

October 25, 2023

Greetings fellow Unitarian Universalists!

The Article II Study Commission is happy to present to you our final draft of the proposed revision to Article II, incorporating the amendments passed at General Assembly 2023. Of course, this is not *the* final version, as there is the opportunity to amend it at General Assembly 2024, as outlined in the UUA Bylaws.

Amending Article II is a two-step process. We completed Step 1 at General Assembly 2023. The process we must follow after the 2023 General Assembly is outlined in the UUA Bylaws, Section C-15.(c)(3)(v): "If one or more amendments proposed in the mini-assembly are adopted by the General Assembly, the Article II proposal shall be referred to the study commission. Within six months after the close of the General Assembly, the Study Commission, taking into account the decisions of the General Assembly, shall prepare the proposal to amend Article II. The Board of Trustees shall put this proposal on the agenda of the next regular General Assembly."

Truth be told, the last year was an intense one for the commission, with writing, drafting, and revising our proposal. We took the month of July as a break and came back to it in August. Mindful of our charge to make the language as poetic as possible and keenly aware of how different elements in Article II interrelate, we were deliberate in our discussions of how best to integrate the amendments into the proposed version. We also reached out to the authors of a few of the amendments with questions about wording and intended meanings. After the commission finished incorporating the amendments, we put our revised version through another round of plain language review. Also, as is customary with potential Bylaws amendments, we had the proposal reviewed by the UUA's legal counsel.

We then incorporated suggestions from each review and arrived at the proposal you have here. Through all of this, we balanced a number of factors: the charge for inspirational and aspirational language, the legal implications of bylaws language, the need for plain language, respect for the will of the General Assembly in the voted-upon wording, and the depth of the conversations we have had among ourselves for the past two years.

It is a fundamental act of hope to consider revising and revitalizing our agreement together as congregations. Ever since we released our draft for comments last year, we've seen an outpouring of creative energy around what this proposal represents: the chance for the current generations of UUs to take an active hand in shaping our faith. It's an opportunity for all of us to draw on the transformative energy of articulating anew what our Association is about. Speaking personally, I found it very helpful working the UU tables at a couple of area Pride events to be able to say, "We come from many paths, but we all put Love at the center." Others, I'm sure, will come up with better one-sentence descriptions, but that's part of the creative joy possible in this moment. In these times, people need that creative joy and the hope that it represents. It's part of practicing skillful Love inside our congregations and Association, so that we can carry that Love out into a world that so desperately needs it. We invite you to participate in congregational discussions about adopting the revised Article II at GA 2024 in this hopeful spirit.

In Faith,

The Article II Study Commission

