

— 63rd ANNUAL —
UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY



Summary and highlight of important events at the 2024 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA)

2024 General Assembly (GA): What is GA?

From the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) website:



“General Assembly is the annual gathering of Unitarian Universalists, where we conduct business of the Association, explore the theological underpinnings of our faith, and lean fully into our mission and principles. Please join us online Thursday, June 20 through Sunday, June 23, 2024 for this 4-day immersive experience where we participate in inspirational worship services and informative workshops, reconvene with friends and colleagues, and explore our virtual exhibit hall. GA is an unforgettable experience for the thousands of UUs who participate. You’ll leave with renewed energy and innovative ideas to share with your congregation and community-at-large!”

2024 General Assembly: Governance



In the last few years, more and more business is taking place BEFORE GA begins. The following information is from the delegate platform, prior to the beginning of GA:

Summary of What's Taken Place so Far

- *The Article II Study Commission released its [final Article II proposal](#) in Autumn 2023, following the vote for preliminary approval.*
- *Amendments to the Article II Study Commission's final proposal were submitted by congregational petition by February 1. [Four Article II amendments](#) met the requirements to be considered during General Assembly.*
- *Business Mini-Assemblies were held to discuss [four amendments](#) pertaining to the Rules of Procedure and Business Resolution. No amendments were submitted for the by-law Amendment to Section 7.13. Three amendments receiving enough support to be considered during General Assembly. The Board of Trustees incorporated these amendments.*
- *[Three Actions of Immediate Witness](#) were submitted and reviewed by the Commission on Social Witness. Feedback sessions were held, and the sponsors submitted revised AIWs.*
- *[A Consent Agenda](#) was added to the GA Business Agenda and includes the [Bylaw Amendment to Section 7.13. Religious Education Credentialing Committee](#). **[NOTE: during GA this was removed from the Consent Agenda]***
- *Delegates and other UUs have been discussing the various business items on [Discuss.uua.org](https://discuss.uua.org).*

2024 General Assembly: Governance



During GA, the delegates of this year's assembly:

- **Elected** members to the UUA Board of Trustees, Commission on Appraisal, and the Nominating Committee. View full election results [here](#).
- Discussed and **adopted** the revision to UUA Bylaw Section 7.13. [Religious Education Credentialing Committee](#)
- Discussed and **adopted** the business resolution “[Embracing Transgender, Nonbinary, and Intersex People is a Fundamental Expression of UU Religious Values.](#)”
- **Affirmed** 3 Actions of Immediate Witness (AIWs).
 - [World on Fire: Humanitarian Work and Climate Change](#)
 - [Solidarity with Palestinians](#)
 - [Centering Love Amidst the Ongoing Impact of COVID-19](#)
- Discussed and **adopted** the [final Article II proposal](#), as amended during the assembly.
- Discussed and **adopted** the responsive resolution “[UUA General Assembly Support for October 7 Hostages.](#)”

[Link to full text](#) of all business during GA 2024

2024 General Assembly: Article II



Only one amendment was incorporated into Article II during GA:

“Equity. We declare that every person **is inherently worthy and** has the right to flourish with ~~inherent dignity and worthiness~~ **dignity, love, and compassion.**”

(Clean version)

