



DRAFT MINUTES – NOT YET APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

General Assembly Business Meeting Minutes

Sixty-Fourth General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association

June 18–22, 2025

Multi-Platform | Onsite in Baltimore, MD

Note: all times are Eastern Time

Introduction

The 2025 General Assembly (GA) of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) was held both onsite and online, the second fully multi-platform GA. This multi-platform event allowed both regular attendees and delegates to participate in programs online, onsite, or a combination of the two. The onsite portion took place at the Baltimore Convention Center in Baltimore, Maryland. Online participants used applications such as the Whova app for participation, access to programs, worship, connection with other attendees and an on-demand video library; and Zoom. Access to General Sessions was available through the UUA website and YouTube.

The theme of GA 2025 was “Meet the Moment.” Unitarian Universalist values call us to show up—for justice, for liberation, and for communities grounded in Love. Throughout history, Unitarian Universalism has not only endured shifting cultural and political landscapes, it has evolved through them. Our religious ancestors met the moment by letting go of what no longer served, imagining new possibilities, and embracing transformation. *Meet the Moment* is a movement-wide invitation to discern what this era asks of us—and to respond with courage, clarity, and creativity.

GA 2025 offered time for UU communities who gather at GA to engage in networking and meetups. Programs and workshops equipped professional and lay leaders to advance our shared faithful mission, in a combination of online, onsite, and multi-platform live-streamed formats.

“Meet the Moment” cohort events began at 10:30 am to create more opportunities for “Flex Time” (meet-ups, worship services, or spiritual practices), and General Sessions generally began at 1:00 pm to optimize a “prime time” schedule for attendees across time zones. The Ware Lecture was given by journalist Imara Jones, whose work has won Emmy and Peabody Awards, is the creator of TransLash Media, a cross-platform journalism, personal storytelling and narrative project, which produces content to shift the current culture of hostility towards transgender people in the U.S. Deepa Iyer, a long-time community builder and writer of *Social Change Now: A Guide for Reflection and Connection*, and Gloria J. Browne-Marshall, author of *A Protest History of the United States* (Beacon Press) were featured speakers. The Service of the Living Tradition was led by Mx. Katharine Childs, and the Sunday Morning worship was led by the Rev. Dr. Nicole C. Kirk.

The voting and discussion process for GA continued in the redesigned, all-ballot format developed for multi-platform participation. All official delegate actions took place through the online Delegate Platform, which opened for election ballot voting in June. Voting took place through ballots on the delegate platform for both online and onsite delegates, and “business-only” online delegates registered with a sliding-scale fee to participate only as delegates without access to the content available for regular attendees.

Business Preparation for General Assembly

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The business process timeline leading up to GA for regular business items was as follows:

- May 19 – final business agenda was published
- May 26 – deadline for delegates to submit amendments to items on the final agenda
Note: No amendments to any of the business items were submitted this year, so there were no mini-assemblies. All business items moved forward to the general session ballots without changes.
- June 10 – final versions of business agenda items, including Actions of Immediate Witness, were published

Convening

Co-Moderators Charles Du Mond and the Rev. Meg Riley convened the General Assembly on Wednesday, June 18, 2025, at approximately 6:00 p.m. Based on an initial report by the Secretary of the Association, a quorum was declared present from the time the meeting was called to order. The Assembly adopted, by a vote of two-thirds or more, the Rules of Procedure for the conduct of the meeting [Vote Results: Adopt = 691 (99.6%), Do Not Adopt = 3 (0.4%)].

Vote to Reconsider the 2025 Congregational Study/Action Issues

Following the scheduled vote on the 2025 Congregational Study/Action Issues, which took place on the Thursday, June 19, 2025 ballot, delegates requested a motion to reconsider due to scheduling conflicts, etc. Co-Moderators Du Mond and Riley approved the use of this pursuant to the last paragraph of Rule 3, “Voting and Counting Votes,” which reads, “Delegates may not make any motion which is not specified under these Rules of Procedure, such as a proposal to table (postpone), reconsider, move the previous question (end discussion), suspend the rules, extend debate, or take any other action related to a business item, unless the Moderator determines it is in the best interest of the General Assembly to consider such a motion.”

The results of the initial ballot were 606 votes (53.4%) for *Housing: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion*; 448 votes (39.5%) for *Abolition, Transformation, and Faith Formation*; and 80 votes (7.1%) for *Fat Liberation: Building Justice and Inclusion for Larger Bodies*, with 13 (1.2%) abstentions. The results of the vote to reconsider, which took place in the Friday, June 20, 2025 ballot, were 1162 (91.2%) Yes votes and 112 (8.8%) No votes, with 61 (4.6%) abstentions.

Notable Events

- Highlights
 - “Meet the Moment” Cohort gatherings (morning) helped attendees connect on a topic of their choice, hosted by UUA staff and the conveners, themselves
 - Preview of the upcoming UUA Climate Revival in September 2024
 - Update from UUA Bylaws Renewal Team
 - Installation of Newly-Elected Leaders
 - Installation of Co-Moderators
 - Invitation to GA 2026
- Ware Lecturer – Imara Jones, whose work has won Emmy and Peabody Awards, is the creator of TransLash Media, a cross-platform journalism, personal storytelling and narrative project, which produces content to shift the current culture of hostility towards transgender people in the U.S., spoke to attendees.

