

Journey to Belonging

We come together in an attitude of openness—not knowing quite what will happen, yet daring to receive a new idea, a new experience, sustenance for our minds and our hearts.

We come with an attitude of praise, expressing our thankfulness for the good that has come into our lives.

We come with an attitude of humility, knowing how much we need one another, how alone we can be in the world, how vulnerable if we face life solely by ourselves.

We come in the spirit of love, seeking human warmth and fellowship in the hands and faces of those around us.

We come in the spirit of joy, seeking reconfirmation and renewal of life, of love, and of hope.

—adapted from Peter Lee Scott

Finding a Religious Community

People come through the doors of Unitarian Universalist congregations and communities for many reasons. Some come seeking solace and guidance during tough times. Others come looking for a place to express and grow their spiritual connection to something greater than just themselves. Families come hoping to find a village with shared values in which to raise their children. Whatever your reason for crossing the threshold, know that you have found a vibrant community that always has room for one more.

We gather to learn from one another, grow on our spiritual journey, hold one another in loving accountability, and support each other as we go about the business of making meaning of our lives. Our lives' pathways expand in ways we could not have imagined before. As your sense of belonging to this community grows, so, too, will your connection to something greater than just yourself. It is challenging to do the work of community-building, but so rewarding.

Learning

Open minds are welcome here. From the history of our Unitarian Universalist faith to world religions, this community offers a myriad of learning opportunities. Some of the best learning happens by engaging with people whose experiences and beliefs differ from our own. Seeing ourselves reflected in the eyes of others helps us learn even more about ourselves and the values we hold dear.

Growth

Our spiritual journey does not stop after we pass through the door for the first time. Through regular worship and opportunities for reflection, we find new spiritual paths to explore that deepen our connection to what we hold holy. We embrace spiritual practices to remind us to open our hearts and souls to new truths. We gain spiritual nourishment from each other as we journey together in community.

Accountability

As Unitarian Universalists, we take our responsibilities seriously, our commitment to each other, our families, neighborhoods, the human race, and our shared earth. We share responsibilities that help us create a more just and loving world. We gather regularly to reflect on our shared values and to challenge ourselves and each other to live those values more fully.

Support

As Unitarian Universalists, we work to live full, meaningful lives, and being part of a faith community is an important part of that. A UU community is a place to celebrate life's milestones—new children, weddings, memorial services—and a place to share more specific joys and concerns, such as a new job or severe illness. We spread news of our good times, knowing that others will share our happiness, and news of our bad times, knowing that others will reach out to support us.

Over time, all these interactions form a tapestry of varied relationships that sustain us in every part of our lives. We offer a place to belong, a place to connect, to engage where you can join your passions with ours and together we can build a better world. We offer acceptance of the person coming through our doors, without expecting them to change who they are to fit a particular mold.

Belonging Is a Journey

Belonging to a congregation is a journey of deepening connection and growth. The journey may be only for a year or for decades. It may progress into membership. Rather than membership being an either/or, in/out thing, it is really an evolving relationship, growing richer over time as we learn more about ourselves and how our Principles call us to live. It starts when we visit a website or go to an event, and gets stronger as we attend worship regularly, join the parents' group, participate in an online small group ministry circle, sign the membership book, teach in religious education, participate in a Facebook event, take on leadership roles, etc. It does not stop when we become a member but rather continues to the highest levels of dedication and leadership. Being in community is a give-and-take. We look forward to the gifts you have to share and hope you will find value in what we bring to this community.

Unitarian Universalism Extends Beyond the Congregation

Our faith is not contained within four walls. There are other types of UU faith communities out there, including online communities such as the Church of the Larger Fellowship, campus ministries, Facebook groups, and even cooperative houses, artist collectives, worshipping communities, and interdependent mission-based groups. Working for justice, helping make connections within your own community, and finding the "sweet spot" of where your passion links to the greatest needs all help connect you to Unitarian Universalism.

Questions for Reflection

When have you felt a strong sense of belonging to a community? What helped you develop that sense of belonging?

What qualities are most important to you in a spiritual community?

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Resources

Our Shared Faith: uuworld.org/articles/what-do-unitarian-universalists-believe

Visit uua.org/directory/congregations to find a Unitarian Universalist congregation or community near you.

Use The Hub Map to find Unitarian Universalist Young Adult and Campus Ministries near you:
<http://tinyurl.com/hx9v893>

The Church of the Larger Fellowship offers worship services and other ministries online.
questformeaning.org/clfuu/

The Unitarian Universalist Pocket Guide, Fifth Edition, edited by Rev. Peter Morales (Boston: Skinner House, 2012) is a good place to start to find out more about Unitarian Universalism. Available from inSpirit: The UU Book and Gift Shop, uua.org/bookstore

Packs of this pamphlet are also available at uua.org/bookstore