

## *Our Theological Foundations*

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What are the theological threads that bind us together as Unitarians, Universalists and Unitarian Universalists? Whether we are lighting two chalices in Lahore, Pakistan, to remind us of the equality of women and men; or sharing our joys and sorrows in Chicago, Illinois; or reading words of inspiration at a service in Bujimbara, Burundi, or preaching words of hope from a pulpit in Koloshvar, we share a tradition of liberal faith. But what are the roots of that faith?

Throughout our history, Unitarian Universalists have been part of the dissenting tradition of Christianity. Ever since the Edict of Torda in 1568, when our Transylvanian forefathers and foremothers advocated not just for their own particular beliefs (for example, the radical oneness of God), but for peaceful coexistence with those who have believed differently, Unitarian Universalists have always affirmed that the sacred is too important to belong only to a single religion or to speak only with a single voice, or to remain the same for all time.

We know all too well the capacity of every human being to think and to act with evil intent, but we also know the capacity of human beings for infinite goodness and mercy and love, and we affirm that ours is a faith that can move the scale toward Love's tipping point. We affirm that life has meaning, and that we find that meaning in generosity, in kindness, and in the service of justice and peace. We affirm that we are meant for one another, and for life in community, and we work to model such community in the way we live our lives together here on Earth.

We affirm all these things in the context of freedom—your freedom and my freedom—to believe these things, or not to believe

them; to choose how we will worship together. We exercise our freedom, explicitly and implicitly, through the promises we make to one another. Our congregations promise to listen to one another, and to make decisions democratically. We also exercise that freedom in the way we choose who will minister to us; only the congregation can choose its minister, and each congregation does so democratically as well.

That is our history: a history of religious freedom, of democratic process and of life in community. No matter where our chalice is lit, its light shines on this history.