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- Berry Street Lecture – The Rev. Leela Sinha, “Tricksters and Tyrannies”, hosted by the Unitarian Universalist Ministers’ Association
- Featured Guest Speakers
 - Deepa Iyer: “Social Change is Still the Way Forward!”
 - Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharris: “Lessons from the Movement to End Poverty”
 - Rev. Sean Neil-Barron and Mx. Katharine Childs: “Fashs Lecture 2025: A Theology of Community Organizing”
 - Gloria J. Browne-Marshall: “Protest and Progress”
 - Rev. John T. Crestwell, Jr. and Justin Cody: “Innovative Worship for the 21st Century”
- Worship Leaders
 - The Rev. Dr. Rebekah A. Savage and the Rev. Paige Getty led the Opening Worship
 - Mx. Katharine Childs led the Service of the Living Tradition, “Once Upon A Time”
 - The Rev. Dr. Nicole Kirk led the Sunday Morning Worship, “Revolution Begins with a Dream”
 - The UUA Lifespan Faith Engagement Team led the Synergy Bridging Worship
- Anniversaries Celebrated
 - American Unitarian Association (AUA) – 200 Years
 - Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism (BLUU) – 10 Years
 - Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA) – 75 Years
 - Our Whole Lives (OWL) lifespan sexuality education curricula series – 25 Years
- Support by GA Care Teams (Covenant, Chaplains, Systemic Justice, Accessibility & Inclusion, App Moderation)
- Hosted spaces: children’s programming, GA Youth, Emerging Adults (EA)@GA

The Assembly received written or video reports from the following groups or officers:

- UUA Executive Officers
- UUA Co-Moderators
- UUA Co-Financial Advisors
- Unitarian Universalist Service Committee
- Unitarian Universalist Women’s Federation

The following awards were presented:

- The Board of Trustees presented the Award for Distinguished Service to the Cause of Unitarian Universalism to Paula Cole Jones.
- The President’s Annual Award for Volunteer Service was presented to Larry Ladd.
- The Angus H. MacLean Award for Excellence in Religious Education was presented to the Rev. Dr. Natalie Maxwell Fenimore.

Consent Agenda – Bylaws Amendments: Technical Revisions and Cleanup

The Assembly adopted the proposed Consent Agenda, which included only one item. [Vote Results: Adopt 1080 (99.1%), Do Not Adopt = 10 (0.9%)].

Business Resolution – Continued Suspension of the General Assembly Planning Committee

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The Assembly adopted the proposed business resolution. [Vote Results: Adopt 1162 (91.2%), Do Not Adopt = 112 (8.8%)].

At the 2022 General Assembly, the delegates approved the following business resolution:

The GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2022 hereby suspends the membership and activities required by the bylaws of the General Assembly Planning Committee, for a period of up to three years, while new GA planning structures are tested, revised, and adopted. This action empowers the current leadership and collaborative efforts of the UUA volunteers and staff who are responsible for GA activities, events, and programs to fulfill these functions. It creates the opportunity to explore and develop more inclusive and innovative GA planning structures for the future.

The rationale for this suspension included allowing time for a multi-year process to rewrite the Association's bylaws, time to better understand the needs of virtual and multi-platform modalities, and time to identify the kinds of skills and volunteers needed to support future General Assemblies.

Also at the 2022 General Assembly, the delegates approved a business resolution which included the following:

Therefore the 2022 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association calls on the UUA Board of Trustees to appoint a task group composed of UUA board members, UUA staff, and UUs who are nonboard or staff members to conduct a thorough review and rewrite of the UUA Bylaws. This review should involve stakeholders in collaborative discernment and conversation about considered changes. A progress report of the UUA Bylaw review detailing which changes are being considered will be issued by the Board of Trustees at least annually beginning in 2023 prior to the annual General Assembly. This report should include the rationale for each change. These new bylaws should create a governance system that supports the UUA in accountably achieving its mission and aspirations consistent with our core values.

The Bylaws Renewal Team has been reporting on their progress at each General Assembly since 2022. Progress has been made, and more time is needed to involve stakeholders in collaborative discernment and conversation, including those that involve the bylaws of the General Assembly Planning Committee.

BASED ON THE FOREGOING, NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: The GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2025 hereby extends the 2022 business resolution which suspends the membership and activities required by the bylaws of the General Assembly Planning Committee, for another period of up to three years.

Actions of Immediate Witness

The following Actions of Immediate Witness (AIWs) were added to the agenda and affirmed by a vote of two-thirds or more.

We Declare and Affirm: Immigrants Are People Who Have Inherent Worth and Inalienable Rights

Vote Results: Affirm = 1285 (99.2%), Do Not Affirm = 11 (0.8%)

Grounding

As Unitarian Universalists, we affirm the sacredness of every human being and our shared humanity across lines of culture, experience, and theology. Our faith compels us to uphold the inherent worthiness

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and dignity of all people, including immigrants, and to insist they be treated with love, compassion, and justice. We reject policies and practices that deny immigrants their basic human rights - especially the right to due process protected under the U.S. Constitution and international law.

Our UU values affirm that justice demands fairness and equal protection of all. Due process – a cornerstone of democracy – guarantees that no one is deprived of life, liberty, or property without a fair hearing. When immigrants are denied these rights, we are called to respond with moral clarity and courageous action.