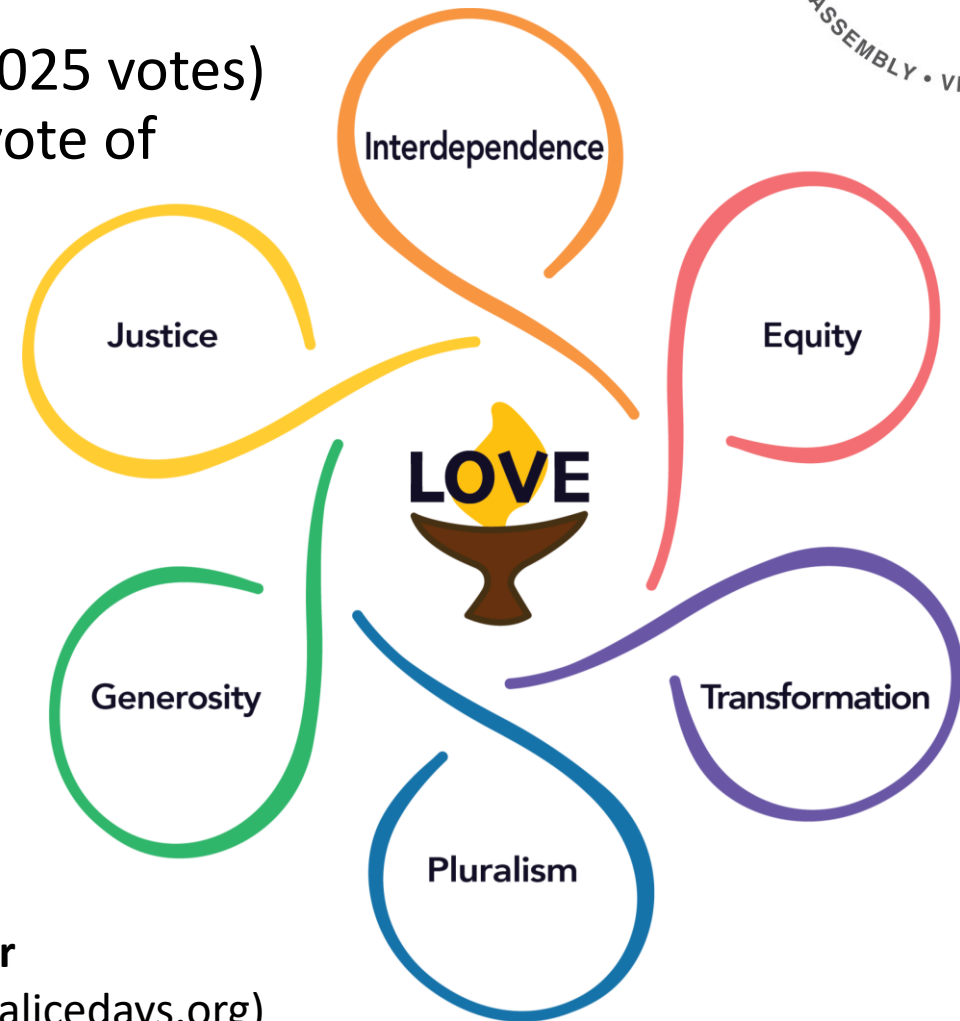
“Equity. We declare that every person is inherently worthy and has the right to flourish with dignity, love, and compassion.”

2024 General Assembly: Article II



The revised Article II was adopted by **80.2%** (2,025 votes) of the delegates, receiving more than the 2/3 vote of support that was required. There were 19.8% (499) votes against, and 21 abstentions.

Read the coverage about Article II from [UU World](#).



Shared Values Flower

© Tanya Webster (chalicedays.org)

2024 General Assembly: Article II



In addressing some common concerns about the revised Article II, it is worth noting:

- UUA bylaws processes have been followed, and this revision has been studied and discussed for 3 plus years. Thousands of delegates from congregations across the nation have had multiple opportunities to discuss and vote.
- There is nothing that stops UUCB or any other member congregation from continuing to display, teach, and refer to the 7 (or 8) Principles and 6 Sources. In fact, we (UUCB) have been teaching and referring to both the Shared Values and the Principles in Religious Exploration this past year, with no issues or confusion.
- Adrienne Walker, UUA General Counsel and Parliamentarian, issued a [legal opinion](#) addressing legal impacts of this bylaw revision. In her legal opinion, this revision does not infringe on the independence of member congregations nor does it affect congregational freedom.

2024 General Assembly: Article II



It is also worth noting that change can be difficult, and it may take time for all of us to become accustomed to and comfortable with this change.

“However we vote, we put love at the center, unflinching, insistent: this free faith we so cherish reveres the past and trusts the dawning future more. We believe in evolution—unfolding always, not unraveling—and revelation is not sealed.”

– **Rev. Victoria Safford**, in a reflection before the final pre-vote discussion of Article II at General Assembly

2024 General Assembly: Business Resolution



Why is “[Embracing Transgender, Nonbinary, and Intersex People is a Fundamental Expression of UU Religious Values](#)” a business resolution instead of an Action of Immediate Witness (AIW) or Congregational Study/Action Item (CSAI)?

