

## Preparation for Session G60 – Creating a Caring, Inclusive Community

*“We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote...Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations...”*  
(Our 3<sup>rd</sup> Principle)

*“Isn’t it true that in our churches, in these communities of the spirit, we have more resources than outside of our churches to accept each others’ imperfections, to reconcile our differences, to forgive and be forgiven, to comfort and to be comforted, to love and to be loved? Isn’t that what the church is all about—because it is what life is all about?”* - “Belonging: The Meaning of Membership,” report of the UUA’s Commission on Appraisal

There’s a saying that goes *“All are welcome here, provided you don’t close the door behind you.”* UU congregations have the goal of embracing diversity and building community among people with a wide variety of religious backgrounds, theological perspectives, socio-economic situations, races and ethnicities, political leanings, sexual orientations, and states of physical and mental health and abilities.

In this session, we’ll take a look at what our congregation does—or doesn’t do—to build a caring community among many different types of people. We realize that this is a very broad topic! You won’t be able to cover every aspect of it in one session. But as our congregation begins the process of defining who we are, so that we can define what we want in a new senior minister, this conversation will continue.

Use any of the following questions if you find them helpful.

1. How would you define a caring community? What are its limits, if any?
2. How “welcoming” and tolerant do you feel our congregation is of our differences? Have we been successful at not just co-existing, but truly caring about one another?
3. Once a survey was done within UU congregations and the two things members said they liked the most about UUism were: 1) being in a place where you have complete freedom and where diversity is valued, and 2) being in a community of like-minded people. What do you think of these results? Have you noticed times when the two needs were in conflict within our own congregation?
4. Have you noticed or experienced conflicting ideas and desires within our congregation? How were they handled? Can you give an example of a time that someone effectively resolved a conflict?
5. What is our responsibility to people that are disruptive or create problems?