The Crisis

Immigration is the first policy arena that the U.S. government has chosen to test the extent to which people are willing to “look the other way” as it escalates the use of authoritarian and autocratic measures to carry out its agenda. In recent months, we have witnessed escalating authoritarian and autocratic actions, including:**

- Arrest of public leaders, like the Mayor of Newark, for supporting immigration justice, seemingly to chill dissent
- Mass arrests, detentions, and deportations
- Cancellation of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and humanitarian parole
- Family separations and prolonged child detentions
- Use of the Alien Enemies Act of 1798 to detain migrants and send them to foreign prisons without a court hearing
- Dismantling Congressionally funded refugee and asylee resettlement programs
- Abandonment of refugees and asylees already approved for entry
- Militarization of the border and criminalization of migration

These actions dehumanize immigrants, refugees, and asylees and undermine foundational democratic principles. They betray our nation’s long history of immigration and the essential contributions of immigrants to its culture, values, and spirit.

People migrate for many reasons: war, violence, persecution, climate disruption, and economic devastation. Many flee because they love their families too much to stay. They deserve compassion, not criminalization and dignity, not detention.

Resolved:

We, the delegates of the 2025 UUA General Assembly, commit to the following actions in support of justice for the immigrants who are our friends, neighbors and valued members of our communities.

Personal Actions

- Learn: Attend [Know Your Rights](#), [Know Your Risks](#), and [Accompaniment](#) trainings.
- Support: Donate to and volunteer with national or local immigrant support groups, such as UURISE, NILC, CLINIC, CASA, and Resistencia en Accion NJ.
- Speak Out: Write letters to the editor, contact media outlets to promote accurate coverage, and push back on anti-immigrant narratives.
- Amplify: Post truthful, supportive content on social media to counter misinformation and oppose the criminalization of immigrant populations.
- Show Up: Accompany migrants to court hearings and administrative meetings—offering transportation, emotional support, and language interpretation as needed.
- Document: Take notes, make audio or video recordings of ICE-Immigrant interactions, particularly those that demonstrate the trauma the immigrants experience or excessive use of force or abuse.

Congregational Actions

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- Educate through worship services, training sessions on immigration justice, and seminars with speakers from immigrant-led organizations who can share their stories.
- Partner with local migrant and refugee organizations to support individuals and families in need.
- Fundraise to support local immigrant legal aid and services.
- Coordinate with other congregations to build long-term, multifaith networks of resistance

Advocacy

- Contact the Administration and members of Congress to oppose the huge increases in funding needed for mass roundups and detentions, mass deportations, and the new facilities to house tens of thousands of additional detainees.
- Amplify calls to action from UUSJ, UUSC, and interfaith and secular partners in advocacy.
- Participate in organized visits to Congressional offices to advocate for humane immigration laws and policies.

Urge the Administration to:

- Halt indiscriminate raids, detentions, and deportations
- End family separations
- End violations of Sensitive Locations and Private Areas such as schools, hospitals, and places of worship

Urge Congress to:

- Create pathways to permanent residency or citizenship for Dreamers, Afghan and Ukrainian refugees, TPS holders, and agricultural and essential workers
- Increase funding for asylum officers and immigration courts to ensure fair and timely hearings
- Resume efforts on legislation for comprehensive immigration reform
- Reassert Congressional authority over immigration under Article 1 of the Constitution

Public Witness

- Attend and promote vigils, protests, and rallies led by frontline and faith-based communities
- Speak publicly as people of faith, who are committed to immigrant justice, and share our public witness
- Wear UU “Side With Love” symbols to signal and sharpen our denominational presence.
- Discern when to move beyond protest to nonviolent direct action and peaceful non-cooperation, as modeled by the US Civil Rights Movement, India’s Satyagraha Movement, and South Africa’s Anti-Apartheid Movement.

Now is the time to rise—to be the moral voice, the loving hands, and the brave hearts our world needs.

Let us not be bystanders to injustice.

Let us not offer thoughts and prayers where action is required.

Let us not forget that history is watching—and so are the generations to come.

Let us remember that the arc of history bends toward justice—but only when we bend it.

We are Unitarian Universalists. We side with love. We act in faith. We choose justice. And we will not be moved.

Supplemental Information:

The Crisis

[Judge scolds DOJ over Newark mayor arrest](#)

[US removes hundreds of Venezuelans to El Salvador despite court order to turn back deportation flights](#)

[Why U.S. citizen children sent with their deported moms can’t come back easily](#)

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Personal Actions

[Know Your Rights Toolkit | Immigrant Legal Resource Center | ILRC](#)
[Know-Your-Rights-Risks-for-Immigrants-Allies-English.pdf](#)
[JusticePower – How-to Guide: Accompaniment | Justice Power](#)
[Accompaniment | Love Resists | UUA.org](#)
[Affiliate Directory | Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. \(CLINIC\)](#)
[The National Immigration Law Center: Home](#)
[American Immigration Lawyers Association](#)

Congregational Actions

[We Are Casa – WE HELP BUILDING POWER AND IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN LOW-INCOME IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES](#)
[RAICES – Invest in the U.S. We Envision Together](#)
[Global Refuge | Welcome & hope since 1939](#)

Public Witness

[United We Dream | The Largest Immigrant Youth-Led Network](#)
[Home - Interfaith Immigration Coalition](#)

Contact Congress

[Senators Phone Numbers | senatecontact.com](#)
[Contact Representatives - Contact Representatives](#)