This question arose from many attendees and delegates. Here is an answer from Carey McDonald, Executive Vice President of the UUA:

*“A business resolution addresses the “structure and management” of the Association, per the UUA Bylaws. The proposed business resolution “Embracing Transgender, Nonbinary and Intersex People is a Fundamental Expression of UU Values” would establish an Associational commitment to supporting transgender people for the UUA’s central organization and for its member congregations. This would provide a sustaining foundation for the powerful work already underway with UUA staff and volunteers, as well as in our member congregations. AIWs and CSAIs are specifically directed externally to “social justice” issues, whereas a business resolution can include both internal and external commitments. Additionally, AIW’s express a position of the General Assembly but do not obligate the Association to take any specific action, and CSAI’s are a multi-year process. The goal of this business resolution is to address the urgent needs of the moment by providing an actionable interpretation of our values and covenant within our faith community and beyond, affirmed at the highest level by the General Assembly. **As far as the UUA is aware, it would be the first time that an entire denomination has proclaimed the sacredness of transgender people as an article of faith.**”*

2024 General Assembly: Business Resolution



TO MY TRANS NON-BINARY INTERSEX OR GENDER DIVERSE BELOVEDS: LEAN IN. LEAN IN. **I LOVE YOU. I LOVE YOU. I LOVE YOU.** PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE THE SPACE WITHOUT FEELING MY LOVE AND THE LOVE OF OTHERS WHO SEE YOU AS DIVINE. I LOVE YOU. YOU ARE DIVINE. **I LOVE YOU.** YOU ARE HOLY. **I LOVE YOU.** YOU KNOW WHO YOU ARE. **I LOVE YOU.** YOU ARE WORTHY OF BEING WHOEVER YOU NEED TO BE TO SURVIVE AND THRIVE IN THIS WORLD. **I LOVE YOU** AND I WILL SAY IT FOR 50 SECONDS IF I NEED TO. **I LOVE YOU. I LOVE YOU. I LOVE YOU. I LOVE YOU. I LOVE YOU. I LOVE YOU. I LOVE YOU. I LOVE YOU. LOVE YOU. I LOVE YOU.** DO NOT LEAVE THE SPACE WITHOUT KNOWING THAT YOU ARE LOVED. IF YOU NEED A REMINDER, CALL ME, EMAIL ME, TEXT ME. WHAT WE WILL NOT DO IN THIS SPACE IS LET YOU GO ANOTHER MOMENT, BELIEVING ANYTHING OTHER THAN THE FACT THAT **YOU ARE LOVED.**

REV. JEKAREN OLAOYA
(GA 2024)



The discussion of this resolution was not smooth, and some extremely hurtful sentiments were expressed.

However, the overall feeling of the Assembly was support and love, as Rev. JeKaren Olaoya shared in the final minutes of the discussion (*see image to the left for her words*). The resolution was overwhelming adopted, by 91.8%.

You can read a press release from the UUA about the resolution [here](#).

Image credit Rob Spirko

2024 General Assembly: Worship



There are several great worship services during General Assembly. It is an amazing feeling to worship together with thousands of UUs whether physically or digitally together. These services are uplifting and inspiring.

- **Service of the Living Tradition**

The Ministries and Faith Development Staff Group invites you to this service where we honor those who have died, recognize those who have completed professional service, and welcome those who have received fellowship, credentialed, certified status in the past year while reflecting on ministry in a time of unprecedented change.

- **Synergy Bridging Worship**

Bridging—the transition from youthhood to young adulthood—is a ritual of transition and becoming. As we honor “crossing the bridge,” we in turn reflect upon and recommit to fostering spiritual fullness and belonging across the lifespan.

- [Sunday Worship](#)

We are all tangled up together in a great web of life that is woven with beauty and hardship, love and loss, thriving and struggle. How do we tend well to the weaving so that all of us are held in care?

