

Adopting the 8th Principle at 4th U

1. What is the 8th Principle?

The 8th Principle is a proposed addition to the current seven aimed at explicitly holding us accountable to address oppressions directly, especially at the systemic level. It states:

*“We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote:
Journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.”*

2. Why do UUs need an 8th Principle?

Our existing 7 principles only imply this 8th Principle. Dismantling racism, white supremacy, and other oppressions requires work at the personal and institutional level. The best way for us to truly support racial justice in a significant way is to purge ourselves and our institutions of racist and white supremacy culture.

3. Why single out racism?

In the USA, racism stands out as the most egregious oppression. UUs have a long, mixed history in response to racism. The two worst crises of the UUA (late 1960's with large numbers of black UUs leaving the denomination and in 2017 with the UUA President resigning) were related to race.

4. Can the language be changed?

While the Commission established by the UUA may alter the language, congregations which choose to adopt the present 8th Principle now prior to the 2023 vote at General Assembly, use the existing language.

5. Why not wait until the UUA adopts the 8th Principle?

Adopting the 8th Principle is just the beginning of **action**, rather than the ultimate goal. Many people of color (POC) have been attracted by the values and potential of UUism but their souls have been repeatedly wounded by its whiteness. Let us make our actions match our values.

Since 2017, over 40 congregations have voted to adopt the 8th Principle. Many more congregations, like 4th U, are in the process of adopting the 8th Principle in support of starting congregational anti-racism work **now**.

6. What are the next steps for me and 4th U?

Become better educated by taking advantage of the resources listed below, discussing it with other members of the congregation, googling “the 8th Principle”, and sending questions to Rev. Schuyler at revschuyler@4thu.org.

Join the national 8th Principle Learning Community monthly zoom call by writing to pcolejones@gmail.com.

The most direct, immediate action is to vote to adopt the 8th Principle at Fourth Universalist's Annual Congregational Meeting on June 13.

The Board will be creating an 8th Principle Task Force after the vote. This diverse group will be responsible for helping to plan the congregation's work to implement the 8th Principle, recruiting volunteers for assignments and monitoring progress. If you would like to be considered for being part of this group, please contact President@4thu.org.

7. How will adoption of the 8th Principle affect 4th U?

There is no blueprint for congregations to follow. The process of deciding what the congregation needs to work on is an important part of implementing the 8th Principle.

The 8th Principle Task Force will take the lead in affecting change through:

EDUCATION: Providing numerous opportunities for awareness and growth including worship services, workshops and seminars. Promoting outside educational opportunities, such as the Jubilee 3 Training led by Paula Cole Jones, co-author of the 8th Principle.

The 8th Principle Task Force will be taking a closer look at how racism has impacted the practices of our own congregation. This could mean every team (Worship Arts, RE, Membership, Justice Team, Hospitality, Board, etc.) reviewing and making changes to promote equity, diversity and inclusion.

An example of a change: The Racial Justice Team looking to develop relationships with more grassroots organizations led by POC and following the lead of these organizations in their anti-racism work.

8. I am interested. Is there more information?

Some additional resources:

- 15 minute video of Schuyler and Ember discussing the 8th principle
<https://youtu.be/wpl3z14Th9s>
- 42 min video Ember and Bruce Pollack-Johnson https://youtu.be/czN2KQ_i0EY
- Background information from the 8th principle website
<https://www.8thprincipleuu.org/background>
- Why the 8th Principle Matters to the BIPOC Community
<https://www.uua.org/leadership/library/bipoc-and-8th-principle>
- The study/action guide that goes with Widening the Circle of Concern
<https://www.uua.org/widening/getting-started>