Immigrant Led Justice Organizations

[Alianza Americas | Network of Latin American and Caribbean Migrant-Led Organizations](#)
[UndocuBlack Network | Justice Power](#)
[National Immigrant Justice Center: Legal Services for Immigrants, Refugees & Asylum Seekers](#)
[Immigrant Justice: 12 Organizations to Support and Seek Support From - Mental Health Therapy](#)
[Blog Post By Melody Li](#)

Proposing Delegate: The Rev. Abhi Janamanchi of Cedar Lane UU Congregation, MD

Collaborators: The Rev. Dr. Beth Ann Johnson & Charlotte Jones-Carroll

Faithful Defiance of Authoritarianism, a Call to Action: Reaffirming Our Covenant for Democracy and Freedom

Vote Results: Affirm = 1274 (98.3%), Do Not Affirm = 22 (1.7%)

BECAUSE, the flaming chalice, the living symbol of contemporary Unitarian Universalism, recalls the compassion and strength needed to aid Jewish refugees on the eve of World War II, and has come to represent helpfulness, sacrifice, and enduring faith in action ^[1];

BECAUSE, as Unitarian Universalists, we bind ourselves to one another through covenants—sacred promises made in response to the profound gift of life, held as shared care and mutual accountability, long central to religious communities; and born with reverence and holy aspirations through the spiritual discipline of Love;

BECAUSE, in this commitment we walk paths once taken by those who, from the earliest days of this great and troubled republic, pledged themselves to liberty—a liberty not of unbounded freedom but of responsibility freely embraced: the necessary constraint of just law, a moral check against abuse of power, and the civic work to sustain fragile institutions;

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BECAUSE, this is no ordinary moment but a time that tries the soul—a time that calls us to reaffirm the values we, as a faith, have declared our own, holding fast to justice, through which we dismantle racism and systemic oppression; inclusive democracy, and the dream—yes the dream—of fully accessible, radically inclusive communities where all may flourish;

WHEREAS, drawing the circle wider requires a covenant of more profound love that reaches toward that “impossible possibility”—to love our neighbors as ourselves, to cherish the frailty and dignity of our shared humanity, and to act not from outrage or self-righteousness, but from hope tempered by courage and deepened by conviction ^[2];

WHEREAS, the pillars of justice, equity, democracy, and the rule of law are under siege from authoritarian assaults on the justice system and constitutional protections, to the erosion of due process, freedom of speech and press, and the values of diversity and inclusion; from the unlawful deportation of immigrants to the weaponization of state power to silence dissent;

WHEREAS, autocratic actors are wielding institutions like the Department of Justice, law enforcement, the IRS, and federal contracting not for the common good, but to intimidate and punish their political opponents and ideological challengers;

WHEREAS, the corrosion of democracy is fueled by dark money and autocratic actors seeking secret advantage, the enrichment of officials and special interests at the public’s expense, and the dismantling of independent oversight and capacity for community accountability ^{[3][4][5]};

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT we, the 2025 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), call upon the UUA, its member congregations, and congregants, as appropriate, to:

- Cast off the cloak of isolation and transcend our differences—both within and beyond ourselves—to defend the guarantees of just law, constitutional integrity, equal justice, meaningful separation of powers, due process, and the freedoms of speech, press, and assembly by:
 - non-violent civil society action, including our vocal support and exercise of these guarantees and our witness;
 - legislative advocacy; and
 - judicial action, including our support of impactful litigation.
- Take bold action activating our faith not only to resist but also to build a nation that honors the dignity, needs, and values of all its people, one where the beloved community may thrive.

And more specifically be it resolved, that the UUA:

- With UU ministers and lay leaders, explore how to become a catalytic force working actively with leaders of other faith traditions to develop common strategies, events, actions, and messaging to bring a strong multi-faith presence that promotes our common values, counters the autocratic actions and messages of elected leaders, helps build a powerful pro-democracy movement, and guides us to a common dream where all can thrive. ^[6]

And be it resolved, that UU congregations:

- Adopt a congregational resolution that affirms their collective commitment to protect and strengthen freedom and democracy and to resist, through peaceful and principled means, encroachment by authoritarian forces seeking to strip citizens and non-citizens of their rights, voices, and power to hold leaders accountable; [review a [sample resolution](#)]
- Contribute to a vital pro-democracy movement by designating or creating a “democracy action team” (or whatever your UU community chooses to call it), composed of congregation members that will:

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- Build on existing infrastructure, guidance, and support by engaging with UU organizations (such as [\[Side With Love\]](#), [\[Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice\]](#), [\[UU State Action Networks\]](#), and other local UU congregations), as well as other local, state, and national organizations, religious groups, and allies (such as League of Women Voters, ACLU, Poor People's Campaign, Common Cause, Protect Democracy, the Brennan Center for Justice, Democracy Forward, etc.);
- Work collaboratively with current congregation efforts to support immigrant, racial, LGBTQ+, environmental, and other related social justice (all are impacted by authoritarianism);
- Provide needed education and training opportunities to engage the congregation and keep members safe and protected in non-violent protest and non-cooperation actions;
- Organize and communicate pro-democracy congregation actions and events that align with local grassroots efforts to protect and assist those directly harmed by injustice;
- Promote, support, and participate in national and local rallies and non-violent actions that are consistent with our UU values and principles;
- Provide a faith-based presence to local pro-democracy actions and events.