2024 General Assembly: Ware Lecture

“The Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) President, in consultation with the General Assembly Planning Committee, invites a distinguished guest each year to address the General Assembly as the Ware Lecturer.”



**2024 Ware Lecture:
Julia Watts Belser**

“Julia Watts Belser (she/her) is a rabbi, scholar, spiritual teacher and a longtime activist for disability and gender justice. She is Professor of Jewish Studies in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at Georgetown University, as well as core faculty in Georgetown’s Disability Studies Program and a Senior Research Fellow at the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs. Her work brings ancient Jewish texts into dialogue with disability studies, feminist thought, queer theory, and environmental justice ethics. She is a cultural historian of rabbinic Jewish literature and a contemporary Jewish feminist theologian who draws disability arts and culture into provocative conversation with Jewish tradition to challenge structural violence, deepen our capacity for social justice, and honor the sacredness of disabled people’s lives.

Belser has held faculty fellowships at Harvard Divinity School and the Katz Center for Advanced Jewish Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. Her most recent book, [Loving Our Own Bones: Disability Wisdom and the Spiritual Subversiveness of Knowing Ourselves Whole](#) (Beacon Press, 2023; published in the UK by Hodder & Stoughton), is the recipient of a National Jewish Book Award.

NOTE: Full registration is required to access the video on-demand when it is posted. This video is not available to the public.



There has been a [Ware Lecture](#) every year since 1922, with the exceptions of 1945 (cancelled due to World War II) and 1950 (Unitarian 125th Anniversary).

2024 General Assembly: Fahs Lecture



Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA) Fahs Lecture

“The purpose of the Fahs Lecture is annually, at the General Assembly of the UUA, to present a speaker on the topic of religious education to this wide and diverse gathering of lay and professional Unitarian Universalists.

The Fahs Lecture is named in honor of Sophia Lyon Fahs, the religious educator who, in the middle of this century, shaped the course of Unitarian Universalist religious education. Her insights - including the notion that children develop religious understanding from their interaction with the world - revolutionized how we teach.”



“Love as Accessibility: Buildings & Beyond”

In this panel presentation, we'll explore stories of bringing more accessible spaces and radical welcome to our congregations and religious education programs.

The panel will be moderated by Mx Katharine Childs, LREDA Board President, who will be joined by Gretchen Maune, the UUA's Accessibility Resources Coordinator, and Elizabeth Foster and Imari Nuyen-Kariotis from EqUUal Access.

Watch a trailer for the Lecture [here](#).

2024 General Assembly: Berry Street Essay



The UU Minister Association’s Berry Street Essay is offered annually during Professional Days before General Assembly. This event began in 1820, when the *“Rev. William Ellery Channing, Minister of the Federal Street Church of Boston, invited all Massachusetts ministers known to be liberal to meet in the vestry of his church (whose entrance was on Berry Street).”* Since then, the Berry Street Conference has convened every year since 1820 (save for one, during World War II), making the Berry Street Essay the oldest lecture series in the US.



The 204th Berry Street Essay was delivered by Reverend Kim K. Crawford Harvie, [“Mystery Loves Company”](#)

*“The **Reverend Kim K. Crawford Harvie** was ordained into the Unitarian Universalist ministry in 1984, she spent the following year as an intern at First Parish in Brewster, Massachusetts. In 1985, she was called to the Universalist Meeting House in Provincetown, Massachusetts, which she served until 1989. In 1987, she received the Maximilian Kolbe Award for Community Service and, in 1988, she was named Provincetown Citizen of the Year. In 1989, she was called to Arlington Street Church in Boston, Massachusetts, where she continues to serve as Senior Minister. ”*

2024 General Assembly: Workshops



There were SO MANY on-demand workshops to choose from!! So many, in fact that the on-demand workshops were available by early June, and continue to be available to registered attendees until December.

There were also three webinars available during GA:

- One of Many Apocalypses: A Black Trans Retelling of the World
- A Conversation: The Gaza War and the Hundred years War on Palestine
- Fat Liberation at the Intersection: Anatasia Kidd and Tigress Osborn in Conversation

These recordings are not publicly available and attendees are **not permitted** to share them, but if you are interested in hearing about the webinars or on-demand workshops, ask a UUCB attendee if they would be willing to share their thoughts about their experience.

