

To the Point

15 Unitarian Universalist Elevator Speeches

Alicia LeBlanc, Editor

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, UUA Curriculum Director

I am a UU because I am convinced I need other people who love what I love. I am a UU because I want to join hands with others to create a community where we grow spiritually, where we support one another, and where we work together to create a world in which everyone matters, everyone is free, everyone is respected, and everyone lives in peace. I am a UU because I have seen what love, understanding, and commitment can do. And finally, I am a UU because I am convinced that if we let the love in our hearts guide our ways, the possibilities before us are breathtaking.

—Rev. Peter Morales, UUA President

Our denomination is unique because every Unitarian Universalist has the right to develop a personal philosophy of life, without being told what to believe. We can learn from all philosophies and religions, and also from science and the arts. We explore important life issues in a caring community, united by shared values rather than by shared theological opinions. And no matter what we do believe about theology or philosophy, we try to live a good life and leave the world better than we found it.

—Rev. Chris Schriener

Unitarian Universalists have different religious beliefs but share a common faith. We know that life is holy, that each person is worthy, and that, when we join together to plant the seeds of love, the world blossoms.

—Erik Resly

Unitarian Universalism is a covenantal, not creedal faith. That means that, although we may believe differently, we come together to search, grow, serve, and minister. Francis David said it best, “We need not think alike to love alike.”

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.

—Michelle Buhite

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

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

We are a church of many beliefs, worshipping as one community, and focused on making this a better world.

—Rev. Steve J. Crump

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

—Andrea Lerner

This is a place where you're welcome, where you're invited into a fuller relationship with yourself, with the spirit of life, with other people, to build a better world, and to build a better you.

—Rev. Shana Lynngood

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.

—Sunshine Jeremiah Wolfe

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.

—Natalie Fenimore

In our faith, God is not a given, God is a question. God is not defined for us, God is defined by us. Our views are shaped and changed by our experiences. As we grow, our faith grows. We struggle with what it means to be alive and yet have to die. We probe the depths of our own being for little hints of meaning. We create a faith by which we can live and struggle to live up to it. Throughout, each of us is fated to travel his or her own path. In the larger sense, we have chosen to journey together because we find that it is helpful. We find that it is good.

—Rev. Forrest Church

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

The Unitarian side of our family tree tells us that there is only one God, one Spirit of Life, one Power of Love. The Universalist side tells us that God is a loving God, condemning none of us, and valuing the spark of divinity that is in every human being. So Unitarian Universalism stands for one God, no one left behind.

—Rev. William Sinkford, former UUA President

Love is the spirit of this church,
and service its law.

This is our great covenant:
To dwell together in peace,
To seek the truth in love,
And to help one another.

—Rev. James Vila Blake

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