Proposing Delegate: Fred Van Deusen, UUSJ, First Parish in Concord, MA

Collaborator: Ursula Scott, UUSJ Democracy Action Team Co-Convener, River Road UU Congregations Bethesda, MD

Defending LGBTIQ Freedom Amid Funding Crisis: A Call for Global Solidarity

Vote Results: Affirm = 1249 (98.3%), Do Not Affirm = 22 (1.7%)

Our Unitarian Universalist principles affirm the dignity of every person, justice and compassion in human relations, and the goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all. Our UU faith calls us to recognize that all bodies are sacred, and that each person is endowed with the divine gifts of agency, conscience, and self-determination, regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation.

As Unitarian Universalists, we understand that liberation theology requires us to center the most marginalized communities and stand against systems of oppression that target our LGBTIQ siblings both at home and across the globe. We recognize that homophobia, transphobia, and discrimination know no borders and true global justice requires that we acknowledge the interconnected nature of human rights struggles and accept our moral responsibility to act from a place of radical solidarity. Our local and global struggles are inextricably linked, requiring our response to be equally interconnected.

The attacks on LGBTIQ communities represent a coordinated global movement of oppression that demands our unified resistance. Anti-LGBTIQ legislation, rhetoric, and violence in one country emboldens similar actions elsewhere, creating a dangerous cycle that threatens progress everywhere. When we defend LGBTIQ rights globally, we strengthen our own local movements; when we advocate locally, we contribute to global liberation.

According to Outright International ^[1], global funding for LGBTIQ human rights has suffered an abrupt termination of over \$100 million due to funding cuts from the U.S. and the Netherlands and pullbacks from corporations and other private donors, representing 30-40% of all global LGBTIQ funding. Approximately 90% of USAID programs supporting LGBTIQ communities globally have been terminated, devastating grassroots movements worldwide.

This funding crisis has forced the closure of critical programs supporting democratic participation, economic livelihoods for trans communities, emergency shelters, legal reform, and health services including HIV prevention and treatment. Without urgent intervention, 20-25% of grassroots LGBTIQ

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organizations in 50 countries may be forced to shut down entirely, leaving vulnerable populations without vital support and protection.

Simultaneously, we face devastating cuts to domestic LGBTIQ support services. It has been reported that the federal government proposes eliminating all funding for the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline's LGBTQ+ Youth Specialized Services, effective October 1, 2025. This \$50 million cut would devastate services that provided over 1.2 million crisis contacts since 2022. The Trevor Project [\[2\]](#), which handles nearly 50% of these specialized services' contact volume and served over 231,000 crisis contacts in 2024 alone, is undergoing layoffs and restructuring due to decreased individual donations and an increasingly hostile political climate targeting LGBTIQ communities.

The human cost of these cuts is already evident in places like:

- Uganda, where LGBTIQ people cannot safely seek care in government hospitals due to the draconian 2023 Anti-Homosexuality Act;
- Myanmar, where legal aid for arbitrarily arrested LGBTIQ individuals has been suspended;
- Malawi, where safe houses for homeless lesbian, bisexual, trans, and intersex women facing violence have been closed;
- Ukraine, where programs supporting displaced LGBTIQ people during wartime have shut down; and
- Communities across the United States, where LGBTIQ youth face unprecedented levels of legislative attacks, book bans, and restrictions on healthcare access, while crisis intervention services are being systematically defunded.

Resolved: We, the delegates of the 2025 UUA General Assembly, call on Unitarian Universalist congregations to:

1. Commit
 - Educate congregations about both the global LGBTIQ funding crisis and local threats to LGBTIQ communities through worship services, adult education programs, and congregational forums.
 - Examine our congregations' connections to international human rights and our capacity to contribute resources to this urgent cause.
 - Integrate local and global LGBTIQ justice into our congregational mission and social justice priorities as interconnected struggles requiring unified action.
2. Organize
 - Form LGBTIQ global solidarity groups within congregations using educational resources from organizations like Outright International and the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee.
 - Build meaningful partnerships between congregations and international LGBTIQ organizations, particularly those working in countries with hostile environments for LGBTIQ people.
 - Connect UU congregations with other faith communities to amplify advocacy efforts and resource mobilization.
3. Advocate
 - Pass congregational resolutions urging the U.S. government to restore and increase funding for both international LGBTIQ human rights work and domestic crisis intervention services.
 - Organize congregational letter-writing campaigns to elected officials to express concern about the devastating impact of funding cuts on vulnerable LGBTIQ populations both globally and in our own communities.
 - Write op-eds, letters to editors, and social media content to raise awareness about the interconnected nature of local and global LGBTIQ oppression.

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- Coordinate congregational participation in solidarity events that center the voices and needs of international LGBTIQ communities.
- 4. Witness
 - Speak publicly as people of faith whose UU theology compels us to work for local and global LGBTIQ rights as one unified struggle.
 - Participate in solidarity events that center the voices and needs of both local and international LGBTIQ communities.
 - Demonstrate faith-based support for LGBTIQ rights in our neighborhood and around the world.
- 5. Fundraise for international LGBTIQ funding intermediaries like Outright International, as well as domestic crisis intervention organizations like The Trevor Project that serve LGBTIQ youth facing suicide risk, recognizing that our local and global movements strengthen each other through mutual support.
- 6. Engage in Learning
 - Host educational forums on the global state of LGBTIQ rights and the impacts of funding cuts on both international and domestic communities.
 - Invite representatives from international LGBTIQ organizations to speak at congregations virtually or in person.
 - Develop youth and adult religious education curricula on local and global LGBTIQ justice that emphasizes the interconnectedness.
 - Share stories of resilience and resistance from LGBTIQ communities facing repression both in our communities and around the world.