2024 General Assembly: Bringing it back to UUCB



Below are the 2024 attendees from UUCB. Those marked “delegate” represented our congregation in the business of the assembly, including voting on business items.

Note: there were 11 attendees in 2023, and 14 attendees this year.

Anne Greenwood (*delegate*)

Beth Jerde

Evelie Delfino Sâles Posch (*delegate*)

Helen Tinsley Jones (*delegate*)

Helen Toy

Kathleen Slobin (*delegate*)

Ladie Malek (*delegate*)

Lonnie Moseley

Melissa Rosales (*delegate*)

Ray Westergard

Rev. Fran Moulton

Rev. Jane Ramsey (*delegate*)

Rev. Jay Atkinson

Victoria Bowen

2024 General Assembly: Bringing it back to UUCB



As it was an all virtual GA this year, in order to create community, Ladie Malek organized watch parties at UUCB for attendees and delegates. This enabled those in attendance to watch together and share their thoughts in real-time. Thank you Ladie!

Attendees and delegates were also able to share comments and ideas through the group chats on the Whova platform. Though we were not all always in the same physical space, we were still connected and able to experience GA together as a UUCB community.

The UUCB attendees will hold a debrief on **Saturday, July 13th via Zoom (3 - 4:30 pm)** to discuss insights, ideas, and what the experience was like for them. The debrief is open to all in the congregation to come and listen.

2024 General Assembly: Bringing it back to UUCB



Ideas for UUCB to be involved in the next year (July 2024 – June 2025):

- Participate in the [UUA Common Read](#) for 2024-2025: “[Authentic Selves: Celebrating Trans and Nonbinary People and Their Families](#)” edited by Peggy Gillespie.

“Through interviews and photo portraits, the subjects of this book invite readers into their real lives--their revelations, challenges, joys, and networks of support. From the foreword by transgender activist Jazz Jennings and her mom and fellow activist, Jeanette Jennings, through the resources offered at the book's end, this Common Read invites UU groups to explore the nature of living authentically and the ways connections among us help us thrive.”

- Inspired by the business resolution, a group of UUCB attendees will be organizing an event to write notes of affirmation and love to trans and nonbinary folx to be delivered via [Point of Pride](#) organization:

“The cards you write are discretely mailed alongside support packages to trans people with barriers in accessing healthcare. 88% of recipients are trans youth under the age of 24. We send hundreds of support packages a month: handwritten cards are always in short supply. No sign-up necessary, and you can get started right away!”

2024 General Assembly: Bringing it back to UUCB



Ideas for UUCB to be involved in the next year (July 2024 – June 2025):

- Take action using the [3 affirmed Actions of Immediate Witness](#) (AIWs) as a guide.
- The UUA Bylaws Renewal Task Force will be starting discussions this fall. UUCB can engage with this topic early and possibly provide input.
- Discuss and comment on Business items for GA 2025 via the [online discussion forum](#) (open to everyone, opens BEFORE GA)
- Fundraise to send even more people from UUCB to GA next year!!

2024 General Assembly: Bringing it back to UUCB



REMEMBER: YOU NEED NOT REGISTER FOR GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE

- The UUA website has [publicly available video](#) from GA for all to watch. If you want to know more, just watch!
- General Sessions (where all business is done) and Sunday morning worship service are available to the public. You can experience not all, but much of General Assembly at your convenience, **for free**, every year.
- Many congregations organize watch parties to watch in community together – fun!
- And now, there is a Discussion Forum open to all:
“A [discussion forum for business items](#) is open to all UU members. An account is not required to read the posts and comments, but it is required if you want to join the discussion. The UUA’s discussion platform follows the same [community participation covenant](#) used during General Assembly.”

2025 General Assembly: Baltimore, MD & online



Next year...

**General Assembly (GA) will be multi-platform, from June 18 - 22, 2025.
Onsite in Baltimore, Maryland and offsite from wherever you are!**

The UUA is trying out a new model of alternating multi-platform GA (off and on site) with a fully online GA. 2024 was fully online, so 2025 will be multi-platform.

