universalists have different religious beliefs but share a common faith. We know there's something sacred about life. And we're committed to finding it, together, even if it takes us our whole lives.

—Rev. Erik Martínez Resly, Washington D.C.

The historical organizing principle of Unitarianism was the unity of God, not the trinity. The historical organizing principle of Universalism was the goodness of God, not the judgment of God. Unitarian: God is one. Universalist: God is love. We have evolved into a religion that has no creed; each person is free to believe what they find to be true. This means that, on a Sunday morning, you might be sitting next to people who give different names to what they believe (theist, atheist, agnostic, Christian, Jewish, undecided, Humanist, Muslim). We become Unitarian Universalists because we believe that humans need the freedom to grow toward their own beliefs. We gather in community to encourage one another in our spiritual growth, to learn how to live together in loving diversity, and to work together for good purpose in the world.

—Rev. Kathleen Hepler,
Framingham, Massachusetts

Our faith is not interested in saving your soul—we're here to help you unfold the awesome soul you already have.

—Andrea Lerner,
Breinigsville, Pennsylvania

Unitarian universalism is a cradle, a critic, and a comforting hand during the journey of spiritual growth and constant realization of self. It is a diverse community in thought and experience, strongest when we listen deeply to one another, when we lead with humility and grace, and when we practice courageous love. One of our greatest values and challenges as a faith community is that there is always more growing to do, and changes must unfold to reveal new truths. Unitarian Universalism is an expression of interconnectivity that holds us all accountable to this expectation by guiding us toward people and lessons that will help us, shape us, affirm us, and celebrate us in the ways that we need in those moments.

—Paloma Callo, BC, Canada

We stand in a tradition of abundance. We have said for centuries that there is room in our religion for every kind of seeker and sojourner. We are called to embody a generosity of spirit, an open and optimistic view of God and of life, that claims that everyone is included. Skeptics and poets and scientists are welcome here, as are nonconformists and shy and uncertain folk, and all manner of smart people and foolish

ones. I believe that our restlessness and doubts have a divine origin and are a sign of grace. Our love of truth can be understood as the holiest of gifts. Our devotion to truth may be the means of deliverance.

—Rev. Barbara Merritt,
Worcester, Massachusetts

Unitarian Universalism is at a wisdom tradition crossroads, critical to the new global community where we need to listen to each other across difference and learn about each other in depth. It affirms our basic human unity, our ecological interdependence in the world, and our spiritual connection to the larger universe.

—Rev. Scotty McLennan,
Stanford, California

The one thing I know to be true about Unitarian Universalism is that it is the shared experience of individuality, being yourself among thousands and celebrating it. My beliefs are my own, my words are my own, yet shared. My passions are my own, yet shared. And my love is my own, yet shared. We have this beautiful intersection between individuality and unity and it fills me with such joy to know I'm a part of it.

—Mel Priese, St. Louis, Missouri

Unitarian Universalism is about accepting all of the imperfect people who interact with it. It's a faith made up of broken, questioning, and innocent people. It's about finding a community of people who don't want to change you, only help you be the best version of yourself—however that looks.

—Libby Palmer, Englewood, CO

Meg Riley, ed. *Testimony: The Transformative Power of Unitarian Universalism* (Skinner House)

For Further Reading

The following books are available from inSpirit: The UU Book and Gift Shop at uua.org/bookstore

John A. Buehrens. *Universalists and Unitarians in America: A People's History* (Skinner House)

Patricia Frevert, ed. *Welcome: A Unitarian Universalist Primer* (Skinner House)

The Unitarian Universalist Pocket Guide (Skinner House)

Packs of 25 copies of this pamphlet can be ordered from inSpirit: The UU Book and Gift Shop at uua.org/bookstore.