In recognition that homophobia and transphobia are global forces that threaten LGBTIQ communities everywhere, from our own neighborhoods to the most distant corners of the world, and that the survival of both local and global LGBTIQ movements depends on our understanding that these struggles are one struggle, we commit to answering this call to courage with our resources, our advocacy, and our faithful solidarity that knows no borders.

Primary Proposer: Rev. DL Helfer of Westminster Unitarian Church

Additional Proposers: Lena Gardner, Rev. Katie Romano Griffin, and Rev. Abhi Janamanchi

Congregational Study/Action Issue

By a majority vote (788 votes – 59.4%), using ranked-choice voting, the Assembly voted to study the following congregational study/action issue:

Abolition, Transformation, and Faith Formation

Issue and Need

Abolition is a holistic approach to systemic social change that includes, but is not limited to: the abolition of slavery; replacing systems and cultures of violence, coercion and control with transformative justice and relational practices; and dismantling the prison-industrial complex as we now know it. It requires the transformation of our society and the replacement of theologies of retributive justice and violence.

A commitment to the practices and ideals of abolition would ask our congregations to make connections among many threads of our social justice work. It is grounded in at least 200 years of Unitarian Universalist history and theology.

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The Church of the Larger Fellowship (CLF) comes to the issue of abolition based on our accountability to the almost 2,000 incarcerated Unitarian Universalists who call our congregation their spiritual home. We believe that engaging the study-action process on this topic will be transformative for our members, our congregations, and our communities.

Grounding in Unitarian Universalism

As Unitarian Universalists, we have long made some version of the theological claim that “every person is inherently worthy and has the right to flourish with dignity, love, and compassion.” At the CLF, our long-standing ministry to and with incarcerated UUs has taught us that our prison-industrial complex is designed with exactly the opposite claim in mind.

The CLF has developed, over decades, accountability to the incarcerated Unitarian Universalist population. This relationship has been formed through worship, activities, faith formation classes, pen pal correspondence, pastoral care and other advocacy. Additionally the CLF has been on the forefront of faithful and progressive embodiment of our Unitarian Universalist faith in terms of speaking out through its platforms and practices for the hiring of previously incarcerated individuals.

Universalism teaches us that our worthiness is not defined by our sins (or lack thereof). If we truly believe this, we are charged to develop better ways to treat people who do harm (or who are unjustly accused of doing harm). We believe that our faith calls us to imagine a future in which none of our siblings are shackled and caged.

Many of our spiritual ancestors embraced the abolition of slavery in the United States, and those who did so are rightly celebrated as heroes of our faith: Theodore Parker, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, Elhanan Winchester, Lydia Maria Child, William Lloyd Garrison, Lucy Stone, and so many more. And yet, their abolitionist project was left unfinished. The 13th Amendment to the US constitution abolished enslavement “except as a punishment for crime.” It is time we finished the job they started.

The job of abolition is not limited to the Prison-Industrial Complex (PIC). We believe that in order to fully embrace abolition, we need to restructure our society in ways that eliminate violence, discrimination, and the causes of these things. At CLF, we connect our theology of abolition with issues such as the genocide in Gaza, ICE detention, discriminatory housing, food deserts, climate justice, and other social justice issues.

We have heard time and time again from our partners in BIPOC communities and from both formerly and currently incarcerated individuals that it is not enough to abolish the PIC. We must, they teach us, abolish the processes of dehumanization which made the PIC possible in the first place. That combination of changing systems, hearts, minds, and spirit is all a part of the liberatory theology of Unitarian Universalism.

Topics for Congregational Study

List smaller subtopics within the overall topic for congregations to study (<10 topics)

1. UU Theologies and Abolition

- What is our theology of sin? Of redemption? Of repentance and repair?
- How does our theology, centering love, ask us to respond to a public theology that is based on punishment, revenge, violence, coercion and dehumanization?
- How do we live our covenantal declaration that “every person is inherently worthy and has the right to flourish with dignity, love, and compassion?”
- What does Universalism—the notion that we are all saved by being reconciled with a love greater than our sins—mean in the 21st century? How do we live this part of our faith heritage?
- What does it mean to proclaim a theology that no one—no matter what they have done or been accused of doing—is disposable?