If we plan early, we can help reduce costs for those who would like to attend onsite in Baltimore.

Scholarships from UUCB available!
Financial support from the UUA available!

2024 General Assembly



Receive the latest updates about GA in your inbox!

Be the first to hear about announcements and new opportunities. If you haven't been receiving regular emails about GA, add your email to the GA mailing list.

[Join the Distribution List for Regular GA Updates](#)

See you next year! 😊

2024 General Assembly: Links

General Assembly Business Guide (how congregations can participate):

<https://www.uua.org/ga/congregations/ga-business-guide>

GA Program Book: https://www.uua.org/files/2024-06/2024_ga_program_book.pdf

Final Business Agenda: <https://www.uua.org/files/2024-05/2024%20Final%20Agenda.pdf>

GA Business Video: <https://www.uua.org/ga/off-site/2024/business>

GA Business discussion forum (open to everyone): <https://discuss.uua.org/>

GA updates mailing list: <https://bit.ly/UUAGAemail>



2024 General Assembly: Links



Election results: [https://www.uua.org/files/2024-06/Results Election 2024.pdf](https://www.uua.org/files/2024-06/Results_Election_2024.pdf)

Business Resolution “Embracing Transgender, Nonbinary, and Intersex People is a Fundamental Expression of UU Religious Values”: [https://www.uua.org/files/2024-05/2024 Final Agenda.pdf#page=21](https://www.uua.org/files/2024-05/2024_Final_Agenda.pdf#page=21)

UUA press release about the business resolution: <https://www.uua.org/pressroom/press-releases/board-adds-trans-business-resolution>

Affirmed Actions of Immediate Witness (AIW):

<https://discuss.uua.org/t/proposed-aiw-world-on-fire-humanitarian-work-and-climate-change/1509>

<https://discuss.uua.org/t/proposed-aiw-solidarity-with-palestinians/1510>

<https://discuss.uua.org/t/proposed-aiw-centering-love-amidst-the-ongoing-impact-of-covid-19/1511>

Bylaw amendment to Section 7.13. Religious Education Credentialing Committee:

<https://discuss.uua.org/t/uua-bylaw-amendment-section-7-13-religious-education-credentialing-committee/1480>

Responsive Resolution “UUA General Assembly Support for October 7 Hostages”:

<https://discuss.uua.org/t/responsive-resolution-uua-general-assembly-support-for-october-7-hostages/1787>

2024 General Assembly: Links

Article II Final Proposal: <https://discuss.uua.org/t/final-proposed-revision-to-article-ii-as-completed-by-the-article-ii-study-commission-in-october-2023/1457>

Legal opinion from UUA counsel as to the legal impacts of the revised Article II:

<https://delegate.uua.org/files/UUA%20Legal%20Counsel%20Article%20II%20Opinion%206.22.24.pdf>

List of 4 proposed amendments to Article II: <https://discuss.uua.org/tags/c/ga24/2024-a2-amendments/28/amendment>

UU World article: <https://www.uuworld.org/articles/uua-article-ii-passes-general-assembly-result-unitarian-universalism-bylaws-vote-values-statement>



2024 General Assembly: Links



History of the Ware Lecture: <https://www.uua.org/ga/program/highlights/ware-lecture>

Julia Watts Belser book, *Loving Our Own Bones: Disability Wisdom and the Spiritual Subversiveness of Knowing Ourselves Whole*: <https://www.uuabookstore.org/Loving-Our-Own-Bones-P19766.aspx>

2024 LREDA Fahs Lecture: <https://www.lreda.org/FahsLecture>

2024 Berry Street Essay video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tj69V7m8_b8

History of Berry Street Essay: <https://uuma.org/programs/berry-street-essay/>

UU Common Read 2024-25, *Authentic Selves: Celebrating Trans and Nonbinary People and Their Families* Edited by Peggy Gillespie (Skinner House, 2023): <https://www.uuabookstore.org/Authentic-Selves-P19547.aspx>

UU Common Read information and study guides: <https://www.uua.org/read>

Point of Pride organization: <https://www.pointofpride.org/letter-writing>