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- How do we teach children about Unitarian Universalist theological claims and work with them to embody them?
- 2. Abolition in UU History
 - 19th century abolitionists: abolishing chattel slavery in the US
 - 1970s movements for prison abolition
 - 2020s solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement
- 3. Abolishing Slavery
 - Enslavement and the 13th Amendment's exception
 - Enslavement of incarcerated people as a profit center for states and corporations
 - Learning from California's 2024 failure to pass a ballot initiative that would have repealed slavery in that state
- 4. Conflict, Restorative Justice, and Transformative Justice
 - Truth and Reconciliation processes
 - Transforming conflict to restoration
- 5. Congregational Policies and Practices: Living our Theological Commitments
 - Inclusion of formerly incarcerated people in the lives of our congregations
 - Review of hiring and HR practices to make sure that they do not illegally discriminate against formerly incarcerated people
 - Reviewing policies around conflict, safe congregations, covenant, and disruptive people with a restorative/transformational justice lens
 - Review of whether/how congregational investments/finances are supporting the Prison-Industrial Complex
- 6. Abolition in Multigenerational Community
 - How do we discuss abolition in ways that are developmentally appropriate for people of all ages?
- 7. Prison Ministries as Abolition
 - How can we build real relationships with people incarcerated in facilities near our congregations?
 - How can we build real relationships with incarcerated UUs around the United States?
 - How do we disrupt and reverse the dehumanization of incarcerated people?
- 8. Ending Cycles of Violence, Abuse, and Trauma
 - How are we disrupting the systems that support the carceral state, that begin with punitive and abusive systems in some of our schools and our homes?
 - How are we doing this work in ways that are trauma-informed?
 - How are extractive systems of harm and violence related to other issues such as climate justice?
- 9. Public Theology
 - Vengeance, punishment, and retributive justice
 - What is the UU theological response to atrocities like the US-sponsored concentration camp in El Salvador (CECOT)?
- 10. Eliminating the Root Causes of Crime
 - Economic injustice a driver for crime
 - Housing, food, healthcare access
 - Mental healthcare: availability, cost, and addressing cultural reluctance to engage mental health services

Possible Congregational/Regional Actions

List actions that congregations and other UU bodies (such as regions or state advocacy networks) can take, such as partnering with existing organizations on the issue. (<10 actions)

1. Partnership with state advocacy networks seeking to make change on a statewide level.

An example: in New York State, the legislature has ended cash bail and most solitary confinement. New York UU Justice is currently partnering with organizations such as RAPP, seeking to release aging people from prisons on humanitarian grounds

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2. Examining and changing congregational policies and practices
 - Hiring practices which center abolition
 - Divestment
 - Inclusion
3. Ministry to and with people incarcerated near our congregations
 - Partnership with local organizations serving incarcerated people
 - Public witness at local carceral facilities
 - Public witness at death penalty cases/executions
4. Advocacy for local policies and laws that reflect an abolitionist worldview
 - Work with local schools on restorative and transformative justice to replace punitive systems of suspension and expulsion
 - Public witness at school board and governmental meetings
5. Partnership for housing, food, and environmental justice
6. Cluster Teach-Ins on restorative relationship practices
7. Partnership with organizations seeking to reallocate the \$200 billion plus a year that our society spends on the Prison-Industrial Complex and the billions spent on violent policing to social services, community care, healthcare, etc.
8. Partnership with local organizations helping incarcerated people with re-entry
9. Theological conferences that address the issues raised above—perhaps with tracks for religious professionals
10. Partnership with local organizations doing court watch activities that provide witnesses to court procedures

Related Prior Social Witness Statements

- 1965 - Human Rights Conventions (General Resolution)
- 1974 - Criminal Justice (General Resolution)
- 1974 - Reform of Courts and Penal System (General Resolution)
- 1978 - Community-Based Correctional Programs (General Resolution)
- 2002 - Alternatives to the “War on Drugs” (Statement of Conscience)
- 2005 - Criminal Justice and Prison Reform (Statement of Conscience)
- 2005 - United States-Sponsored Torture Must End (Action of Immediate Witness)
- 2008 - End Present-day Slavery in the Fields (Action of Immediate Witness)
- 2012 - Repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery (Responsive Resolution)
- 2013 - Immigration as a Moral Issue (Statement of Conscience)
- 2013 - Condemn the Racist Mistreatment of Young People of Color by Police (Action of Immediate Witness)
- 2015 - Support the Black Lives Matter Movement (Action of Immediate Witness)
- 2018 - End Family Separation and Detention of Asylum Seekers and Abolish ICE (Action of Immediate Witness)
- 2018 - Dismantle Predatory Medical Care Practices in Prisons and End Prisons for Profit (Action of Immediate Witness)
- 2020 - Address 400 Years of White Supremacist Colonialism (Action of Immediate Witness)
- 2020 - Amen to Uprising: A Commitment and Call to Action (Action of Immediate Witness)
- 2021 - Undoing Systemic White Supremacy: A Call to Prophetic Action (Statement of Conscience)
- 2023 - Stop Cop City (Action of Immediate Witness)

Related UUA, Regional or State Action network initiatives

- UU at the United Nations Spring Seminars
 1. 2023 - Demilitarization and Abolition: Resist Policing and Empire <https://www.uua.org/global/historic-relationships/un/seminar/past/demilitarization-and-abolition>

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2. 2015 - International Criminal Justice: From Punitive to Restorative <https://www.uua.org/global/historic-relationships/un/seminar/past/international-criminal-justice-punitive-restorative>
- New York UU Justice (nyuuuj.org) partnership with Release Aging People in Prison

UU and/or Other Organizations Addressing This Issue

- UUSC
- BLUU
- DRUUMM
- UUJME
- UU State Advocacy Networks (connections already established with networks in North Carolina, Texas, Arizona, and New York)

Resource List

- Online Resources:
 1. Mariame Kaba's Prisonculture Substack: prisonculture.substack.com
 2. Mariame Kaba's website includes a lengthy bibliography and links to hundreds of articles and resources: mariamekaba.com
 3. Equal Justice Initiative: eji.org
 4. CLF Worthy Now worship services available by request ([Worthy Now Worship Services for UU Congregations - Google Drive](#))
 5. Worthy Now (2021)
 6. Light of Liberation (2023)
 7. Imagining a Post-Abolition World (2025)
 8. 13th Forward: 13thforward.com
 9. End the New Jim Crow Action Network: endthenewjimcrow.blogspot.com
 10. Release Aging People in Prison: rappcampaign.com
- Bibliography:
 1. Kaba, Mariame. We Do This 'Til We Free Us (Haymarket Books, 2021)
 2. Children's Books by Mariame Kaba:
 - Missing Daddy (Haymarket Books, 2019) See You Soon (Haymarket Books, 2022) Prisons Must Fall, with Jane Ball (Haymarket Books, 2025)
 3. Cawley, Ashon and Roberto Sirvent, eds. Abolition and Spirituality (Common Notions, 2023)
 4. brown, adrienne maree. We Will Not Cancel Us (And Other Dreams of Restorative Justice). (AK Press, 2020)
 5. Ruttenberg, Danya. On Repentance and Repair: Making Amends in an Unapologetic World. (Beacon Press, 2022)
 6. Davis, Angela Y., Gina Dent, Erica R. Meiners, and Beth E. Richie. Abolition. Feminism. Now. (Haymarket Books, 2022)
 7. Purnell, Derecka. Becoming Abolitionists (Penguin Random House, 2021)
 8. Gilmore, Ruth Wilson. Abolition Geography: Essays Toward Liberation. (Verso, 2022)
 9. Kaepernick, Colin, ed. Abolition for the People: The Movement for a Future Without Policing or Prisons. (Kaepernick Publishing, 2021)
 10. Shelby, Tommie. The Idea of Prison Abolition. (Princeton University Press, 2023)
 11. Cullors, Patrisse. An Abolitionist's Handbook. (Macmillan, 2022)
 12. Dharia, Premal, James Forman, Jr., and Maria Hawilo, eds. Dismantling Mass Incarceration. (FSG Adult, 2024)
 13. Blackmon, Douglas. Slavery by Another Name: The Re-Enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II (Doubleday, 2008)
 14. Ross, Andrew, Tomasso Bordelli, and Aiyuba Thomas. Abolition Labor: The Fight to End Prison Slavery. (OR Books, 2024)

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15. Kaba, Mariame and Kelly Hayes. *Let This Radicalize You: Organizing and the Revolution of Reciprocal Care*. (Haymarket Books, 2023)
- Films, Videos and online media:
 1. 2024 Minns Lectures by Rev. Jason Lydon: *Abolition Theologies: Praying for Liberation* (available online at <https://www.minnslectures.org/lecture-archive>)
 2. 2024 CLF General Assembly Worship: *Love Unites Across Barriers of Exclusion* ([Church of the Larger Fellowship \(CLFUU\)](#))
 3. 2023 CLF General Assembly Worship: *Liberation and Incarceration: Faithfully Becoming Abolitionists* (UUA has video and can make available)
 4. *The Dehumanizing Theater of the Parole Process* (documentary film available online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jBbs3R7VUwg>)
 5. *Slavery By Another Name* (PBS Documentary, [Slavery by Another Name | Episode 1 | PBS](#))

Sponsored by: The Church of the Larger Fellowship

Other Endorsing Organizations and Individuals: Community Church of New York, UU Prison Ministry of Illinois, Second Unitarian Church of Chicago, UU College of Social Justice, and Rev. Rodney Lemery (former CLF Director of Prison Ministry)

Election Results

Moderator

- Rev. Kimberly Quinn Johnson & Bill Young (term to expire in 2031) – 1243 votes
- Natasha Walker – 417 votes

The following individuals were declared elected, because their nominations were uncontested, to take office at the close of General Assembly:

Board of Trustees

- Mary Heafy (elected to Trustee Position 7) – term to expire in 2028
- Rev. Vanessa Rush Southern (elected to Trustee Position 9) – term to expire in 2028
- Rev. Adam Robersmith, DMin, PhD (re-elected to Trustee Position 10) – term to expire in 2028
- Rev. Justine Sullivan (re-elected to Trustee Position 11) – term to expire in 2028

Commission on Appraisal

- Rev. Dr. Tracie Barrett – a full term that expires in 2031
- Rachel A. Feltner – a full term that expires in 2031
- Rev. Dr. Matthew Johnson – a full term that expires in 2031
- Rev. Dr. Rodney Lemery – a full term that expires in 2031

Nominating Committee

- Debra Gray Boyd – a full term that expires in 2028
 - Kathy Charles – a full term that expires in 2028
 - Courtney McKenny – a full term that expires in 2028
-

Credentials Report

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Below is the final credentials report of the Secretary of the Association for both general attendance and delegates accredited and attending the 64th General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association:

Attendees

- 3,279 confirmed attendees including 94 young people
 - 2,899 were multiplatform
 - 380 were business-only
 - 2,483 attendees onsite in Baltimore
 - 143 children onsite
 - 796 attendees online (460 full time; 380 business-only)

Delegates

- 1,882 credentialed member delegates (from 592 congregations in 48 states and 4 countries: Canada, France, Mexico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands)
 - 1,543 multi-platform delegates
 - 339 business-only delegates
 - 1,433 congregational delegates
 - 329 minister or minister emeritus/a delegates
 - 117 religious educator or religious educator emeritus/a delegates
 - 3 delegates from associate member organizations

Closing

The Assembly was adjourned *sine die* by Co-Moderators Du Mond and Riley at approximately 4:00 p.m. on Sunday, June 22, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Carey McDonald,
Executive Vice President